

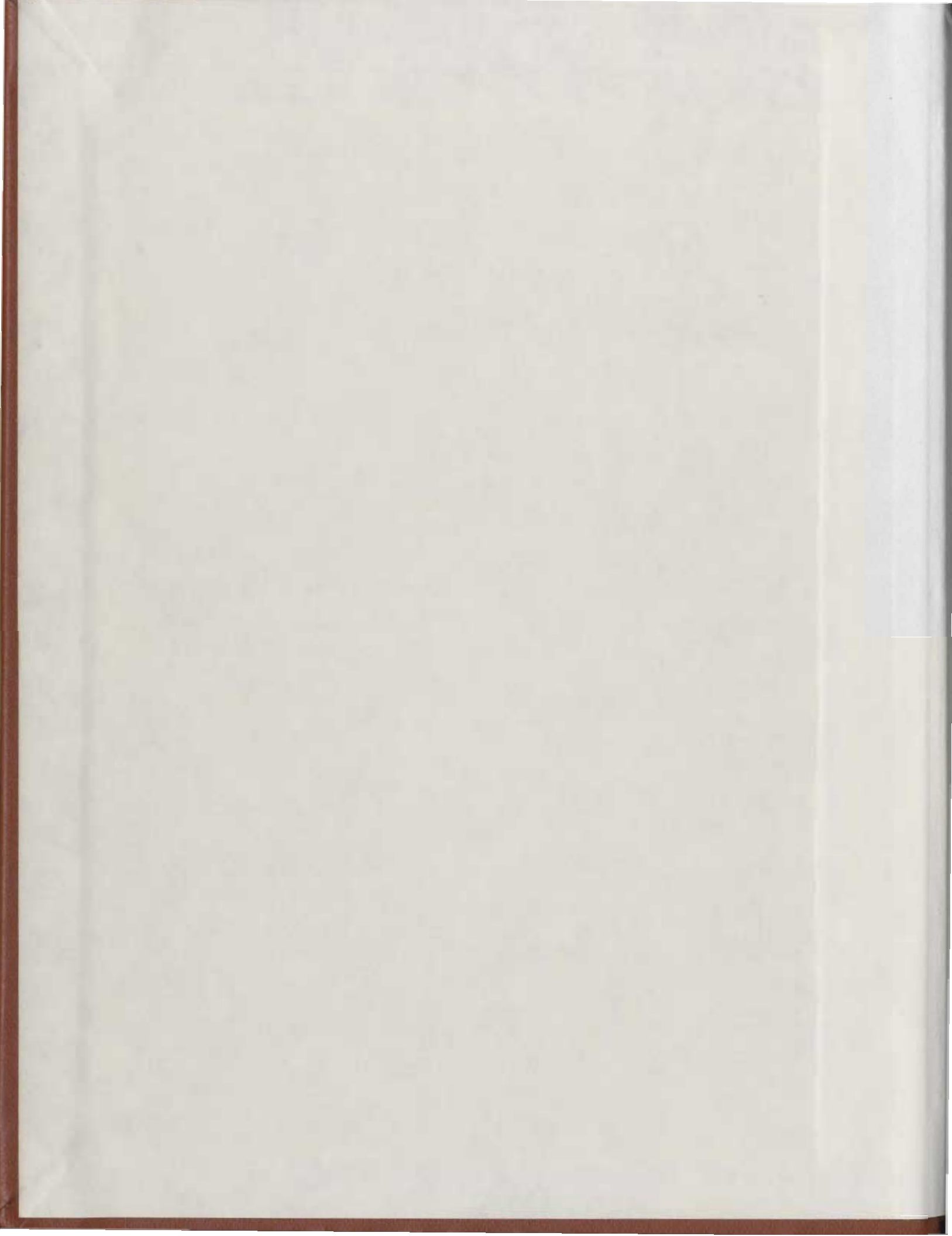
AN ASSESSMENT OF FOSTER  
PARENTS WITH RESPECT TO  
THEIR ADEQUACY  
AND SATISFACTION

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

**TOTAL OF 10 PAGES ONLY  
MAY BE XEROXED**

(Without Author's Permission)

IRENE M. EDDY



11188







National Library of Canada

Cataloguing Branch  
Canadian Theses Division

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Direction du catalogage  
Division des thèses canadiennes

## NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

**THIS DISSERTATION  
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED  
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED**

## AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ  
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE  
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF FOSTER PARENTS WITH RESPECT  
TO THEIR ADEQUACY AND SATISFACTION**

by,

**Irene M. Eddy, B.S.W.**

**A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Social Work**

**School of Social Work  
Memorial University of Newfoundland**

**August 1978**

**St. John's**

**Newfoundland**

## ABSTRACT

Foster family care is one of society's responses to the need for temporary or long term care of children whose parents are unable or unwilling to provide them nurturance and safety. Child welfare agencies have been given sanction by society to recruit, select, develop and supervise foster homes. However, their success in these areas has been uneven.

According to the foster care literature, there is a chronic shortage of adequate foster parents in Canada and the United States. Many foster parents are dissatisfied with fostering even though they have been designated as adequate by child welfare agencies. So that there might be a better understanding of the satisfactions derived from fostering this study was undertaken.

The purpose of the study was to seek answers to the questions: (1) Is there a significant relationship between foster parents' satisfactions with fostering and social workers' ratings of adequacy of foster parents? (2) Are certain demographic characteristics of foster parents related to foster parents' adequacy and/or satisfaction.

Answers to these questions would shed some light on just who are the most adequate and most satisfied foster parents. In addition, since closure of foster homes is more

often due to voluntary withdrawal than to agency rejection, identification of predictors of foster parents' satisfaction would be a useful finding.

The study group consisted of foster parents from eighty-two foster homes which are listed as "regular" foster homes by the Department of Social Services for the area served by their St. John's office.

An interview schedule was used to collect the data regarding the foster parents. Because of time and financial constraints the study group was confined to the total population of foster parents in St. John's and surrounding area.

The social workers at the St. John's service office of the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Social Services divided the study group into more adequate and less adequate foster parents using the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale developed for this research. The degree of satisfaction of foster parents was determined by a Foster Parents' Satisfaction Scale based on prior work by Fanshel (1966) in the United States. The interview schedule also contained a demographic questionnaire.

From this process, it was found that foster parents rated as more adequate by the social workers were also the more satisfied foster parents. It was also found that certain foster parents' demographic characteristics, i.e., foster mother's age and education of foster parents, were positively related to adequacy and satisfactions of foster parents.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my co-supervisors, Dr. J. Victor Thompson and Dr. Paul Sachdev for the support and advice they have given me in the conception and execution of this study. In addition, I would like to thank the rest of the faculty and staff of the School of Social Work at Memorial University for their assistance. Special mention should also be made of the Department of Social Services, in particular the social workers at the Child Welfare Division in St. John's for their co-operation with this research.

The interviewing process would not have been possible without the help of the three undergraduate students, who gave freely of their time. I wish also to express my gratitude to the two graduate students who worked on part of this project, as they were doing similar research, for their kind support and encouragement.

Certainly the study could not have been completed without the co-operation of the study group, the foster parents in St. John's, and surrounding area. I thank them for their time and interest.

Last but not least, I am grateful and somewhat apologetic to my husband and young daughter who at times during the last three semesters were subjected to a wife and mother in absentia.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract . . . . .	ii
Acknowledgements . . . . .	iv
List of Tables . . . . .	viii
 <b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Problem Statement . . . . .	3
Significance of the Study . . . . .	7
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	8
Explanation of Terms . . . . .	9
Foster Home Care . . . . .	9
Foster Parents' Adequacy . . . . .	11
Foster Parents' Satisfaction . . . . .	12
<b>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .</b>	<b>13</b>
Assessment of Current Foster Care Performance . . . . .	17
Outcome and Breakdown Studies . . . . .	19
Studies Relating to Motives of Foster Parents . . . . .	23
Literature Relating to Satisfaction Foster Parents Receive from Fostering . . . . .	24
Critique of the Literature . . . . .	27
<b>III. THEORETICAL RATIONALE AND HYPOTHESES . . . . .</b>	<b>31</b>
Theoretical Rationale . . . . .	31
Proposition and Hypotheses . . . . .	35
Hypothesis No. 1 . . . . .	35
Hypothesis No. 2 . . . . .	36
Hypothesis No. 3 . . . . .	36

CHAPTER	Page
IV. METHODOLOGY . . . . .	37
Sampling Procedure . . . . .	38
Developing the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale . . . . .	39
1. Emotional Maturity of Foster Parents . . . . .	41
2. Ability of Foster Parents to Understand and Accept Natural Parents in the Fostering Process . . . . .	42
3. Meeting the Emotional Needs of the Child . . . . .	42
4. Capacity of Foster Parents to be Child-Centred Rather than Self-Centred . . . . .	43
5. Ability to Meet Basic Physical Needs . . . . .	44
6. Foster Parents' Ability to meet the Intellectual Needs of the Child . . . . .	44
7. Ability of Foster Parents to Understand, Accept, and Cope with Different Childhood Behaviour . . . . .	45
8. Satisfaction Which Foster Parents Derive from the Foster Parenting Role . . . . .	45
Pre-Testing the Scale . . . . .	45
Using Social Workers to Rate Foster Parents in the Study Group . . . . .	46
The Foster Parents' Satisfaction Scale . . . . .	47
Pre-Testing the Scale . . . . .	50
Demographic Information . . . . .	51
Survey Procedure . . . . .	54
V. ANALYSIS . . . . .	57
Description of the Study Group . . . . .	57
Personal and Social Characteristics of Foster Parents . . . . .	58
Age at Time of Study . . . . .	58
Marital Status . . . . .	59
Race . . . . .	60
Religious Affiliation . . . . .	60
Income . . . . .	61
Occupation of Foster Fathers . . . . .	62
Educational Achievement . . . . .	63

CHAPTER	Page
Residence . . . . .	64
Siblings of Foster Parents . . . . .	64
Natural Children of Study Group . . . . .	65
Years Married . . . . .	66
Foster Children . . . . .	67
Profile of the Study Group . . . . .	67
Examination of Foster Parents' Satisfactions and Adequacy Summary . . . . .	68
Summary . . . . .	76
 VI. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	 78
Recommendations . . . . .	81
 BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	 83
APPENDIX A: FOSTER PARENTS' GLOBAL ADEQUACY SCALE . . . . .	89
APPENDIX B: FOSTER HOME APPLICATION PROCEDURE . . . . .	93
APPENDIX C: FOSTER PARENTS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE . . . . .	101
APPENDIX D: FOSTER MOTHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE . . . . .	110
APPENDIX E: LETTER TO FOSTER PARENTS FROM DIRECTOR OF CHILD WELFARE . . . . .	119

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1. Foster Parents Unavailable for Interview . . . . .	58
2. Age of Foster Parents at Time of Study . . . . .	59
3. Religious Affiliation of Foster Parents . . . . .	60
4. Combined Income of Husband and Wife . . . . .	61
5. Occupation of Foster Fathers . . . . .	62
6. Highest Education Level Attained . . . . .	63
7. Length of Time at Present Address . . . . .	64
8. Siblings of Foster Parents . . . . .	65
9. Natural Children of Foster Parents . . . . .	66
10. Foster Parents' Number of Years Married . . . . .	66
11. Social Satisfaction and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	69
12. Private Satisfaction (a) and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	69
13. Private Satisfaction (b) and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	70
14. Private Satisfaction (c) and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	70
15. Satisfaction with Child Place Agency and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	71
16. Age of Foster Mother and Adequacy . . . . .	72

TABLE

	Page
17. Region and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	73
18. Education and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	74
19. Religion and Adequacy of Foster Parents . . . . .	75
20. Income of Foster Parents and Adequacy . . . . .	75

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Foster families are recruited, selected, developed and supervised to provide appropriate family and community living experience for dependent children and to offer them the quality of care, nurturance, and child-rearing which they need (Child Welfare League of America, 1959).

Although foster family care exists to provide corrective experiences over those from which children are removed, studies suggest that substitute care is often inadequate. The 1969 National Survey of Attitudes and Practices in Child Welfare Agencies, sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America (C.W.L.A.), revealed that only one-fourth of responding public and voluntary agencies cited the quality of foster parents as a major strength of their program. Sixty-eight per cent of over 300 responding agencies also reported that the foster care system was generally not meeting children's needs (Stone, 1969).

Researchers in psychiatry have found that many foster parents lacked the required insight and motivation to support their therapeutic goals for disturbed children and to provide normal children consistent opportunity to accomplish age-appropriate development tasks (Meisels & Loeb, 1966;

Defries, 1965; Ambinder, 1962; Solomon, 1969; Eisenberg, 1962).

In addition, the instability of foster home placements is reflected in the frequent removal of placed children as reported by Maas and Engler (1959). These researchers found that in six of the nine communities they studied one-fourth or more of the children had had four or more foster home placements.

The interaction between foster parents and foster children is crucial to the success of a placement. Foster parents must feel some sense of satisfaction from fostering and be recognized by their agency and the community if they are to continue to do their best work. This researcher felt that foster parents' satisfaction was an important variable that needed further examination, so that a better understanding of the fostering process could be obtained. Hence, this study of foster parents' satisfaction with fostering was pursued.

The primary purpose of the study was to seek an answer to the question--Is there a positive relationship between foster parents' satisfaction with fostering and social workers' ratings of foster parents' adequacy? A secondary purpose of the study was to seek an answer to the question--Are certain demographic characteristics of foster parents positively associated with social workers' ratings of foster parents' adequacy?



### Problem Statement

Often, as in the case reported by Jensen, a foster home is adjudged unsuitable only after placed children have suffered profound and possibly irreversible developmental lag (Jensen, 1965). A recurring theme in the literature is that institutional care may even be preferable to the inadequate foster family care children receive. Fanshel (1970) has stated:

Once a youngster is placed with a high-risk foster family, he is tucked away out of sight. He is not a bother to anybody except years later when his disturbance erupts into visible form. Something valid can be said for letting children pile up in the shelters--an eye-sore in the community. At least under such circumstances there is a potential for indignant rage from public minded citizens. The best thing that could happen to some foster children is a large scale closing down of foster family homes, just as there was of the large congregate institutions in the 1930's and 1940's. (p. 235)

Coupled with the fact that many foster homes have been found inadequate is the chronic shortage of foster homes. An insufficient number of foster homes was the fact most often cited as adversely affecting the quality of foster care services by agencies which responded to the Child Welfare League of America survey (1969). Socio-economic factors--mobility, suburbanization, housing shortages, increased employment of women--contribute to the reported deficit (Garrett, 1967).

The fact of a shortage of foster homes is a separate issue from the need for the social work profession to isolate systematically the characteristics of adequate foster

4

parents. However, the foster home shortage is occasioned by the attrition of dissatisfied foster parents, as well as by the social forces which impede recruitment--the reason most frequently cited for the closing of foster homes has been "No Longer Interested" (Stone, 1969).

In addition to the above, the estimated number of children in foster care is on the increase. In the United States in March, 1965, there was an estimated 207,800 children living in foster care, a rate of 2.9 per 1,000 children under twenty-one years of age (Low, 1968).

By March, 1971, the number of such placements had risen to 266,070. These figures are conservative estimates of the number of placed children. They exclude placements made independently of social agencies and children in institutions. They are also a one day estimate, rather than an estimate of the total number of children who moved in and out of placement during a given year (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1971).

The figures for Canada are similar, with an estimated number of 81,000 children in foster care in 1972, while the total in 1962 was approximately 50,000 (Foster Care Committee, 1973).

In 1959, the Child Welfare League of America established standards to serve as goals for continuous care services to children and to represent most desirable practices. The CWLA standards specified that the foster home study consist of a series of interviews in the home and

agency with members of prospective foster families and also provide for the gathering of supplemental information from references. As a result of the study, an evaluation must be made of the personality make-up of foster parents and the way in which they are likely to perform as foster parents, indicating such things as whether applicants have the potentiality of meeting needs of children served by the particular agency, whether they have the necessary personality characters and whether applicants can accept child's relationship with his natural parents (Child Welfare League of America, 1959).

This is basically the same approach set out by Dorothy Hutchinson in 1943 in her book, In Quest of Foster Parents, in which she outlines what one must look for in the home visit and in office interviews in respect to prospective foster parents (Hutchinson, 1943).

The home study process as prescribed by the Child Welfare League of America's standards is based on a clinical model of diagnosis and assessment. This approach is time consuming and costly and bears no documented relationship to outcomes for foster children. Maas found it more appropriate in child guidance clinics where patterns of pathology are sought. Maas (1971) has stated:

Until we know more than we do now about such matters, child welfare workers might well consider whether their time is not better invested in other than clinical procedures in their home finding and placement activities. (p. 89)

In foster care literature, no generally accepted selection theory to guide the home study worker in intensive foster home evaluation was revealed. Rather a general dissatisfaction with the home study process, as well as substantial differences between theories and actual selection practices was found. Writers viewed home studies as involving offensive or inappropriate probing of applicants (Fanshel, 1970), and reported the gathering of excessive amounts of information from applicants (Wolins, 1963). The tendency to view the foster parent applicants simultaneously as client and colleague was seen to subvert and obscure the purpose of the selection process (Lawder, 1964).

Child welfare agencies have been charged with providing nurturing, substitute care for dependent children. Foster parent selection procedures have proven inadequate to select the needed quality or quantity of foster homes. No generally accepted theory guides the assessment of foster parent applicants. Characteristics of adequate and satisfied foster parents have not been systematically isolated. Objective selection procedures, the results of which could be measured and predicted, are needed and have been advocated in the literature.

An ideal foster parent selection system would identify those foster parent applicants whose existing attitudes and characteristics are appropriate to the long-term needs of dependent children and who also find fostering a satisfying vocation.

The intention of this study was to isolate some of the characteristics of adequate foster parents and associate them with aspects of satisfaction derived from fostering by the foster parents.

#### Significance of the Study

The increased understanding of factors associated with foster parents' adequacy and foster parents' satisfaction with fostering may help at least make a beginning in working towards a situation where social workers may be able to predict outcomes in foster parent selection, and this will in turn contribute to improved services to dependent children. For example, children could be spared the trauma of frequent removal from inadequate foster homes, and social workers would be less dependent on the appearance of developmental lag in foster children to gauge the adequacy of foster parents.

The objectives of foster care according to the Child Welfare League of America (1959, p.52) should be:

The ultimate objectives of foster family care should be promotion of healthy personality development of the child, and amelioration of problems that are personally or socially destructive. Foster family care is one of society's ways of assuring the well-being of children who would otherwise lack adequate parental care. Society assumes certain responsibilities for rearing and nurturing of children whose parents are unable to carry and discharge those responsibilities through the services of social agencies and other social institutions. Foster family care should provide for the child, whose parents cannot do so, experiences and conditions which promote normal motivation (care) which prevent further injury to the

child (protection) and which correct specific problems which interfere with healthy personality development (treatment).

Clearly the degree and quality of this care, protection and treatment, and therefore, the degree to which the well-being of a large number of children is assured, depends in a great measure on the men and women who act as foster parents.

It is necessary, therefore, to discover who is doing a good "job" with fostering and to some extent why they are doing it.

#### Limitations of the Study

This research was contingent in part on the ability of the social worker to make judgements concerning the adequacy of foster parents. The social worker's ability to judge can be affected by her educational background, by her position in the agency structure and by personal whims, fancies and idiosyncrasies (Wolins, 1963). The workers who rated the study group for this research were basically of the same educational background, the average educational level being Bachelor of Arts with a major in Social Work. Their position in the agency structure was the same--all were child welfare social workers.

It must be remembered that there is no sharp dividing line between fact and opinion; almost any answer, however objective and factual, is liable to distortion. The

impulse to distort may be slight if the questions to be answered have a negligible personal content to the informants, but the possibility can never be eliminated (Madge, 1965). As professionals, social workers can be expected to make judgements of their clientele with less personal involvement than laymen. Wolins (1963) found, for the most part, placement supervisors and home finders were largely in agreement on the adequacy of foster homes.

Because the statements in the satisfactions scale were measuring conscious satisfactions of foster parents, the "halo effect" could have introduced some bias into the study as well. People are inclined to give socially accepted answers in interviews according to Madge (1965).

With regard to generalization of this research, since a total population of St. John's and surrounding area was studied, the results are limited to the St. John's area.

Explanation of Terms

Foster Home Care

Fostering or foster care is a generic term which includes the variety of situations wherein a child may receive care outside the confines of his own family (Costin, 1972). Included in the term are institutional care, group homes and foster homes. Since this study is concerned with the provision of foster home care for children in the Province of Newfoundland, it is appropriate to cite the Government's definition of this type of care. The Provincial Government's

Department of Social Services, Division of Child Welfare, refers to foster home care in terms of its purpose and function rather than stating a formal definition. For example, the Department of Social Services Child Welfare Regulations (1977) state:

Regular foster homes are for neglected children who require short term or long term care and include children who are awaiting adoption. (p. 15)

In the same place, it is further stated:

The purpose of providing homes is to provide a normal family home with respect to size, composition and housing with opportunities for the growth and development of children, and to provide a stable family environment, as an alternative to institutional care, for children with emotional, physical and mental disabilities. (p. 15)

In the Division of Child Welfare's Policy Manual, it is noted that:

Foster Home Service is a means of providing children with suitable environment with which normal childhood experiences may be enjoyed in a family life setting. (p.8)

It should be noted that the Division of Child Welfare uses the term "regular" to distinguish regular foster homes from group homes or special foster homes which serve the emotionally or physically handicapped children.

While the Department of Social Services in Newfoundland does not have a definition of foster home care as such, their intent and purpose as outlined above is consistent with most definitions of foster home care found in the literature. Britain's Boarding Out of Children Regulations, 1965, state that the essence of fostering for children in care is that the child lives with foster parents, in their



dwelling as a member of their family (Pugh, 1968).

Throughout this study foster home care, delivered by foster parents, is used in the context of being (Costin, 1972, p. 321),

... full-time care, twenty-four hours a day, outside the child's own home . . . given within a foster family home.

#### Foster Parents' Adequacy

Foster parents' adequacy for the purpose of this research is the parents' ability to provide for the emotional, physical and intellectual needs of the foster child, as perceived by the social worker. In addition, the foster parents must be judged as being emotionally mature by the social worker and must accept the natural parents as a part of the foster care process. They must also be flexible in their ability to care for a variety of children. In addition, they must be perceived by the social worker as satisfied with the foster parenting role.

All foster parents in this study group were considered adequate foster parents (otherwise, they would not be approved as foster parents in the first place, or if so, would be closed down when they became inadequate, as perceived by the worker). However, everybody in the group are not considered to be of exactly the same degree of adequacy.

Wolins (1963) says that foster parents fall on a continuum of low to high adequacy. Therefore, the social workers were asked to divide their foster homes into more

adequate and less adequate using the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale in Appendix A. There are eight items on the scale with a possible highest score of thirty-two, and a possible lowest score of eight. A foster home rating score totalling twenty or less was considered to be less adequate and a foster home rating score totalling twenty-one or more was considered to be more adequate.

### Foster Parents' Satisfaction

Satisfaction derived from fostering falls into three main categories--social, private, and satisfaction with the child placing agency. Social satisfactions include such items as respect of one's neighbours and knowing one is doing something useful for the community. Private satisfactions are divided into three divisions--satisfactions concerned mainly with oneself; satisfactions concerned with one's family; and satisfactions derived directly from the foster child. Under satisfactions with the agency are such items as being satisfied when one has had to contact the department concerning a problem with the foster child.

More detail of foster parents' satisfaction is provided in the Methodology under foster parents' satisfactions scale and in Appendices C and D.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature regarding foster parents' adequacy and satisfaction should probably be preceded by an understanding of foster care, how it comes about and what it does or does not lead to. A child can be said to be in foster care when a child welfare agency arranges a living situation for him that is with someone other than adoptive or natural parents. Properly speaking, foster care can take place in an institution as well as with a family. The agency delegates to the institution or family only certain portions of parental rights and responsibilities, the remaining parts of which the agency and sometimes in some areas, the natural parents, retain. One of the major rights retained by the agency is the decision about where the child shall live. Parental rights may, if the court finds it to the child's advantage, be terminated by legal action. In many more cases, parental rights are simply abandoned, along with the child.

Until perhaps twenty-five or thirty years ago, many children came into foster care because their parents were ill or unable to provide for them financially (Tegethoff & Goldstein, 1972).

Such parents were not always lacking in love or concern for their children and foster care was conceived of as a temporary measure whose ultimate goal was restoration of the child to his family. With an increase in social services, the situation has changed. More extensive casework services, homemaker services and other social services have held together many families that would once have dissolved (Child Welfare League of America, 1959).

Maas and Engler in 1959 pointed out, as a result of a study in seven communities, that even though the profession of social work was still theoretically committed to short term placement in foster care and the restoration of a child to his own parents, or failing that his adoption, there was nevertheless a staggering number of children in long term care. Maas and Engler found that once a child had been in care for three months there is a sharply decreasing chance that he will ever return to his own family. In addition, 40 to 50 per cent of the children in long term foster care showed fairly serious signs of disturbance, not so much as a function of the length of time in foster care, but as a function of the number of placements the child had undergone (Maas & Engler, 1959).

The initial reaction to the writings of Maas and Engler (1959), and to the preliminary studies (Maas, 1959; Purvine, 1959) was primarily one of shock that there were so many long term placements. It has been pointed out by Kline that the social work profession has been slow to admit that in many

cases long term foster care is a necessity. Many parents will never care for their children, will not sign consents for adoption and even though there are legal processes by means of which a child may be made adoptable without the consent of his natural parents, these processes are tedious to a degree, and may drag on for two or three years (Kline, 1965).

It is also a common observation that more and more seriously disturbed children are coming into care (Littner, 1960). Emotionally disturbed children, like physically handicapped and retarded children, are not eminently adoptable anyway. Older children share the same fate. Furthermore, either in terms of immediate legal fees, or in terms of the loss of small board payments and reimbursement for medical, dental, and clothing expenses, many foster parents cannot afford the expense of adoption. So we are left with long term care as a reality for a great number of children (Kline, 1965). Long term, however, does not necessarily mean long term in the same foster home; Maas and Engler (1959) have shown that many foster children experience several placements before they are released from care.

Jeter (1963) reported a United States nationwide study of a sample of agencies which showed that 43 per cent of the foster children in the care of public agencies and 17 per cent of those in the care of voluntary agencies had suffered abuse, exploitation or neglect by the parents or

caretakers. Continued foster care was the only plan for 64 per cent of the children in care of public agencies, and for 51 per cent of those in care of voluntary agencies (Jeter, 1963).

In an attempt to find out why children come into care, the Child Welfare League of America (1969) assessed the child placement needs in seven metropolitan areas of the United States and derived an overview of requests for foster care service over a three month period in sixty-eight agencies. Out of wedlock children, and deviant parent behaviour each accounted for 21 per cent of the requests. Jenkins and Sauber (1966) analyzed the preplacement circumstances of 420 families of 891 in initial foster care placements of the New York Department of Welfare. Physical illness of the child rearing person was the most frequent single reason for placement and accounted for 29 per cent of the 425 families. A variety of family problems (including unwillingness or inability of the child-rearing person to continue care, desertion, incompetence, household conflicts, arrest, death, and housing problems) accounted for 33 per cent of the cases. Thirty-nine per cent of the children remained in care three months after placement (Jenkins & Sauber, 1966).

Given the fact that there are a large number of children in foster care for what is considered long term and the majority of the care of these children is entrusted to the men and women who become foster parents, it is useful to look at research regarding the adequacy of these substitute parents.

The literature regarding foster parents' adequacy has been divided by the author into three sections--(1) assessment of current foster care performance; (2) breakdown and outcome studies; and (3) studies on motivation of foster parents--in order to render the material more meaningful to the reader.

#### Assessment of Current Foster Care Performance

The current assessment studies have been done by DeFries (1965), Cautley (1966), Kline and Overstreet (1972), and Solomon (1969).

DeFries (1965) compared parental attitudes of foster parents of disturbed children with those of foster parents caring for well-adjusted children. He summed up his findings as follows (DeFries, 1965, p. 79):

'In general, the group of foster parents caring for well-adjusted children were more direct and realistic, freer to complain and to praise, willing to take more responsibility for making decisions, and more rejecting of agency help. They expressed a greater feeling of permanency about keeping the children. In contrast, the foster parents of disturbed children did not implicate themselves in the children's difficulties and were unable to empathize. They were detached and objective in their feelings, but did not see the children's unfortunate experiences as causes of their difficulties, since they were so involved in attempting to cope with the effects on themselves of this maladaptive behaviour.

Cautley (1966) studied success in fostering and defined success in terms of social workers' global ratings of foster parents' performance. Eight variables which accounted for almost one-half the variance in the ratings were derived. These variables included a combination of

factual data, fosters parents' perceptions and attitudes and social worker assessment of the families economic level.

When non-farm families were examined separately, the best item predictive of success ratings was the rating of the foster mother as a good risk in handling a withdrawn child. This item accounted for 27 per cent of the variance in global success ratings. Second in importance was the item concerning the teamwork of the foster parents which accounted for 11 per cent of the variance (Cautley, 1966, p. 58).

... a large component of the best predictors to "success" of non-farm families consists of two parents who work well together and a mother who has both particular sensitivity to a withdrawn child as well as confidence in her ability to "reach" him, along with the ability to be firm in some situations. In addition to these, the number of own children a foster family has had, and their general economic level are also important.

Meisels and Loeb (1966) suggested that foster home selection be based on the ability of foster parents to help foster children accomplish age-appropriate psychological tasks as described by Erikson. Solomon (1969) applied Meisels and Loeb's approach in a study of foster parents of latency aged boys. He found that foster parents did not consistently act upon their perception of the need for mastery of developmental tasks by providing the boys opportunity for mastery. The foster parents possessed a well-developed capacity for providing physical care, but a much less developed capacity for providing psychological care.



Kline and Overstreet (1972) came to the conclusion that the only generally accepted criteria for selecting adequate foster homes are specific physical standards and certain social requirements, which can be and have been designated by state licensing agencies. They see them as being concrete, necessary and identifiable. They typically cover such matters as adequate housing, sanitation, accessibility to education and medical facilities and certain health standards.

In summary, the foster care literature of current assessment of foster homes is at times contradictory. However, in the areas of most agreement it revealed that successful foster parents are those who not only recognize the age-appropriate tasks of children, but also provide an opportunity for their development, have an ability to discriminate among children with respect to problems, and provide for the physical needs of children.

#### Outcome and Breakdown Studies

The major studies in this area were carried out by Parker (1966), Trasler (1960), George (1970), Kraus (1971), and Meier (1962).

Trasler's breakdown group consisted of all eighty-six of one agency's failed placements over a three year period. The successful group consisted of all eighty-one agency placements rated excellent by at least two judges. Both child factors and foster home deficiencies were implicated

in the breakdown of placements. The foster home factors included inappropriate expectations of foster parents for foster children, lack of affection in the foster home and other inadequacies including poor marital relationships, neurotic behaviour, misbehaviour and old age of foster parents.

Foster mothers between forty and fifty years of age were significantly more successful than younger foster mothers. Successful placements were significantly associated with the placement of a foster child's siblings or another foster child in the home. However, placement of a child to provide companionship for other children in the home was significantly associated with placement breakdown.

Parker (1966) used a five year placement survival as his criterion for success. In his study of 209 placements, 106 were successful and 101 were failures by this definition. Success was significantly and positively related to lower social class and foster parents' childlessness. The presence of foster parents' own children under five years or within five years of the foster child's age were negatively associated with success.

There was no significant association between success and foster mother's age, her previous experience as a foster mother, nor the presence of the foster father in the home.

George (1970) used a five year placement survival, as well as his standard of success. He studied forty-five successful

placements and sixty-seven unsuccessful placements in three public child placing agencies. These cases represented all placements made during a selected time period and which met the other criteria, foster child under thirteen and placed with non-relatives. Data were gathered from the records of foster parents and foster children.

Three foster family variables were found significantly related to successful placement:

1. Foster mothers between ages 25-34 were more successful than those 35 years and older (this finding was in contrast to Trasler's (1960) findings of greater success among older foster mothers).
2. Placements in which at least one of the foster parents had a different religion than the placed child were more successful than those in which both foster parents and the foster child shared their religion.
3. Childless couples were more successful than those who had children of their own (this is in agreement with Parker (1966)).

Factors examined but found not significantly related to success, were the presence of a foster father, the amount of the foster parents' experience with fostering, and sex and age of own children in relation to foster child.

Kraus (1971) studied seventy-eight successful and seventy-eight unsuccessful placements of children over six years of age who were placed in their first foster homes.

A twenty-four month survival of the placement was his measure of success. Five foster home factors were found positively and significantly associated with success. These factors were:

1. Foster mother was over 40 years of age (this agrees with Trasler's (1960) findings.
2. Foster parents had two children of their own.
3. The number of people in the foster home including the foster child was not four.
4. Another foster child was already in the home.
5. Foster parents had previously known the child.

Unlike other researchers, Kraus (1971) found none of the foster child factors he studied, sex, age, intelligence, significantly associated with success.

Meier (1962) investigated the current adjustment of adults who spent at least five years in foster homes and who were not returned to parental homes during their minority. She sought to determine their present levels of adjustment and the degree to which foster home factors were associated with adjustment as measured by social effectiveness and well-being. The most important characteristics of the most influential homes--in order of frequency mentioned were:

(1) satisfaction with the affection received, and (2) appreciation of skills and useful knowledge gained in the foster home.

In summary, the studies of outcome and breakdown in foster care, tell us success is positively associated with

lower social class, foster parent childlessness, foster child's siblings or another foster child in the home, a placement in which one of the foster parents has a different religion than the child, foster parents have children of their own, but not within five years of the foster child's age. It seems that the ideal age of a foster mother is forty or over, although this was disputed in several studies. Opportunity to gain skills and knowledge in the home was also associated with success.

#### Studies Relating to Motives of Foster Parents

Three of the major studies in this area were conducted by Etri (1967), Foy (1967), and Murphy (1964).

Etri (1967) in studying foster parents' motives found that foster parents who preferred girls or children of the same sex as most of their own children were judged to be the least adequate in fostering.

The most adequate parents gave much fuller responses to a question about motives for fostering than least adequate. Their responses tended to be child-centred and those of the other group self-centred. Most adequate parents in fostering used words such as "love," "children" in their answers.

Foy studied motives of foster parents and attempted to relate them to success in fostering. Foy (1967) discerned two "valid primary motives": (1) desires a child or another child but unwilling or unable to conceive, and (2) identifies strongly with deprived or unhappy children because of

29

their own experiences. He also cited two secondary motives: (1) replacement of a lost or partially rejected child, and (2) companionship for applicants' own child.

Foy concluded that the secondary motives were insufficient to warrant placement of a child unless combined with a primary motive. The findings of empirical studies which suggested that Foy's "valid primary motives" were precursors of foster placement failure are of interest (Trasler, 1960; and Parker, 1966).

In Murphy's (1964) study of adults who were foster children, he found that the location of the foster home was associated with unsatisfactory outcome, i.e., the suburban placement. The most important foster mother factor was her motivation for a particular child of a certain age (associated with unsatisfactory outcome). Those who insisted on girls were less successful in fostering. Those who were not "choosy" were more successful.

In addition to adequacy of foster parents, another area of concern of this research is related to the satisfaction foster parents derive from fostering, as it can be assumed that in order for a person to continue a job one has to derive a certain amount of satisfaction.

#### Literature Relating to Satisfaction Foster Parents Receive from Fostering

Studies concerned with foster parents' satisfactions were conducted by Fanshel (1966), Wakeford (1967), Badcock

(1965), and Jenkins (1965), with Fanshel being the major researcher in this area.

Fanshel (1966), when studying the differences in foster parents of infants and foster parents of older children, found that foster mothers of infants were more oriented to "private" gratifications in fostering, and the older group to more "social" gratifications. The foster parents of younger children rated such satisfactions as enjoying a cuddly baby as their most important satisfaction, while items associated with the community were more popular with foster parents of older children. In other words, foster parents of infants received private and immediate gratification, while foster parents of older children received delayed and social gratification.

Both parents reported that they thought themselves to be respected by the community because of fostering and reported satisfaction with the child placing agency.

Fanshel also compared overall parental adequacy with satisfaction in fostering. The high and low scorers did not differ markedly in selection of satisfactions. When comparing foster parents' adequacy as perceived by the social workers, no clear-cut difference in association was established.

For both groups being able to add to the family income was listed at or near the bottom as a source of satisfaction. Thus, although there has been a good deal written in the professional social work literature about the

legitimacy of earning as a foster parent, this has not apparently been recognized by the foster parents themselves.

Wakeford conducted a study in 1967 in Britain to compare the characteristics and interests of a sample of foster mothers and other housewives, in order to understand why people foster. He found that foster mothers had fewer interests outside the home and placed greater value in staying home and supporting the family, and had a strong desire for a large family. He found that foster mothers received great gratification from having a large family through fostering and spending most of their time with the family.

Badcock in her study in 1965, which was an attempt to provide a profile of the "typical American foster parent" drew her findings from a case study of a small number of foster parents selected from Fanshel's sample of 1961. One of the things common to the foster parents was a need to have a larger family. They satisfied this need by fostering as they could not increase their own family because of economic or other reasons. These are similar findings to Wakeford's (1967).

Jenkins (1967) focused on foster parents' reasons for fostering and related these motives to the adequacy of care provided in the homes. All subjects were interviewed at home for one to three hours, the interview being mainly unstructured. Case material from the records and interviews with the Child Care Officer were also used. Homes were rated satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If one or both foster parents, the Child Care Officer and the interviewer thought the



placement should not have been made, it was rated unsatisfactory, and if this was not the case, it was rated satisfactory. Thirty of the ninety-seven were rated unsatisfactory. After the interviews, homes were divided in nine categories according to predominant need satisfied by fostering, and the number of satisfactory and unsatisfactory ratings compared for each category.

The motives considered most favourable were "alternative to adoption," "compassion for children in need," and "repetition of happy experienced relationship," and the most negative needs were "reparation for guilt feelings" and "compensation for missed or unsatisfactory relationship."

#### Critique of the Literature

Foster care was originally considered a temporary arrangement of substitute care for dependent children. Within the last quarter of a century social workers have become increasingly aware that foster care is in many cases long term.

Children come into foster care for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of which focuses on parental problems such as physical illness and deviant parental behaviour.

The foster care literature of current assessment of foster homes revealed that successful foster parents are those who not only recognize the age-appropriate tasks of children, but also provide an opportunity for their development, have an ability to discriminate among children with respect to problems, and provide for the physical needs of children.

The studies of outcome in foster care, tell us that success is positively associated with lower social class, foster parent childlessness, foster child's siblings or another foster child in the home, foster parents having children of their own but not within five years of the foster child's age. It seems that the ideal age of a foster mother is forty or over, although this was disputed in several studies. Opportunity to gain skills and knowledge in the home was also associated with success.

In the motivation studies, foster parents who preferred girls, or a child of the same sex as their own were judged to be the least adequate. Foster parents' motivation of company for own child was associated with failure.

The literature on satisfaction from fostering is mainly the studies of Fanshel. He came up with a list of satisfactions that foster parents' derive from fostering which fell into three categories--private, social, and agency satisfaction.

Many of the studies mentioned in the literature review are based on different samples, the variables and data collection methods vary and findings were frequently contradictory. It is difficult, therefore, to make generalizations.

Many of the studies give incomplete information about sampling, and method of data collection. Similar terms are defined quite differently, depending on the researcher conducting the study. For instance, the term "success" in fostering is sometimes defined as survival of the placement for

one year, two years, and even five years. Success is also defined as what is considered successful by the child care worker regardless of the length of time of survival of the placement. This variation in meaning makes it difficult to make comparisons of these studies.

In addition, several of the researchers do not attempt to approach the foster parents. All of their information is culled from agency records. Agency records can be contradictory and they do not necessarily portray reality (Fanshel, 1963). Fanshel obtained his list of satisfactions that foster parents derive from fostering from agency records and interviews with workers, but also interviewed the foster parents to find out if his list coincided with the feelings of the foster parents.

A major criticism of research in the area of foster care is the gap of information concerning the foster fathers. Many of the studies have ignored the foster fathers completely. Fanshel (1963) says that the foster father is involved in the process of fosterage after a foster child is placed in the home, even though it may be the foster mother who approaches the agency in most cases. He insists that the foster father is not the passive figure that many people involved in foster care have led us to believe.

Another criticism of the literature on foster care is the apparent lack of interest in the satisfactions foster parents derive from fosterage. This is surprising given the

fact that there is a chronic shortage of adequate foster homes and that many homes are closed because of expressed lack of interest on behalf of the foster parents.

Certainly, what Dinnage and Kellmer-Pringle said of their literature review can be said of this one (Dinnage & Kellmer-Pringle, 1967, p. 22):

. . . the little evidence that exist about "good" and "bad" foster parent characteristics, why people foster and about their actual success at fostering, has revealed no meaningful relationship between these three aspects.

## CHAPTER III

### THEORETICAL RATIONALE AND HYPOTHESES

#### Theoretical Rationale

While there is a chronic shortage of foster parents reported in the literature by just about all Child Welfare Agencies, some people do foster and continue to foster for many years. Fostering does not seem to be financially rewarding, because foster payments are usually only enough for necessities for the foster child. Very few respondents reported gain financially and some even report a deficit according to Jaffee and Kline (1970) and Fanshel (1963).

According to the social exchange theory, social behaviours involve an exchange of resources at a variety of costs (Backman & Secord, 1964). The theory maintains that behaviour is purposeful and goal oriented and not random. Behaviours must be rewarding and persons generally avoid non-rewarding situations (Edwards, 1969). If persons avoid non-rewarding situations, then fostering must of necessity be rewarding to the foster parents.

The theory continues that rules exist pertaining to the association between actors in the social interaction regarding the exchange of resources possessed by the actors. Equivalent exchanges are striven for and compensation for

costs would be an expectation if parties involved are both adults (Gouldner, 1960). Backman and Secord (1964) say that not only is equivalent compensation expected but parties are assumed to strive to maximize rewards and reduce costs. The value of the exchange depends on the actors involved and differs from one social interaction to another.

In seeking foster parents the Child Welfare Agency is hoping to provide a growth-producing (emotional, intellectual and physical) environment for a child within the constellation of the family. The agency usually knows what it expects from the foster parents and they place great value on the foster parenting role.

Surrogate parenting involves adaptation and change for the foster parents and the other family members. The foster parents' psychological tasks embrace a relationship with the foster child, his natural parents, and the agency. Concomitantly, the changes that take place in equilibrium in the foster family relationships in response to the arrival of a newcomer require special efforts on the part of the parents to re-establish an equilibrium in the family. These are some of the expectations of the actors who fulfill the role of foster parents (Kline and Overstreet, 1972).

Many foster children find it difficult to respond overtly to care given them by the foster family. If one faces the fact that the care of most foster children cannot possibly be primarily gratifying, one can then face

realistically the requirements that the foster parents must receive gratification from other sources (Kline & Overstreet, 1972).

According to Zuckerman (1958), the individual who gives without sufficiently receiving to balance the scales for his own equilibrium, cannot be transgressed without ill results. This could result in the foster parent not giving sufficiently to fulfill the needs of the foster child, with a consequent decrease in adequacy of the foster parents. Or it may mean that the foster parents will lose interest in fostering entirely and give up the role.

Some agencies have recognized when foster parents may be giving and not receiving equivalent exchange and purposely provide gratification through the relationship with the social worker or through a planned agency program designed for foster parents. By so doing they tip the scales in the direction of enabling the foster parents to stay with the job through periods of excessive drain on their energies (Jaffee and Kline, 1970).

According to Fanshel (1966) foster parents can and do get satisfactions from fostering. He has labeled the satisfactions "social" and "private."

Social satisfactions would be the gratification one gets from such things as respect from the neighbours and knowing that one is doing something useful for the community through fostering. Private satisfactions would be derived

from such enjoyments as enjoying the presence of a cuddly baby and satisfying one's motherly (or fatherly) drives through having foster children in the home.

According to Backman and Secord, (1964) social exchange theory involves the concepts of reward, cost, and outcome. Any activity on the part of one person that contributes to the gratification of another person's needs can be considered a reward from the standpoint of the latter person. The term cost is similarly a very broad concept. The costs of engaging in any activity not only include "punishment" incurred in carrying out that activity such as fatigue or anxiety, but also as Homans (1970) argues, includes the value of rewards foregone by engaging in this activity rather than alternative activities. The term outcome refers to rewards less costs. If interaction is positive for a particular act in the social exchange, it may yield a profit; if it is negative it should yield a loss.

The rewards for fostering whether they be respect of one's neighbours or enjoyment watching children grow, or satisfaction with the child placing agency, etc., must of necessity overcome the costs, such as giving up a certain amount of one's freedom in order to care for the foster/child and possibly refusing a job in order to foster. This situation of the costs of fostering being less than the rewards would produce a "profit" which is necessary in order for the foster parents to continue fostering.



Wakeford is also of the opinion that fostering must be rewarding as evidenced by his following statement (Wakeford, 1967, p. 77):

No one will voluntarily apply to take an extra child into their homes unless it is rewarding in some way. This applies especially to a foster child . . . . There are all the duties and obligations associated with the maintenance and socialization of any child.

In summary, fostering must be a rewarding undertaking in order for foster parents to continue to foster. The more satisfactions the foster parents get from being involved in substitute parenting, the more they can give to the child-parent relationship involved in this process. It follows from this, the more satisfactions derived from fostering, the more adequately the role of foster parenthood will be performed.

#### Proposition and Hypotheses

Because of the literature review for this study and because of the foregoing theoretical rationale, one can be confident in saying that: There is a positive relationship between foster parents' satisfactions with fostering and social workers' rating of foster parents' adequacy.

Under this general statement, there are three specific hypotheses:

#### Hypothesis No. 1

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by social workers will more likely be more satisfied socially

with fostering than foster parents who are rated as less adequate by the social workers.

Hypothesis No. 2

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied privately with fostering than foster parents who are rated as less adequate by the social workers.

(a) Sub-hypothesis: Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with private gratifications concerned with self derived from fostering.

(b) Sub-hypothesis: Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with private gratifications concerned with the family.

(c) Sub-hypothesis: Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with private gratifications derived directly from the foster child.

Hypothesis No. 3

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with the agency than foster parents who are rated as less adequate by the social worker.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODOLOGY

Since this was a study of an ex post facto nature, the research design was restricted by the examination of a study group where the variables being measured had been and continue to be on-going.

The study group comprised those foster parents who maintained regular foster homes for the Division of Child Welfare, Department of Social Services, St. John's, Newfoundland. The total number of homes amounted to eighty-two as of June 1, 1978 (the research was completed and reported approximately two months later). It should be noted that the provincial Department of Social Services has divided the province into five regions for the purpose of expediting delivery of all facets of its services, including child welfare. Each region has a number of foster homes, though varying in quantity from one to another. As of June 1, 1978, there were 485 regular foster homes in the province. The eighty-two in the study group represented approximately 17 per cent of the provincial total.

Prior to commencement of the field work portion of this study, the Department of Social Services, Head Office, St. John's, was approached. They agreed to become involved

in this endeavour by providing easy access to records identifying foster parents who maintain regular foster homes in the St. John's area. Use of case files, if required, was authorized. They also gave approval for the researcher to solicit assistance from their field staff, including social workers and administrative personnel.

#### Sampling Procedure

Due to constraints imposed by time and finances, it was not feasible to select a sample from the total foster parent population in Newfoundland. The number available, therefore, was only eighty-two families, as this was the number of foster homes in the St. John's area. This small number necessitated use of the entire population serviced by the Department of Social Services' office here in St. John's.

It was desirable to have two groups of foster parents for comparison purposes. Assistance in dividing the study group in two separate groups was provided by the child care workers at the Social Services' office in St. John's. They assisted in the development of a Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale in a manner described in the following section. The scale was then used by the social workers to rate the foster families in order to divide them in two groups. One would comprise the more adequate and the other the less adequate foster parents.

However, there is an inherent bias in this procedure as there may be a tendency on behalf of the workers to favour their first decision (that is, splitting the group into two subgroups without the scale), when rating the foster parents on the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale.

#### Developing the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale

Three student researchers were interested in obtaining information about fostering, including differences in child rearing attitudes among foster parents, satisfactions which they derive from fostering, and the use of control and support in child rearing.

The researchers were constrained by circumstances to using a population of foster parents as previously noted. Since these foster parents would be useful for the researchers' respective studies only when divided into two groups, the following procedure was devised, tested, and implemented by them to secure the two groups of foster parents who comprise the subjects for this study.

Martin Wolins (1963), an American researcher in Child Welfare, proposes that any applicant for licensing as a foster parent is rated by a social worker in terms of that social worker's perceptions of the applicant's ability to foster. He believes that each worker has a continuum by which he rates potential foster parents. Such a continuum rates from very bad to excellent. Based on Wolins' thinking, it logically follows that foster homes fall on a continuum

after they are licensed. Kadushin (1970) and Wolins (1963) have found that the demand for foster homes is always greater than the supply. The result, they maintain, is that homes rated low on the continuum become licensed to meet the demand.

Based on these observations, the researchers believed that it was probable that two groups of foster parents would emerge by dividing such a continuum, and by developing a rating scale which would measure the global or overall adequacy of foster parents.

Each of the eight variables on the scale had four possible responses, and values were assigned as follows: Above Average, 4; Average to Slightly Above Average, 3; Average to Slightly Below Average, 2; Below Average, 1. A foster home rating score totalling 20 or more was determined to be less adequate. Foster homes with rating scores between 21 and 32 were considered more adequate. Researchers believed that a scale which allowed more than two categories to emerge would produce groups which would be too small to produce meaningful results.

To ensure that two groups of foster parents would emerge, social workers were asked to divide their foster parent caseloads into two groups before using the rating scale. The two groups were the more adequate and the less adequate. This division was requested to preclude or overcome any bias or prejudice on the part of social workers

which might lead them to view all foster parents in their caseloads as being more adequate if using the rating scale only.

The eight variables used in the scale were those determined as being most relevant in measuring foster parents' global or overall adequacy. These variables were obtained in two ways. The first was through interviews with the social workers offering child care services in the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Social Services' office in St. John's. The second was through use of the child care literature related to adequacy in foster parenting.

Social workers were asked, independently of each other, to give written responses indicating which factors they considered most important in an adequate foster home. From their replies, researchers abstracted variables which appeared most frequently. The following variables emerged.

1. Emotional Maturity of Foster Parents

This variable occurred in six of eight worker replies. Follow-up telephone conversations with the workers sought to learn what they considered would be an operational definition of this variable. They provided the following:

Emotional Maturity includes the capacity to love, give and take; the ability to cope with day to day problems; flexibility and good judgement; adequate enactment of social roles; acceptance of all one's weaknesses and strengths; capacity to form satisfying interpersonal relationships.

Kline and Overstreet (1972) support this definition of emotional maturity for the most part. Trasler (1960) indicates that unsatisfactory placement outcomes of foster children is related to emotional illness in foster parents. His study is supportive of social workers correlating emotional maturity with fostering adequacy.

2. Ability of Foster Parents to Understand and Accept Natural Parents in the Fostering Process.

Foster parents may express this ability through indicating beliefs that natural parents are normal people who are temporarily unable to cope with the care of their children. They believe that the natural parents should have the right to visit their children while they are in foster care. They understand that the foster child may eventually return to the natural parents. They encourage the foster child to maintain a loyalty toward his natural parents. This variable occurred in four out of eight worker replies. This is supported by Wilkes (1974) and Fanshel (1966) in their observations regarding clarification of the role of foster parents.

3. Meeting the Emotional Needs of the Child.

This variable occurred in seven out of eight workers' replies. Emotional needs were defined by the workers as giving warmth, affection, understanding and tolerance. Trasler (1960) in his research, defined emotional needs in



a very similar way. He states that warmth, feelings of self-worth, the developing of a moral conduct (sense of socially acceptable behaviour), and stimulation of learning are the key elements in a definition of emotional needs to be met in children. In his assessment of foster parents' ability to meet foster childrens' basic needs, Solomon (1969) found that these parents largely concentrate on meeting the child's physical needs. Only one-third of his study group showed an awareness or appreciation for emotional needs and intellectual stimulation of the child.

#### 4. Capacity of Foster Parents to be Child-Centred Rather than Self-Centred

This is defined as the parents' ability to accept the child for his own self, rather than as a means to fulfilling their own needs. For example, do foster parents talk more about themselves than the child; or do they use words such as "home," "love," "children," frequently (Etri, 1969).

This variable occurred in one form or another in five of the eight social worker responses. Again, this variable has been found to be related to success in fostering by Stanton (1956). His findings indicate that success in fostering is higher among those foster parents who love the foster child without reservation.

The remaining four variables did not clearly emerge from the social workers' replies, but are considered to be

quite important in the literature on foster care and parenting.

5. Ability to Meet Basic Physical Needs

Physical needs are defined so as to include food, clothing, housing, and medical services. This variable would be considered the base line for any human being. Solomon (1969), in looking at foster parents' ability to meet the emotional needs of the children, noted that this variable has for years been the focus of foster home programs. Consequently, foster parents have emphasized physical care and developed it well. This may explain why physical need was not included as a variable by the St. John's social workers, that is, it was probably taken for granted.

6. Foster Parents' Ability to meet the Intellectual Needs of the Child

Intellectual needs are operationally defined as providing new learning experiences, expressing interest in school progress, and encouraging the child's efforts in learning new tasks. While the social workers did not explicitly give this variable, its importance can be found in the literature related to the socialization of the child. Yarrow (1973) reiterates that one of the major functions of the family is the socialization of the child and, one of the key elements in that socialization process is developing the child's learning through experiences provided by the family.

7. Ability of Foster Parents to Understand, Accept, and Cope with Different Childhood Behaviours

This is operationally defined to include foster parents' ability to independently evaluate the child's behaviour. For example, the awareness of reasons for slowness in toilet training, bed-wetting, or hyper-activity. This includes the parents' overall readiness to accept the child's behaviours at different ages and stages in his development (Solomon, 1969).

8. Satisfactions Which Foster Parents Derive from the Foster Parenting Role

Foster parents may indicate such satisfactions by expressing positive comments about their relationship with the social worker (agency); by indicating that they enjoy meeting the challenge of difficult tasks in fostering; of being able to serve the community (humanity) in this manner, and by expressing their fascination at watching children grow up. These observations about foster parent satisfactions are supported by Fanshel (1966), Jaffee and Kline (1970), and Kline and Overstreet (1972).

Pre-Testing the Scale

The Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale was pre-tested at the Long Pond district office of the Department of Social Services. Two supervisors divided twenty foster families into more and less adequate and the child care workers used the scale to rate them. The foster parents who were categorized by the social workers as being

more adequate were also rated more highly by them when using the scale. The converse was true for those categorized as less adequate.

#### Using Social Workers to Rate Foster

##### Parents in the Study Group

Having used social workers to rate foster parents on the basis of adequacy, the author was following precedents established by researchers such as Fanshel (1966) and Trasler (1960). And, as Wolins wrote (1963, p. 101):

. . . social worker's image of a good foster parent is, we have seen, substantially clear, predictable, and consistent individually within agencies and among agencies.

It was expected, based on observed precedents in the literature, that social workers at the St. John's Social Services' office would be consistent with one another in using the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale. This was anticipated, to some extent, in that the majority of workers had identified similar criteria for rating foster parents when they assisted in the construction of the scale.

The underlying assumption was that social workers, who would be rating foster parents, were capable of making correct assessments, based on their agency's guidelines for fostering (see Appendix B), their experience, and their academic training. The average education of the social workers who rated foster parents for this study was a Bachelor of Arts degree with a Social Work major. The

average number of years experience in working with foster families and related child welfare activity was four years.

Subsequent analysis of the Foster Parent Global Adequacy/Scale rating forms completed by the social workers revealed that foster homes rated by them as less adequate consistently scored 20 or less. The more adequate foster parents achieved scores between 21 and 32. Although the workers were forced to divide their foster homes as being either more or less adequate, a subsequent comparison of foster home scores and assigned ratings confirmed that the ratings coincided with their initial judgements. Social workers were unaware of the scoring component used to check their rating of foster homes.

#### The Foster Parents' Satisfaction Scale

So far, research has not provided any clear-cut facts about the complicated question of satisfactions of couples who undertake fostering. The most prominent and well-quoted study in this regard has been done by David Fanshel (1963). Fanshel attempted to describe characteristics of foster parents, which included their satisfactions with fostering.

To find out what types of satisfactions foster parents receive from foster parenthood, Fanshel went to the files of foster parents and culled from different agency records foster parent role satisfactions. In order to find out if this list of satisfactions were actually

important to foster parents and to what degree, he interviewed the foster parents. In an unstructured interview with the foster parents he found that these were in fact the satisfactions reported by foster parents. Fanshel then asked the foster parents to rank the satisfactions in order of importance to them. Fanshel found that foster parents of young children (age 5 and under) were more oriented towards "private" gratifications and those of older children were more "socially" oriented. Both groups, however, felt as if they were respected by the community because of being foster parents.

Fanshel defined social satisfactions as enjoying respect from neighbours, helping the unfortunate people, and doing something useful for the community.

Fanshel's private gratifications seemed to fall into three categories. Under one category are private satisfactions concerned with oneself. The second category contains private satisfactions concerned with other people in the family. The third category are private satisfactions derived directly from the presence of the foster child in the home.

The first category would include such satisfactions as putting one's religious beliefs into action, fostering helping one to continue to feel young, keeping busy, satisfying strong motherly (fatherly) drives, liking the challenge of a difficult task, putting one's homemaker skills into action, and feeling like a "whole" person.

The private satisfactions concerned with other members of the family would be gratification with fostering because it makes one's spouse happy, and being able to add to the family income through fostering.

The private satisfactions directly concerned with the foster child would be enjoying the presence of a cuddly baby, enjoying the affection received from children and being fascinated watching children grow.

In further research, Fanshel (1966) suggested there is a third area of satisfactions derived from the child-placing agency. This third major area of satisfactions involved getting a satisfactory response when a problem arose concerning the foster child if the foster parent had to contact the agency. In addition, it involved being pleased with social worker's preparation when a child is placed in the foster home or removed from the foster home.

Fanshel, when interviewing his study group of foster parents, wanted to find out if his list of satisfactions was important to his group and the degree of importance they attached to each item. He therefore used the rank order approach. The writer's study wanted to find out if these satisfactions were related to adequacy of foster parents. To do so, it seemed more useful to examine concepts which encompassed a number of related items on Fanshel's list of satisfactions. The items were grouped from the face validity of Fanshel's list into three groups and each item given a scale of

one to five. The mean for each scale was obtained to determine the degree of private, social and agency satisfactions separately.

#### Pre-Testing the Scale

The Foster Parents' Satisfaction Scale was pre-tested at the Long Pond district office of the Department of Social Services. Twenty foster families were involved in this pre-test. They were first rated by the social workers as more or less adequate. It was found that the more adequate foster parents were more satisfied socially, privately and with the agency than the less adequate foster parents. It was also found that the respondents understood the wording of the scale. According to Fanshel (1966) a major difficulty with interviewing foster parents is their lack of comprehension.

The social satisfactions include items 3, 9, 13, and 14 in the foster parents' interview schedule. The first category of private satisfactions--concerned with oneself--are included in items 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, and 16. The second category--concerned with one's family--are included in items 4 and 5. The third category--private satisfactions derived directly from the foster child--are included in items 2, 11, and 12. The agency satisfactions are included in items 17, 18, and 19 (Appendices C and D).

The lowest mean satisfaction score on these satisfactions is 1; the highest mean satisfactions score is 5.



The score considered the mid-point would be a mean score of 2.5. Foster parents with a mean score of 2.5 and below would be considered the less satisfied, and above 2.5 would be considered more satisfied.

#### Demographic Information

In addition to the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale and Foster Parents' Satisfaction Scale, a questionnaire designed by the researcher was used to obtain demographic information on the population studied. Information of this nature was required so as to provide characteristics of the population being examined and, where possible to relate differentiating characteristics to the foster parents designated as either more adequate or less adequate.

The demographic questions directed to foster mothers (see Appendix D) and foster fathers (see Appendix C), were the same except in the following instances. The question regarding family income was on the father's questionnaire, but provided that responses should indicate if there was family income received from spouse's earning as well as from the husband's. Similarly, the question regarding living arrangements was asked of the father only.

The foster mother's questionnaire differed from the foster father's in the following manner. The mother was asked how many natural children she had had; how many natural children she had living at home at the time of the survey; and how many children they had fostered since becoming

fooster parents. Placing of the above-noted questions was governed by the appropriateness of the question directed to the spouse thought to be most likely to best handle the response.

The following questions were asked to determine socio-economic characteristics of the study group.

Occupation.--Responses to this question were taken as given; that is, if a person was a plumber, the occupation was so written on the response sheet. Prior to the survey, the Newfoundland Government's Department of Manpower and Industrial Relations was contacted for assistance in coding occupations. As a result, seven categories were developed. These are: Homemaker, Homemaker with Part-Time Employment; Retired; Unskilled; Semi-Skilled; Skilled; Professional. Responses to the occupation question were subsequently assigned to the category which they were thought to best fit after referring to the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations, 1977, prepared by Employment and Immigration Canada, Ottawa.

Education.--Categories were developed to determine those persons who had no high school, some high school, technical training with either of the foregoing, high school graduation, and university education.

Income.--The Department of Manpower and Industrial Relations also assisted in devising income ranges wherein

respondents could possibly be expected to fall, employed in current occupations in Newfoundland. Two ranges, \$5,000.00 to \$6,999.00, and \$7,000.00 to \$9,999.00, were determined to be the lower income category. The middle income range was \$10,000.00 to \$14,999.00, and \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00. Over \$20,000.00 was the higher income level.

Age.--The question regarding age was asked to determine if a particular age group, for example, forty to fifty years, provided the majority of foster parents, or if there were some other variations.

In addition, two questions sought to determine if the foster families in this study tended to remain in the one place for lengthy periods. Indications of stable living arrangements, particularly if the home was occupant owned, would reveal a permanency of the arrangement. For this purpose, length of residence was also asked.

Information was sought regarding the size of the place where the foster parents were raised, the number of siblings they had, and the size of their own families. The population ranges used for places where respondents were raised are the same as those used by Census Canada, but were modified slightly for use in this study. Two new ranges were added, under 1,000 and over 100,000. Census Canada considers all areas with a population less than 1,000 to be rural. Considering the small size of many of Newfoundland's outport settlements, using the under 1,000 range was necessary. And since there is only one city in the province with

a population of more than 100,000, there was no reason to go beyond this range. The reason for asking this question, and the number of siblings, was to determine if foster parents in this area generally come from large families in rural areas.

#### Survey Procedure

Through use of the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale, agency social workers provided two groups of foster parents, which together comprised the total regular foster parent population serviced by the Department of Social Services' office in St. John's. One group was designated as more adequate foster parents and the other as the less adequate.

One week prior to the actual survey period, researchers arranged with the Child Welfare Division of the above-noted agency to mail a letter to each foster home. The letter, bearing the letterhead of the Department of Social Services, over the signature of the Child Welfare Supervisor, informed the foster parents that a research project in child care was underway, and requested their cooperation (see Appendix E).

During the period 6-19 June, 1978, foster parents were telephoned and appointments scheduled, at their convenience, for interviewers to visit them. Three graduate students (fellow researchers), and three undergraduates, all in social work, formed three interviewing groups, a researcher

and student in each. Before the survey began, each interviewer was familiarized with the interview instruments, and all were aware of the interview format, i.e., no prompting of responses, no explanations of the statements in the interview schedule. They were also briefed in the use of the coding system devised and the response sheets (see Appendices C and D), used for recording the foster parents' responses.

The interview schedules were administered to both parents, usually, in about thirty-five minutes. The schedules for the two researchers, interested in foster parents' Child Rearing Attitudes and Child Rearing Practices are not included here although they were administered with the writer's instrument as one schedule. The section on Satisfaction (A) was administered first, followed by that on Child Rearing Practices (B), and Attitudes (C), finishing with the demographic questionnaire (D).

The interviewing teams visited with the foster parents, usually in the late evenings, since this was the only time foster parents were available. They were always advised that their responses would be treated confidentially. While one interviewer spoke with the mother, the other spoke with the father. Throughout the survey, interviewing members alternately interviewed the mother or the father, though not by design. There was little possibility for an interviewer's bias to enter since interviewee responses were

limited and prompting or explanations were also limited. Response cards were given to the respondents on which were printed the response choices for the sections as outlined above. The team approach of interviewing necessitated, where possible, separating mother and father so that, with two conversations in progress, neither would be a distraction to the other. The use of survey teams made possible as many as five interviews per evening, accomplishing the actual survey in a two week period.

Collected data were collated and descriptive statistics were applied. Subsequent analysis of the prepared data is reported in the section which follows.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS

#### Description of the Study Group

The total number of foster families operating "regular" foster homes in the St. John's area as of June 1, 1978 (the commencement date of this research) was 82. One of the homes was erroneously licensed and is actually supposed to be classified as a Child Welfare Allowance Arrangement rather than a regular foster home. Another family was recently transferred to the St. John's area, consequently, the social worker refused to rate the home. This left a total of 80 families to be studied. Some of these homes did not contain both foster parents--since licensing either the mother or father had died. Approximately 10 per cent fell into the single parent category.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview all of the foster parents. The following is a breakdown of this group in regards to sex, the reason for unavailability, and the numbers. As one can see from the table, 27 people were unavailable with the majority refusing to be interviewed (20). The number of males exceeded the females unavailable by 5. It is interesting to note that in the refusals there were 17 persons who were considered more adequate by the

social workers involved and the remaining 10 were in the less adequate group.

TABLE 1  
FOSTER PARENTS UNAVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

	Male	Female	Total Persons	Reason
	11	9	20	Refused
	3	1	4	Illness
	1	1	2	Death in family
	1	0	1	Out of province
<b>Total</b>	<b>16*</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>	

\*In 5 instances, 1 parent of a 2-parent family did not respond.

In the beginning there was a total of 79 foster mothers and 73 foster fathers to be interviewed. There were 11 mothers and 16 fathers unavailable, leaving a total of 125 to be interviewed. This meant an inaccessibility rate of 18 per cent.

Characteristics of non-respondents were not examined. To press for their participation may have caused discord among the non-participants and the agency which made the group available for the study.

Personal and Social Characteristics of Foster Parents

Age at Time of Study

The foster mothers and fathers showed a wide spread in ages; ranging from 22 to 68. The following is a table



showing the age range of the group.

TABLE 2  
AGE OF FOSTER PARENTS AT TIME OF STUDY

<u>Foster Mothers</u>			<u>Foster Fathers</u>		
Age	Frequency	Percentage	Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-24	2	2.9	20-24	-	-
25-29	3	4.4	25-29	3	5.3
30-39	26	38.2	30-39	18	31.6
40-49	14	20.6	40-49	16	28.0
50-60	9	13.2	50-60	8	14.0
Over 60	14	20.7	Over 60	12	21.1
Total	68	100		57	100

As one can see from Table 2, the majority of the foster parents fell in the age range 30-39. The fathers are slightly older than the mothers, with 45.5 per cent of the mothers falling below age 40 as compared with 36.9 per cent of the fathers.

#### Marital Status

All but eight of the families were intact, with both spouses alive and living together. It is more likely that agencies will tend to seek and retain "complete" families

because of the fact that foster home placement is viewed by social services as an effort to provide children with substitutes for natural parents.

### Race

All of the foster families were Caucasian. This is not surprising as Newfoundland is a very homogeneous society.

### Religious Affiliation

The categories of religions of the foster parents is as follows:

TABLE 3

#### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF FOSTER PARENTS

Category	<u>Foster Mothers</u>		<u>Foster Fathers</u>	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Roman Catholic	29	42.6	22	39.6
Anglican	25	36.8	17	30.8
United Church	8	11.8	9	16.5
Salvation Army	2	2.9	2	3.6
Other	4	5.9	7	9.5
Total	68	100	57	100

The predominance of the group, as seen from Table 3, fall into the category of Roman Catholic; closely behind this category is Anglican. This is not surprising as it is common knowledge that the majority of the population of St.

John's is of Irish descent, consequently of Roman Catholic affiliation.

Income

The income composition of the study group is as follows:

TABLE 4  
COMBINED INCOME OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

Category	Frequency	Percentage
\$ 5,000- 6,999	8	14.0
7,000- 9,999	9	15.8
10,000-14,999	23	40.4
15,000-20,000	10	17.5
Over 20,000	7	12.3
Total	57	100

As mentioned previously, this question appeared on the father's questionnaire only, but asked for combined income. However, the income of the wives would not make very much of a difference since the majority of the foster mothers had no income.

According to the above table, the largest percentage fell in the income range between \$10,000.00 to \$14,999.00. This is above the average income in Newfoundland which is below \$10,000.00 (Statistics Canada, 1976). The average income for the study group used by Jaffee and Kline (1970)

was \$9,910.00 and this group was considered to be above average in all respects as it was a very select group of foster parents. This study, however, was conducted in 1970 and in the United States.

#### Occupation of Foster Fathers

The occupation of the fathers is shown in the following table:

TABLE 5  
OCCUPATION OF FOSTER FATHERS

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Retired	9	16.1
Unskilled	6	10.7
Semi-skilled	16	28.6
Skilled	23	39.2
Professional	3	5.4
Total	57	100

As one can see, the largest percentage (39%) of foster fathers were in the skilled category with almost as many in the semi-skilled (29%). The average Newfoundlander is in the semi-skilled to unskilled occupation category (Department of Labour, 1976). Jaffee and Kline's (1970) study group of foster parents had more professionals than this group, but the largest percentage fell in the semi-skilled category.

Educational Achievement

The extent of education of the foster parents is shown in the following table:

TABLE 6  
HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ATTAINED

Category	<u>Foster Mothers</u>		<u>Foster Fathers</u>	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Grade 8 or Less	27	39.7	22	38.6
9th through 11 (did not graduate)	23	33.8	14	24.6
High School graduate	4	5.9	12	21.0
Some college, no degree	1	1.9	1	1.8
Special or technical training with some high school or graduation	13	18.7	7	12.2
University graduate	0	0	1	1.8
Total	68	100	57	100

As one can see, the foster fathers are slightly more educated than the foster mothers, but there is not a great disparity. For example, 23 per cent of foster mothers had high school with no diploma, as opposed to 25 per cent of foster fathers. It is interesting to note that 18.7 per cent of the foster mothers do have some technical training,

but the majority of the housewives are not employed.

It is also of note that there is only one university graduate.

### Residence

The length of time at their present address of the foster parents is shown in the following table (7):

TABLE 7  
LENGTH OF TIME AT PRESENT ADDRESS

Category	<u>Foster Mothers</u>		<u>Foster Fathers</u>	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	3	4.5	2	3.6
1-5 years	10	14.7	5	8.9
Over 5 years	26	38.2	21	35.7
Lifetime	29	42.6	29	51.8
Total	68	100	57	100

As a group, the foster parents are very stable with regards to permanency of address, with the majority living at the same address for their entire lifetime. It is also interesting to note that 89 per cent of foster parents own their own homes, with the remainder renting.

### Siblings of Foster Parents

In the following table is shown the number of siblings which the foster parents have:

TABLE 8  
SIBLINGS OF FOSTER PARENTS

Category	<u>Foster Fathers</u>		<u>Foster Mothers</u>	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1-2	11	18.2	16	21.4
3-4	14	24.2	10	17.9
5-6	10	18.2	12	16.1
7 or more	22	39.4	30	44.6
Total	57	100	68	100

As can be seen from this table, foster parents tend to come from large families. Thirty-nine per cent of the foster mothers come from families with 7 or more siblings, and the corresponding percentage for the foster fathers is 44 per cent. Fanshel (1966) says from his experience with foster parents that they tend to come from large families, which would be in accord with the findings of this study.

#### Natural Children of Study Group

The percentage of foster parents related to the number of natural children they have had (and this includes adopted children) is shown in the following table:

TABLE 9  
NATURAL CHILDREN OF FOSTER PARENTS

Category	Percentage
None	7.3
1-2	11.8
3-5	50.0
6 or more	30.9
	100

The foster parents as a group have had more children than the national average which is 2.5 children (Statistics Canada, 1976). Eighty per cent of the foster parents have had three or more children. This agrees with Fanshel (1966) who says that foster parents tend to have fairly large families.

#### Years Married

The following scale shows the number of years married corresponding with the percentage of foster parents who fall in the different categories.

TABLE 10  
FOSTER PARENTS' NUMBER OF YEARS MARRIED

Category	Percentage
1-5 years	2.5
6-10 years	8.9
11-15 years	28.7
16 years or more	59.9
	100



It is not surprising then, knowing the foregoing characteristics, many of which denote stability, that approximately 60 per cent of these foster parents have been married to the same spouse for 16 years or more, and 90 per cent have been married for 11 years or more. As Fanshel (1966) notes, characteristics such as these could be a result of the selection process.

#### Foster Children

It is interesting to note, in regards to the foster children, that 41 per cent of the foster parents have had 8 or more foster children, and over 50 per cent have had more than 4 foster children since they became foster parents.

In regards to the number of children in foster care in these homes at the time of the survey, there were 150 foster children being cared for by 125 foster parents.

#### Profile of the Study Group

The study group showed a wide spread in ages ranging from 22 to 68, with the majority falling in the age range 30-39. All but 8 of the families were 2-parent families, all were Caucasian. The majority of the foster parents were of the Roman Catholic faith, followed closely by Anglican. The range of income containing the majority was \$10,000.00 to \$14,999.00. The occupations for the most part were in the semi-skilled and skilled category. The educational achievement of the group was low, the average

foster parent having below Grade 9.

The group are considered to be very industrious as 100 per cent of them were employed full time (foster fathers) and considering their education level they were holding very good jobs with above average income.

Their stability is evidenced in the fact that nearly all own their own homes and have lived in the same area over five years (nearly 90%) and lifetime (over 50%), and have stable employment, together with over ten years of marriage to the same person.

The average foster parent also comes from what is considered a fairly large family (Statistics Canada, 1976) and practically all have children of their own.

This group when compared to other groups of foster parents are very similar, except for the fact that they are somewhat more homogeneous than other foster parents' groups in the literature.

#### Examination of Foster Parents' Satisfactions and Adequacy

In analyzing the data, it was discovered that there were 35 foster fathers out of a total of 57, who scored between 21 and 32 on the Foster Parents' Global Adequacy Scale. In other words, they were designated as more adequate as perceived by the social worker. They are classified by the author as Group I for the sake of simplicity in reporting the data. Twenty-two foster fathers scored 20 or

less and consequently were designated as being in the less adequate group (Group II). The corresponding results for the foster mothers was 39 in Group I, and 29 in Group II.

When compared with the foster parents' satisfaction derived from social gratification, the results were as follows:

TABLE 11  
SOCIAL SATISFACTIONS AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

	Fathers		Mothers	
	N	Mean Score	N	Mean Score
Group I	35	3.63	39	3.48
Group II	22	2.12	29	2.10

As indicated previously, a mean score of 2.5 and below was considered to be less satisfied, and anything above 2.5 was considered to be more satisfied.

From the scale above, it is evident that the foster mothers and the foster fathers who were more adequate are also the more satisfied foster parents, and vice versa.

When Group I and Group II were compared on the private satisfactions, the results were as follows:

TABLE 12  
PRIVATE SATISFACTIONS (a) AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

	Fathers		Mothers	
	N	Mean Score	N	Mean Score
Group I	35	3.31	39	3.22
Group II	22	2.11	29	2.19

From this scale one can see that the more adequate foster parents Group I, had higher mean scores on Private Satisfactions (a) than Group II. It will be remembered that private satisfaction (a) are the satisfaction concerned with self.

TABLE 13  
PRIVATE SATISFACTIONS (b) AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

	Fathers		Mothers	
	N	Mean Score	N	Mean Score
Group I	35	2.12	39	2.30
Group II	22	2.22	29	2.20

Private Satisfaction (b) are the gratifications concerned with the family. The more adequate foster mothers and fathers, as well as the less adequate foster mothers and fathers scored below the mid-point of 2.5. The reason for this is that there were only two items in this scale and one had to do with being able to add to the family income. It has been reported that foster care payments do not add to the family income (Jenkins & Sauber, 1967).

TABLE 14  
PRIVATE SATISFACTIONS (c) AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

	Fathers		Mothers	
	N	Mean Score	N	Mean Score
Group I	35	3.70		3.75
Group II	22	2.30		2.40

Private Satisfactions (c) are concerned with the private satisfaction that foster parents derive directly from the foster child.

The more adequate again scored higher than the less adequate, although the less adequate scored higher on this scale than those previously reported. They are still, however, below the point of being more satisfied.

The next area of satisfaction to be compared to adequacy is agency satisfaction category. The results are as follows:

TABLE 15

SATISFACTION WITH CHILD PLACEMENT AGENCY  
AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

	<u>Fathers</u>		<u>Mothers</u>	
	N	Mean Score	N	Mean Score
Group I	35	2.75	39	2.80
Group II	22	2.05	29	2.10

The more adequate foster parents scored lower on this satisfaction scale than previous scales, but are still considered more satisfied. They did, however, score a higher mean than the less adequates.

The next variable to be tested against adequacy was the age of the foster mother. It was found (refer to Table 16) that mothers age 40 and over contained the greater percentages of less adequate foster mothers.

TABLE 16

## AGE OF FOSTER MOTHER AND ADEQUACY

Category	Group I	Group II
Under 40	74.1% (23)	25.9% (8)
40 and Over	43.2% (16)	56.8% (21)

Also, the mothers under 40 contained the greater percentage of more adequate foster mothers.

Trasler (1960) found that foster mothers between the ages of 40-50 were the more adequate foster mothers. Kraus (1971) found a similar result and considered that foster mothers over 40 were more adequate. Parker (1966) concluded that foster mother's age had nothing to do with adequacy. George (1970) found similar results as this present study when he concluded that mothers between the ages of 25 and 35 were more adequate than foster mothers over 35.

The next demographic characteristic to be compared to adequacy was the location of the foster home and the two locations were city as opposed to suburban area.

The results are shown in Table 17. Both Groups I and II had a larger percentage in the suburban area than in the city. This variable was, therefore, not considered to be related to foster parents' adequacy.

TABLE 17

## REGION AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

	Foster Fathers		Foster Mothers	
	City	Suburban	City	Suburban
Group I	N=16 (45%)	N=19 (54%)	N=18 (46.2%)	N=21 (53.8%)
Group II	N=8 (36.4%)	N=14 (63%)	N=10 (34.5%)	N=19 (65.5%)

This is in disagreement with Murphy's (1964) findings that the less adequate foster parents live in the suburban area.

The next demographic characteristics of the foster parents to be compared to adequacy was the number of foster parents' own children living in the home (this included adopted children) that were close in age to the foster child or children. It was found that only 5 per cent of the families had children who were within five years of the foster child's (children's) age. This was not considered to be a characteristic related to adequacy.

This variable has been significantly and negatively related to foster parents' success according to Parker (1966).

Another variable advocated in the literature as being associated with success in fostering is the fact that the mother is employed outside the home. The vast majority of the foster mothers were not employed outside the home and were listed as full-time housewives. This was not, therefore, considered a significant factor for this group.

The next factor looked at with respect to adequacy was education. The educational level was combined into two groups, "Less than Grade 9" and "Grade 9 or more," and the results were as follows:

TABLE 18  
EDUCATION AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

Grade	<u>Mothers</u>		<u>Fathers</u>	
	Group I	Group II	Group I	Group II
Less than 9	N=7 (25.9%)	N=20 (74.1%)	N=14 (63.6%)	N=8 (36.4%)
Grade 9 or more	N=32 (79%)	N=9 (22%)	N=21 (60%)	N=14 (40%)

The more adequate foster parents (Group I) consistently contained a greater percentage with Grade 9 or more. Conversely, the less adequate foster parents consistently contained a greater percentage of foster parents with less than Grade 9. It was found, therefore, that the educational level of the foster parents is related to their adequacy.

As the vast majority of the foster parents come from families of four or more siblings, this factor was not tested for relationship; in addition, the living arrangements (the vast majority of foster parents own their own homes), was not considered to be a deciding factor as to whether foster parents were considered more or less adequate.



The next variable compared to adequacy was the religion of the foster parents, and the results were as follows:

TABLE 19  
RELIGION AND ADEQUACY OF FOSTER PARENTS

Religion	Foster Fathers		Foster Mothers	
	Group I	Group II	Group I	Group II
R.C.	N=14 (58.3%)	N=10 (41.7%)	N=16 (55.2%)	N=13 (44.8%)
Other	N=21 (63.6%)	N=12 (36.4%)	N=23 (59.0%)	N=16 (41.0%)

As can be seen from the above table, Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholics had just about an equal chance of falling in Group I or Group II.

The last variable to be looked at was income of the foster parents. This was divided into three categories for comparison, and the results were as follows:

TABLE 20  
INCOME OF FOSTER PARENTS AND ADEQUACY

Category	Group I	Group II
Less than \$10,000	N=7 (43.8%)	N=9 (56.3%)
\$10,000 to \$14,999	N=17 (70.8%)	N=7 (29.2%)
\$15,000 and over	N=11 (64.7%)	N=6 (35.3%)

The majority of the families fell in the second income category (\$10,000 to \$14,999). The greater percentage of the last two groups were in the Group I status (more

adequate) but so few were left for comparison in the first group, this was not considered to be a factor when comparing income to adequacy.

### Summary

There were 35 foster fathers of the total of 57 rated as more adequate and 39 foster mothers rated as more adequate out of a total of 68. There were 22 less adequate foster fathers, and 29 less adequate foster mothers.

More adequate foster parents received a higher mean score on the social satisfaction scale. The same was true for the private satisfactions concerned with oneself and the private satisfactions centred around the foster child. However, the more adequates and the less adequates both scored below the mid-point of 2.5 on the scale private satisfactions concerned with one's family. Consequently, both were considered less satisfied on this scale. The more adequate foster parents received a higher mean score than the less adequate foster parents on the satisfaction with agency scale.

Both Groups I and II, more and less adequates, had a larger percentage of foster parents in the suburban area than in the city.

Only 5 per cent of the families had children who were within five years of the foster child's (children's) age. The vast majority of foster mothers were not employed outside the home; their occupation was listed as housewife or homemaker.

The more adequate foster parents consistently contained a greater percentage with Grade 9 or more than the less adequates.

The vast majority of foster parents came from families of four or more siblings, so this factor was not compared to adequacy. The living arrangements of the foster parents fell in this same category.

Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholics had just about an equal chance of falling into Group I as Group II.

The vast majority of the foster families fell into the income range of \$10,000.00 or more. And the greater percentage of these were in the more adequate group, but as so few were left over for comparison to the income range less than \$10,000.00 that this was not considered a factor in determining adequacy.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, it was concluded that the more adequate foster parents were more socially satisfied with fostering than the less adequate foster parents. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 which is,

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by social workers will more likely be more satisfied socially with fostering than foster parents who are rated as less adequate by the social worker,

can be said to be acceptable.

It is also concluded that the more adequate foster parents derived more private satisfactions which are concerned with self from fostering than less adequate foster parents. Therefore, the sub-hypothesis (a) which is,

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with private gratifications from fostering concerned with self,

can be said to be acceptable.

From the reported findings, it is concluded that sub-hypothesis (b) which is as follows:

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with private gratifications concerned with the family,

is refuted and said to be unacceptable.

Because the more adequate foster parents were found to derive more satisfactions from private gratifications centred around the foster child, the sub-hypothesis (c) which is,

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with private gratifications derived directly from the foster child,

is said to be acceptable.

From these three sub-hypotheses, two being proven acceptable out of three, it can be said that the main Hypothesis 2, which is,

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied privately with fostering than foster parents who are rated as less adequate by the social workers,

is said to be partially acceptable.

The more adequate foster parents scored higher on the scale, satisfaction with child placing agency, therefore, Hypothesis 3, which is,

Foster parents who are rated as more adequate by the social workers will more likely be more satisfied with the agency than foster parents who are rated as less adequate by the social workers,

is said to be acceptable.

Since Hypotheses 1 and 3 are said to be acceptable, and 2 partially acceptable, then it can be conjectured that in the group of foster parents studied using the described instruments there is a positive relationship between foster parents' satisfactions with fostering and social workers' ratings of foster parents' adequacy.

It was also concluded that the foster mothers under forty seemed to be the more adequate and the more satisfied foster parents. The other variable which appears to be related to the adequacy and satisfaction of the foster parents is the education level of the foster parents. Location of foster parents' home (whether it was in the city or suburban area) was not considered to be related to adequacy or satisfaction of foster parents, neither was the employment of the mother, nor the size of family in which the foster parents were raised, nor the religion of the foster parents, nor the income.

The answer to the question, "Is there a positive relationship between certain foster parents' demographic characteristics and/or social worker's rating of foster parents' adequacy," has been discovered for this study group. The foster mother under forty is more likely to be from the more adequate foster home than the less adequate. And the higher the education level of the foster parents, the more likely they will be considered the more adequate foster parents by the social worker.

It is also concluded that the social workers involved in this study do possess an ability to rate the foster parents under their jurisdiction. As it seems that the more adequate are more satisfied, it can be an assumption that if people are satisfied they will do a better job.

It would be an injustice to the people who participated in the study, namely the foster parents, to end this section without a few words of my impressions of them, not just how they came out when fed through a computer. For the most part, they were amazingly honest and often volunteered information about problems and difficulties that were not asked for. I usually ended up with the feeling that I had a reasonably good idea of how it was to live in that family. I was shown the car the son was working on, the room the husband was adding, and the many pictures of different members of the family. Religion seemed to be greatly valued, work, socialization of the children, the marital relationship, and acquisition of material things. For the most part, the family unit seemed to be extremely close and strong.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations resulted from this research:

1. It is recommended that similar studies be carried out because the population was limited to foster parents serviced by the St. John's Division of Child Welfare, therefore generalizability is restricted.
2. It is recommended that further research be carried out which involves the foster children, an area which

is very important and was ignored in this study.

Little is known, in Newfoundland at least, about the types of children that come into care and what happens to them after they leave care.

3. A study to determine how much time social workers spend with less adequate foster parents, compared with more adequate would be useful. More time and attention to the less adequate foster parents (who are less satisfied with the agency than the more adequates) could improve their satisfaction with fostering. This, in turn, could improve their adequacy.
4. It is recommended that social workers pay more attention to foster parents' individual achievements especially to those caring for difficult children. In doing so, social workers would be reinforcing the positive aspects of the foster parent process and contributing to their self-esteem and satisfactions.



**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Ambinder, W. Role phenomia and foster care for disturbed children. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1962, 32, 32-34.
- Backman, C.W., and Secord, P.F. Social Psychology. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1964.
- Badcock, C. Some psychodynamic factors in foster parent-hood - Part 1. Child Welfare, 1965, 44, 485-493.
- Bruner, J.S. Cognitive growth: toward a theory of instruction. New York: Norton Press, 1968.
- Cautley, P. Successful foster homes: an exploratory study of their characteristics. Wisconsin: Broome Inc., 1966.
- Child Welfare League of America. Standards for foster family care services. New York: C.W.L.A. Inc., 1959.
- Committee on standards for foster service. New York: C.W.L.A. Inc., 1959.
- The need for foster care. New York: C.W.L.A. Inc., 1969.
- Costin, N. Child welfare: policies and practices. New York: McGraw Hill, 1972.
- DeFries, Z. Foster care for disturbed children: a non-sentimental view. Child Welfare, 1965, 44, 73-84.
- Dinnage, R., and Kellmer-Pringle, M.L. Foster home care: facts and falacies. London: Longman's, Green & Co., 1967.
- Edwards, J.N. Familial behaviour as social exchange. Journal of Marriage and Family, 1969, 43, 518-526.
- Eisenberg, L. The sins of fathers: urban decay and social pathology. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1962, 32, 5-17.
- Etri, G. A motivational study of successful and unsuccessful foster parents. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.
- Fanshel, D. Studying the role performance of foster parents. Social Work, 1961, 6, 74-81.

Fanshel, D. Foster parenthood: a role analysis. Minnesota: Minnesota Press, 1966.

----- The role of foster parents in the future of foster care. New York: C.W.L.A. Inc., 1970.

Foy, E. Decision in foster care. Child Welfare, 1967, 46, 498-503.

Garrett, B. A crises in foster care. Public Welfare, 1967, 25, 101-104.

George, V. Foster care: theory and practice. New York: Humanities Press, 1970.

Gottesfeld, H. In loco parentis: a study of perceived role value in foster home care. New York: Jewish Child Care Association, 1970.

Gouldner, A.W. The norm of reciprocity. American Sociological Review, 1960, 25, 161-178.

Government of Alberta. Foster Care Committee. Alberta: Government of Alberta, 1973.

Homans, C.C. Social behaviour: its elementary forms. New York: Harcourt and Brace, Inc., 1970.

Hutchinson, D. In quest of foster parents. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.

Jaffee, B., and Kline, D. New payment patterns and the foster parent role. Washington: C.W.L.A. Research Centre, 1970.

Jenkins, R. The needs of foster parents. Case Conference, 1965, 11, 211-219.

Jenkins, S., and Sauber, M. Paths to child development. New York: Community Council of Greater New York, 1967.

Jensen, G. Developmental assessment as an indicator of foster home adequacy. Child Welfare, 1965, 45, 576-582.

Jeter, H. Childrens' problems and services in child welfare programs. Washington: Washington Press, 1963.

Kadushin, A. Child Welfare Services: A Source book. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Kline, D. The validity of long term foster family care service. Child Welfare, 1965, 44, 185-195.

-----, and Overstreet, H. Foster care of children. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

Kraus, J. Predicting success of foster placements for school age children. Social Work, 1971, 16, 67-71.

Lawder, E.A. Toward a more scientific understanding of foster care. Child Welfare, 1964, 48, 57-63.

Littner, N. The child's need to repeat his past: some implications for placement. In N. Littner, Changing needs and practices in child welfare. New York: C.W.L.A., Inc., 1960.

Low, S. Foster care of children, major national trends and prospects. Washington: Washington Press, 1968.

Maas, H.J. Highlights in the foster care project: introduction. Child Welfare, 1959, 38, 5-9.

-----, Children's environment and child welfare. Child Welfare, 1971, 50, 32-47.

-----, and Engler, R. Children in need of parents. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.

Madge, J. The tools of social science. New York: Double Day Anchor Books, 1965.

Mandell, B. Where are the children? London: Lexington Books, 1973.

Meier, E. Former foster children as adult citizens. Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1962.

Meisels, J.F., and Loeb, M.B. Unanswered questions about foster care. Social Services Review, 1966, 30, 239-246.

Middleton, N. When family failed. London: Victor Gallancy Ltd., 1971.

Murphy, A.B.M. Foster home variables and adult outcomes. Mental Hygiene, 1964, 48, 587-599.

Newfoundland Government. Department of Social Services Child Welfare Regulations, 1977.

-----, Policy Manual, Division of Child Welfare, 1978.

Parfit, J. The communities children. London: The National Bureau for Co-operation in Child Care, 1967.

Parker, R. Decision in child care. London: Allen & Unwin, 1966.

Pugh, E. Social work in child care. London: Routledge and Kegan, 1968.

Purvine, M. Highlights of the foster care project, Part III. Child Welfare, 1959, 48, 25-28.

Solomon, M.A. Foster parent's perceptions of foster child's roles. Child Welfare, 1969, 78, 202-211.

Stanton, H.R. Mother love in foster homes. Marriage and Family Living, 1956, 18, 301-307.

Stevenson, O. Someone else's children. London: Routledge and Kegan Press, Ltd., 1965.

Stone, H. Reflections on foster care: a report of a national survey of attitudes and practices. New York: C.W.L.A. Inc., 1969.

Tegethoff, H., and Goldstein, H. A realistic approach to home finding. Child Welfare, 1972, 41, 253-255.

Trasler, G. In place of parents: a study of foster care. New York: The Humanities Press, 1960.

U.S. Government Printing Office. Children served by public welfare agencies and voluntary child welfare agencies. Washington, D.C.: Author, 1971.

Wakeford, V.J. Fostering - a sociological perspective. British Journal of Sociology, 1967, 14, 335-346.

Walters, J., and Stinnett, N. Parent-child relationships - a decade review of research. Journal of Marriage and Family, 1971, 33, 70-111.

Wilkes, J.R. The impact of fostering on the foster family. Child Welfare, 1974, 53, 331-341.

Wiltse, K.T., and Gambrill, E. Foster care: plans and actualities. Public Welfare, 1974, 32, 12-21.

----- Foster care, 1973, a reappraisal. Public Welfare, 1974, 32, 7-15.

Wolins, M. Selecting foster parents. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.

Yarrow, M.R. Research on child-rearing as a basis for practice. Child Welfare, 1973, 52, 209-219.

Zuckerman, M. Normative data and factor analysis on parental attitude research. Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1958, 22, 163-171.

APPENDIX A  
FOSTER PARENTS' GLOBAL ADEQUACY SCALE



FOSTER PARENTS' GLOBAL ADEQUACY SCALE

This information is part of a research project being conducted by graduate students at the School of Social Work, Memorial University. In this study we are interested in understanding more about the attitudes, behaviours and satisfactions of foster parents. In order to do so, it is first necessary to rate each of your foster families. We would like you to complete the following questionnaire for each of the regular foster homes in your district. While we have asked you to give the name, address and telephone number of each foster home, your answers to this questionnaire will be maintained in confidence and used for research purposes only. Thank you for your co-operation.

Foster Parents' Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Time Fostering \_\_\_\_\_  
(years)

Please complete one questionnaire for each foster home. The following statements have 4 possible ratings. Please circle one rating for each statement. The rating you circle should best represent your overall rating of the statement as it applies to this particular foster home.

1. EMOTIONAL MATURITY OF THE FOSTER PARENTS

This statement is defined as the foster parents ability to love, give and take; the ability to cope with day-to-day problems; flexibility and exercise of good judgement; adequate enactment of one's social roles; acceptance of all one's weaknesses and strengths; capacity to form satisfying interpersonal relationships.

Above	Average to	Average to	Below
Average	Slightly Above	Slightly Below	Average
	Average	Average	

2. ABILITY OF FOSTER PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT NATURAL PARENTS

This may be expressed by the foster parents by their indicating that they view the natural parents as normal people, temporarily unable to cope; that the foster child may eventually return to the natural parents; by their encouraging foster child to maintain a loyalty



toward the natural parents.

Above Average	Average to Slightly Above Average	Average to Slightly Below Average	Below Average
---------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------

3. ABILITY OF FOSTER PARENTS TO MEET THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD

Emotional needs are defined as giving the child love and warmth; enhancing the child's feelings of self-worth; developing child's socially acceptable behaviour.

Above Average	Average to Slightly Above Average	Average to Slightly Below Average	Below Average
---------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------

4. CAPACITY OF FOSTER PARENTS TO BE CHILD CENTERED RATHER THAN SELF CENTERED

This is defined as the ability to accept the child for his own self, rather than a means to fulfilling own needs; for example, do foster parents more often talk about their own wishes, needs, problems, than those of the child; do they use the words, home, love and child, quite a lot.

Above Average	Average to Slightly Above Average	Average to Slightly Below Average	Below Average
---------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------

5. ABILITY OF FOSTER PARENTS TO MEET THE PHYSICAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD

These are defined as clothing, food, housing; giving proper attention to medical needs.

Above Average	Average to Slightly Above Average	Average to Slightly Below Average	Below Average
---------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------

6. ABILITY OF FOSTER PARENTS TO MEET THE CHILD'S INTELLECTUAL NEEDS

Examples of this are represented by foster parents' efforts to provide the child with new learning experiences; expressing interest in his school progress; encouraging the child in learning new tasks;

Above Average	Average to Slightly Above Average	Average to Slightly Below Average	Below Average
------------------	---	---	------------------

7. ABILITY OF FOSTER PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND, ACCEPT, AND COPE WITH DIFFERENT CHILDHOOD BEHAVIOURS

Can foster parents independently evaluate child's behaviour; for example, do they indicate an awareness of reasons for slowness in toilet training, bedwetting, or hyper-activity; an overall readiness to accept child's behaviour at various ages and stages of his development.

Above Average	Average to Slightly Above Average	Average to Slightly Below Average	Below Average
------------------	---	---	------------------

8. SATISFACTION WITH FOSTER PARENTING ROLE

Foster parents may express this in making positive comments about their relationship with social worker (agency); by indicating that they enjoy meeting challenge of difficult tasks in fostering; of being able to serve the community (humanity) in fostering; expressing fascination at watching children grow up.

Above Average	Average to Slightly Above Average	Average to Slightly Below Average	Below Average
------------------	---	---	------------------

**APPENDIX B**  
**FOSTER HOME APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

The following is the outline of the Foster Home Application Procedure (selection criteria) as stated in the Policy Manual maintained by the Child Welfare Division, Department of Social Services, Government of Newfoundland. Reproduced herewith is all of Section 233 of the Policy Manual, Revision No. 282 - October 1976.

### 233 Foster Home Application Procedure

#### .1 Initial Contact

When prospective foster parents contact a Social Worker to offer their services to care for children he should discuss very carefully and thoroughly with them the meaning, purpose and responsibilities of foster home care. Unless it is very inconvenient, arrangements should be made for both prospective foster parents to be interviewed in the office. If the applicants appear to have qualities which are needed by foster parents and they are offering a home for the types of children for which foster homes are needed, they should be given the Application for a Child, (form 8-607, Revised 10-'70) to be completed in triplicate and returned to the Social Worker.

It is to be expected that not all applicants will be considered suitable foster parents. They may have proved to be excellent parents in caring for their own children or, if they have no children of their own, they may be considered citizens that any community would be quite proud of; however, it must be recognized that such applicants may not possess qualities which are necessary in providing care for other parents' children. When such applicants have their application rejected and request an explanation for the decision, it is considered advisable that the Social Worker should explain to them the reason for not availing of their services as foster parents.

#### .2 Supporting Documents

Following receipt of the application the Social Worker must visit the home and complete very carefully the Foster Home Study. It is essential that both parents, and children where this is practical, should be interviewed.

The following supporting documents are required:

- (a) Proof of date of birth and of marriage should be seen by the Social Worker and information transferred to Verification of Birth and Marriage (form 8-614).
- (b) A Medical report is required for all members of the household which includes a chest x-ray. The applicants are responsible for obtaining these documents at their own expense. If it is known early in the application process that applicants may not qualify as foster parents for any reason, they should be discouraged from incurring any expenses to obtain medicals.
- (c) Three references (form 8-608) are required and wherever possible one of these should be from the applicant's own clergyman. The Social Worker should explain to the applicants that the other two references should be from persons in the community who are not related to the applicants and who are well respected and whose recommendations would be impartial.
- (d) It is important that a comprehensive and detailed home study be completed on each foster home application in order to properly evaluate the ability of the applicants to provide adequate care for children placed in their home. The following outline may serve as a guide. Other pertinent information, which the worker feels would be of value, should also be included.

### 233.3 Foster Home Study

#### (a) Parental History

State the full name, birth date and place of birth of both parents. Describe the childhood experienced by both parents with emphasis on their relationships with their own parents and how they were, themselves, treated, for example, discipline. The employment history of both should be included, as well as their present occupation and the stability of their present employment. Job satisfaction should be gauged and if the wife is not employed outside the home, her concept of her role as a homemaker and mother should be described. Include the personality of both parents in detail with particular emphasis on their concern for children, their knowledge

and sensitivity to children. Their patience and tolerance. Is the marital relationship a stable one and how does each view the other as spouse and as parent? Do both share responsibility for household chores and care of the children? Who is the disciplinarian in the family and what is the method of discipline? Are they in mutual agreement on this topic and are there any problems in this area?

(b) Other Persons in the Home

List all other persons in the home, including the place of birth, date of birth, and the relationship to the family. Describe all of the natural children of the foster family, including their personality, educational achievement, ability to interact with other children, knowledge of and attitude towards foster care. Indicate whether the children have had any serious problems in the past, and if a foster child coming into the home would be viewed as a threat. Would jealousy be a problem? If there are other persons living in the home who will be long members of the household, describe their personality, their attitude towards foster care and any children who might be placed in the home.

(c) Environment

Describe the home, including the number of rooms (specify which are bedrooms), the type of heating and lighting and the plumbing. Indicate the type of furnishings and the standard of household management. Describe any indoor and outdoor play area. Is the home owned or rented? Describe the community and neighbourhood where the home is located and the location with respect to distance from school, medical facilities, and church.

(d) Health and Education

In addition to the medical certificate and x-ray report, the worker should describe the family's health background, for example any instances of medical illnesses. Are there any health problems in the family which would limit the family's ability to care for foster children?

Describe the educational achievement of each member of the family and, if there is limited

educational achievement, outline the reasons for this. Describe their attitude towards education in general and whether they would be interested in helping children attain their highest possible standard. Do they view education as a prerequisite for boys and girls equally? Are they prepared to assist children with homework, visit the school for periodic reports? Do they do this with their own children?

(e) Religious Attitudes

Indicate the religion of all family members and whether they are active members of their religion. If there is a difference in religion indicate the religion in which any child placed in the home will be raised. What is their attitude toward religion generally and do they feel religious upbringing of children is significant? Do they attend church with their own children? Describe any unusual practices of their religion which might make them different from others in the community. Are they tolerant of other religions or do they impose inflexible religious standards?

(f) Community Standing

Do they take part in community activities and how are they viewed by the community as a whole? Would they be considered good examples for foster children?

(g) Income

Indicate all sources of income and the amounts. Is the income of the parents stable and is there any history of dependence on Social Assistance? Is the family able to budget well with their income and are they able to function independently or will they rely on income from foster care? Are they willing and able to provide extras for children in their care? How does their standard of living compare with the community as a whole? Does employment take either spouse away from home for long periods of time and, if so, does this cause any problems?

(h) Motivation

This is the most crucial aspect of the application whereby the worker should accurately describe the reasons why the applicants are interested in

becoming foster parents. Are both displaying an equal interest in becoming foster parents and is one not merely going along with the other? Are all other members of the household equally motivated? Do the applicants demonstrate a genuine love for children? Do they demonstrate patience, tolerance, and understanding for a foster child? Are they fully aware of their role as foster parents and are they able to love a child, care for him, and help prepare him for returning home or for adoption? Do they have a basic knowledge of a child's development, both physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally? Do they have practical ideas about how to handle the child and are these ideas flexible or are they so set that they would have difficulty accepting guidance and suggestions from the worker and other professionals? What is their attitude towards foster care itself and towards foster children in general? Is there any hint of the attitude of "welfare children"? Do they see the foster child as having different values, standard and behaviour patterns than their own children and are they able to accept this or must the child fit into a pattern? Will they show patience and understanding in helping a child to change gradually, yet retain his own individuality?

Are the foster parents aware of the necessity of having natural parents visit and how receptive are they to this? Do they have negative feelings towards parents who are unable to care for their children and will these attitudes be conveyed to the child? Are they prepared to take the child for any medicals and other appointments deemed necessary - to treat the child as if it were their own? Are they cooperative with worker and willing to work closely with the worker in endeavouring to care for children? Will they share problems with the worker or will they conceal them - pretend they are not there or endeavour to solve them by themselves.

(i) Preferences and Expectations

The worker and foster family should together consider the type, age, sex and number of children best suited to the particular family. The foster parents should be given an opportunity to discuss in detail the types of children requiring care, the reasons for their being in care, and the problems these children may possibly



have. Both the foster parents and worker should signify as exactly as possible the types of children the foster home would be best suited for. The natural age spacing should be considered, as well as the need to not overwhelm new foster parents with children who have serious problems. At the same time foster parents should be encouraged and supported in taking a child with problems if they have the ability to cope with him.

When all required documents pertaining to the foster home application have been received, the worker will make an overall recommendation as to whether the home should be licensed and the specific number of children for whom the home should be licensed. In all cases workers should be truthful with applicants advising them of their recommendation, the reasons, etc. In those rare instances where this would seem inadvisable, consultation should take place with the Regional Director and all documents should be forwarded to the Regional Director for his decision. It should be noted that applications for receiving homes should be completed in exactly the same manner but with all documents being forwarded through the office of the Regional Director to the Director of Child Welfare. Licenses for receiving homes will not exceed two children unless very exceptional circumstances indicate otherwise.

#### .4 License

The Child Welfare Act, No. 37, 1972, Section 45, enables Regional Directors to issue, reclassify, refuse to issue and revoke a foster home license. He also has authority under this Act to grant permission for the boarding of a child.

When an application is approved, the license should be issued on form 8-625 and sent to the applicants with a covering letter (see Appendix A). When a license has been revoked or reclassified, foster parents should be advised by letter (see Appendix E). If the home cannot be approved, the applicants should be notified as soon as possible (see Appendix D). The Social Worker shall be advised of the reason for rejection and these reasons may be shared with the applicants if this is deemed advisable by the Regional Director.

The occasion may arise when the Social Worker will obtain knowledge of a situation which may constitute an illegal placement in accordance with Section 45 of the Child Welfare Act, No. 37, 1972. Such placement should be discussed with the Regional Director who may decide to legalize the placement and advise the person or persons boarding the child accordingly (see Appendix B).

Accurate and up-to-date statistics and information are essential at Headquarters and this can only be maintained when forwarded by the field staff to the Child Welfare Division. In this connection it is very important that a copy be sent to the Director in every instance where action is taken as described in this section.

The licensing of receiving homes, special homes and group foster homes, is still the responsibility of the Director; however, all such applications should be forwarded through the office of the Regional Director. The Director will notify Receiving Home Parents and Group Foster Home parents when their application is approved, their license revoked or reclassified. In each situation a copy of the Director's letter will be forwarded to the Social Worker and the Regional Director.

APPENDIX C  
FOSTER FATHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWER

There are two interview schedules, each containing four sections A-D. One schedule labelled M is for use with foster mothers, while schedule F is for use with foster fathers. As the questions vary, please ensure that the correct schedule is used for each interview. Interviews are to be carried out separately and answer sheets are labelled-- Foster Mother O<sup>A</sup> Interview Schedule and Foster Father O<sup>B</sup> Interview Schedule. Please ensure the correct answer sheet is utilized and that answers are clearly coded.

Please do not prompt answering, giving subjective reactions or attempt any input with regard to the statements or questions. Before each section of the interview schedule begins, please read the written explanations given. The given interview format should be adhered to beginning with reading the following paragraph:

INTRODUCTION FOR RESPONDENT

This survey is part of a research project on family life being completed by graduate students at the School of Social Work, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Opinions are used for research purposes only and will be strictly confidential. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers.

A  
STUDY OF FOSTER FAMILIES  
IN  
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND



Foster Family



Foster Child



Natural Parents



The Agency

Interview Schedules  
for  
Foster Fathers

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

St. John's, Newfoundland

1978

## Section A

FOSTER PARENTS' SATISFACTION SCALE

Foster fathers report different satisfactions from being a foster father. Below are a list of items that have been reported to us as being satisfactions which foster fathers derive from fostering.

Please indicate how satisfied you are with each statement by stating how important each item is to you.

(Give response card to respondent)

- |   | <u>Most</u>      | <u>Very</u>      | <u>Somewhat</u>  | <u>Not very</u>  | <u>Not Impor-</u>  |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|   | <u>Important</u> | <u>Important</u> | <u>Important</u> | <u>Important</u> | <u>tant at all</u> |
|   | 5                | 4                | 3                | 2                | 1                  |
| 1. I like putting my religious beliefs into action.                         |                  |                  |                  |                  |                    |
| 2. I enjoy the presence of a cuddly baby in our home.                       |                  |                  |                  |                  |                    |
| 3. I like knowing that I am doing something useful for the community.       |                  |                  |                  |                  |                    |
| 4. Since this makes my spouse happy, I am satisfied.                        |                  |                  |                  |                  |                    |
| 5. I like being able to add to the family income.                           |                  |                  |                  |                  |                    |
| 6. Being a foster father helps me to continue to feel young.                |                  |                  |                  |                  |                    |
| 7. It keeps me from becoming nervous for want of something to keep me busy. |                  |                  |                  |                  |                    |

Section A (continued)

105

- |   | <u>Most</u><br><u>Important</u> | <u>Very</u><br><u>Important</u> | <u>Somewhat</u><br><u>Important</u> | <u>Not very</u><br><u>Important</u> | <u>Not Impor-</u><br><u>tant at all</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
|   | 5                               | 4                               | 3                                   | 2                                   | 1                                       |
| 8. It satisfies those strong fatherly drives of mine.   |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 9. I like helping the unfortunate downtrodden people.   |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 10. I like being able to meet the challenge of a difficult task.  |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 11. I like the affection I get from children.   |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 12. I am fascinated watching children grow.   |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 13. The respect of my neighbours is very gratifying.  |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 14. I get satisfaction out of being associated with an organization such as the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Social Services.  |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 15. I like doing things only a father can do.   |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 16. Fostering makes me feel like a "whole" person.  |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |
| 17. When a problem arises with a foster child or with the natural parents of a foster child, foster parents sometimes find it necessary to contact Child Welfare. How satisfied are you with the response you have gotten |                                 |                                 |                                     |                                     |   |

when you have had occasion to contact the Department regarding your foster child (children)?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
5	4	3	2	1

18. How satisfied are you with the preparation made by the social worker before a child is placed in your home?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
5	4	3	2	1

19. How satisfied are you with the preparation made by the social worker before a child is removed from your home?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
5	4	3	2	1



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(FATHER)

Demographic Questions

1. What religion do you follow now?

<u>R.C.</u>	<u>Ang.</u>	<u>U.C.</u>	<u>S.A.</u>	<u>Pent./</u>	<u>Other</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>

2. What is your occupation? (Write response on answer sheet).

3. What is the last grade you completed at school?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. 8th grade or less                     | 5. Special or technical training, but no high school.                  |
| 2. Grade 9 through 11, did not graduate. | 6. Special or technical training, with some high school or graduation. |
| 3. High school graduation.               | 7. University graduation, specify.                                     |
| 4. Some University, no degree.           |  |

4. What is your age?

<u>20-24</u>	<u>25-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>50-60</u>	<u>Over 60</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>

5. What is the approximate amount of your yearly earnings? (husband and wife) (excluding family allowance and foster care payments).

<u>\$5,000-6,999</u>	<u>\$7,000-9,999</u>	<u>\$10,000-14,999</u>	<u>\$15,000-20,000</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>over \$20,000</u>			
<u>5</u>			

6. How many brothers/sisters were there in your family?

<u>None</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5-6</u>	<u>7 or more</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>

7. What was the approximate population of the city, town or village, in which you were raised?

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Less than 1,000 | 5. 10,000 - 29,999 |
| 2. 1,000 - 2,499   | 6. 30,000 - 99,999 |
| 3. 2,500 - 4,999   | 7. Over 100,000    |
| 4. 5,000 - 9,999   |                    |

8. What are your living arrangements?

<u>Own Home</u>	<u>Rent</u>	<u>Other</u>
1	2	3

9. How long have you been living in this area? (city, town or village).

<u>Less than 1 year</u>	<u>1-5 years</u>	<u>Over 5 years</u>	<u>Lifetime</u>
1	2	3	4

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOSTER FATHER  
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE  
Answer Sheet**

**SECTION A  
SATISFACTIONS**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION D  
DEMOGRAPHIC**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D  
FOSTER MOTHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWER

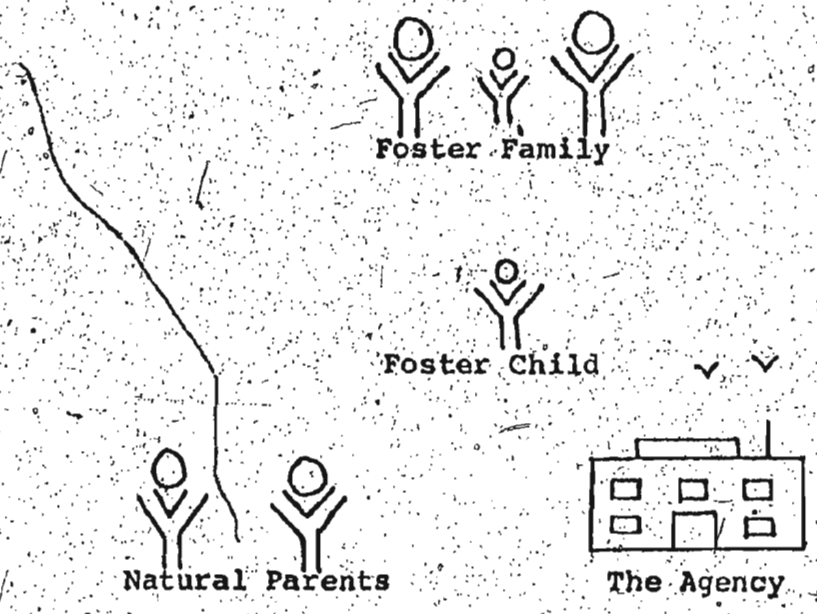
There are two interview schedules, each containing four sections A-D. One schedule labelled M is for use with foster mothers, while schedule F is for use with foster fathers. As the questions vary, please ensure that the correct schedule is used for each interview. Interviews are to be carried out separately and answer sheets are labelled-- Foster Mothers O Interview Schedule and Foster Father O Interview Schedule. Please ensure the correct answer sheet is utilized and that answers are clearly coded.

Please do not prompt answering, give subjective reactions or attempt any input with regard to the statements or questions. Before each section of the interview schedule begins, please read the written explanations given. The given interview format should be adhered to beginning with reading the following paragraph:

INTRODUCTION FOR RESPONDENT

This survey is part of a research project on family life being completed by graduate students at the School of Social Work, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Opinions are used for research purposes only and will be strictly confidential. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers.

A  
STUDY OF FOSTER FAMILIES  
IN  
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND



M  
Interview Schedules  
for  
Foster Mothers

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
St. John's, Newfoundland

1978

## Section A

FOSTER PARENTS' SATISFACTIONS SCALE

Foster mothers report different satisfactions from being a foster mother. Below are a list of items that have been reported to us as being satisfactions which foster mothers derive from fostering.

Please indicate how satisfied you are with each statement by stating how important each item is to you.

(Give response card to respondent)

<u>Most</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Not very</u>	<u>Not Impor-</u>
<u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>tant at all</u>
5	4	3	2	1

1. I like putting my religious beliefs into action.
2. I enjoy the presence of a cuddly baby in our home.
3. I like knowing that I am doing something useful for the community.
4. Since this makes my spouse happy, I am satisfied.
5. I like being able to add to the family income.
6. Being a foster mother helps me to continue to feel young.

Section A (continued)

114

Most      Very      Somewhat      Not very      Not Impor-  
Important      Important      Important      Important      tant at all

7. It keeps me from becoming nervous for want of something to keep me busy.
8. It satisfies those strong motherly drives of mine.
9. I like helping the unfortunate down-trodden people.
10. I like being able to meet the challenge of a difficult task.
11. I like the affection I get from children.
12. I am fascinated watching children grow.
13. The respect of my neighbours is very gratifying.
14. I get satisfaction out of being associated with an organization such as the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Social Services.
15. I like being able to put my skills as a homemaker into action.
16. Fostering makes me feel like a "whole" person.



## Section A (continued)

17. When a problem arises with a foster child or with the natural parents of a foster child, foster parents sometimes find it necessary to contact Child Welfare. How satisfied are you with the response you have gotten if and when you have had occasion to contact the Department regarding your foster child (children)?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
5	4	3	2	1

18. How satisfied are you with the preparation made by the social worker before a child is placed in your home?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
5	4	3	2	1

19. How satisfied are you with the preparation made by the social worker before a child is removed from your home?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
5	4	3	2	1



8. How long have you been married?

1-5 years      6-10 years      11-15 years      16 or more years  
 1                      2                      3                      4

9. How many natural children have you had?

None                      1-2                      3-5                      6 or more  
 1                              2                              3                              4

10. How many foster children have you had since becoming a foster mother?

None                      1-3                      4-7                      8 or more  
 1                              2                              3                              4

11. How many children of your own do you still have living with you?

None                      1-2                      3-5                      6 or more  
 1                              2                              3                              4

12. List children, if any, by sex and age; e.g., M - 11 years; F - 3 years, etc.

N.B. This includes all children in the home now.  
 (Adopted children are considered natural children).  
 Please write in FC after Foster Child, NC after Natural Child.

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

8  
**FOSTER MOTHER  
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE  
Answer Sheet**

SECTION A  
S A T I S F A C T I O N S

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION D  
D E M O G R A P H I C

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. F \_\_\_ yrs. M \_\_\_ yrs.
- F \_\_\_ yrs. M \_\_\_ yrs.
- F \_\_\_ yrs M \_\_\_ yrs.
- F \_\_\_ yrs. M \_\_\_ yrs.

APPENDIX. E

LETTER TO FOSTER PARENTS FROM DIRECTOR OF CHILD WELFARE



120

GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ST. JOHN'S

1978 05 29

Dear Foster Parents:

Sometime in the near future you will probably receive a telephone call from a Social Work Student at Memorial University. Three of the Social Work students are interested in obtaining more information about fostering as part of their work in graduate studies.

Foster home care for children has been in existence in Newfoundland for over twenty-five years, and is considered to be quite successful. The Social Work students are interested in learning about foster home care. In order to do so, they would like your opinion on a number of questions, requiring approximately 45 minutes of your time.

Your co-operation in helping these students will be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

S. Callahan (Mrs.)  
Social Worker Supervisor

SC/pd

