

A COMPARISON OF CHILDREN FROM INTACT AND  
DISRUPTED FAMILIES IN A NEWFOUNDLAND  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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A Comparison of Children From Intact  
and Disrupted Families in a  
Newfoundland Elementary School Setting

by

©Rosanne M. Sweeney, B.A., B.Ed

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## **Abstract**

Four hundred forty-nine students from 26 different grade four classes, representing six different school boards on the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland were divided into two groups based on family structure. Children who have experienced a marital disruption in their family were compared to their same aged peers who have not experienced a marital disruption. Eighty-seven percent of the sample were from intact homes (i.e. homes in which a mother and a father were present), and seven percent of the sample were from disrupted homes (i.e. homes in which there had been a divorce or a separation). The remaining six percent came from alternative family structures example, adopted family, and so on.

Research studies have suggested that the process of divorce has predictable effects upon children and that these effects can be categorized depending upon the age of the child. Using the results of these studies, a behavioral checklist was developed. This checklist was used to assess whether Newfoundland children displayed effects of divorce similar to those identified in non-Newfoundland populations. Children were compared on seven variables namely: Anxiety, Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Maturity Adjustment, Perceived Academic Potential, Acceptable Classroom Behavior, and Academic Performance.

A sample of grade four teachers filled out a behavioral

checklist for every student in their classes. Results of the study suggested that Newfoundland children who have experienced a marital disruption are similar to other elementary school children who have similar experiences as defined in the literature. The results also showed that children who have experienced a marital disruption in their family were significantly different on four out of the seven variables measured when compared to their same aged peers who have not experienced a marital disruption. A recommendation supporting an intervention program for this particular group of children was made.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction to the Study

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if the frequently cited responses of latency aged children to the separation or divorce of their parents described in the literature could be observed in a Newfoundland population of elementary school children whose parents have separated or divorced, herein called disrupted families (Plunkett & Kalter, 1984).

The independent variable in this study was the type of family structure experienced by the child. Two alternative family structures were considered, namely; (a) intact family, and (b) disrupted family.

The disrupted family group consisted of children of remarried, divorced, or separated but not currently divorced parents. Children from single parent homes (i.e. parent never married) were not included.

The dependent variables were comparisons of children from intact homes and disrupted homes on each of the following:

1. Anxiety
2. Social Adjustment
3. Personal Adjustment
4. Maturity Adjustment
5. Perceived Academic Potential

6. Acceptable Classroom Behavior
7. Academic Performance

### **Rationale**

According to Statistics Canada, the total number of Canadian divorces climbed to 86,985 in 1987 from 78,160 in 1986--an increase of about eleven percent. The number of divorces in Newfoundland rose to 1,002 in 1987 from 610 in 1986--an increase of more than 60 percent! With the divorce rate increasing each year, homes in which there are a mother and a father may no longer be the norm.

Hetherington (1979) reports that 40 percent to 50 percent of children born in the past decade in the United States will spend some time living in a single-parent home. Freeman and Couchman (1985) report that it is difficult to calculate how many children are affected by marital separation, although American (Bane, 1976) and Canadian (Ambert, 1980) sociologists have estimated that 40 percent of all children growing up in the 1980s will be directly affected by marital dissolution.

Massive amounts of research have been done on the effects of a marital disruption upon children. The results of this research have suggested several specific behaviors, characteristics and problems which can be associated with children who have experienced the divorce of their parents. Many of these findings are age-related. If these findings can be substantiated, then it may be possible to better predict

the likely reactions of a certain aged child whose family becomes disrupted due to the divorce or separation of the child's parents. This information would be valuable to the people who have been given the responsibility for educating these children.

Drake (1979) identified children from disrupted homes as a population "at risk." Teachers and other professionals in our schools should be made aware, therefore, of the possible effects of a marital disruption on children at various ages. These people have to be made to understand that divorce is not an event, it is a process which can have identifiable "side effects," some of which may take years to disappear. Knowing what the child's world is like outside the classroom will allow educators to empathize and to understand better the child in the classroom and to be in a better position to be able to provide support for the child during the stressful time of the divorce. Teachers are often in a better position to observe the behavior of children of divorce and to judge if the child is experiencing problems or not. The parents of the child going through a divorce are often so involved in the process of the divorce and so emotionally overwhelmed with their own problems that they are often not aware of the feelings or behaviors of their children. The child's teacher is often the next most available adult to the child. Teachers, therefore, are in a unique position, to be able to provide support and guidance to their students because of

their regular contact with and amount of time spent with their students. One of the factors revealed through the literature which affects a child's adjustment to divorce is the availability of a support system. Schools, and teachers in particular, are in an excellent position to be able to provide this support once given the necessary information.

The reason for this study then, is to determine to what extent latency-aged children in Newfoundland classrooms, who are from families in which there has been a marital disruption, exhibit the behaviors and characteristics as suggested in the literature. If similar behaviors and characteristics are identified, an effort to determine the potential need for special help or intervention can be assessed.

### Research Questions

The researcher was interested in studying the following questions in this research:

1. Can the research findings about the effect of divorce on children be generalized to children in a Newfoundland setting?
2. Is the anxiety level in children from disrupted homes higher than the anxiety level in children from intact homes?
3. Is a child's social adjustment responsive to stability in the family?
4. Is the personal adjustment of a child in an intact

home higher than the personal adjustment of a child from a disrupted home?

5. Will a child's judged maturity level be higher for a child from an intact home than a child from a disrupted home?

6. Is a child's judged school potential higher in children from intact homes than for children from disrupted homes?

7. Does a child from an intact home display more acceptable classroom behavior than a child from a disrupted home?

8. Is the school performance of a child from an intact home better than the school performance of a child from a disrupted home?

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

A review of the literature on the effects of a marital disruption on children revealed many studies noting a combination of different effects. After examining the results of the diverse studies, the author perceived several major trends to be emerging. First of all, marital conflict and disruption have been found by several authors to be sources of a wide range of behavior problems in children. Secondly, the effects of marital disruption seem both age-related and gender-related. Thirdly, a child's long-term adjustment to divorce is affected by several factors. Finally, a consensus exists among researchers concerning weaknesses in current research on marital disruption. Each of these trends is discussed in detail below.

#### Trend #1: Behavioral Effects

Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1977) found that in the year following divorce, children became more dependent, disobedient, aggressive, demanding and less affectionate. Futterman (1980) stated that feelings of depression, separation anxiety, and concerns about security are common among children of divorce regardless of age. He said that these feelings may be manifested directly through night fears and school avoidance, or they may be expressed symbolically for example, in a



concern over losses of pets, friends, homes and family members. Kinard and Reinherz (1986) concluded that marital disruption resulted in increased problems with attention, withdrawal, dependency, and hostility for children in recently divorced families.

Brady, Bray and Zeeb (1986) found that children from intact families were rated as having significantly fewer overall problems when compared to children from "broken" or "reconstituted" homes. These authors suggested that children from separated families demonstrated more immature behavior, sleep disturbances, tension, and hyperactive behavior when compared with children from intact families. These findings added support to Wallerstein and Kelly's (1975) study in which the children, particularly preschoolers, from divorced or separated homes were described as displaying "generalized neediness" at the time of parental divorce. Brady et al. concluded that their findings were generally consistent with previous investigations of divorce in child psychiatric populations done by Kalter (1977), McDermott (1970), Morrison (1974), Porter and O'Leary (1980), Tuckman and Regan (1966), and Westman (1970) which characterized children of divorce as having higher rates of delinquency, antisocial behavior, depression, and behavior disorders compared with children from intact families. Brady et al. determined that their findings even more closely resembled the results of nonclinical studies done by Landis (1960), McDermott (1970) and Wallerstein and

Kelly (1975) which found children of divorce to be more dependent, disobedient, aggressive, whining, demanding, and unaffectionate than children in intact families.

Felner, Farber, Ginter, Boike and Cowen (1980) compared children from three different home settings: intact homes, divorced homes, and homes in which a parent had died. These authors found that those children who had experienced parental separation/divorce had significantly more acting-out problems than those children from homes in which a parent had died or children from homes in which the family was intact. In fact, children from homes disrupted by parental divorce were judged to have fewer competencies overall. Frustration tolerance and peer sociability were specific areas in which children from disrupted homes were found to be having problems when compared to children from homes disrupted by parental death or from homes in which the family was intact.

Guidubaldi, Clemenishaw, Perry and McLoughlin (1983) stated that their present results provide evidence that divorce accounts for a number of negative social and academic effects independent of well defined SES measures, including income, educational and occupational levels of parents.

Kalter and Rembar (1981) examined 144 children of divorce and found that the most common presenting complaint of this group was subjective psychological symptoms, a category that included anxiety, sadness, pronounced moodiness, phobias, and depression. Over half the children examined were suffering

from these forms of distress. Academic problems, which included poor grades or grades that were substantially below ability or recent past performance, was the next most frequently observed symptom with, again, over half the sample having this difficulty. Aggression toward parents as part of the presenting picture was seen in 43% of the full sample and was the third most common type of difficulty according to these authors.

Jacobs (1982) pointed out that although there is some disagreement among the various authors of studies of children of divorce as to which age group tends to show which symptoms, a consensus exists that poor self-esteem, depression, aggression, poor school performance, and anti-social actions are very frequently found in this group.

Hetherington (1979) reported that the children's most common early responses to divorce are anger, fear, depression, and guilt. Bonkowski, Boomhower, and Bequette (1985) noted in their exploratory study that anger was the most commonly expressed feeling by children of divorce of both sexes.

Peterson and Zill's (1986) data showed that marital disruption is associated with a range of negative outcomes for children. Both overcontrolled and undercontrolled behavior are more prevalent among children who had experienced some form of marital disruption.

Anthony (1974) stated that if the pre-divorce marital relationship had been within the normal range, the children

predictably manifested certain common reactions which included some degree of "clamming up," a certain amount of regression, especially in the younger children, and a host of somatic disturbances such as overactivity, tachycardia, anorexia, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, urinary frequency, and disturbed sleep with nightmares. The child may run away from home, run to the lost parent, grieve openly or covertly for him, display hostile feelings toward the remaining parent, and at times seem confused and disoriented about himself and his surroundings according to Anthony.

Sugar (1970) discovered a variety of symptoms among children that would suggest that divorce is a time of crisis for them. These symptoms included feelings of helplessness, hostility, loneliness, sadness, embarrassment and shame, along with a loss of appetite and disinterest in studies and playmates.

Futterman (1980) supported the statement that children experience shame about being children of divorced parents. He said that this group sensed that they were different from others and felt guilty about their possible role in precipitating the divorce. As a result, many of these children presented a "pseudomature facade." The child(ren) may have appeared to be exceptionally rational, giving advice and moralizing about the sexual, business, and social affairs of adults. Frequently beneath this facade were feelings of vulnerability, anxiety regarding sexuality and numerous fears.

Kaslow and Schwartz (1987) had similar results. They stated that young children generally seemed to experience anxiety, confusion, fear of abandonment, and/or worry that their behavior might have contributed to the breakup. Depending on age, these authors maintained that some of these children exhibited regression or antisocial behaviors while others demonstrated their anguish in deteriorating school performance or in psychosomatic symptoms like asthma or gastrointestinal disturbances. On the other hand, some of these children worked hard to defend against the distress they felt and masked their feelings and/or channeled their energies into excelling at school, in sports, the arts or other activities. Some attempted to comfort their parents; others defended against tuning into the pain. Kaslow and Schwartz also emphasized how critical it is that parents not embroil their children in custody disputes and guard against becoming their constant companion and confidant.

Hetherington et al. (1982) reported that in the first year following divorce, there is considerable stability across situations in the behavior of children from divorced families. Observed noncompliance, negative demands, dependency, ignoring, aggression and sustained activity were all significantly correlated for the home and laboratory situations in this study. These authors speculated that in the first year following divorce, the distress, anxiety, and problems in coping with their new family situation were most intense for

the children. Under such disturbed emotional conditions, the internal state of the child rather than external situational variations may control the behavior of the child. Under high stress, the child may discriminate less well between situations and may respond less appropriately to the behavior of others. Heatherington et al. concluded that children from divorced families were more likely than children from non-divorced families to make inappropriate responses to others.

Tooley (1976) considered the problem of violent, assaultive, and antisocial behaviors as a common referral problem in young children of divorce. Enuresis was the most commonly noted psychiatric symptom that appeared to be related to divorce and was found twice as often in children of divorced families as in children of intact families. Tooley's findings supported Douglas's 1970 results.

Plunkett and Kalter (1984) revealed that children from disrupted homes perceived divorce as a highly negative disruptive event. In fact, these authors noted that the children's perception of the divorce was very similar to that of an experienced group of clinicians.

The findings of Isaacs, Leon and Donohue (1987) supported the results of prior research (Hetherington et al., 1976; Hodges, Wechsler & Ballatine, 1979; Longfellow, 1979; Young & Parish, 1979) which have indicated the likelihood of emotional or behavior problems for many children in the aftermath of parental separation. Diamond (1985) stated that the child

will typically have certain psychological reactions to separation and divorce. Sadness or depression, denial, embarrassment, anger, guilt, concern about being cared for, regression, maturity, and somatic (physical) symptoms were common reactions which were noted.

Wallerstein's (1984, 1985) studies detected immediate and more lasting negative effects of marital disruption on children. Findings from this 10-year longitudinal study of 113 children and adolescents from a largely white, middle-class population of divorced families in Northern California suggested that some psychological effects of divorce are long lasting. Forty young people from 26 of the families who participated in the original study, ranging in age from 19 to 29, regarded their parents' divorce as a continuing major influence in their lives 10 years later. A significant number of these young people reported being burdened by vivid memories of the unhappy events at the time of the marital rupture. Their predominant feelings, as they looked back, were restrained sadness, some remaining resentment at their parents, and a wistful sense of having missed out on the experience of growing up in an intact family. Although many were proud of their enhanced maturity, they regretted the ways in which the divorce cut into the play and school time of their growing-up years. One-half of these young people were still full-time at school; one-third were fully self-supporting; and the greater majority were law abiding. Nevertheless,

a significant number of men and women, and especially women, appeared troubled and drifting. A minority consisting of one-third of the women appeared especially wary of commitment and fearful of betrayal and seemed caught up in a web of short-lived sexual relationships. The greater number, however, were strongly committed to the ideals of a lasting marriage and to values that included romantic love and fidelity. They were apprehensive about repeating their parents' unhappy marriage during their own adulthood and especially eager to avoid divorce for the sake of their own still unborn children. This relatively fixed identification with being a child of divorce may be one of the lasting sequelae of the experience of parental divorce during childhood according to Wallerstein.

Plunkett, Riemer, Kalter, and Alpern (1985) reported potential difficulties for children of divorce according to studies by Gardner (1976), Hetherington et al. (1979), Kalter and Plunkett (1984), McDermott (1970), Schoettle and Cantwell (1980), Wallerstein (1983), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980). The difficulties listed included problems in handling anger, school behavior, loyalty conflicts, reconciliation fantasies, sadness and loneliness, anxiety over a sense of security, lowered self-esteem, behavioral conflicts at home, and feelings of responsibility for the divorce.

#### School-related effects.

The NAESP's (National Association of Elementary School



Principals) 1980 Staff Report found that as a group, one-parent children showed lowered achievement and presented more discipline problems than did their two-parent peers in both elementary and high school. One-parent children were also absent more often, late to school more often, and showed more health problems as well. A definite correlation between school performance and family status was found in this report.

Brown's (1980) study added support for the above correlation. It was Brown's conclusion that children from homes of divorced parents caused a strikingly disproportionate share of discipline problems in schools, fared worse academically than their peers from two-parent homes, and were more apt to have experience as juvenile offenders.

Forty percent of the sample of divorced children in Freeman and Couchman's (1985) study had also experienced a marked change in academic performance and achievement since the parental separation. The nature of the change was reported as being almost evenly split between children whose academic performance had deteriorated and those exhibiting negative changes in emotional and behavioral areas. The teachers of the children in this sample attributed the differences to factors related to the issue of family change.

Kinard and Reinherz's (1986) findings also indicated that children in recently divorced families were likely to have more problems in certain areas of school performance than children in early divorced or in never divorced families.

Evans and Neel (1980) reported that the major finding of their statistical analysis was that on 25 of 29 measures of school behavior by two-parent and one-parent family, two-parent children adhered more closely to school expectations.

#### Social relations.

Hetherington et al. (1979b) revealed that in the first year following divorce, disruptions were found in both play and social relations for boys and girls from divorced families in their study. Both boys and girls showed high rates of dependent helpseeking behavior and acting out, non-compliant behavior. In an earlier study (1978), these authors described the children in divorced families as more dependent, disobedient, aggressive, whining, demanding, and unaffectionate than children in intact families. These authors also noted a marked decline in the mother-son relationship after a divorce.

Stolberg and Anker (1983) compared children from divorced and intact families and said that divorce appeared to influence the psychological development of children and may have resulted in the acquisition of certain abnormal behavioral and cognitive/perceptual patterns. These authors noted lower levels of prosocial, school related behaviors and higher levels of inappropriate interpersonal and unusual behavior patterns in the children from divorced families.

Schoettle and Cantwell (1980) discovered significantly higher rates of socialization and behavior disorders in

children of divorce than in children from intact families. Schoettl and Cantwell also noted that individual occurrences of antisocial behavior such as aggression, lying, stealing, rebelliousness, firesetting, and drug abuse were more frequent in the divorce population in this study than in the intact population.

Hetherington et al. (1982) noted that the play patterns of children from divorced families were less socially and cognitively mature when measured shortly after divorce. When these authors looked at the social behavior of children across a broad range of situations in the school, they again found evidence of disrupted functioning in children immediately following divorce. Hetherington et al. described how at two months following divorce both boys and girls showed a pattern of greater fantasy aggression, opposition, and seeking help, attention, and proximity. In schools in which there were male adults, boys from divorced families made particularly strong attempts at maintaining contact and getting attention by following, touching, and seeking praise or affection from male adults. At two months after divorce children from divorced families shared and helped less than children in nondivorced families. Children from divorced families, according to these authors, also showed less positive nonverbal (such as smiling or hugging) and more negative nonverbal behavior (such as pouting, clinging, and scowling), more crying, whining, and complaining, and more inattention, activity changes, and

inactivity. In girls of all ages from divorced families, Hetherington et al. observed higher fantasy aggression, more seeking of attention and affection, and more positive and negative physical contact with adults. In addition, in the first year following divorce, boys from divorced families were more likely to make negative initiation bids and negative terminations of social interactions. Immediately following divorce, these boys showed a great deal of aversive opposition and negative demands toward both peers and adults, particularly female adults. This high rate of aversive opposition and negative demands continued over the two years following the divorce. Boys from divorced families were also higher than boys from nondivorced families in physical and verbal hostile and instrumental aggression toward peers at both two months and one year after divorce. However, by two years after divorce, boys from divorced families, in comparison to those from nondivorced families, were showing low physical aggression and high verbal aggression, a pattern more frequently found in girls. The verbal and physical aggression displayed by girls from divorced families at two months, and by boys at two months and one year, tended to be immature, unprovoked, and ineffective. These girls were seldom successful in gaining their ends through instrumental aggression. Their aggression was often accompanied by or followed by crying, dependency bids, or appeals to the teacher. Hetherington et al. (1982) also noted in this study how boys from

divorced families were viewed as more aggressive and less socially constructive than their peers from nondivorced families on a peer nomination inventory.

#### Parent-child interaction effects.

Hetherington et al. (1982) revealed that divorced parents made fewer maturity demands of their children, communicated less well and tended to be less affectionate with them, and showed marked inconsistency in discipline and lack of control over them in comparison to still married parents. Poor parenting was most apparent in the mother-son relationship.

Hetherington et al. (1982) remarked that children of divorced parents were more likely to exhibit oppositional behavior to mothers and compliance to fathers. These children also made negative complaining demands of the mother more frequently. Boys were more oppositional and aggressive; girls were more whining, complaining, and compliant. These children showed an increase in dependence over time, and exhibited less sustained play than children of nondivorced parents. The first major trend suggested through the literature review, therefore, was that a marital disruption has many predictable effects upon a child's behavior.

#### Trend #2: Age-Related and Gender Effects

The second major trend suggested in the literature review is that the effects of a marital disruption are both age and

gender related.

Age-related effects.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c) have emphasized the importance of such variables as the length of time since divorce and children's age in studying children's reaction to divorce. These authors cited pervasive sadness as the most striking response among the six-to-eight-year-old children in their study. The children in this age group, according to these authors, were also ashamed of what was happening in their families and felt embarrassed about the way their parents were behaving. As a result, they often lied to protect their parents and to camouflage their own hurt feelings.

The pervasive sadness of the younger latency (aged five-and-a-half through seven) children was also referred to in Kelly and Wallerstein's (1976) study. These authors stated that fantasies of deprivation were conveyed either directly as feeling of loss or insatiable hunger or reversed in play and fantasy. The authors observed that boys seemed most affected by this strong sense of loss.

Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) also observed in their sample that some children, mostly boys, expressed considerable anger at their mother for either causing the divorce or driving the father away. Those children most profoundly hurt or made anxious by the loss of the father tended to be those

enraged at their mother. Anger was expressed directly in several instances. More often, anger was expressed in displacements, such as expressed anger towards teachers, friends, or siblings, or in regressive outbursts reminiscent of pre-school temper tantrums.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c) remarked in their study that children in later latency were ashamed of the divorce and disruption in their family as well, despite their awareness of the commonness of divorce. These children were ashamed of their parents and their behaviors, and lied loyally to cover up for their parents and their behaviors. They were also ashamed of the implied rejection of themselves in the father's departure, marking them in their own eyes, as unloveable.

The single feeling that most clearly distinguished this late latency age group from all the younger children, according to these authors, was their conscious intense anger. The intense anger of these children was variously expressed. Parents reported a rise in the frequency of temper tantrums, scolding, diffuse demandingness, and in dictatorial attitudes. Other children, however, showed the opposite of all this--namely, an increased compliance and decreased assertiveness immediately following the divorce.

The one symptomatic response observed in this late latency age group, and not seen in any younger group according to Wallerstein and Kelly, was the report of a variety of somatic symptoms of different kinds and degrees of severity,

such as headaches and stomach aches, which the children related to the parental conflict and parental visits. This group also suffered a noticeable decline in school performance with an accompanying deterioration in their peer relationships during and following the parental separation. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c) pointed out that the behavior of many of the children at school was at considerable variance with that displayed at home. Thus, some children who were feeling pressed and frightened at home began to act out a bossy, controlling, sometimes devious role at school. Another school behavior pattern which emerged at the time of separation according to these authors combined a decreased ability to concentrate in class with increased aggression on the playground. These authors suggested that the divorce-triggered changes in the parent-child relationship may propel the child forward into a variety of precocious, adolescent, or, more accurately, pseudoadolescent behaviors.

In this study, Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c) again emphasized the fully conscious, intense anger of the six-to-eight-year-old group which was noted in Kelly and Wallerstein's (1976) study. This anger, these authors noted was usually directed at the parent whom they blamed for the divorce and was wedded to a sense of moral indignation and outrage that the parent who had been correcting their conduct was behaving in what they considered to be an immoral and irresponsible fashion. These youngsters experienced confusion



and a threat of ruptured identity as the time of parental separation. Part of the threat, which the children experienced as directed against their sense of integrity and identity was posed even more specifically to their sense of right and wrong and to their conscience. Children reportedly felt that their conscience had been weakened by their disenchantment with the parents' behavior, and with the departure of the very parent who had more often than not acted as their moral authority. Several children became involved in petty stealing and lying immediately following the parental separation.

Pfeffer (1981) reported that the methodology and results of Kelly and Wallerstein's (1976) large-scale study were worthy of special note since this study attempted to evaluate children's reactions to divorce when it occurred at different phases of the child's life. Cantrell (1986) also supported Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980c) findings about the pervasive sadness in the six-to-eight-year-old group. Cantrell stated that children at this age were very frightened by the breakup of the family. They experienced unrealistic fantasies which included fears of being deprived of food, of being left without family, and of being sent to live with strangers. Some children exhibited disorganized behavior because of these fears.

Another intense response at this developmental stage, according to Cantrell (1986), was the yearning for the

noncustodial parent. Some children felt abandoned and rejected by the missing parent and exhibited behaviors similar to those involved when grieving the death of a parent. Only a small number of children, however, could express anger toward this noncustodial parent. Most often, at this age, the child's anger was indirectly expressed toward teachers, friends, or siblings. Children in this age group also experienced divided loyalties.

Cantrell (1986) noted that the children in the nine-to-twelve age group had feelings which included loss, rejection, helplessness, fear, loneliness and anger. Some children in this age group also felt ashamed and embarrassed about the divorce and used denial as a way to deal with their anguish.

Intense anger was another characteristic of the nine-to-twelve year old children noted by this author. This anger was both well organized and clearly directed toward the parent whom the child blamed for the divorce. An alignment with one parent often assisted the child in dealing with the ambivalent relationship with both parents. In addition, viewing one parent as good and the other as bad helped the child cope with the feelings of loneliness, sadness, and depression.

Many children, Cantrell (1986) remarked, also experienced identity confusion. This is believed to occur because at this age their identity is so closely tied to the external family structure. Such threats to their identity occurred because of the children's sense of right and wrong, which leads them to

interpret their parents' divorce as immoral and irresponsible.

A final aspect of the response to divorce in Cantrell's (1986) literature summary involved the reporting of somatic symptoms. Headaches and stomachaches were some examples of children's physical problems that were linked to parental conflict and parental visits.

Freeman and Couchman (1985) reported that in the children they saw, several themes consistently emerged in the children's descriptions of post-separation family life. Sadness was the most prevalent theme, followed closely by anger, loneliness, fear and reconciliation fantasies. Typically, younger school-age children (six-to-nine-years-old) were seen as sad, suffering emotional pain, fearful and exhibiting feelings of guilt about the marital breakup (for example, "I am the cause"). The nine-to-twelve-year-olds more often showed shock, surprise and intense anger. Developmentally these children saw things in black and white terms. Accordingly, they tended to blame and often rejected one parent. On the other hand, according to these authors, adolescents expressed surprise but were not particularly shocked at the decision, although they felt the loss and pain intensely. Many became angry or hostile about what they perceived had been done "to them." In some instances, this may have been demonstrated by acting-out behaviors, delinquencies and promiscuity.

Snyder, Minnick and Anderson's (1980) study added support

to Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980c) issue of health problems among children of divorce. Synder et al.'s initial finding showed that children from broken homes visited the school nurse in greater numbers than children from intact homes.

Kalter and Rembar (1981) detected that the prevalence of subjective psychological problems, academic troubles, and difficulties with intense angry feelings toward parents closely parallels the nature of distress observed by Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) among latency-age and adolescent youngsters of divorce. Kalter and Rembar found that school refusal/truancy and academic problems in their sample were significantly associated with age at parental separation in their sample.

Anderson and Anderson (1981) remarked that when the school-aged child's home life becomes stressful, quite often the child's schoolwork and the child's relationship with one's peers will suffer first. The child may have trouble concentrating and paying attention and may constantly test the teacher, provoking the teacher to set tighter limits.

Anderson and Anderson (1981) also mentioned that sometimes the school-aged child may resume earlier ways of behaving (bedwetting, fussy food habits, and infantile demands). The child may even act out anger by becoming physically aggressive (bullying, fighting) or verbal hostile (obscene language or an attitude of defiance). Like the younger child, the school-aged child may also be plagued with

nightmares.

These authors noted as well that stealing is not uncommon at this point, and is sometimes combined with an exaggerated possessiveness of "His" things. According to Anderson and Anderson (1981), the child is clinging to objects s/he can count on; things that won't walk off and leave him/her. At this stage the child's stealing cannot be regarded as a moral lapse; the acts are symptoms of the child's sense of abandonment according to Anderson and Anderson.

Francke (1983) related that anger, fear, betrayal, and in the disrupted postdivorce household, a deep sense of deprivation were the characteristic responses of children this age (six to eight) to divorce. But above all, the children felt a persistent and sometimes crippling sadness. Francke added support to Anderson and Anderson's claim of possessiveness in the child from a disrupted family. Francke said that during divorce, six-, seven- and eight-year-olds who were just beginning to be generous with their possessions and to share can suddenly turn relentlessly possessive again. Francke also mentioned that separation anxiety, which the child should have grown out of by now, may reappear. The child may have trouble sleeping and have more than a normal share of nightmares as well.

Francke (1983) remarked that the most characterized reaction of the nine-to-twelve-year-old group of children to divorce was a deep, unrelenting anger. She explained that

these children have a strict sense of fairness. They live by a rigid code of ethics that stresses black-and-white definitions of loyalty and behavior. When the very parent who taught the child these rules does not abide by them, the child becomes very angry. Children this age use anger as a defense against their feelings of shock and depression and do not hesitate to let both parents know about it. They often align themselves with one parent whom they elevate to nobility to the virtual exclusion of the other, and nothing the "bad" parent does will defuse that contempt. At the extreme, children who continued to bear the anger of their parents could become suicidal.

Francke (1983) noticed that the anger of these children may spill over into the classroom, where their behavior can become disruptive. Boys often threw temper tantrums and overreacted to ordinary discipline and setbacks with violent outbursts; girls were apt to be more devious. Francke recounted that an unusual number of somatic symptoms emerged, such as headaches and stomachaches. The accident rate also rose among these children, especially boys.

Felner, Stolner and Cowen (1975) noted that acting out and aggression were more common in latency age children of divorced families than other types of families. Thus, for latency age children, aggression, sadness and anxiety would seem to be common problems in response to divorce of parents.

Johnston, Campbell and Mayes (1985) found in their study

of latency children in high conflict post-separation and divorced families that in general, these children, especially the younger ones, were highly distressed and symptomatic in response to witnessing the parental conflict and in making transitions between parents. Many of these children were prone to anxiety, tension, depression and psychosomatic illness. Constriction of affect, lack of autonomy, problems in ego-integration and in the development of a cohesive sense of self were also stated features of this group. The authors reported that the child's capacity for secure, intimate yet autonomous relations with one or both parents was severely compromised as well.

According to Magrab (1978) school aged children are much more aware of the long-term significance and meaning of divorce. Children of this age frequently hoped and wished that their parents would get back together again. They became confused by overly friendly relationships (which raised their hopes of reunion), and angry at overly hostile relationships between parents. Children of this age frequently expressed anger toward one of the parent figures. Loyalty conflicts (involving which parent to love and to side with) took on realistic significance for children of this age. To their advantage, school age children have many more resources available to them to cope with the disruptions of divorce and feelings of loss, denial, bravado, seeking support from others, and pursuit of activities according to Magrab.

Magrab (citing a 1964 work of Erikson) stated that mastery is a central issue for the school age child and the expression of this mastery is needed for the development of a healthy self-concept. Peer relationships play an important role in the socialization process at this time, and sexual identification is crystallized. Divorce can interfere with both these processes. With divorce, it becomes difficult for the child to focus his attention outside of the family on school and peer relationships as would normally occur. In particular, anxiety and fears can become expressed in poor school performance according to Magrab.

Additional support for age-related effects have been found in studies by Hetherington (1979), Wallerstein and Kelly (1974, 1975, 1976), Kurdek and Siesky (1980a), Gardner (1977), Westman (1972), and Wallerstein (1983).

#### Gender-related effects.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c) observed that particularly striking in the six-to-eight-year-old age group they studied was a yearning for the father. This was noted especially among the boys. This intense yearning sometimes caused the boys to express considerable anger at their mother for either causing the divorce or driving the father away. This anger was more often displaced onto teachers, friends, brothers, and sisters, or in temper tantrums.

Kalter and Rembar (1981) added support to Wallerstein and



Kelly's (1980c) findings. They discovered that latency-age boys were experiencing subjective psychological and school-related difficulties. These boys were also having problems with aggression across a variety of relationships (parents, sibling, and peers), and were experiencing developmental arrests or regressions in toilet training, sleep patterns, and in their relationship with at least one parent. Stealing and nonaggressive disturbances with peers were also present for more than a fifth of these boys.

Kalter and Rembar's (1981) study generated a very different profile for adolescent girls. Aggression within the family, mostly toward parents; academic but not behavior problems in school; and pronounced difficulty in coping with the major issues of impulse control that confront all teenagers were important features of the adolescent girls' profile according to these authors. Snyder, Minnick and Anderson (1980) related in their study that females from broken homes in the elementary school setting were a particularly distressed group who often presented ill-defined complaints which appeared to be psychosomatic.

These authors observed that drug involvement, alcohol involvement, sexual behavior, running away, and school refusal/truancy were extremely rare to absent in both latency male and female groups they studied in their sample of divorced children. These behaviors, however, were most frequent in the adolescent female sample.

According to Hetherington et al. (1978), the impact of marital discord and divorce was more pervasive and enduring for boys than for girls. These authors observed that boys from divorced families, in contrast with girls from divorced families and children from nuclear families, showed a higher rate of behavior disorders and problems in interpersonal relations in the home and in the school with teachers and peers. Although especially in young children both boys and girls showed an increase in dependent help-seeking and affection-seeking overtures following divorce, boys were more likely also to show more sustained noncompliant, aggressive behavior in the home. In addition, these authors noted that the boys received less positive support and nurturance and were viewed more negatively by mothers, teachers, and peers in the period immediately following divorce than were girls. Divorced mothers of boys reported feeling more stress and depression than did divorced mothers of girls. Boys thus may be exposed to more stress, frustration, and aggression and have fewer available supports.

Hetherington et al. (1982) noticed that boys from divorced families at two years after divorce, were scoring lower on male preferences and higher on female preferences on the sex-role preference test. These boys were drawing the female figure more often than were boys in nuclear families. In addition, their male and female drawings showed less sex differentiation than those of the boys in intact families and

both groups of girls. By two years after divorce boys in single-parent families were spending more time playing with female and younger peers and were more involved in female activities.

In a study by Hammond (1979), data from the Attitude Toward Family Questionnaire revealed that boys from divorced families rated their family as significantly less happy than boys from intact families. There were no significant differences between girls' ratings. Boys from divorced families were also significantly less satisfied with the time and the attention they received from their mothers than their peers from intact families. Hammond also stated that boys from divorced families had lower ratings in mathematics achievement, said their families were less happy, and exhibited more distractibility and acting out behavior in school than boys from intact families did.

Sack (1985) reported that gender identity disturbance in boys would appear to be another potential complication of divorce. Gender-related effects have been supported by: Hetherington et al. (1979, 1982), Emery (1982), Hodges and Bloom (1984), Kurdek and Berg (1983), Guidubaldi, Clemminshaw, Perry and McLoughlin (1983), and Plunkett and Kalter (1984).

### **Trend #3: Factors Affecting Post-Divorce Adjustment**

The third major trend suggested in the literature is that the effects of divorce on children are both short- and long-

term. A child's long-term adjustment to divorce is affected by such factors as:

1. **Availability of support systems (i.e. grandparents, brothers, sisters, friends, teachers etc.** See Hetherington (1982); Wyman et al. (1985); Hetherington (1979); Kurdek (1981); Kinard and Reinherz (1984); Kurdek and Berg (1983); Longfellow (1979); Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c); Kaslow & Schwartz (1987).

2. **Time elapsed since separation and divorce.** See Hetherington et al. (1978, 1982); Woody, Colley, Schlegelmilch, Maginn and Balsanek (1984); Hess and Camara (1979); Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c, 1984); Hetherington (1979); Warren et al. (1987); Kinard and Reinherz (1984).

3. **Degree of interparent hostility in the preseparation period.** See Jacobson (1978); Wyman et al. (1985); Kurdek (1981); Hetherington et al. (1979b); Tooley (1976); Wallerstein and Kelly (1974); Westman (1972); Kurdek and Berg (1983); Longfellow (1979); Kurdek and Siesky (1980); Kaslow and Schwartz (1987); Anthony (1974); Kinard and Reinherz (1984).

4. **Degree of hostility in the post-separation environment.** See Hetherington (1982); Wyman et al. (1985); Kurdek (1981); Kurdek and Berg (1983); Longfellow (1979); Wallerstein and Kelly (1980c); Wallerstein (1983); Anthony (1974); Kinard and Reinherz (1984).

5. **Availability of the non-custodial parent.** See Hess

and Camara (1979); Hetherington et al. (1979b, 1979c); Jacobson (1978); Tooley (1976); Wallerstein and Kelly (1974, 1980c); Westman (1972); Kinard and Reinherz (1984); Kurdek and Berg (1983); Longfellow (1979); Kaslow and Schwartz (1987); Gardner (1977).

**6. Post divorce adjustment of the custodial parent.**

See Hetherington (1979, 1982); Wyman et al. (1985); Longfellow (1979); Stolberg and Cullen (1983); Nichols (1984); Magrab (1978); Kaslow and Schwartz (1987).

**7. Child's developmental status and age.** See Hetherington (1979b); Wallerstein and Kelly (1979b, 1980c); Wyman et al. (1985); Kurdek, Blisk and Siesky (1981); Kinard and Reinherz (1984); Kurdek and Berg (1983); Anderson and Anderson (1981); Longfellow (1979); Stolberg and Cullen (1983); Brady et al. (1986); Wallerstein (1983); Anthony (1974); Kalter and Rembar (1981); Cantrell (1986); Hodges and Bloom (1984); Guidubaldi et al. (1983).

**8. Quality of the custodial parent-child relations.**

See Hetherington (1979); Hetherington et al. (1976); Kurdek et al. (1981); Longfellow (1979); McDermott (1970).

**9. Quality of life in single-parent household/extent of environmental change.** See Hetherington (1979); Longfellow (1979); Stolberg and Cullen (1983).

**10. Child's understanding of the divorce.** See Kurdek et al. (1981); Anderson and Anderson (1981); Stolberg and Cullen (1983); Kurdek and Siesky (1980); Wallerstein, (1983); Kurdek

(1983).

The researcher wishes to point out that although children of divorce are often described as being a group that are "at risk," it cannot be assumed that all children of divorce will have serious problems. Some children appear to function normally after a divorce. Warren, Ilgen, Van Bourgondien, Konanc, Grew and Amara's (1986) study, for example, indicated that the majority of children showed consistent evidence of resiliency and adaptation following a divorce.

#### Implications for educators and other professionals.

Northan (1989) stated that educators must be wary of putting additional stress on children of divorce by expecting them to have problems when in fact they don't. She also expressed how very important it is for teachers and school counsellors to be more aware of the particular needs of children of divorce in order to deal sensitively and knowledgeably with one of the most drastic changes in the life of the child.

Palker (1980) addressed the hazards of expecting children to react in a predictable way as well. She stated that expectations are too often self-fulfilling. Teachers should know what might happen in order to better understand and comfort the child, but should never assume that a child's academic work or behavior will be impaired.

Hammond (1979b) illustrated this point in her study. She

found that teachers rated the boys of divorced families significantly higher in school behavioral problems (i.e., "acting out" and "distractibility") than boys of intact families. Boys with divorced parents also rated themselves and their families as less happy than those in the intact group and expressed more dissatisfaction with the time attention they received from their parents. Girls in the study showed no significant differences on any measures.

Fuller's (1986) results indicated that teachers 35 years of age and under failed to view negative behaviors as more characteristic of one group than the other group when comparing children from single-parent families and intact families. Similarly, teachers over 35 years of age viewed positive behaviors as equally characteristic of both groups. Teachers 35 and under were more apt to attribute positive behaviors to children from single-parent families, whereas teachers over 35 were more extreme in attributing negative behaviors to children from single-parent families. These findings suggested that teachers of different ages do differ in their expectations for children from single-parent and intact homes.

Bonkowski, Boomhower and Bequette (1985) pointed out how important it is for the professionals who are working with children and even their parents to fully understand the divorce process and the feelings and the behaviors often associated with this process. With this understanding, the authors proposed that the professionals can then help the

children understand the normality of their feelings associated with divorce and suggest methods for the expression of those feelings.

Anthony (1974) said that most children whose parents divorce are not in need of psychiatric treatment, but all of them are in need of some form of support which they may gain from an extended family, from friends, or from practioners.

Magrab (1978) stated:

The effects of divorce on children and their families need not be lastingly adverse. The potential for growth and adaptation in each family member can be optimized in new life-styles and patterns of relationships. "For the sake of the children" this society must attend to the pressing social need for developing support systems for families of divorce and separation. (p. 244)

#### **Trend #4: Research Weaknesses**

The fourth trend revealed through the literature is the lack of consistency in the method of data collection on the effects of a marital disruption and on the particular type of population studied. Information reviewed came from a range of different types of studies. There were very few empirical/experimental studies. Most of the studies were clinical while many articles were either theoretical, predictive, or offered commentary.



Guidubaldi et al. (1983) emphasized in their study how surprising it is that so little has been done to provide an empirical understanding of the impact of parental divorce on children. They cited recent evaluations (Clingempeel & Reppucci, 1982; Hetherington, 1979; Kurdek, 1981, 1983; Levitin, 1979; Shinn, 1978) which described the research done on this subject as flawed by limited data-gathering procedures, biased sample selection, inadequate controls and other serious methodological weaknesses. Plunkett and Kalter similarly addressed the lack of consistency and generalizability of results on the effects of a marital disruption on children in their 1984 study. Kalter and Rembar (1981) stated that failure to control for sex and current age gives rise to misleading results in studies of children's psychological adjustment to divorce.

Emery (1982) concluded that many studies of marital and child problems suffered from one or more of a variety of methodological flaws. The three most common problems listed in the study were: (a) biased sampling--usually from a clinic population; (b) non-independent data--the judges of child behavior were aware of the marital status; and (c) the uses of measures lacking in reliability and validity.

Isaacs, Leon and Donohue (1987) pointed out that a weakness of many empirical studies, was the tendency to gather data on families who have requested counseling and to assume that results from such a sample may be generalized to all

separating families. This, they said, could lead researchers and clinicians to ignore important differences that may exist between separating families who have requested counseling and those who have not.

Cooney, Smyer, Hagestad and Klock (1986) reported that some investigators have failed to report clearly the ages of their subjects and have drawn conclusions with regard to the divorce experience for older children without any clear data base. Others have included older offspring in their samples, yet have ignored factors such as age at the time of divorce or the amount of time that has passed since the divorce as important variables.

Hodges (1986) concluded that the research literature on the effects of divorce on children is generally quite poor by scientific standards. He pointed out that a review of the literature of about 250 studies on children of divorce by Dr. Walter Prowansky revealed only 22 research studies with acceptable standards of design with control groups. Hodges noted the following as typical problems in the research literature:

1. Many reported studies are actually case histories. The absence of quantified data makes it impossible to determine whether the reader would come to the same conclusions as the author.
2. Most of the studies do not have control groups. Statements about the effects of divorce on children are

difficult to evaluate without a control group of children from intact families.

3. Much of the research is based on very small sample sizes. Bias in the sample may be a greater likelihood with these small groups.

4. Even when sample size is adequate, biases in socioeconomic status, cultural bias in different areas of the country, initiator status for the divorce, and motive for participation may all play a role in the data. While data provided by parents and teachers are useful, each source of data might have its own source of bias.

In conclusion, however, the researcher would like to point out that it is interesting to note despite the concerns listed above by the different researchers, Emery (1982) reported that close inspection of the data across studies reveals a convergence of results from studies in spite of the different flaws.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

#### The Sample

Grade four elementary school students were chosen to be the subjects in this study. These children ranged in age from eight to eleven. For practical reasons, including accessibility, the questionnaires were administered to grade four classes on the Avalon Peninsula only.

To select the sample for this study, the 1986-1987 School Directory was used. From the 109 schools on the Avalon Peninsula containing grade four classes, 30 schools were randomly chosen to participate in this study. Each of the eight school boards on the Avalon Peninsula were represented in the initial population. Six school boards and 14 schools actually participated in the study.

#### Procedure

The eight school boards representing the various schools chosen were sent a letter (Appendix A) explaining the nature of the study and asking their permission for the selected school(s) in their district to participate. It was the original intention of this investigator to have only one class of grade four in each selected school participate in the study. After two of the eight school boards chosen refused permission for this study to be conducted, it was decided by

the researcher to administer the questionnaires to all grade four classes in the schools for which permission had been granted. (School boards which did not participate stated that it would not allow this study to be done at this particular time in their district due to the time it would take for the teacher to complete the questionnaires for a class. The researcher was asked to reapply in the fall of the year when the teachers would not be as busy.) As a result, to obtain an adequately large sample, it was decided to involve more grade four classes in the chosen schools.

After the letter of explanation was sent, another letter (Appendix B) was prepared and sent to each of the principals in the chosen schools and to each of the grade four teachers (Appendix C) who were chosen to participate in the study. The letters informed the principals and the teachers that they had been chosen to participate in a study, gave detailed information concerning the study, and asked for their cooperation in this study.

When permission from the principals to administer the questionnaires in their school was received, the questionnaires were sent to each of the teachers involved. Each teacher had ample opportunity to question the study and to refuse to participate. No teacher expressed concern about participating in the study nor refused to participate.

### Development of the Instrument

While the literature suggests that children were experiencing predictable, age-related behaviors/characteristics following a marital disruption in the family, much of the literature was non-empirical. The appropriateness of suggested patterns to Newfoundland was also not known.

To identify the age-related behaviors/characteristics on which there seemed to be a reasonably high consensus, the literature was searched and all effects of a marital disruption which were found relating specifically to the early and late latency aged group were itemized according to the behaviors/characteristics listed by that particular researcher.

No effort was made by this researcher to contrast the specific operational definitions of the terms chosen by the authors of each reported study. The effects of marital disruption on children were listed according to the terms used by the reported researchers. It was noted that not all studies shared terminology. Support for each effect (i.e. using the same term to describe an observed effect of marital disruption on early and late latency aged children) was listed as revealed through the literature by recording the author's surname and date of publication under the term used by the author.

The behaviors/characteristics were listed in alphabetical order for ease of recording and updating the list as new

behaviors/ characteristics were revealed. Categories of terms were not combined. The terms were recorded as reported in the literature. Appendix D contains the complete list of effects which was compiled.

After the list of commonly noted responses was compiled, a questionnaire was devised using the terms from the compiled list. The questionnaire was developed by taking a term from the list and incorporating it into a question concerning the behavior implied by the term. The assumption of the researcher was that each of the terms reflected an observable phenomenon. For example, anger. This term was phrased into the question, "Does the child often or easily become frustrated or angry"? The term aggressive was incorporated into the following question, "Does this child tend to be aggressive towards peers and materials (i.e. destructive, insulting, fighting, etc.)"? After all the items from the list were blended into questions, the questions were sorted resulting in the following categories being identified: behavioral/social characteristics; social relationships; learning/school; affective/self-concept; and health.

Each of the above categories were used as different sections on the final questionnaire. These sections organized the questionnaire by grouping the many questions into their appropriate categories. Each item on the questionnaire was labelled with a letter representing the particular section to which it belonged and a number representing the item's

particular numeric sequence in that section. For example, S2 refers to question number 2 in the Social Relationship section; L3 refers to item number 3 in the Learning/School section.

Two sections were added to the above groups by the researcher. In order to collect demographic information, questionnaire items concerning the child's age, sex and academic record were added to the beginning of the instrument. To collect information on family structure, questions concerning the child's family structure were constructed to be included at the end of the questionnaire. In this final section, all possible family structures were listed in order that the particular group being studied (i.e. divorced children) could not easily be identified. It was believed that this would minimize any pattern or expectancies in the raters.

The resulting draft questionnaire contained seven sections comprised of:

1. Demographic Section containing 11 factual items which required the rater to check the best response.
2. Behavioral/Social Characteristics which included seven items. Each item required a yes or a no answer by the rater.
3. Social relationships which was comprised of six items requiring a yes or a no answer by the rater.
4. Learning/School contained 10 items requiring a yes



or a no answer by the rater.

5. Affective/Self Concept consisted of five items requiring a yes or a no answer by the rater.

6. Health Section comprised of seven items requiring a yes or a no answer by the rater.

7. Family Structure Section made up of eight items which required the rater to mark the alternative most suitable for the particular student being rated.

The draft questionnaire was pretested using 10 elementary school teachers not participating in the study. Each teacher was asked to fill out one questionnaire rating any one student taught by that teacher. Each teacher was asked to note the time it took to complete the questionnaire and to note any terms or statements which were found to be confusing or not easy to understand.

In the pretest, the ten elementary teachers took an average of three and one-half minutes to complete a questionnaire on one child. No one reported having any problems or concerns about the wording of the questionnaire or any of the items contained in the questionnaire. Because no problems were identified with the draft form of the instrument, it was not altered in the principal study. (Appendix E contains a copy of the final questionnaire.)

#### Method of Data Collection

The questionnaires were sent through the mail to each

teacher along with the request that the teacher fill out one questionnaire for each student in the class. After all questionnaires had been completed for the class, the teacher was to return the questionnaires through the mail in the provided pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope.

### Design of the Study and Hypotheses

The null hypotheses format was used in this study to test the following hypotheses:

1. Teachers' perceptions of the anxiety level of children from disrupted homes and the anxiety level of children from intact homes are the same.

2. Teachers' perceptions of the social adjustment of children from disrupted homes do not differ from the social adjustment of children from intact homes.

3. Teachers' perceptions of the personal adjustment of children from disrupted homes do not differ from the personal adjustment of children from intact homes.

4. Teachers' perceptions of the maturity adjustment of children from disrupted homes are the same as the maturity adjustment of children from intact homes.

5. Teachers' perceptions of the judged academic potential of children from disrupted homes do not differ from the judged academic potential of children from intact homes.

6. Teachers' perceptions of the acceptable classroom behavior of children from intact homes and the acceptable

classroom behavior of children from disrupted homes do not differ.

7. Teachers' perceptions of the academic performance of children from intact homes are the same as the academic performance of children from disrupted homes.

## CHAPTER IV

### Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze, and interpret the data gathered in the study.

#### Demographic Characteristics of Sample

The demographic characteristics of the sample studied are presented first. Although these statistics do not answer any of the questions in the study, they do provide some insight into the nature of the groups studied. The frequency distribution on "Family Structure" for the sample with the corresponding percentage is presented in Table 1.

The percentages of intact families and disrupted families identified in the sample mirror the 1986 Canada Census figures on Population and Dwelling Characteristics for Newfoundland. The percentages of intact families and disrupted families reported for Newfoundland in 1986 were 89% and 11% respectively. In this study, 87% of the sample were from intact homes and 7% were from disrupted homes. These figures suggest that the sample in this study is representative of the Newfoundland population in general.

**Table 1****Distribution of Sample by Family Structure**

Family Structure	Frequency	Percentage
Intact Family	391	87.1
Parents Never Married	4	.9
Adopted Family	7	1.6
Legal Guardians	4	.9
Don't Know	7	1.6
Parent Deceased	1	.2
Disrupted Family	33	7.3
Missing Information	2	.4
Total	449	100.0

Tables 2 and 3 present the frequency distribution of the sample by age and by sex respectively. The ages of the children rated ranged from 8 years of age to 11 years of age. Seventy-three percent of the sample were nine years of age. The sample consisted of 208 males and 202 females. The sex of the child was missing on eight percent of questionnaires.

Tables 4 and 5 present the frequency distributions on the disrupted family sample by age and by sex respectively. Seventy percent of the children in the disrupted family group were nine years of age; and, 58% of the disrupted family children were males. The sex of the child was missing on four

of the questionnaires for this group.

**Table 2**

**Distribution of Sample by Age**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
8	1	.2
9	328	73.1
10	101	22.5
11	9	2.0
Missing	10	2.0
Total	449	100.0

**Table 3**

**Distribution of Sample by Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	208	46.3
Female	202	45.0
Missing	39	8.7
Total	449	100.0

**Table 4****Distribution of Disrupted Sample by Age**

Age of Disrupted Child	Frequency	Percentage
9	23	69.7
10	7	21.2
11	2	6.1
Missing	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

**Table 5****Distribution of Disrupted Sample by Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	19	57.6
Female	10	30.3
Missing	4	12.1
Total	33	100.0

Tables 6 and 7 present a comparison of the academic records of the whole group with the disrupted family group. The author is aware that this comparison minimizes the degree of differences between the intact and disrupted families; however, the data is presented in this way so as to offer the

**Table 6****Distribution of Sample by Academic Record**

Academic Record	Frequency	Percentage
Passed Every Year	406	90.4
Missed One Year	37	8.2
Missed More Than One Year	4	.9
Missing	2	.4
Total	449	100.0

**Table 7****Distribution of Disrupted Family Sample by Academic Record**

Academic Record	Frequency	Percentage
Passed Every Year	27	81.8
Missed One Year	5	15.2
Missed More Than One Year	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0

reader a basis for comparing "disrupted children" to the "whole" group. Such a comparison is considered useful as a teacher typically does not have a ready bases to split the intact and disrupted students in the class. Any comparison between disrupted children and intact children specifically



would only enhance the differences between the two groups.

Based on academic records, 90% of the whole group passed every year compared with 82% of the disrupted family group. Eight percent of the whole group had missed one year compared with 15% for the disrupted family group.

Tables 8 and 9 present a comparison of the two groups based on the teacher's rating of their class standing. Forty-one percent of the sample were rated as being in the top 25% of the class; while, only 24% of the disrupted family group received this rating. Thirty-nine percent of the disrupted family sample were rated in the middle of the class with 36% reported in the lower end of the class. Thirty-five percent of the entire sample were rated as in the middle of the class with only 22% receiving the rating "in the lower end of the class."

**Table 8**

**Distribution of Sample by Class Standing**

Class Standing	Frequency	Percentage
Top 25% of the Class	187	41.1
Middle of the Class	157	35.0
Lower End of the Class	100	22.3
Missing	5	1.1
Total	499	100.0

**Table 9****Distribution of Disrupted Family Sample by Class Standing**

Class Standing	Frequency	Percentage
Top 25% of the Class	8	24.2
Middle of the Class	13	39.4
Lower End of the Class	12	36.4
Total	33	100.0

Tables 10 and 11 compare the academic success of the two groups. Both groups appear to be equally successful in passing Reading and Mathematics. In passing other subjects, the disrupted family group has a 91% rating; while, the entire sample has an 84% rating.

**Table 10****Distribution of Sample on Success in Reading, Mathematics and Other Subjects**

Subject	Number Passing	Percentage
Reading	380	84.6
Mathematics	408	90.0
Other Subjects	377	84.0

Table 11

Distribution of Disrupted Family Sample on Success in Reading,  
Mathematics and Other Subjects

Subject	Number Passing	Percentage
Reading	27	81.8
Mathematics	31	93.9
Other Subjects	30	90.9

Tables 12 and 13 present a comparison of the entire sample and the disrupted family sample on judged work habits. Thirty percent of the sample were judged by their teachers as having above average work habits. Only 15% of the disrupted family group were judged by their teachers as having above average work habits. Thirty-six percent of this group were judged as having below average work habits with 49% having average work habits. The entire sample was judged as having only 19% with "below average work habits" with 51% having "average work habits."

**Table 12****Distribution of Sample on Judged Work Habits**

Rating of Work Habits	Frequency	Percentage
Above Average	133	29.6
Average	227	50.6
Below Average	87	19.4
Missing	2	.4
Total	449	100.0

**Table 13****Distribution of Disrupted Family Sample on Judged Work Habits**

Rating of Work Habits	Frequency	Percentage
Above Average	5	15.2
Average	16	48.5
Below Average	12	36.4
Total	33	100.0

**Variable Construction**

The literature reviewed in Chapter II suggests that there should be differences between children from intact homes and children from disrupted homes on each of the following: Anxiety Level, Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment,

Maturity Adjustment, Academic Potential, Classroom Behavior and Academic Performance. The study sought to compare children from intact families with children from disrupted families on each of those variables. Items from the questionnaire in a category listed above were grouped and their alpha reliabilities were measured. When reliability analysis proved certain items poor discriminators, these items were deleted. This was done to improve the individual composites. The questionnaire items chosen to depict each construct follow.

#### Anxiety.

In order to construct a measure for this variable the following cluster of items were chosen to provide a measure for the anxiety dimension: A3, "appears to be anxious, fearful or stressed"; and A5, "often or easily becomes frustrated or angry" ( $\text{Anxiety} = A3 + A5$ ).

#### Social adjustment.

Questionnaire items S2, "avoids social interactions with peers"; and S4, "seems less willing than his/her peers to engage in social or peer play" were chosen from the questionnaire to suggest a measure of social adjustment ( $\text{SocAdj} = S2 + S4$ ).

#### Personal adjustment.

Questionnaire items A1, "appears to feel good about

him/herself (i.e. does not become easily discouraged or have a negative attitude of own abilities)"; and A2, "appears confident and optimistic were used to construct a possible measure of personal adjustment" ( $PersAdj = A1 + A2$ ).

#### Maturity adjustment.

Questionnaire items B1, "does this child tend to be self-reliant and mature?"; L4, "does this child exhibit/display interest in school"; and L7, "does this child exhibit/display initiative"? were chosen to provide a measure for this variable ( $MatAdj = B1 + L4 + L7$ ).

#### Perceived academic potential.

The measure for this variable was constructed using items: D6, "how would you rate this child's work habits? above average ( ) average ( ) below average ( )"; L6, "does this child exhibit/display achievement below potential?"; and L8, "does this child exhibit/display poor reading achievement"? ( $AcadPot = D6 + L6 + L8$ ).

#### Classroom behavior/discipline.

Questionnaire items L3, "does this child exhibit/display hyperactivity and distractability?"; and L5, "does this child exhibit/display disruptive behaviors in class"? were used to provide a measure for this variable" ( $ClassBe = L3 + L5$ ).

### Academic performance.

This variable was constructed using questionnaire items: D3, "has this child passed every year: yes ( ) missed one year ( ) missed more than one year ( )"; D5, "on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills did the child place in the: top 25% of the class ( ) middle of the class ( ) lower end of the class ( )"; and D7, "is this child failing:

- A. Reading yes ( ) no ( ) B. Math yes ( ) no ( )  
 C. Other yes ( ) no ( ) Specify\_\_\_\_\_."

(AcadPer = D3 + D5 + D7A + D7B + D7C).

### Reliability Coefficients

Table 14 presents the reliability coefficients for all the variables constructed. Borg and Gall (1983) stated that "alpha reliability is a measure of internal consistency" (p. 606).

The variables Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Maturity Adjustment, Academic Potential, Class Behavior, and Academic Performance show high internal consistency (reliability ranging from .72 to .82). The alpha reliability for the Anxiety variable shows that it has low internal consistency (.59) and indicates that the questionnaire may not be a good measure of the construct. This construct, however, was found to be significantly higher in children from disrupted homes than in children from intact homes ( $t = -2.821$ ). Due to this significant finding, the weak measure for this variable was

used in this exploratory study since any improvement in the reliability of this measure would only strengthen the significance of this result. As stated by Borg (1989), "... although the magnitude of these correlation coefficients is lower than those needed for effective prediction, they nonetheless can signify important relationships between variables" (p. 633).

**Table 14**

**Reliability Coefficients of Variables**

Dependent Variable	Alpha	Standardized Item Alpha
Anxiety Dimension	.5870	.5878
Social Adjustment	.8234	.8341
Personal Adjustment	.7358	.7426
Maturity Adjustment	.7488	.7544
Academic Potential	.7536	.7761
Class Behavior	.7220	.7311
Academic Performance	.7156	.8056
Reliability Coefficient of All Items	.7365	.6551



### Pearson Correlations

The relationship between variables was analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Borg and Gall (1983) stated that "the correlational method allows the researcher to analyze how several variables, either singly or in combination, might affect a particular pattern of behavior" (p. 575).

These correlations are presented in Table 15 along with the means and the standard deviations for all variables. The 0.05 level of probability was accepted as evidence of a significant relationship.

From Table 15, one notices that there is a negative correlation between Anxiety and Personal Adjustment (-.57). This means that the higher the level of anxiety, the lower the level of personal adjustment and the lower the level of anxiety, the higher the level of personal adjustment.

Positive correlations are noted between Maturity Adjustment and Personal Adjustment (.51); Academic Potential and Personal Adjustment (.52); Academic Potential and Maturity Adjustment (.69); and, Academic Performance and Academic Potential (.58).

Table 15

**Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations for all Variables**

	Disrupt	Anxiety	SocAdj	PersAdj	MatAdj	AcadPot	ClassBe	AcadPer
Disrupt	1.00							
Anxiety	-.14**	1.00						
SocAdj	.07	-.29***	1.00					
PersAdj	.21***	-.57***	.33***	1.00				
MatAdj	.08	-.36***	.30***	.51***	1.00			
AcadPot	.15**	-.38***	.28***	.52***	.70***	1.00		
ClassBe	.04	-.32***	.09***	.30***	.47***	.44***	1.00	
AcadPer	.12**	-.24***	.23***	.36***	.42***	.58***	.26***	1.00
Means	.92	2.27	3.77	3.60	5.42	5.57	3.69	10.71
Standard Deviations	.27	.58	.58	.70	.94	1.32	.64	1.08

Note: SocAdj = Social Adjustment  
 PersAdj = Personal Adjustment  
 MatAdj = Maturity Adjustment  
 AcadPot = Academic Potential  
 ClassBe = Classroom Behavior  
 AcadPer = Academic Performance

Level of Significance

\*p &lt; .05

\*\*p &lt; .01

\*\*\*p &lt; .001

### Analysis of Variance

Tables 16 and 17 present the Analysis of Variance results.

The Analysis of Variance is a way to assess the meaningfulness of differences between means when more than two groups are involved (Hardyck & Petrinovich, 1976, p. 137). Analysis of Variance was used to determine whether the groups differ significantly among themselves on each of the seven dependent variables being studied. A one-way analysis of variance was used because the subgroups differ on one factor, Family Structure.

Table 16 presents a comparison of the children in the study on the seven dependent variables. From this table it can be seen that children from intact homes had a lower anxiety level than those from disrupted homes. This result was significant ( $T = -2.821$   $p \leq .01$ ).

Children from intact homes had higher means on Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Maturity Adjustment, Academic Potential, Class Behavior, and Academic Performance than children from disrupted homes. Personal Adjustment ( $T = 4.332$   $p \leq .001$ ), Academic Potential ( $T = 3.076$   $p \leq .01$ ), and Academic Performance ( $T = 2.517$   $p \leq .05$ ) were found to be significantly different.

Table 16

**Comparison of Children from Intact and Disrupted Families on Seven Dependent Variables**

Dependent Variable	Intact Family		Disrupted Family		Total Sample		F	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Anxiety	2.2513	.5540	2.5455	.7942	2.2742	.5805	7.9428	.01
Social Adjustment	3.7855	.5649	3.6364	.7424	3.7738	.5812	2.0081	NS
Personal Adjustment	3.6373	.6823	3.0645	.8139	3.5947	.7080	19.6243	.001
Maturity Adjustment	5.4450	.9479	5.1818	.9828	5.4241	.9522	2.3285	NS
Academic Potential	5.6253	1.3123	4.875	1.4536	5.5680	1.3277	9.6348	.01
Acceptable Classroom Behavior	3.6974	.6339	3.6061	.6586	3.6903	.6355	.6285	NS
Academic Performance	10.7869	1.5131	10.0633	1.7173	10.7053	1.5502	4.4435	.05

NOTE: S.D. = Standard Deviation  
 F = F Ratio  
 Sig = Level of Statistical Significance  
 NS = Not Statistically Significant

The findings presented in Table 17, indicate that children from intact homes had a lower mean than children from disrupted homes on the measure of Anxiety. Children from intact homes had higher means on Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Maturity Adjustment, Academic Potential and Academic Performance when compared to children from disrupted homes. The differences in the students' performance on each of these variables thus appears related to differences between the groups (i.e. the type of family structure the student is from).

The only variable for which the Between Groups Mean Square is not higher than the Within Group Mean Square is Acceptable Class Behavior. Because the Within Group Mean Square is higher, the difference in the classroom behavior of the students can thus be attributed to factors within the groups themselves (i.e. sex, socio-economic status, stress level, etc.) rather than to the type of family structure the child is from.

Table 17

Analysis of Variance Results For All the Breakdown Analyses

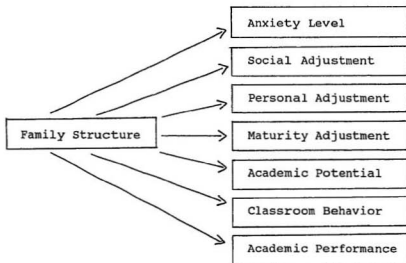
Variables	Sums of Squares		Degrees of Freedom		Mean Square		F Ratio	Signif Level	ETA	ETA <sup>2</sup>
	B.G.	W.G.	B.G.	W.G.	B.G.	W.G.				
Anxiety	2.6329	139.5562	1	421	2.6329	.3315	7.9428	.01	.1361	.0185
Social Adjustment	.6766	140.8353	1	418	.6766	.3369	2.0081	NS	.0691	.0048
Personal Adjustment	9.4146	199.0938	1	415	9.4146	.4797	19.6243	.001	.2125	.0452
Maturity Adjustment	2.1044	373.2546	1	413	2.1044	.9038	2.3285	NS	.0749	.0056
Academic Potential	16.6396	720.1718	1	417	16.6396	1.7270	0.6348	.01	.1503	.0226
Class Behavior	.2540	170.1762	1	421	.2540	.4042	.6285	NS	.0386	.0015
Academic Performance	10.5023	484.5219	1	205	10.5203	2.3635	4.4435	.05	.1457	.0212

Note:

B.G. = Between Groups  
 W.G. = Within Groups  
 Signif Level = Significance Level

### Research Model

A research model was designed by the researcher to illustrate the underlying conceptualization of the study. Figure 1 presents the model which illustrates the conceptualization that Family Structure affects the Anxiety Level, Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Maturity Adjustment, Academic Potential, Classroom Behavior and Academic Performance of elementary school children.



**Figure 1.** Research Model: The Effect of Family Structure on the Anxiety Level, Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Maturity Adjustment, Academic Potential, Classroom Behavior and Academic Performance of Elementary School Children.

### Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was used to examine the magnitude of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables in the research model presented in Figure 1. This procedure used the "principles of correlation and regression to help explain the variance of a dependent variable by estimating the contributions of two or more independent variables to this variance" (Kerlinger & Pedhazur, 1973, p. 4).

Path analysis was conducted using the results from the multiple regression analysis. Path analysis was used to examine the causal relationships between the variables. Path analysis is used solely to test theories about hypothesized causal links between variables. Borg and Gall (1983) stated that "path analysis is a method for testing the validity of a theory about causal relationships between three or more variables that have been studied using a correlational research design" (p. 606).

Figure 2 consists of models which illustrate the path analysis variables. The use of models is the standard way of representing path analysis variables. Each variable in the theory is represented in the figure. Each straight arrow indicates a hypothesized causal relationship in the direction of the arrow. All the straight arrows point in one direction. When a path analysis is ordered in this way, it is said to be based on a recursive model. A recursive model is one which



Model #1      Family Structure and Anxiety

Disrupt -----&gt; Anxiety

Model #2      Family Structure and Social Adjustment

Disrupt -----&gt; Social Adjustment

Model #3      Family Structure and Personal Adjustment

Disrupt -----&gt; Personal Adjustment

Model #4      Family Structure and Maturity Adjustment

Disrupt -----&gt; Maturity Adjustment

Model #5      Family Structure and Academic Potential

Disrupt -----&gt; Academic Potential

Model #6      Family Structure and Classroom Behavior

Disrupt -----&gt; Classroom Behavior

Model #7      Family Structure and Academic Performance

Disrupt -----&gt; Academic Performance

**Figure 2.**    Family Structure Models for Regression Analyses

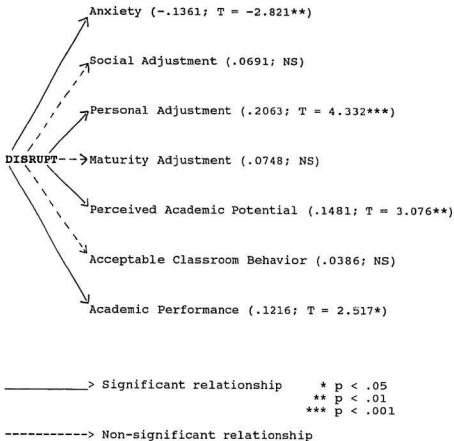
only considers unidirectional causal relationships (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 616).

Figure 3 presents the path diagrams for the Family Structure Models. A straight line indicates a significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable in its path. A broken line indicates a non-significant relationship.

Path coefficients were determined by statistical analysis.

A path coefficient is a standardized regression coefficient indicating the direct effect of one variable on another in the path analysis ... The path coefficient can be viewed as a type of correlation coefficient. Like correlation coefficients, path coefficients can range in value from -1.00 to +1.00. The larger the value, the stronger the association between the two variables. (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 618)

The path coefficients are recorded at the end of each path line. The t value is recorded immediately following the path coefficient for each significant relationship and is starred according to the level of probability. The t distribution (or the z distribution if the sample is large) is used to determine the level of statistical significance of an observed difference between sample means (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 351). In the study a t value  $\geq 2.0$  is significant at the  $p \leq .05$  level.



**Figure 3.** Path Analysis of the Effect of Family Structure on Anxiety, Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment, Maturity Adjustment, Perceived Academic Potential, Acceptable Classroom Behavior and Academic Performance

Table 18 presents the results of the regression analysis on the Family Structure Model.

Table 9

**Regression Analysis Results for the Family Structure Model**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables									
	Anxiety					Social Adjustment				
	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Disrupt	-.294	.104	-.136	-2.821	.0050	.149	.105	.069	1.423	.1554
Constant			2.545					3.636		
Multiple R			.136					.069		
R Square				.019					.005	
Adjusted R Square				.016					.002	
Standard Error			.575					.578		
	Personal Adjustment					Maturity Adjustment				
	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Disrupt	.540	.125	.205	4.332	.0000	.263	.170	.075	1.541	.1241
Constant			3.100					5.182		
Multiple R			.205					.075		
R Square				.043					.006	
Adjusted R Square				.040					.003	
Standard Error			.688					.940		
	Academic Potential					Classroom Behavior				
	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Disrupt	.723	.237	.148	3.076	.0022	.091	.115	.039	.794	.4279
Constant			4.896					3.606		
Multiple R			.148					.039		
R Square				.022					.001	
Adjusted R Square				.020					-.001	
Standard Error			1.307					.635		

(table continued)

Independent Variables	<u>Dependent Variables</u>				
	<u>Academic Performance</u>				
	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Disrupt	.490	.195	.122	2.517	.012
Constant		10.253			
Multiple R		.122			
R Square				.015	
Adjusted R Square				.012	
Standard Error		1.075			
Note: Disrupt = Family Structure					

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

#### Conclusions

When the children from the intact homes were compared to the children from the disrupted homes based on teacher rating, the researcher found that the two groups differed significantly on four out of the seven variables on which they were compared.

First of all, the children from intact homes had a lower anxiety level than those children from disrupted homes. Based on the literature, this is not surprising. Divorce and separation have been noted as being highly stressful for both the adults and the children involved.

The personal adjustment of children from intact homes was found to be significantly different from the personal adjustment of children from disrupted homes. In this study, this means that, as a group, children from intact homes appeared to feel better about themselves and appeared more confident and optimistic than children from disrupted homes.

The perceived academic potential of children from intact homes was found to be significantly different from the perceived academic potential of children from disrupted homes. Children from intact homes were perceived by their teachers to have better work habits, to be working to their potential and to be doing better in their reading than their peers from

disrupted homes.

The academic performance of children from intact homes was also found to be significantly different from the academic performance of children from intact homes. Children from intact homes were more than likely to have passed every year; to be in the top 25% or middle of the class on their Canadian Test of Basis Skills placement; and, to be passing in their Reading and Mathematics.

The differences between children from intact and disrupted homes on social adjustment, maturity adjustment and acceptable classroom behavior however, were not significant. These results are surprising in light of the fact that 58% of the disrupted sample were males. According to the literature, boys from disrupted homes tend to have more problems with acting out behavior, especially in school. Boys from disrupted homes are also said to be less mature and to have more trouble getting along with their peers. The results of this study do not support the findings in the literature.

One possible explanation for these results may be attributed to the age of the classroom teacher. According to a study done by Fuller (1986) mentioned earlier in Chapter II, elementary teachers 35 years of age and under failed to view negative behaviors as more characteristic of one group than the other group when comparing children from single-parent families and intact homes. Teachers over 35 were more extreme in attributing negative behaviors to children from single-

parent families. The ages of the teachers in this particular study were not noted. Maybe, the teachers involved in this particular study were 35 years of age or younger. Additional research in teacher perceptions by age is needed.

Another factor that needs consideration here is the length of time since the separation or divorce. Research indicates that as time passes, some of the more noticeable effects of a divorce on a child may subside or eventually disappear. The length of time since the separation or divorce was not considered in this study.

Another significant finding of this study was the negative correlation between anxiety and personal adjustment. The higher the anxiety level, the lower the personal adjustment. The lower the anxiety level, the higher the personal adjustment.

Maturity adjustment and personal adjustment were found to be positively correlated. Both of these variables are also highly correlated to academic potential. This finding suggests that the belief held by many educators that maturity adjustment and personal adjustment influence academic potential may have some bases.

A high positive correlation was found between academic performance and academic potential. This finding may lend support to the belief held by many educators that academic potential has a significant influence on academic performance.

Of particular interest in this study was the fact that



the teachers participating in this study were not aware of the target group being studied. The teachers were not aware of the fact that children from disrupted homes were the focus of this study. From the questionnaire it may have been evident that alternative family structures were being considered, but the particular group being studied was not emphasized. The teachers were not aware that children from disrupted homes were the target group. This fact draws attention to the strength of the findings in general and to the measurement instrument in particular. The questionnaire developed may be considered as worthy of note as a valid instrument for collecting information on children from different family structures. This instrument could be refined and used as a good basis on which other researchers could build.

### Implications

Children of divorce and/or separation are different from children of intact families. As a result, these children do seem to be a definite group in need. Educators in this province have to be made aware of the particular needs of children from divorced and/or separated homes. Once the needs have been identified, educators must address those needs. Nichols (1984) found that ignoring the needs and reactions of children at the time of divorce can result in unresolved problems that sometimes surface as much as thirty to forty years later.

As most educators have suspected, a child's learning environment is affected by the child's home situation. Children of divorce and/or separation are known to be experiencing stress because of the change in their family structure and their resulting living conditions. These children handle this stress in different ways. The most common result of this stress seems to be direct changes in school behavior and school performance--both being negatively affected in most cases. When things go wrong at school a lot of additional stress is placed on the child who is already worried about the situation between mom and dad. As a result, the negative behaviors may become more intense and the child becomes more troubled. Educators are in an excellent position to identify this vicious circle. Armed with the knowledge of the most common reactions of divorce and/or separation on the particular age group of children they are dealing with, educators can provide the support this particular group needs by first of all recognizing that the negative behaviors are not a personal attack on the teacher or indicators of a "bad" child. These children are displacing their anger and frustration at their home situation on the next most available adult in this lives, an adult with whom the child spends a significant amount of time. Knowing this, educators can address the specific cause of the behavior rather than the result of the behavior.

Creating a positive school environment may help to alleviate some of the stress these children are experiencing.

By experiencing success at school, the child gains control over one facet of his/her life and this positive experience may help to alleviate any other problems the child may be experiencing. The lessening of the stress caused by poor school performance and behavior may give the child the extra confidence or support needed in order to handle the home situation. The more stressors that are removed from outside the home, the better able the child may be to handle the home situation. In the author's opinion, at their young age, one major stressor is enough for these children to have to deal with. Seeing there is nothing the child can do about the home situation, helping the child to gain better control of his/her school performance may help the child cope more successfully with the home situation. Teachers and other school personnel are in the best position to be able to identify a child in need and to provide the help this child may need.

The results of this study emphasize the importance of implementing a support system now for children who are from divorced or separated homes. Traditionally Newfoundland has always lagged behind the rest of the country in divorce statistics. This trend has often been attribute' to the relatively recent divorce laws, low access to institutions such as courts due to the geography of the province, the position of the church in the province and the resulting strong religious beliefs of the people, and the presence of extended families. If a population of children from divorced

or separated homes can be identified at this particular time, the necessity for such a system can only be intensified in the future as divorce rates continue to increase and Newfoundland continues to modernize.

### Recommendations for Further/Future Research

This study has provided direction for further studies which might deal with more specific concerns and better clarify some of the findings in this study.

1. Another study should be conducted using a larger sample of elementary school children from disrupted homes. In this study, both the age of the teacher and the time since the divorce/separation should be noted.

2. A study should be done to investigate what services are presently available for children of divorce.

3. Teachers should be surveyed to assess their current level of understanding of the divorce process and its effects.

4. A program should be developed to provide all teachers with information on the documented effects of divorce and separation on children of different ages.

5. The reliability of the anxiety variable should be strengthened. Maybe, the symptoms of stress/anxiety should be used as a measure of anxiety.

6. The questionnaire developed could be examined for areas of strengths and weaknesses and refined to be a more powerful measurement instrument.

7. It was noted in the final analysis that one teacher identified a child from a family in which one parent was deceased. This family structure was not included in the original questionnaire and should be included in any future study.

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## Appendix A

### Letter to School Boards

149 Old Petty Hr. Rd.  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1` 1R5

May 19, 1987

Dear :

I am a graduate student in Educational Psychology at Memorial University. Presently, I am in the process of collecting data for my thesis. My research will consist of looking at the school achievement and behavior of students from different family units. To collect this information, I have designed a questionnaire to gather general information about students' academic achievement, social relationships, behavioral characteristics and family structure. The information collected will be used to try to generate an overall profile of the Grade 4 Newfoundland school child; plus, a possible profile of children from the different family structures in the Newfoundland setting.

As a former teacher, I am well aware of the possible effects different family structures may have on children's school performance and behaviors. By looking at a broad sample of Grade 4 children, I should be able to produce an overall profile of children from both intact and other family structures. This type of research has never been done before in Newfoundland. The data collected will be relevant not only for the purposes of this study, but for the educational system in general. The information obtained could help provide the justification for possible intervention programs in the future.

I am seeking your permission to have my questionnaire distributed to the Grade 4 teachers in seven schools in your district. These schools were selected through a process of random sampling and are as follows:

Teachers in these schools will be asked to fill out one questionnaire for each student in his/her class. It will take approximately one hour to complete all of the questionnaires for a class. The questionnaires may be completed in one or more sittings at the teacher's convenience.

To ensure complete anonymity, student names will not be collected. Confidentiality of all information is guaranteed. For specific information concerning confidentiality, please refer to the covering letter on the questionnaire.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide a brief summary of my results to you and to the teachers who participate.

I am enclosing a draft of this questionnaire for your perusal. I will call you in a few days' time concerning any questions you may have about my study.

I sincerely need your help and strongly feel that the data we are collecting can be of tremendous benefit to our students. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me (364-8325) or my supervisor, Dr. Gary Jeffery (737-7654).

Yours truly,

Rosanne Sweeney, Graduate Student

Dr. Gary Jeffery, Supervisor

Enclosure

**Appendix B****Letter to Principals**

149 Old Petty Hr. Rd.  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1G 1R5

May 20, 1987

Dear :

I am a graduate student in Educational Psychology at Memorial University. Presently, I am in the process of collecting data for my thesis. For my thesis, I have chosen to look at the academic achievement, behavioral characteristics, social relationships, health, and family structure of a random sample of Grade 4 school children in Newfoundland. The information I gather will be used to try to generate an overall profile of the Grade 4 school child; plus, a possible profile of children from different family structures. This type of research has never been done before in Newfoundland.

To collect this information, I have designed a questionnaire which I plan to distribute to Grade 4 teachers in schools which have been randomly selected. Your school was one of those which have been chosen. Currently, I am waiting on permission from your board to administer this questionnaire in your school. In anticipation of this permission, I am sending you a draft of this questionnaire for your perusal. A copy of the covering letter to the teacher is included as well.

One Grade 4 teacher in your school will be asked to fill out one questionnaire for each student in his/her class. It will take approximately one hour to complete all questionnaires for one class. The questionnaires may be completed in one or more sittings, whichever is most convenient for the teacher.

Names of students are neither requested nor required. Complete anonymity is requested. You will notice, however, that each questionnaire has been marked with a school code. This school code is for administration purposes only. This code will allow follow-up of any questionnaires which may not be returned. The other code, the class code, is for the teacher's use. S/he may use this space to keep track of students for which a questionnaire has already been completed in the event that the questionnaires are filled out in two or more sittings. After all questionnaires have been completed for the class, the teacher is asked to erase or to white out

any identifying marks that have been placed on the questionnaires. The completed questionnaires are to be placed in a provided envelope, sealed, and returned to you. You will be asked to place the envelope in the mail. In this way, confidentiality of all information is guaranteed.

I hope that my request to collect this data will meet with your approval as well. I realize that this is a very busy time of year for both you and your staff. As a former teacher, however, I feel that this research is very important. The information collected will be relevant not only for the purposes of this study, but for the educational system in general. The information obtained could help provide the justification for future intervention programs if a need can be identified for a particular group. I strongly feel that the data we are collecting can be of tremendous benefit to our students.

I shall be contacting you again once permission to administer the questionnaire has been received. In the meantime, if you have any questions concerning the questionnaire or the study, please do not hesitate to call me (364-8325) or my supervisor, Dr. Gary Jeffery (737-7654).

Yours truly,

Rosanne Sweeney, Graduate Student

Dr. Gary Jeffery, Supervisor

Enclosure

**Appendix C****Letter to Teachers**

149 Old Petty Hr. Rd.  
St. John's, Nfld.  
A1G 1R5

May 21, 1987

Dear :

I am a graduate student in Educational Psychology at Memorial University. Presently, I am in the process of collecting data for my thesis. My research will consist of looking at the school achievement and behavior of students from different family units. To collect this information, I have designed a questionnaire to gather general information about students' academic achievement, social relationships, behavioral characteristics and family structure. The information collected will be used to try to generate an overall profile of the Grade 4 Newfoundland school child; plus, a possible profile of children from the different family structures in the Newfoundland setting.

Permission to gather this information has been obtained from your school board; and, through a process of random sampling, your class has been chosen to participate in this study. Could you fill out one of the enclosed questionnaires for each student in your class? Pretesting of the questionnaire has indicated that it will take approximately one minute for you to complete the first questionnaire on student number one and thirty seconds each to complete the additional questionnaires for the remaining students in your class.

You will notice that the questionnaires have been printed with a class code space on the top of each questionnaire for your use. This will help you to keep a record of the students for whom a questionnaire has been already completed. You may use your own system of recording. After one questionnaire has been completed for each student in your class, you may use your checklist to ensure that all students have been included. You are then asked to erase or to white out any codes you may have used. This is to ensure complete anonymity. As well, complete confidentiality of all information is guaranteed.

The other code on the front of each questionnaire is for administration purposes only. This school code will allow me to keep track of all questionnaires that have been sent out and to assist me in any follow-up that may be necessary in the event that any questionnaires are not returned.

The completed questionnaires are to be placed in the large addressed envelope that has been included and sealed immediately. This sealed envelope may then be placed in the mail.

I sincerely need your help and strongly feel that the data we are collecting can be of tremendous benefit to our students. This type of research has never been done before in Newfoundland. The data collected will be relevant not only for the purposes of this study, but for the educational system in general. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 364-8325.

I know what a busy time of the year it is for you. Being a teacher myself, I know how hard it is to keep up with all the demands that are already placed upon you. Therefore, any assistance you can give me in this research would be very much appreciated. Your participation in this research will make a very valuable contribution to this study. In view of this, I will be sending you a summary of the results upon completion of the study. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Rosanne Sweeney, Graduate Student

Dr. Gary Jeffery, Advisor

Enclosure

## Appendix D

### List of Normal, Frequently Seen Responses to Children Whose Parents Have Separated/Divorced

The following contains a complete list of all the normal, frequently seen responses in children whose parents have separated/divorced. An effort was made by the researcher to keep to the literature on the early to late latency aged group of children from a "normal population" i.e information from a so-called "psychiatric population" was not included. The studies listed under each response offer support for that response. No effort was made on behalf of the researcher to interpret the terms chosen by the authors of each study. Categories of terms were not combined. Support for each effect was listed according to the term(s) used in the reported literature.

**Normal, frequently seen responses in latency aged children whose parents have separated/divorced:**

#### Aggressive Behaviour

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1978)  
Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Kinard & Reinherz (1986)  
Magrab (1978)



McDermott (1968)  
 Sonnenshein - Schneider & Baird (1980)  
 Futterman (1980)  
 Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1977)  
 Peterson & Zill (1986)  
 Ross (1980)  
 Fetner, Farber, Ginter, Boike & Cowen (1980)  
 Wallerstein & Bundy (1984)  
 Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
 Allers (1982)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
 Jacobs (1982)  
 Stolberg & Anker (1983)  
 Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1982)

#### Anger

Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
 Cooney, Smyer, Hagestad, Klock (1986)  
 McDermott (1968)  
 Black (1979)  
 Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)  
 Cantrell (1986)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1980 c)  
 Freeman & Couchman (1985)  
 Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
 Allers (1982)  
 Francke (1983)  
 Grossman (1986)  
 Diamond (1985)  
 Hetherington (1979a)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1974)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
 Pfeffer (1981)

**Anxiety**

Shiller (1986)  
 Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
 Johnston, Campbell & Mayer (1985)  
 Futterman (1980)  
 Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
 Springer & Wallerstein (1983)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
 Diamond (1985)  
 Wyman, Cowen, Hightower, Pedro-Carroll (1985)  
 Tooley (1976)

**Ashamed (of the divorce & disruption in their family/ (of their parents & their behaviours /Embarrassment)**

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
 Sugar (1970)  
 Cantrell (1986)  
 Futterman (1980)  
 Ambert (1986)  
 Grossman (1986)  
 Springer & Wallerstein (1983)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
 Diamond (1985)  
 Westman (1972)  
 Pfeffer (1981)  
 Anthony (1974)

**Behavioral changes in school behavior**

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
 Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
 Kurdek & Kiesky (1980 a & b)  
 Sonnershein-Schneider & Baird (1980)  
 Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1977)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

Zill & Peterson (1983)  
Freeman & Couchman (1980)  
Brown (1980)  
Francke (1983)  
Hetherington (1979a)  
Pfeffer (1981)

Decline in school performance

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Jacobson (1978)  
McDermott (1970)  
Brady, Bray, Zeeb (1986)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Hess & Camara (1979)  
Werner & Smith (1982)  
Svanum, Bringle and McLaughlin (1982)  
Kinard & Reinherz (1986)  
Sonnenshein-Schneider & Baird (1980)  
Futterman (1980)  
Freeman & Couchman (1980)  
Wallerstein & Bundy (1984)  
Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
Jarosz & Szymanderski (1985)  
Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
Brown (1980)  
Allers (1982)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Jacobs (1982)  
Hodges & Broom (1984)  
Guidubaldi, Cleminshaw & Perry (1983)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1974)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Pfeffer (1981)

**Depression**

Westman (1972)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Jacobson (1978)  
McDermott (1970)  
Brady, Bray, Zeeb (1986)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Johnston, Campbell & Mayes (1985)  
Futterman (1980)  
Wallerstein & Bundy (1984)  
Francke (1983)  
Grossman (1986)  
Diamond (1985)  
Jacobs (1982)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Hetherington (1979a)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1974)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Tooley (1976)

**Diminished Self-Esteem**

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Westman (1972)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
Boyd, Nunn & Parish (1983)  
Parish and Wigle (1985)  
Berg & Kelly (1979)  
Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
Grossman (1986)  
Jacobs (1982)  
Wyman, et al (1985)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Parish & Taylor (1979)  
Chethik, Dolin, Davies, Lohr & Darrow (1986)

**Disobedient**

Brady, Bray, Zeeb (1986)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1977)

**Eating Problems/Change in Eating Habits/Concerns about food**

Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
Diamond (1985)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1974)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Plunkett & Kalter (1984)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980 c)  
Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)

**Not Eating (Loss of Appetite)**

Sugar (1970)  
Magrab (1978)  
Anthony (1974)

**Obesity**

Futterman (1980)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

**Enuresis**

Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Douglas (1970)  
Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
Morrison (1974)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1974)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)

**Fantasy, Day Dreaming, Inattentiveness**

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)

Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)  
Kinard & Reinherz (1986)  
Cantrell (1986)  
Sonnenshein - Schneider & Baird (1980)  
Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
Brown (1980)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Diamond (1985)

#### Fears & Phobias

Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Ambert (1980)  
Grossman (1986)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Hetherington (1979a)

#### Gender Identity Conflict

Sack (1985)  
Westman (1972)  
Schwartz & Getter (1979)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1978)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1974)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1982)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1979)  
Santrock (1970)  
Anthony (1974)

#### Guilt

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980)  
Wallerstein and Kelly (1976)  
McDermott (1970)

Westman, Cline & Krammer (1970)  
Hetherington (1979c)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1974)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)  
Tooley (1976)  
Sorosky (1977)  
Anthony (1974)

### Hostility

Sugar (1970)  
Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
Sonnenshein - Schneider & Baird (1980)  
Futterman (1980)  
Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
Gardner (1984)  
Anderson & Anderson (1981)

### Hyperactivity

Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
Walterstein & Bundy (1984)  
Brown (1980)

### Immaturity

Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Anderson & Anderson (1981)

### Irritability

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

### Loneliness

Sugar (1970)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Cantrell (1986)  
Grossman (1986)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

Lying

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Ambert (1980)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

Neediness (Need for physical contact, individual attention and approval)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1979)  
Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
Chethik & Kalter (1980)  
Kinard & Reinherz (1986)  
Brown (1980)  
Allers (1982)  
Diamond (1985)  
Hetherington (1979a)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1982)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980 C)  
Pfeffer (1981)

Poor Parental Relationships

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Johnston, Campbell & Mayes (1985)  
Peterson & Zill (1986)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1979)  
Hetherington (1979a)  
Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1982)



**Poor Peer Relations**

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
 Brady, Brad, Zeeb (1986)  
 Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
 Futterman (1980)  
 Drake (1979)  
 Felmer, et al. (1980)  
 Bundy & Gumaer (1984)  
 Jarosz & Szymanderski (1985)  
 Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
 Hodges & Bloom (1984)  
 Stolberg & Anker (1983)  
 Hetherington (1979a)  
 Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1982)  
 Wyman, Cowen, Hightower & Pedro-Carroll (1985)  
 Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1979 b)  
 Anthony (1974)

**Poor Sib Relationships**

Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
 Springer & Wallerstein (1983)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

**Preoccupation with maintaining "good behavior" (Overcontrol)**

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
 McDermott (1968)  
 Block, Block & Morrison (1981)  
 Whitehead (1979)  
 Peterson & Gill (1986)  
 Emery (1982)  
 Ross (1980)  
 Wallerstein & Kelly (1984)

**Pseudo-Maturity**

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
McDermott (1968)  
Futtermann (1980)  
Francke (1983)  
Diamond (1985)  
Hetherington (1979a)

**Regression**

Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Diamond (1985)  
Pfeffer (1981)

**School Truancy/School Avoidance/School Refusal/Running Away**

Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
McDermott (1970)  
McDermott (1968)  
Futtermann (1980)  
Freeman & Couchman (1980)  
Wallerstein & Bundy (1984)  
Jarosz & Syzmanderski (1985)  
Francke (1983)  
Diamond (1985)  
Sorosky (1977)  
Anthony (1974)

**Sadness**

Sugar (1970)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)  
Cantrell (1986)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

Wallerstein & Bundy (1984)  
Francke (1983)  
Ambert (1980)  
Grossman (1986)  
Diamond (1985)  
Chethik, Dolin, Davies, Lohr, Darrow (1986)

Sleeplessness/Sleep Problems

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)  
Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
Allers (1982)  
Francke (1983)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

Somatic and Psychosomatic Symptoms (headaches, stomach aches, etc.)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Brady, Bray, Zeeb (1986)  
Snyder, Minnick & Anderson (1980)  
Kelly & Wallerstein (1976)  
Cantrell (1986)  
Johnston, Campbell & Mayes (1985)  
Allers (1982)  
Francke (1983)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)  
Diamond (1985)  
Snyder, Minnick and Anderson (1980)  
Anthony (1974)

Stealing

Anderson & Anderson (1981)  
Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)  
Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)  
Kalter & Rembar (1981)

Francke (1983)

Diamond (1985)

### Stress

Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)

Black (1979)

Nichols (1984)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

### Suicidal

Francke (1983)

### Tantrums

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)

Magrab (1978)

Francke (1983)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

### Tension

Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)

Johnston, Campbell and Mayes (1985)

### Trouble concentrating and paying attention

Anderson & Anderson (1981)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1976)

Allers (1982)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

Diamond (1985)

### Underachievement/Low productivity

Kinard & Reinherz (1986)

Whining

Wallerstein & Kelly (1975)

Brady, Bray & Zeeb (1986)

Wallerstein & Kelly (1980)

Diamond (1985)

Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1979a)

Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1982)

## Appendix E

## Questionnaire

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

CLASS CODE \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL AND HOME PROFILE  
Rosanne Sweeney

## DIRECTIONS:

Place a check mark in the bracket after the item that indicates the best response for this particular student.

## D1 CHILD'S AGE:

8 ( ) 9 ( ) 10 ( ) 11 ( ) 12 ( ) Over 12 ( )

## D2 SEX: male ( ) female ( )

No. of older sisters: 0 ( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 or more ( )

No. of younger sisters: 0 ( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 or more ( )

No. of older brothers: 0 ( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 or more ( )

No. of younger brothers: 0 ( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 or more ( )

## D3 Has the child passed every year?

yes ( )

missed on year ( )

missed more than one year ( )

## D4 Based on class achievement, where would you place this child?

top 25% of the class ( )

middle of the class ( )

lower end of the class ( )

## D5 On the Canadian Test of Basic Skills did the child place in the:

top 25% of the class ( )

middle of the class ( )

lower end of the class ( )

D6 How would you rate this child's work habits?

above average ( )      average ( )      below average ( )

D7 Is this child failing?

Reading      yes ( )      no ( )

Math          yes ( )      no ( )

Other          yes ( )      no ( )      Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

#### BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Does the child tend to:

B1 be self-reliant and mature      Yes ( )      No ( )

B2 display age inappropriate behaviors  
(i.e. has temper tantrums, infantile  
actions, excessively dependent,  
whines, etc.)      Yes ( )      No ( )

B3 be self-destructive or to do self-  
damaging acts      Yes ( )      No ( )

B4 be aggressive towards peers and  
materials (destructive, insulting,  
fighting, etc.)      Yes ( )      No ( )

B5 be over controlled (i.e. try to  
behave perfectly)      Yes ( )      No ( )

B6 excessively day-dream and fantasize      Yes ( )      No ( )

B7 talk about or try to run away  
from home      Yes ( )      No ( )

#### SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Does the child tend to:

S1 display courtesy and consideration  
in interactions with peers, teachers,  
and other school personal?      Yes ( )      No ( )

S2 avoid social interactions with peers  
(withdrawn, excessively shy, or  
fearful)      Yes ( )      No ( )

S3 seem comfortable or be willing to  
talk about his/her home situation      Yes ( )      No ( )

S4	seem less willing than his/her peers to engage in social or peer play	Yes ( )	No ( )
S5	exhibit leadership among peers	Yes ( )	No ( )
S6	get along well with parents and siblings	Yes ( )	No ( )

#### LEARNING/SCHOOL

Does the child exhibit/display any of the following:

L1	Cooperativeness	Yes ( )	No ( )
L2	Frequent truancy or school absence	Yes ( )	No ( )
L3	Hyperactivity and distractibility	Yes ( )	No ( )
L4	Interest in school	Yes ( )	No ( )
L5	Disruptive behaviours in class	Yes ( )	No ( )
L6	Achievement below potential	Yes ( )	No ( )
L7	Initiative	Yes ( )	No ( )
L8	Poor reading achievement	Yes ( )	No ( )
L9	School phobic (fear) behaviour	Yes ( )	No ( )
L10	Dependability	Yes ( )	No ( )

#### AFFECTIVE/SELF-CONCEPT

Does the child:

A1	appear to feel good about him/herself (i.e. does not become easily discouraged or have a negative attitude of own abilities)	Yes ( )	No ( )
A2	appear confident and optimistic	Yes ( )	No ( )
A3	appear to be anxious, fearful or stressed	Yes ( )	No ( )



- |    |   |         |        |
|----|---|---------|--------|
| A4 | have a clear and appropriate sex-role or gender concept (i.e. does not display overly feminine behaviors (if a boy) or overly masculine behaviors (if a girl) | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |
| A5 | often or easily become frustrated or angry  | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |

### HEALTH

Compared to peers, does the child:

- |    |  |         |        |
|----|--|---------|--------|
| H1 | appear to be in generally good physical health?  | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |
| H2 | appear to be well rested and adequately fed?   | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |
| H3 | regularly (i.e. once a week) complain of a headache, stomach ache, etc.?   | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |
| H4 | have frequent absences (at least once a week) from class (i.e. at the nurse's office) or from school due to illness? | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |
| H5 | have poorer self-hygiene or body control (i.e. soiling or wetting one's clothes)?                                    | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |
| H6 | seek help more often from the counsellor or a teacher on personal or situational problems?                           | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |
| H7 | present a well groomed and tidy appearance?  | Yes ( ) | No ( ) |

### FAMILY STRUCTURE

TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, is the child living in one of the following family structures:

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| F1 | ( ) intact family (i.e. child has lived with same persons, usually the natural parents, since birth) |
| F2 | ( ) remarried/blended family (natural parent + step-parent)  |

- F3 ( ) parents divorced  
F4 ( ) parents separated but not divorced  
F5 ( ) parent never married (i.e. single parent)  
F6 ( ) adopted family  
F7 ( ) foster parents/home  
F8 ( ) legal guardian(s)  
F9 ( ) group home  
F10 ( ) don't know

**Note:** If you do not know a child's situation, please end here.

Is one parent away from home 25% or more of the time even though the family is still "intact"?

- F11 ( ) Yes ( ) No

This parent is absent due to:

- F12 ( ) work ( ) other

Which parent is (or has been) required to be away?

- F13 ( ) mother ( ) father

**Note:** If the family is "intact" and both parents are present 75% of the time or more, end here.

If the family is not intact, which parent is not present?

- F14 ( ) father absent  
F15 ( ) mother absent

This parent is absent due to:

- F16 ( ) death  
F17 ( ) separation  
F18 ( ) divorce  
F19 ( ) parents never married (i.e. single mother or father)

To the best of your knowledge, approximately how long has this situation existed? [Omit this question if parents never married]

- F20 ( ) less than three months
- F21 ( ) less than six months
- F22 ( ) less than one year
- F23 ( ) less than three years
- F24 ( ) more than four years

If the child's mother or father is absent, are there any other adults living in the home besides the child's parent? If yes, please check any of the following which apply:

- F25 ( ) the child's grandmother
- F26 ( ) the child's grandfather
- F27 ( ) adult male related in some other way (brother, uncle, cousin, etc.)
- F28 ( ) adult female related in some other way (sister, aunt, cousin, etc.)
- F29 ( ) unrelated male (friend, etc.)
- F30 ( ) unrelated female (friend, etc.)
- F31 ( ) border(s)







