

# chapter 10

## Parents and Childrearing

### CHAPTER EXPECTATIONS

While reading this chapter, you will:

- describe the development of parent-child relationships, drawing on a variety of theories
- explain several theoretical perspectives on the role of the parent in the development and socialization of children, and describe supporting evidence from published research
- evaluate parenting styles and strategies for achieving developmental and socialization goals, using socialization theories as criteria
- evaluate opinions and research on the subject of working mothers and related issues
- identify the role that different types of social institutions and systems have in the rearing and socialization of children
- analyze the division of responsibility for childrearing and socialization, and the interaction of caregivers
- select and access secondary sources reflecting a variety of viewpoints
- demonstrate an understanding of research methodologies, appropriate research ethics, and specific theoretical perspectives for conducting primary research

#### KEY TERMS

attachment  
authoritarian parenting  
authoritative parenting  
constructive conflict  
destructive conflict  
insecurely attached infants  
intact family  
normative event  
permissive parenting  
primary caregiver  
reference groups  
securely attached infants  
significant others  
universal day care

## RESEARCH SKILLS

- conducting observations and experiments
- compiling and summarizing results using theories of socialization
- writing an anecdotal summary



Being a parent is a lifelong commitment that offers many rewards.

## CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the development of parent-child relationships. The parents' role in the socialization of children will be investigated using socialization and developmental theories. The nature and impact of the following parent-child relationships will be explored: the parents' marital relationship, parenting styles, the perspectives of both parents, and the parents' work situations. A discussion of adult-child relationships would not be complete without examining the influences that other caregivers have on a child's development. The research used throughout this chapter will reflect psychological perspectives.

## The Transition to Parenthood

**M**any social scientists, including Carter, McGoldrick, and Erikson, consider the transition to parenthood to be one of the most significant events in life. Some people do not consider that couples are a family until they become parents, while others view becoming parents as the final step of reaching adulthood. There are many adjustments couples have to make, both individually and as a couple, to successfully complete the transition to parenthood. “There is no stage that brings about more profound change or challenge to the nuclear and extended family than the addition of a new child to the family system” (Bradt, 1989, p. 235).

*“Children reinvent  
your world for you.”*

—Susan Sarandon

The family life-cycle theory sees the transition to parenthood as a major **normative event**, one that occurs naturally in the course of a person’s life. During the transition, the family unit has several developmental tasks to complete. They need to adjust and accept a new member, a child, into the system. The couple must alter their relationship as a couple to make room for children. When a couple adds a child to their family unit, they move up a generation by becoming parents (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). This brings with it a change in self-image; the new parents have to make changes in the way they organize their personal, family, and work routines to fit in the new demands of child care. They also need to work through issues related to how they will raise the child, how the child will be cared for, what roles they will play as **primary caregivers**, and who else will be included in child care. The additional tasks that come with the birth of a child also change the division of household jobs that the couple had established during earlier stages in their relationship (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

Many couples experience some decrease in marital satisfaction after the birth of a child (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001). Couple time is diminished, because caring for a child, especially in the first year, is very time-consuming. New parents surveyed by Ralph LaRossa reported that the change that bothered them most was the lack of time—personal time, couple time, time with extended family, time with friends, and time commitments at work. They complained of lack of time for such activities as watching television, sleeping, communicating with each other, having sex, and even going to the bathroom! It takes a while to adjust to the additional time required to care for a child (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001).

The couple’s financial situation also changes, since the addition of a new member to the family brings additional costs. Some of these expenses are incurred immediately, such as the cost of the food, clothing, and equipment for the infant. Others occur in the near future, such as day-care costs. Still others occur in the distant future, such as funding post-secondary education.

During parental leave from the work force to care for a new baby, employment insurance does not compensate for the entire wage that is lost. The Canadian Employment Insurance program provides a basic benefit rate of 55 percent of the person's average insured earnings up to a maximum amount, which was \$413 per week in 2002. This amount is subject to income tax, as is any other income. The decline in the income of young men since 1980 means that they are no longer earning "a family wage," meaning enough money to support a family (Morissette, 1997). It is often difficult for some couples to make up the income lost during the first few years of a child's life (Schlesinger & Schlesinger, 1992).

Many couples make the parenting decision without fully considering the cost of having a child. The following tables show a breakdown of the costs of raising a girl and a boy to age 18 in Canada.

## The Cost of Raising a Child

Cost of Raising a Girl to Age 18*									
Age	\$ Food	\$ Clothing	\$ Health Care	\$ Personal Care	\$ Recreation, Reading, Gifts, School Needs	\$ Transportation	\$ Child Care	\$ Shelter Furnishings, Household Operation	\$ Total
Infant	1 406	1 695	149	0	0	0	4 568	1 855	9 673
1	687	512	149	93	456	0	6 200	1 940	10 037
2	724	507	149	93	456	0	5 200	1 906	9 035
3	724	507	227	93	456	0	5 200	1 872	9 079
4	964	544	227	93	456	0	5 200	1 872	9 355
5	964	678	227	93	517	68	5 200	1 872	9 483
6	964	678	227	89	627	68	3 805	1 872	8 329
7	1 103	678	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 724
8	1 103	678	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 724
9	1 103	709	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 756
10	1 316	709	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 968
11	1 316	709	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 968
12	1 316	1 106	261	271	965	439	0	1 872	6 230
13	1 403	1 106	261	271	965	439	0	1 872	6 316
14	1 403	1 106	261	271	1 105	439	0	1 872	6 457
15	1 403	1 138	261	341	1 333	439	0	1 872	6 786
16	1 324	1 138	261	341	1 333	439	0	1 872	6 707
17	1 324	1 138	261	341	1 333	439	0	1 872	6 707
18	1 324	1 138	261	341	1 287	439	0	1 872	6 661
Total	\$21 869	\$16 339	\$4 315	\$3 172	\$15 706	\$3 548	\$54 397	\$35 649	\$154 993

Source: Manitoba Agriculture and Food. August 2001. [www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/homeec/cba28so2.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/homeec/cba28so2.html).

### Cost of Raising a Boy to Age 18\*

Age	\$ Food	\$ Clothing	\$ Health Care	\$ Personal Care	\$ Recreation, Reading, Gifts, School Needs	\$ Trans- portation	\$ Child Care	\$ Shelter Furnishings, Household Operation	\$ Total
Infant	1 406	1 695	149	0	0	0	4 568	1 855	9 673
1	687	438	149	93	456	0	6 200	1 940	9 963
2	724	449	149	93	456	0	5 200	1 906	8 976
3	724	449	227	93	456	0	5 200	1 872	9 021
4	964	474	227	93	456	0	5 200	1 872	9 875
5	964	474	227	93	517	68	5 200	1 872	9 414
6	964	551	227	93	627	68	3 805	1 872	8 205
7	1 141	551	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 635
8	1 141	551	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 635
9	1 141	592	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 676
10	1 419	592	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 954
11	1 419	592	227	89	883	68	3 805	1 872	8 954
12	1 419	1 064	261	165	965	439	0	1 872	6 185
13	1 663	1 064	261	165	965	439	0	1 872	6 429
14	1 663	1 064	261	165	1 105	439	0	1 872	6 569
15	1 663	1 020	261	241	1 333	439	0	1 872	6 829
16	1 920	1 020	261	241	1 333	439	0	1 872	7 085
17	1 920	1 020	261	241	1 333	439	0	1 872	7 085
18	1 920	1 020	261	241	1 287	439	0	1 872	7 039
Total	\$24 863	\$14 675	\$4 315	\$2 459	\$15 706	\$3 548	\$54 397	\$35 649	\$155 611

\* These projections are based on Budget Guides 2001 data and do not include inflation.

Source: Manitoba Agriculture and Food. August 2001. [www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/homeec/cba28so2.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/homeec/cba28so2.html).

1. Why would the costs to raise a boy and a girl be different?
2. Who is more expensive to raise?
3. In which categories are the expenses the same? Why?
4. In what areas are there differences? How can these be explained?
5. What are the factors that could change this? Explain.

Relationships undergo a major change at this stage of the life cycle. The transition to parenthood changes the couple's relationship with others in their family. When a couple becomes parents, their parents become grandparents, and their siblings become aunts and uncles. Systems theory looks at this change in the system as a major shift in the family unit. The addition of a child changes the system because it requires the development of new strategies for caring for and relating to the child and the adjustment of existing strategies to allow for new responsibilities. Relationships within the extended family must be rebuilt to allow for the couple's parents to develop as grandparents,

and a clear hierarchy must be established to avoid conflict over the child's care. The couple's new emphasis on family will affect their relationships with friends as well. Some relationships will be slow or resistant to change. One of the parents' tasks is to work through these changes in the best possible manner for themselves and their child. This can be one of the most challenging developmental tasks of new parents (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

Relationships will also change if one member of the couple decides to leave the work force for an extended period of time to provide child care. An individual's identity is related to the work role as well as the family role, because a job provides people with opportunities to feel competent. The couple will have to realign their roles within the home to adjust to both the new baby as well as one person's absence from the workplace. The lack of anticipatory socialization can mean that new parents will not feel as competent in their new roles as parents as they do in their workplace roles. Usually, it is the mother who takes time out from her career to care for children. This change in role can be either positive or negative, and seems to depend on the amount of caregiving performed by the father after the birth of a child. Situations in which the father spent more time caring for the child were deemed to have higher marital satisfaction than in those in which the father was less involved (Demo & Cox, 2000).

Past research on the transition to parenthood has focused on the negative adjustments couples have had to make when they became parents. As a result, a great deal of research has shown the marital satisfaction of new parents to be lower than that of couples without children. During the 1990s, more research has been done on the long-term satisfaction of couples. New studies have focused on understanding the diverse ways in which different couples adjust to parenthood, and the factors that are associated with the various degrees of marital satisfaction that exist between couples. David Demo and Martha Cox, family studies professors at the University of North Carolina, report that after an initial disruption in marital satisfaction, most couples seem to be happy and enjoy life as parents. According to recent research, the best predictor of marital satisfaction during the transition to parenthood is marital satisfaction before it. The better adjusted couples are prior to becoming parents, the better they are able to cope with the demands of parenthood (Demo & Cox, 2000).



A baby's arrival affects everyone and everything in the larger family.

Social scientists use the technique of observation to learn many things about people's behaviour. There are several techniques and methods of reporting observations.

- **Observing frequency of a response** Researchers use this method of observation to quantify the number of times a behaviour occurs. This type of research can be used to study anyone who performs repetitive behaviours; for example, an autistic child. Researchers specify a time period and count the number of times a behaviour occurs. This method is useful for a functionalist perspective on role behaviour.
- **Observing family interaction patterns** Researchers observe family members interacting and make anecdotal comments. They note negative and positive interactions. They look for patterns in the interactions and try to assess the patterns' impact on individual members of the family. This type of observation is used in family counselling sessions that try to determine the roots of family problems using a systems perspective.

- **Observing behaviour in an experimental setting** Researchers first observe individuals in a setting in which there is no intervention. They observe both an experimental group and a control group. After they have observed the initial behaviour, they will intervene in some manner with the experimental group to introduce an *independent variable*. They will then observe the individuals again to see if the independent variable caused a change in behaviour, or the *dependent variable*. An example of this is the observation of a mother-child interaction while the child is performing a task. The researcher would note the ways the mother interacted with the child. An independent variable would be to suggest that the task be done within a certain time frame not suggested the first time to the experimental group. As the child repeated the task after this intervention, researchers would look for changes in the behaviour of the mother. ■

## Parent-Child Relationships

*"Parents: A peculiar group who first try to get their children to walk and talk, and then try to get them to sit down and shut up."*

—Wagster's Dictionary  
of Humor and Wit

A great deal of research has been done on the **attachment** relationship between mother and infant. Attachment is defined as the behaviours that represent the need of the infant to attain and maintain proximity and protection with an available and responsive caregiver. In his psychoanalytic theory, Sigmund Freud emphasized this relationship. Freud saw the infant-mother relationship as the foundation for personality growth, since the mother was the infant's first love relationship and the model for all future ones. If the relationship with the mother was a good one, then the foundation for future positive relationships was laid. In Freud's theory, the quality of the bond between mother and child is the foundation for personality growth and determines how well the child adjusts later in life (Demo & Cox, 2000).

Infant attachment to the primary caregiver, usually the mother, is seen to be essential for normal child development (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). Erik Erikson, one of Freud's students and also a psychoanalyst, saw socialization

as a process that lasts a lifetime, beginning at birth and continuing into old age. He identified eight stages of human development, with each involving a crisis brought on by the changing social situation. During the period of infancy, the crisis faced by the developing child is *trust versus mistrust*. Trust is developed when the infant's needs are met. How well the sense of trust is developed depends on the quality of care the infant receives (Gale Research, 1998).

A great deal of the research has focused on infants between the ages of 6 months and 24 months. This research used *observation in the stranger situation* to assess the degree of infants' psychological and biological attachment to their parents.

In these situations, a stranger enters a room where an infant and the parents are at play. The infant's reaction determines the degree of attachment. **Securely attached infants** head for their mothers, rather than their fathers, in a stressful situation such as the entrance of a stranger. If the mother is not there, the infant will go to the father. An **insecurely attached infant** who experiences the same stress from the appearance of a stranger will either avoid or resist the parents. Most of this observational research has been done in laboratories. However, in a Canadian study done in 1995 by David Pederson and Greg Moran, observations were made in the family home, and the research findings were consistent with those done in the laboratory (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000).

Attachment research has tended to focus on the mother-infant bond and has almost completely ignored the father-infant bond. As fathers' involvement in their children's lives has become more apparent, the research has shifted (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). Studies have found that fathers of secure infants were more extroverted and agreeable, had higher levels of self-esteem, and had marriages that were more positive. These fathers had positive work and family boundaries, with work demands that did not override family commitments (Demo & Cox, 2000; Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). Fathers who developed a commitment to their infants during pregnancy maintained it after birth, and were more likely to be involved in infant care. These fathers tended to be more caring, nurturing, child-oriented, and affectionate than non-involved fathers (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000).



Securely attached infants and toddlers will seek out their primary caregiver when confronted by strangers, or their secondary caregiver if that person is not present.

*"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."*

—Rachel Carson





If you asked this man if he is babysitting his child, he would probably answer, "No, I am parenting. I am the father."

## FYI

### Two Views on the Education of Children

John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, two philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively, developed opposite views on the education of children. Locke believed that, at birth, a child was an unformed person whose mind was a blank slate, which he termed a *tabula rasa*. He felt that it was the parents' responsibility to fill the child's mind through education, reason, and self-control and, by doing so, create a civilized adult. Rousseau believed that a child was born with an innate capacity for understanding, curiosity, and creativity that was often deadened by the education, literacy, reason, and self-control imposed by the adults around him or her.

**Source:** Adapted from Postman, Neil. *The disappearance of childhood*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Recent research on attachment has focused on the stability of attachment over time and how secure attachment affects social adaptation later in life. Demo and Cox found that secure attachment patterns are far more stable than insecure ones, and adults who had secure attachments are better adjusted socially later in life. Children coming from higher-income homes show more stability and better social adaptation later in life than those who come from lower-income homes do. In 1996, Teti, Wolfe, Sakin, Kucera, and Corns looked at the security patterns of first-born children after the arrival of a new sibling and found that their attachments were less secure after this arrival (Demo & Cox, 2000). Children who do not have a secure attachment may remain socially and emotionally underdeveloped into adulthood, and may have difficulty with trust, empathy, self-esteem, and successful relationships for the rest of their lives. Insensitivity to children's needs may cause some areas of the brain to overdevelop, which leads to intense rage, anxiety, impulsiveness, and a predisposition to violence (Steinhauer, 1997).

Attachment is often viewed as love between parents and their children. Love develops over a period of time. In the beginning, parents touch their children, make soothing sounds, and look at them with affection. Babies respond to this attention, and love develops. As babies grow, they begin to reach out to touch their parents, make responsive sounds, and look affectionately at their parents. This pattern is seen in securely attached infants. As children grow and mature, the knowledge of their parents' love gives them self-confidence and self-esteem. Children who feel secure in their parents' love are better able to meet the challenges of the outside world. Children who are secure in their parents' love are more likely to be socially competent and better able to make the transition from dependence on their parents to autonomy. Older children who do not feel secure in their parents' love are more likely to experience feelings of separation, hostility, aggression, low self-confidence, and have poor peer relations (Bodman & Peterson, 2000).

Research from the Canadian National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, as well as the Early Years Study in Ontario, leaves no doubt about the important role

by **Laura V. Carranza,**  
**University of California, San Diego**

This study examined links between perceived parent characteristics and attachment variables for young women from intact families (biological parents still married to each other). One hundred and fifty-four female college students served as subjects. They rated both parents using items derived from Secunda's (1992) descriptions of father characteristics, and also were assessed on measures of adult attachment, self-esteem, and interpersonal trust. Positive correlations were found between secure attachment and self-concept, good father characteristics, and doting mother characteristics. An insecure attachment pattern was associated with lower

self-worth, less interpersonal trust, distant and demanding father characteristics, and absent mother characteristics. A fearful attachment pattern was associated with distant father and absent mother characteristics. A preoccupied attachment pattern was linked to absent, seductive, and demanding father characteristics, and demanding mother characteristics. A dismissive attachment pattern was associated with distant father characteristics. Collectively, father characteristics related more strongly to an insecure attachment pattern, while mother characteristics related more strongly to a secure attachment pattern. ■

**Source:** *Adolescence*. (2000, Summer).

parents play in child development. Brain development research has shown a connection between good parenting and optimal brain development. Children who receive language stimulation from their parents develop better language skills than those who do not. The emotional development of children during the first six years of life is dependent on strong parenting skills. Canadian psychiatrist Paul Steinhauer believes that children who do not receive proper stimulation during the early years will suffer from a deficit that is difficult to make up. Steinhauer thinks that the quality of this development is very dependent on family environment. He strongly feels that "it is so much better, in human and economic terms, to improve the quality of parenting while the windows of opportunity are open, than to try to change a child's established but destructive behaviour patterns after the windows have been closed" (Steinhauer, 1997, p. 2). John Bruer, an American researcher, also believes that the earlier parents improve the lives of their children, the better, but that people should not think that the windows of opportunity close forever. Later intervention with good parenting skills can help improve the lives of all children. He reminds parents that there are a wide variety of ways to enrich the lives of children, and that it is important to provide enrichment throughout the life of the child (Bruer, 1999).

## research study | Reversing the Real Brain Drain

by Margaret McCain, Former Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, and Fraser Mustard, Founding President of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research

### RESEARCH QUESTION

What impact does the new research on brain development have on child development?

### METHOD

This metastudy synthesized new research on child development from various fields of study. The authors established a framework for understanding the early years of child development and the effects on learning based on existing research. Then, discussions were held with a wide range of people and organizations concerned with early child development and learning. From these discussions, the authors outlined the future directions for the province in order to optimize the brain development of Ontario's children.

### RESULTS

- New knowledge has changed the understanding of brain development. Early experiences and stimulating, positive interactions with adults and other children are far more important for brain development than previously realized.
- Experiences in the early years, from conception to age 6, have significant influence on brain development and subsequent learning, behaviour, and health. During the first six years, critical periods of neural development include binocular vision (use of both eyes), emotional control, habitual ways of responding, language and literacy, symbols, and relative quantity.
- The brain develops through the stimulation of sensing pathways. Proper care and nutrition provide the optimal conditions for child development.

Children who do not receive good nutrition and positive stimulation during this critical time may never overcome this poor start to life, and thus may never achieve their full potential.

- In the early years, nurturing by parents provides essential emotional experiences that affect brain development. It influences all parts of the developing brain, including the neural cross connections that influence arousal, emotional regulation, and behaviour, and improves the outcomes for the children's learning, behaviour, and physical and mental health throughout life.
- Children who receive inadequate or disruptive stimulation will be more likely to develop learning, behavioural, or emotional problems in later stages of life. They will also have an increased risk of health problems.

### CONCLUSIONS

The authors feel strongly that the issue of brain development is of major importance to the children and citizens of Ontario. They suggest that society should give as much attention to the early years as they do to the years for school and post-secondary education. They would like to see early childhood development programs that involve parents and other primary caregivers of young children from all socio-economic groups in society. They feel that these programs can influence how they relate to children in the home and can vastly improve the outcomes for children's behaviour, learning, and health in later life. Programs need to be based on high-quality, developmentally attuned interactions with primary caregivers, and opportunities for play-based problem solving with other children that stimulates brain development. ■

**Source:** McCain, M., & Mustard, F. (1999, April). *Reversing the real brain drain: The early years study, final report*. Toronto: Children's Secretariat.

In the Early Years report (see the Research Study on the opposite page), Margaret McCain and Fraser Mustard emphasize the importance of parental support in early learning. They state that new evidence on brain development research supports what “good mothering” has done for centuries: “Babies and young children need good nutrition, stimulation, love, and responsive care” (1999, p. 6). They use “mothering” as an inclusive term, since they believe that both parents have a critical role to play in the optimal development of their children (McCain & Mustard, 1999).



#### web connection

[www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12](http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12)

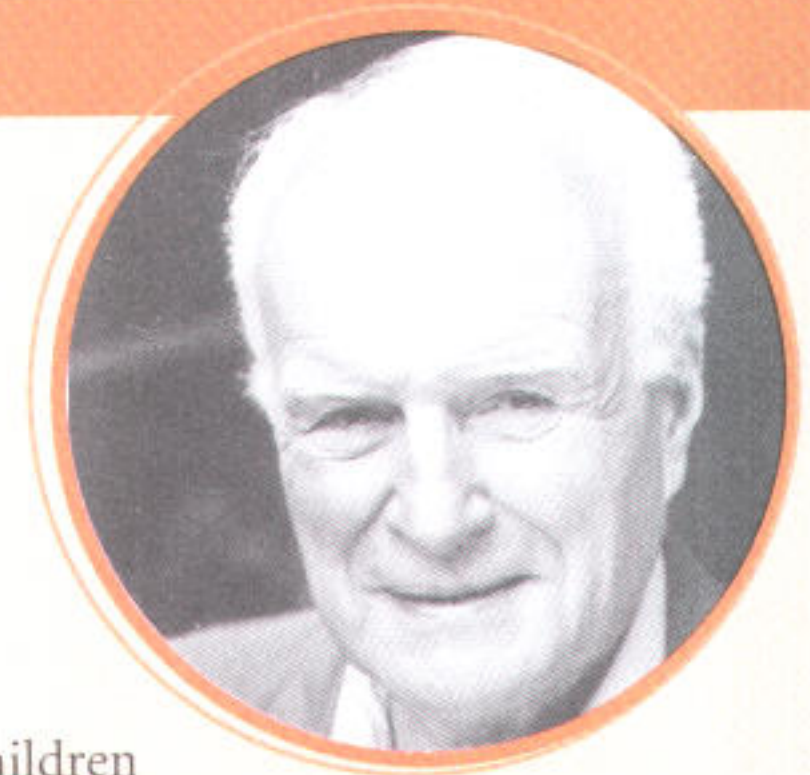
To learn about the Ontario Early Years Initiative and brain development, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

## in focus | Dr. Fraser Mustard

J. Fraser Mustard was born in Toronto and attended the University of Toronto. A physician by training, he has worked in a variety of careers, including scientist, educator, thinker, and policy maker. Early in his career, he helped found the McMaster University Medical School, known across Canada for the past generation for its progressive curriculum. In 1982, he established The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIAR), which he ran for 14 years. This large research organization has helped to influence government policy in science, technology, economic growth, health, and human development.

Dr. Mustard’s primary interest over the past ten years has been in early childhood development and, in particular, how early childhood development has an impact on the health and happiness of people during their adult years. As a result of his extensive research, he has been a strong advocate for increasing

Dr. Fraser Mustard is an advocate of the importance of early childhood education.



government resources to help parents nurture children in their first six years of life. He strongly believes that stimulation is critical for the best brain development of children and that without it, children will not realize their intellectual potential and will be more likely to have serious health problems in later life.

Dr. Mustard is the father of six children and the grandfather of nine. He has received numerous awards during his long and distinguished career, including the Companion of the Order of Canada. ■

Bruer refers to the current discussions about brain development and the impact of childrearing as “strangely reassuring. . . . [They] capture the essence of our cultural beliefs about infants, mothers, and the early years of life” (1999, p. 183). He claims that these beliefs have been incorporated into theories of child development. He cautions, however, that people do not get so caught up in the very early years that they forget that good parenting needs to continue throughout

children's lives to make a significant impact on their overall development. Children who have a difficult start in life are not doomed forever, and good parenting can improve their circumstances later in life (Bruer, 1999).

## Parental Roles

*“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots. The other, wings.”*

—Hodding Carter

In the past the role of the parent was different from what it is today. Parents of previous generations relied on firm disciplinary practices and unquestioning obedience from their children due to the difficult times in which they lived. Parents and children faced many hardships, including ill health, high infant and childhood mortality rates, and short life spans for adults. Adults worked long and difficult hours to provide for their families. It was important for children to develop self-discipline from an early age, as they contributed to the family's economic well-being as soon as they were able. The style of parenting practised in the past was seen as critical to provide children with the self-discipline required by societies in which strict obedience to authority was expected from citizens. Some of the forms of discipline widely accepted then are currently considered to be child abuse. Today, parents use more democratic strategies in their parenting. A combination of rational control, strong communication between parent and child, and high levels of affection are the norm (Bodman & Peterson, 1995). Recent research has looked at the parent's role from a systems perspective, with the understanding that parents and their children do not live in a vacuum but within a larger family grouping and society in general. Researchers have looked at the role of parents and children within this broader context, and it has an impact on the parent-child relationship (Bodman & Peterson, 1995). Parents take their parenting cues from the society in which they live. In the past, society expected parents to exert firm discipline over their children, while today it views corporal punishment as unnecessary and excessive and accepts a more democratic parenting model. Parents are responsible for socializing their children so they can function in the society in which they live.

Socializing children is one of the most important tasks parents have. Socialization is the process of learning one's culture and acquiring one's personality and personal values throughout life. There are three important aspects of socialization:

1. How it affects the attitudes and behaviour of the individual being socialized to social institutions and cultural norms.

2. How the people who are doing the socialization affect the individual.
3. The way in which the socialization takes place. In most societies, it is the function of the family (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001).

Although much of the research has focused on the socialization of young children, people are always in the process of developing the self and learning how to function in society and the world around them. Parents socialize their children by influencing and shaping their behaviour, and children socialize their parents in a similar manner (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001). There are two preconditions for socialization:

1. The child must have the physical capacity to learn.
2. The child lives in a society that has values, norms, statuses, role, institutions, and a variety of social structures.

If a child is missing any of these preconditions, then socialization is not possible. The infant is exposed to agents of socialization, which parents and others pass on the patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting in their society (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001).

In every culture in the world, women are the primary caregivers to children, and consequently, for many, parenting and mothering are one and the same. However, as more and more North American women stay in the work force after the birth of their children, they are no longer at home to be the sole caregiver (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001).

As the mother's role has changed, so has the father's. In the past, especially in the 1950s and early 1960s, the father's roles were that of breadwinner and head of the household. Many of the television shows of the time, such as *Father Knows Best*, portrayed that image. Today, couples have a more equal role to play in the family, and the head of the household is both parents. Michael Adams, a researcher with Environics in Toronto, discusses a statement that Environics used in a poll of Canadians since 1983: "The father of the family must be the master in his own house" (2001, p. A11). In 1983, 42 percent of Canadians agreed with this statement. By 1992, this number was reduced to 26 percent, in 1996, to 20 percent, and in 2000, to 5 percent. The results were consistent across gender, age groups, marital status, size of community lived in, and the region of the country, with very little variation across the varying groups (Adams, 2001). As the research shows, Canadians no longer agree that the father is the "master." This change is reflected in many aspects of our culture, from advertising to television shows.

*"Most times, after my mother made dinner, my father would put the apron on and do the dishes, and this was never beneath him... It didn't even occur to him that it might make him look wimpy or henpecked. I definitely picked up that attitude from my dad. And the way I've used it in my own life is by treating women, men, and children—with respect."*

—Robert Pastorelli

Changing ways of life in North America have changed fathers' involvement with their children. Most participate in prenatal classes with their wives and are present for the birth of their children. More divorced fathers now have joint or sole custody of their children. However, many men still only "help" with household chores and the care of their children, instead of sharing full responsibility with their partners (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001). Even though fathers are more involved with their children, mothers still perform many of the more mundane tasks associated with parenting, and parental roles still follow more traditional gender roles. Fathers tend to do the more skilled jobs, like awakening, playing with, and educating their children, while mothers tend to do less skilled jobs, like laundry, dishes, and feeding their children (Dulac, 1994; Glossop & Theilheimer, 1994).

Reasons for fathers' more traditional roles in the family include the fact that male and female roles are not considered to be interchangeable, since society sees the mother as the principal parent responsible for the family's care. Also, men often wait to be asked to help. The concept of reciprocity, in which each spouse gives and expects something in return, allows for the couple to define who is giving what in terms of parenting (Dulac, 1994). Functionalists would see this role division as consistent with the homemaker-breadwinner

ideology. They believe that the function of the nuclear family is to raise children, and the structure of the male and female roles within that family supports that function. Conflict theorists would maintain that men reject female roles in parenting as a way of maintaining their power position within the family and society. Childrearing is seen as a job with less status and, therefore, less power (Tanfer & Mott, 1997).

Research focused on single-parent families headed by females has given the impression that, in many families, there is no father figure. In fact, there is a father present in 78 percent of Canadian families. In the United States, the percentage of homes with a father present is less than in Canada, which may account for the misconception. Many Canadian children benefit from the involvement of their fathers in their lives (Campbell, 1999). Studies by Paul Amato and John Snarey have documented the importance of the father in the life of the child. Being close to their father has an



Children gain emotional and intellectual benefits from playing with their father.

## in focus | Who Has Time for the Kids?

by Elaine Carey, Demographics Reporter

Dads still aren't pulling their weight. When both parents are working, mothers are spending an average of two more hours a day with their young children than fathers do, Statistics Canada said. They're also doing most of the housework, spending about an hour more a day on tasks other than child care, it says. At the end of the day, mothers of young children have a full hour less leisure time than fathers do and they spend proportionately more of it with their kids.

The study is the first to look at the time working parents spend with their children at different ages and what they actually do, says author Cynthia Silver, a senior StatsCan analyst. And most of it isn't quality time. In fact, the harried working parents of pre-schoolers are managing to find only about half an hour a day each to play with them. The rest of the time they're doing other things, like shopping, cleaning, and the laundry, while they keep an eye on the kids.

The study confirms that the gap between men and women is getting smaller when it comes to housework and child care. "And that's good news," said Kerry Daly, a University of Guelph professor and author of *Families and Time: Keeping Pace in a Hurried Culture*. "But it's clear to me there is still a disparity, a very continual asymmetry, that continues to exist between men and women," he said.

And nobody is very happy about that, says the study of working couples with children, which is based on the 1998 General Social Survey of about 11 000 adults. Two-thirds of full-time working parents were dissatisfied with the balance between their job and home life. When the children are asked for their views, "one of the things they say they want is more time with their parents, hanging around doing nothing in particular—quality time that seems to be missing here," said Alan Mirabelli, Executive Director

Children say that the one thing they want is more time with their parents doing nothing in particular.



of the Vanier Institute of the Family.

"Parents feel guilty and stressed for time, asking, 'How can I show up at home without the stress of work in my head and show up at work without the stress of home?'"

About two-thirds of the 1.5 million Canadian women with children under six are in the workforce. That jumps to 75 percent of those with children aged six to 15. Working mothers spend more time with young children than fathers, partly because mothers spend about an hour-and-a-half less a day at their jobs.

But as the kids get older, they spend less time with the kids and more time at work. By the time children are young teens, fathers and mothers are each spending about two hours and 40 minutes a day with them, a large part of it chauffeuring them to various activities. Family meal time may be a vanishing art but still happens, the study says. After child care, it was the most common activity shared by parents and their children. ■

Source: *The Toronto Star*. (2000, June 14). p. A24.

1. According to this article, how are the roles of mother and father becoming similar?
2. What disparities still exist between the father's role and the mother's role?
3. What do children want from their parents, according to this article?
4. How would additional time for the activities desired by children improve the parent-child relationship?



impact on children's happiness, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, intellectual development, and educational and occupational success. Children with absent fathers have lower levels of academic achievement, are more likely to be delinquent or deviant, and more likely to drop out of school (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001).

Fathers and mothers interact differently with their children. Fathers tend to be more physically engaged and less emotional with their children than mothers are. Play with fathers involves more teamwork and games, with fathers stressing healthy competition, risk taking, and independence. This type of play is said to help children develop the ability to manage their emotions and to improve their intelligence and academic achievement (McClelland, 2001).

People are reconstructing the social image of fatherhood (Dulac, 1994). Men are starting to realize what they did not get from their own fathers and want a different type of relationship with their children. They are not willing to pay the same price for their careers as their fathers did (Glossop & Theilheimer, 1994). Many fathers today understand that "a family is a mother and father working together as a team" (Campbell, 2000, p. 7). The new image is based on a father's feelings, experiences, and relationships with his children. Some of this change comes from necessity, as most women with young children are now working and fathers have to spend more time parenting than before.

One of the problems facing today's new fathers is the lack of role models. Their fathers were raised in a time when fathers were primarily the breadwinners. They therefore cannot provide role models for fathers in a dual-income family (McClelland, 2001). Social learning theorists would argue that men learn to be fathers by watching their fathers. The lack of role modelling makes it difficult for today's fathers to make the transition to a different time and social reality. Erikson's theories of development would explain that involved fathers are experiencing parental generativity by promoting children's ability to develop to their full potential (Tanfer & Mott, 1997).

Many authors argue that Canadian society needs to change the ways that fathers are treated in order to better reflect fathers' views of themselves as parents. Society is more accommodating of mothers as parents, and not of fathers. People assume that when fathers are caring for children they are babysitting, not parenting. We maintain a culture of jokes that show fathers as incompetent parents. Many families find that the wife's workplace is more accommodating of the responsibilities that come with parenting than the husband's workplace (McClelland, 2001). Research by Linda Druxbury, an associate professor of business at Carleton University in Ottawa, determined

that women's increased labour force participation has not made them more like men, but men are becoming more like women in that they now face the competing demands of work and family. Men are more stressed and overloaded from juggling the obligations of work and family, but this is what working women have been experiencing for years (Glossop & Theilheimer, 1994). Canadian society needs to support men who become more involved in parenting. There are many provisions for women, but few for men. Society needs to develop programs for men to share with men their feelings and concerns about their parenting roles (Mann, 1995).

Parents are the main agents of socialization for their children's gender roles. Babies are socialized from the moment they enter this world to be masculine or feminine. Many hospitals provide blue accessories for male babies and pink for female babies. Children see definitions of what it means to be male and female all around them—in books, on television, in their neighbourhoods, and in their own families. Children view the tasks performed by their parents in the home and come to gender-based conclusions about who should perform which jobs (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001). Parents encourage certain sex-role stereotyped behaviour through something as simple as buying toys, disciplining their children, and responding to them when they are sick.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth is studying gender issues related to Canada's children to determine how growing up as a boy or a girl in Canada influences a child's long-term physical and emotional health. Girls are more likely to experience sexual violence, exploitation and harassment, mental health problems, smoking, attempted suicide, and sexually transmitted diseases. Boys are more likely to be hospitalized for, or die from, injuries, commit suicide, use alcohol, and engage in early sexual activity. Understanding the unique needs of boys and girls can assist politicians and other policy makers to develop strategies that will address such issues as systematic discrimination and gender inequality in Canadian society (Rogers & Caputo, 2000).



Individuals' attitudes toward gender roles may be changing, but it is taking a while for all aspects of society to catch up.

## Parenting Styles

During the twentieth century the majority of North Americans have increasingly come to value individualism, competition, and independence. This has led to parents raising their children to be more independent and self-reliant, rather than focusing on family ties and commitments to the larger family. In comparison, children from some cultures are raised to value co-operation, sharing, reciprocity, obligation, and interdependence of the larger family and kinship network (Demo & Cox, 2000). Families develop a shared view of the world, and this shared view has an impact on parent-child relationships. Shared views consist of assumptions that families hold on the following:

- how the world inside and outside of family boundaries is organized
- how members relate to one another
- how the family treats the environment surrounding them

Shared views provide a sense of meaning and order for families, establishing a rationale for many of their functions, such as setting goals, making decisions, governing behaviour, and managing their resources. Each family constructs its unique view to suit its needs. This view influences the parent-child relationship and represents the belief system under which the parents operate. Views change over time as outside forces come to influence the family's thinking. Factors such as education, differing social or work experiences, or a family crisis can change a family's shared view. In this way, shared views are representative of the systems theory, according to which influences in the system affect the entire system (Bodman & Peterson, 1995).

The commonly held views of the family have a direct impact on parenting and parent-child relationships. Parents who value career and work success highly will place a different value on family time and time with their individual children than those who place less value on work success. Parents who value the goals and needs of individuals over the family will have a difficult time putting their personal needs on hold to care for family members. Parents who are busy fulfilling their individual needs may not take the time to parent in a democratic and nurturing manner. Instead, they may use punishment or coercion to get their children to behave. Parents who spend a great deal of time with their children get to know them better and become more sensitive to their needs. Children who spend a great deal of time with their parents may also become more sensitive to their parents' needs (Bodman & Peterson, 1995).

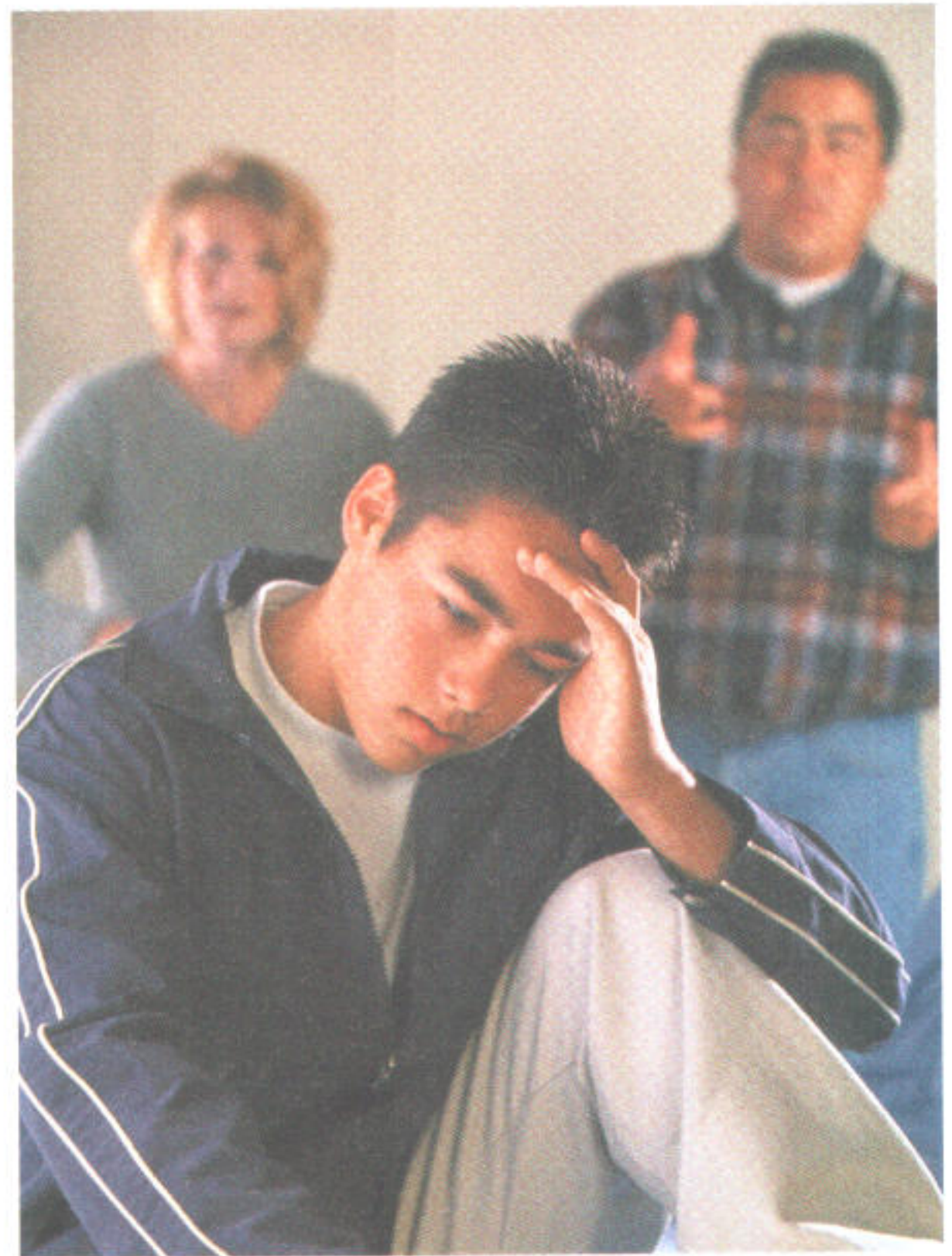
Parenting style and its impact on the development of the child has been another subject of much research. Three basic styles of parenting have been

*“Loving a child doesn't mean giving in to all his whims; to love him is to bring out the best in him, to teach him to love what is difficult.”*

—Nadia Boulanger

considered: **authoritative**, **authoritarian**, and **permissive**. There has been a focus on authoritative parenting, which is characterized by warmth, support, acceptance, and indirect positive control of the children. It is compared to authoritarian parenting, which is distinguished by more parental control and use of punishment, as well as to permissive parenting, which is typified by few rules and by the children controlling family situations.

Recent studies have contrasted the qualities of authoritative parenting and authoritarian parenting in relation to a child's psychological development and well-being. Children raised by authoritative parents are better adjusted psychologically and have a better self-concept. In contrast, authoritarian parents use more physical punishment, which has been shown to negatively affect the child's adjustment, especially if it is severe and frequent. Children who experience this type of parenting feel rejected by their parents. Children raised by authoritarian parents tend to have more problems with psychological adjustment (Demo & Cox, 2000). Children raised by permissive parents who offer much warmth and encouragement tend to be more irresponsible, impulsive, and immature, while children raised by permissive parents who are hostile and rejecting tend to be flighty, anxious, and emotionally impoverished. Permissive parenting is not the best for the child. Optimum parenting provides a balance between over-control and permissiveness (Larson, Goltz, & Hobart, 1994). Factors that inhibit parents from showing the consistent warmth, support, and effective discipline of an authoritative parenting style are economic hardship, marital conflict, conflict between spouses regarding parenting style, maternal antisocial behaviour, and neighbourhood poverty (Demo & Cox, 2000). Risk factors such as these contribute to the parent's inability to parent effectively. Using positive parenting techniques despite these risk factors can, however, reduce the impact of the risk factors. No matter what situation the parent and child are living in, good parenting is crucial to a child's development (McCloskey, 1997). Many parents find that one of the greatest challenges of parenting is to come to terms with issues related to discipline, punishment, and guidance of their children. Developing their own parenting style is a challenge for most parents.



Positive parenting practices lead to a child who is better adjusted psychologically, emotionally, and socially.

## Barbara Coloroso's Parenting Styles

Barbara Coloroso is a renowned speaker and writer about parenting and raising children. Her lectures are filled with funny anecdotes that demonstrate important points about how to raise children. She is famous for her three styles of parenting and how they affect children. The following are her version of the styles and characteristics of each.

### Brick Wall

- Hierarchy of control
- Litany of rigid rules, thou shalt nots, and don't you dares
- Rigid enforcement of rules
- Punishment imposed by adults
- Rigid rituals, rote learning
- Use of sarcasm, ridicule, and embarrassment to manipulate and control behaviour
- Threats and bribes are used extensively
- Relies on heavy competition
- Learning takes place in an atmosphere of fear
- Children learn love is highly conditional
- Children learn what to think and are easily manipulated
- High-risk group for sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, and suicide

### Jellyfish

- Anarchy
- No recognizable structure, rules, or guidelines
- Punishment and rewards are arbitrary and inconsistent

- Mini-lectures and put-downs are typical tools
- Second chances are given often
- Threats and bribes are commonplace
- Learning takes place in an environment of chaos
- Emotions rule behaviour of parents and children
- Children learn love is highly conditional
- Children are easily led by peer influence
- High-risk group for sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, and suicide

### Backbone

- Network of support is developed
- Democracy is learned through experience
- Provides an environment that is flexible and conducive to creative, constructive, and responsible activity
- Rules are simple and clearly stated
- Consequences are logical, realistic, and palatable

- Discipline with authority gives life to learning
- Motivates children to be all they can be
- Lots of smiles, hugs, and humour
- Provides second opportunities
- Learning takes place in an atmosphere of acceptance and high expectation
- Children learn to accept their own feelings and control their own behaviour
- Encourages competency and co-operativeness
- Love is unconditional
- Teaches children how to think
- Buffers students from sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, and suicide by reinforcing the messages "I like myself," "I can think for myself," and "There is no problem so great it can't be solved."

**Source:** Coloroso, B. (1989). *Winning at Parenting—without beating your kids*. Littleton, Colorado: Kids are worth it!

### web connection



[www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12](http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12)

To learn about theories and research on child development and parenting, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth began collecting data on Canadian children in 1994. Initial findings from this study indicate that parenting style has an impact on the development of children. Hostile parenting practices, such as harsh discipline, unsuppressed anger, and use of negative comments, have been shown to lead to children with low scores in their ability to get along with others. Being raised by a hostile parent has a more negative influence on a child's ability to form positive relationships than any other aspect of a child's family background (McCloskey, 1997).

Positive parenting practices result in positive scores in social relationships, helping behaviour, and motor and social development, while negative parenting styles lead to negative scores. Further research into children who are living in an at-risk situation—such as in lone-parent families, teen-parent families, low-income families, low social-support families, parents with little educational attainment, and dysfunctional families—shows that if the style of parenting is positive, they score at least as well as children who are not at risk but who are exposed to negative parenting styles (Eshleman & Wilson, 2001).



#### web connection

[www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12](http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12)

To learn about challenges to section 43 of the *Criminal Code*, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

## legal matters | Parental Authority

by Justice Marvin Zuker

One of the driving concepts in law is that of the “best interest of the child” rather than parental rights. In a case decided in 1995, Jehovah’s Witness parents had refused consent to a blood transfusion for their newborn daughter who had been born prematurely. Their refusal was on religious grounds, and the medical evidence indicated that transfusions would be necessary to protect the child’s life. After the child was treated, the girl was returned to parental custody, but the parents appealed the original decision on the grounds that it had violated their constitutional rights.

A judge of the Supreme Court of Canada maintained that the liberty interest in section 7 did not include the right of parents to make medical decisions or to raise their children without undue state interference. A majority of the court believed that the parents’ rights to rear their children according to their religious beliefs was a fundamental part of freedom of religion and that, accordingly, their section 2(a) rights had been infringed. They went on to state that the careful legislative scheme implemented by the state was saved by section 1, which states, in part:

The common law has always, in the absence of demonstrated neglect or unsuitability, presumed that parents should make all significant choices

affecting their children, and has afforded them a general liberty to do as they choose.

This liberty interest is not a parental right tantamount to a right of property in children. . . . Parents should make important decisions affecting their children both because parents are more likely to appreciate the best interests of their children and because the state is ill-equipped to make such decisions itself. . . . This is not to say that the state cannot intervene when it considers it necessary to safeguard the child’s autonomy or health. But such intervention must be justified.

This case underlines reluctance to allow a doctrine of a parent’s rights to be set up in opposition to the interests or health of a child. But that does not mean that it is not willing to protect the procedural interests of parents. This is consistent with the view of the family as a central social unit whose integrity should be encouraged and protected.

Section 43 of the *Criminal Code* states:

Every school teacher, parent, or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child as the case may be who is under his care if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

The case of David Peterson was brought before an Ontario judge in 1997 amid a storm of controversy. Peterson, an Illinois family man, was vacationing in London, Ontario, when he was arrested and charged with assault. An eyewitness report indicated that Peterson had spanked his five-year-old daughter on her bare bottom. Peterson testified that he had spanked his daughter to punish her for intentionally slamming the car door on her brother. Ironically, Peterson wanted to teach his daughter that wilfully hurting her brother was not acceptable. The judge ruled that in the eyes of the law, a father has the right to physically discipline his children.

A Québec judge ruled that a teacher who grabbed a 15-year-old boy by the hair and banged his head onto his desk had not committed an offence since Section 43 of the *Criminal Code* prohibited the “excessive” use of force, not the “disgraceful” use of it.

In Manitoba, a father who removed his shoe before kicking his son down the stairs was exonerated by the application of Section 43. The judge ruled that the father had exercised restraint and reason by removing his shoe before he began kicking.

Section 43 of the *Criminal Code* became a focal point in the debate about corporal punishment in childrearing. It

does not expressly outline the nature or limits of the force that is justified other than to require that it be “reasonable in the circumstances” and be for the purposes of “correction.” Because the notion of reasonableness varies with the beholder, it is perhaps not surprising that some of the judicial decisions applying section 43 to excuse otherwise criminal assault appear to some to be inconsistent and unreasonable.

As recently as January 15, 2002, the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld an earlier decision that Section 43 does not violate subsection 7, 12, or 15, of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It may ultimately be for the Supreme Court of Canada to strike down Section 43, if appropriate.

There is a growing consensus that corporal punishment of children does more harm than good. It has been banned in virtually all Canadian school systems, and the federal Ministry of Health has mounted an educational campaign teaching that hitting children is wrong. Canadian attitudes toward corporal punishment are changing. An increasing number of Canadian adults believe that many forms of corporal punishment, at one time considered acceptable, are no longer acceptable. ■

## Family Structure and Parent-Child Relationships

Over 30 years ago, family structure was fairly consistent across Canada. Most families were **intact**, meaning both parents were in their first marriage and they had biological or adopted children. Most single-parent families existed because of the death of one spouse. Family breakdowns occurred, but they were not as widespread as they are today. Currently, children live in different family structures, which have been arrived at in a variety of ways. In the past, over 90 percent of children were born into a two-parent family. Now, for several

reasons, an increasing number of children are born to single parents. Children are living in lone-parent families at younger and younger ages. For children born in the early 1960s, 25 percent were living in lone-parent families by the time they were 20 years old. This increased dramatically through the 1980s, when 22 percent of children had lived in lone-parent families by the time they were 6. For children born in 1989–1990, 37 percent had lived in lone-parent families by the time they were 4. It is clear that the percentages of children living in lone-parent families are increasing, while the age at which they do so is decreasing (Marcil-Gratton, 1998).

**Distribution of Canadian Children According to Their Age and the Types of Family in Which They Reside at the Time of the Survey, 1994–1995**

Age (birth cohort <sup>2</sup> )	Type of Family <sup>1</sup>						Total	N <sup>3</sup>
	Intact	Step (not blended)	Step Blended	Lone- Parent (mother)	Lone- Parent (father)	Lone- Parent (other)		
0–1 year (1993–94)	80.3	0.4**	7.0	12.1	0.2**	0.0**	100.0	3661
2–3 years (1991–92)	76.8	1.1*	5.4	15.9	0.8**	0.1**	100.0	3858
4–5 years (1989–90)	74.8	2.6	6.7	14.5	1.2*	0.1**	100.0	3903
6–7 years (1987–88)	74.2	2.8	5.5	16.4	0.9*	0.1**	100.0	3729
8–9 years (1985–86)	75.2	4.1	5.7	13.0	1.7*	0.3**	100.0	3815
10–11 years (1983–84)	72.9	3.9	6.2	14.8	1.8*	0.3**	100.0	3820
All ages 0–11 years	75.7	2.5	6.1	14.5	1.1	0.1*	100.0	22 786 <sup>4</sup>

\* Estimate to be interpreted with caution because of sampling variability.

\*\* Estimate does not meet Statistics Canada quality standards. Conclusions and interpretations based on this estimate cannot be considered reliable.

<sup>1</sup> Intact: All children are biological or adopted children of both members of the couple.

Step: Two-parent family in which one parent is not the biological parent of the children.

Blended: Two-parent family in which at least one of the children does not have the same biological or adoptive parents as the others.

Lone-parent (other): Non-biological mother or father.

<sup>2</sup> As indicated, children's years of birth are those of the majority of cohorts. Thus, the 0–1 year cohort (1993–94) was born between November 1992 and March 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers of cases weighted, brought back to sample size.

<sup>4</sup> Forty-five cases had missing information.

**Source:** Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *Growing up with Mom and Dad? The intricate family life courses of Canadian children*. Catalogue 89-566, August 1998.



Most research considers the intact family to be the guideline against which to measure other family forms. A great deal of important information has come from this research; however, it is limited, because it creates broad categories of families, whereas more defined ones would provide more valuable information. For example, single-parent families tend to be put into one category rather than sorted by type of single-parent family, such as male-headed, female-headed, or by reason for being single, such as never married, divorced, or widowed. This type of research ignores many important variables, such as the amount and type of resources available (for example, money, time, support from family and/or friends) and differing outcomes in various family forms (Demo & Cox, 2000).

A parent's gender plays a more important role in parental involvement than living arrangement does. Fathers, regardless of where they live, tend to be less involved with their children than mothers are. Divorced fathers tend to see their children infrequently, and their contact with their children usually decreases over time. Recent research contradicts past research, showing that many non-residential fathers maintain frequent contact with their children. Further studies demonstrate a difference between what the mother reports as father contact and what the father reports. It has been suggested that past research has relied on the mothers' reports to determine fathers' contact, and this may have led to unbalanced views of father involvement (Demo & Cox, 2000).

## abstract

### Family Structure and Children's Success: A Comparison of Widowed and Divorced Single-Mother Families

by Timothy J. Biblarz and Greg Gottainer,  
University of Southern California

Compared with children raised in single-mother families created by the death of the father, children raised in divorced single-mother families have significantly lower levels of education, occupational status, and happiness in adulthood. Yet divorced single mothers are not significantly different than their widowed counterparts in childrearing, gender role, family values, religiosity, health-related behaviors, and other dimensions of lifestyle.

However, relative to widowed single mothers, divorced single mothers hold lower occupational positions, are more financially stressed, and have a higher rate of participation in the paid labour force. We speculate that the contrasting positions in the social structure of different types of single-mother families may account for observed differences in child outcomes. ■

**Source:** Copyrighted 2002 by the National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave. NE, Suite 550, Minneapolis, MN 55421. Reprinted by permission.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth found that more fathers of children who are born to single mothers are acknowledging their paternity by putting their name on the child's birth certificate, compared to any time in the past, when paternity was seldom acknowledged. This same research shows that fathers who are not married to the mothers are often living with them at the time of the child's birth. However, children born to common-law unions are three times more likely to have to deal with the break-up of their parents' relationship than children born to married couples (Marcil-Gratton, 1998). Systems theory suggests that removing the father from the home, or not having a father in the home, affects the family dynamics of the entire household. The relationship between the children and the father changes as the rest of the system does. Children who have been accustomed to frequent contact with their father may have difficulty in other areas of their lives due to their father's absence.

The dynamics of a couple's relationship has an impact on their children's development. Marital conflict is more strongly related to disrupted parenting and child adjustment than is parents' overall marital satisfaction or the quality of a marriage. When a child is old enough to understand intense marital conflict that is child-related and is not resolved in a constructive manner, there are direct negative effects on the child. David Demo and Martha Cox found that children who are exposed to conflict that is resolved in a constructive, non-aggressive, and productive manner do not suffer the same negative effects (Demo & Cox, 2000; Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). Couples who engage in **constructive conflicts** may be able to parent better, since they are able to solve problems as a couple and provide good role models for their children. Parents who engage in hostile and angry conflicts with each other are more likely to use this same method of solving conflicts with their children. This can have long-lasting, negative consequences for their children. Parents who engage in this type of **destructive conflict** in their marital relationship may not have the energy left to be available to their child emotionally and, consequently, may experience more tension in the parent-child relationship. Parents' anger from a destructive marital conflict may cause them to reject their children and be hostile or physically abusive toward them. This may hold true for fathers more than for mothers (Demo & Cox, 2000).



Witnessing destructive parental conflict has long-lasting negative repercussions on children, while witnessing constructive conflict can help develop their problem-solving skills.

*“The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.”*

—Theodore M. Hesburgh

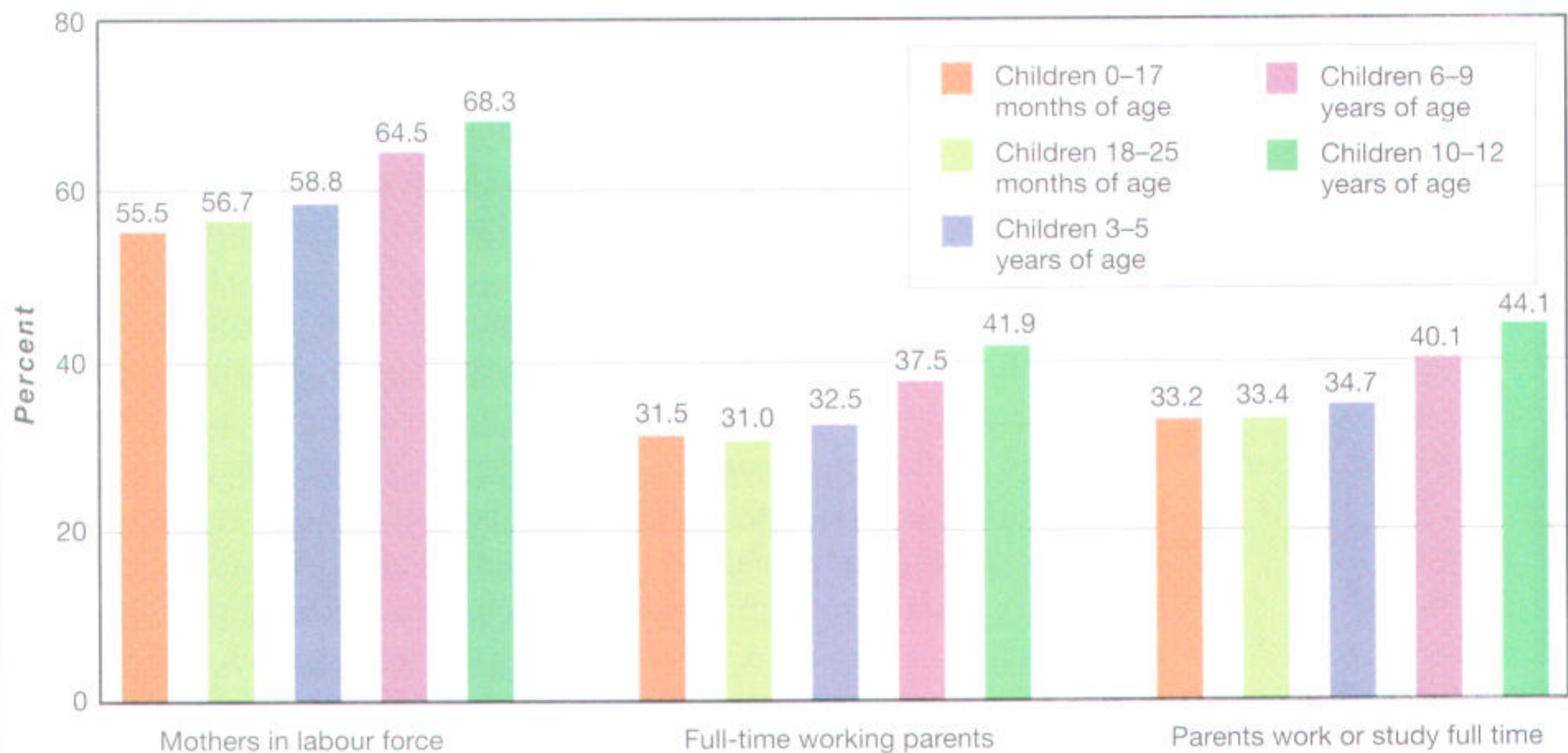
Marital conflict has negative effects on children, but conflict between parent and child has a greater negative effect, especially when the child is an adolescent. Another factor that influences how conflict affects the child is how the child interprets the conflict. Children who spend much of their time living in a conflicted household tend to become sensitized to it and view it as more negative than children who spend less time living with conflict would. The strategies a child uses to cope with parental conflict determine the effect of the conflict on the child. Children who become involved in the conflict suffer more maladjustment than those who distance themselves or seek support outside of the family (Demo & Cox, 2000).

## Parents, Work, and Child Development

Most mothers of young children in Canada today work at least part-time. The Canadian National Child-Care Study, using data from the 1988 census, looked at working families and the age of their children. They found that as children get older, it was more likely that both parents were working full time. In 33 percent of families with children aged 0–17 months, both parents worked full time. However, when they included either full or part-time employment of the mother, the percentage increased to 56 (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). More often, mothers are working before and after the birth of their children. In the 1950s, only 8 percent of mothers went back to work within two years after the birth of a child. In the 1990s, that figure increased to 57 percent. In Canada, there is a nationally funded maternity- and parental-leave system that allows parents access to employment insurance to support staying home to care for infants. The system provides for mothers, primarily, but also for fathers, to spend time with the infant and meet the needs of themselves and their families after childbirth. At the end of the leave, 45 to 50 percent of women return to work, while others are more likely to return at the end of two years (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000).

According to the Canada Census results between 1971 to 1991 for where people work, the percentage of people working from home has remained steady at between 7 and 8 percent over the past three decades. The General Social Survey, done in 2000, questioned if respondents usually work at home, and found that 17 percent of the population did. Men do more work from home than women do, with 10.8 percent of men working from home, while 9.8 percent of women do. Working from home is more prevalent among families with young children: 14.8 percent of employees with families compared to 11.3 percent of employees without children. Much of the increase of home-based

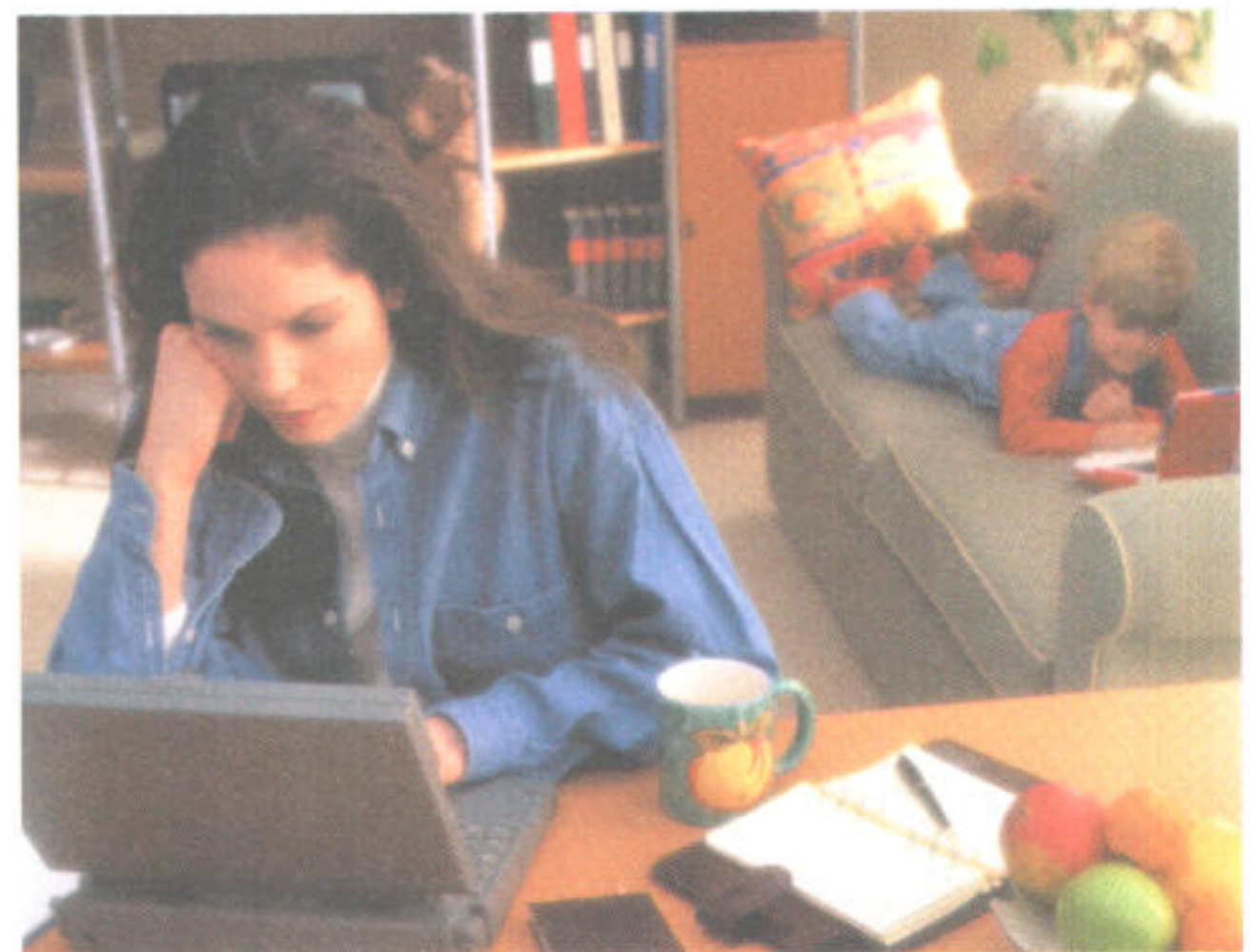
### Percentage of Children in Age Groups by Parents' Usual Hours of Work and Study, Canada, 1988



Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *Canadian National Child Care Study: Introductory Report*. Catalogue 89-526E, February 1992, Figure 3, pg. 56.

work has been linked to the use of computers and related technologies. There are advantages to working at home, especially for families with young children: different child-care arrangements, less time spent commuting, more time with children, and more flexibility. There are also disadvantages, such as a decreased social network, isolation from colleagues, interrupted work, and inconsistent hours (Akyeampong & Nadwodny, 2001).

Working full or part-time has an impact on the parents' level of satisfaction concerning the amount of time they get to spend with their children. The State of the Family in Canada, a national survey taken in 1994, showed that mothers who worked 20 hours per week were more satisfied than those who worked more. The more hours parents worked, the



Parents who are overloaded by work have less time to give to their children, which may affect the children's development in a negative way.

*“Our children are not going to be just ‘our children’—they are going to be other people’s husbands and wives and the parents of our grandchildren.”*

—Mary S. Calderone

viewing other parents with their children and incorporating into their style techniques that they view as positive. When parents spend time with childless people, it has a different type of influence. For example, a young mother whose friends are single and free to do as they please may come to resent the time demands of caring for a young child (Bodman & Peterson, 1995).

The National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth in Canada studied the impact of poverty on children. The survey showed that children in poor families have twice as many negative outcomes, such as chronic health problems, hyperactivity, school issues, and emotional disorders as children who are raised in families with sufficient income. The researchers also found that these children had triple the rate of conduct disorders, including aggressive and antisocial behaviours. An important finding of this survey was that poor children who have parents with good parenting skills adjust as well as, and sometimes better than, children with sufficient income whose parents have poor parenting behaviours (Steinhauer, 1997).

### Care of Children by Others

There has been a great deal of research on the effects of non-parental care on young children. Several ongoing research projects have shown that infants under the age of 12 months in day care for more than 20 hours a week are more likely to develop insecure attachments with their mothers. These children are also more likely to develop heightened aggressiveness and non-compliance during their preschool and early school years (McCain & Mustard, 1999). Michael Lamb reported in the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* that even though regular exposure to non-parental care can have negative effects on a child, this is not always the case. He states that the quality of the parent-child relationship is the key factor in determining how the child develops. Children who spend substantial amounts of time with non-parental caregivers and who have good relationships with their parents do not suffer the ill effects seen in some research. Parents who are moderate- to high-risk in terms of their parenting behaviour are more likely to have problems with children who spend more time in day care than parents who are not high risk (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000).

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth also studied the impact of parents’ work on Canadian children. Findings show that the vocabulary development of preschoolers is affected by the amount of time a mother reads to the child rather than whether or not she chooses to work or stay at home. The behavioural, math, and reading scores of older children

demonstrate the same results. Good parenting is seen to be a more significant factor than work. Researchers suggest that society should invest in more resources and child-friendly workplace policies. They believe this would allow parents to spend more time with their children and, thus, encourage child development. They also encourage good-quality day care as a means of supporting child development for working parents (Human Resources Development Canada, 1999).

Most families do not use public day-care centres to tend their children. Most use sitters, licensed in-home child care, or relatives. Many parents consider relatives to be more trustworthy than other caregivers. Grandparents are the most commonly used relative, followed by aunts or uncles (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). Research suggests that child care by family members is part of an exchange of services between these individuals. Parents who seek child care from their kin usually do so out of economic necessity. When the cost of family care becomes too great, they seek other forms of child care. Parents with higher incomes are less likely to use kin care. Researchers suggest that government policy makers consider providing subsidies and other incentives for kin care of children (Brandon, 2000).

Many Canadian families live too far from their extended family to be able to rely on them for child care (Steinhauer, 1997). Day-care centres are used by only 8 percent of families. Those who advocate for day care argue that the availability of high-quality day care is a critical support for parents of young children. Licensed day cares must have trained staff, low staff-child ratios, flexible hours, high-quality facilities, low turnover rates, and parental involvement. Advocates claim that licensed day care must be available and accessible for all families. This is called **universal day care** (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000).

In Canada, there are not enough licensed day-care spaces available. In 1990 there were 1.3 million preschoolers whose mothers were in the paid labour force and only 321 000 licensed spaces available. The benefit of high-quality day care for high-risk and disadvantaged children and for children in single-parent families has been proven in the research (Larson, Goltz, & Munro, 2000). As a nation, Canada needs to provide a variety of child-care situations for working parents to ensure that children have good-quality care, no matter what the parents' work situation is. Providing flexible options that meet various situations is an important part of the future of child care in Canada. Providing effective support for parents has been shown in the research to also improve children's chances for a successful future (Steinhauer, 1997).



#### web connection

[www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12](http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12)

To learn about work and day care in Canada, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

*“The most important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.”*

—John Lubbock

## case study | Being a Father

Grant Johnson always knew that he wanted to be a father, although when he first started to date his wife, Pamela, in 1970, he often spoke out about the so-called “irresponsibility of bringing a child into an overpopulated world of poverty, ethnic conflict, war, and environmental destruction.” Despite his idealistic leanings, Grant prepared himself in his youth for being a father. He worked part time at the YMCA through high school and university, and spent his summers until he was 21 as a staff member of various Y summer camps. He loved children, enjoyed being with them, and was a positive role model for them. It was no surprise to his family and friends that he eventually chose teaching as a career after trying many other jobs.

Grant and Pamela had been married for four years before deciding to start their family. When Emma was born in 1976, Grant was already working as a high school teacher and was ready to start this new period in his and Pamela’s life together. Grant had expected to be actively involved in raising his children. Both he and Pamela had come from families in which both parents had worked, and they had agreed early in their relationship that Pamela would continue with her career after having children. They had also decided they would utilize home child care and community day care when their children were young. Grant’s father had taken a very active role in raising him and his older brother, and Grant naturally expected to follow his example.

Having Grant present at Emma’s birth was a joy for both Grant and Pamela, and the first few weeks of the baby’s life were emotionally satisfying for both of them. He liked being home with the baby and did not even mind changing her dirty diapers. The only conflict that arose was arguing about who got to carry Emma in her “Snuggly” when they went out as a family!



Once Emma was born and Pamela went back to work, Grant had to contribute more to the housework.

Things changed, of course, when Pamela went back to work when Emma was three months old. Grant liked having a stay-at-home wife and was spoiled by Pamela, who had taken over many of the household chores that Grant was used to doing. He resumed responsibility for the household tasks that he had handled before, including the laundry and housecleaning, but these jobs became even more time-consuming now that they had Emma. He dropped off and picked up Emma from a day care that was close to his school, but had to give up his regular squash games after work with his friend Richard, since he no longer had the time. His regular Friday evening out with the guys from work also became a problem, since it meant less time with Emma and because Pamela was really tired at the end of the week and especially appreciated Grant’s company and help then. However, they eventually

adjusted to the rhythm of their life as a family. They began to spend more time with other couples who had children and less time with their single friends.

Money became more of a concern for Grant and Pamela. No matter what anyone had advised them, they found that they were not prepared for the amount that was required to raise a family. They were unable to afford many of the things that they could before, such as travelling during their vacation time, renovating their house, and driving new cars. To ensure that their day-care costs remained affordable and to have some control over the quality of care that Emma was getting during the day, Grant and Pamela helped start up a co-operative day care in the local elementary school. Grant took on the position of treasurer and performed those duties for the next nine years.

By the time that Colleen, and later Andrew, were born, the Johnsons were a family fixture in their community. They were part of the endless series of car pools and child-centred recreational activities. Grant enjoyed taking his children to the local community

centre for “gym and swim,” playing with them at the local park, and teaching them to play soccer and baseball. Although his life had changed dramatically, in that the majority of his leisure time was now spent with his family, he felt tremendously fulfilled. He loved everything about being a dad, and looked forward to seeing his children grow up and mature and to experiencing the change in his role as a father as he aged with them. ■

1. How did the transition to parenthood affect Grant and Pamela’s lifestyle?
2. In what way did Grant’s role within the family change when he became a father? Explain the changes from a systems perspective.
3. From a social exchange perspective, what are the benefits of fatherhood for Grant?
4. Using the perspective of symbolic interactionism, explain how Grant’s identity changed to include himself as father.
5. How might things have happened differently when considering the division of labour, finances, and going out with friends?



# chapter 10 Review and Apply

## Knowledge/Understanding Thinking/Inquiry

1. What do you remember about your child-care situation as a child? Check with your parent(s) or guardian(s) to see who cared for you when you were young. Compare your child-care situation with that of your classmates.
2. Discuss the various roles of parents in the development of children. How do the roles of mother and father differ? How are they similar? Give specific examples to support your statements. What roles do your parents assume? What roles do you plan on assuming in your future?
3. Use the theory of symbolic interactionism to discuss marital conflict and its impact on child development.
4. The systems perspective assumes that the system is influenced by outside forces. Using systems theory, explain how the work situation of the following parents might affect their relationships with their children. At what age of the children will each of these jobs have the most effect on the parents' relationship with them?
  - a) A mother who works in the young offenders unit of a large urban police force
  - b) A father who manages a trendy restaurant and employs many people in their late teens and early twenties
  - c) A father who works in the emergency department of the local hospital
  - d) A mother who is an elementary school teacher

## Knowledge/Understanding Thinking/Inquiry Communication

5. Discuss the issue of child care by extended family from a structural functionalist perspective.
6. Significant others and peer groups have a larger influence on school-aged children than society realizes. Write a reaction paper supporting your opinion on this statement. Give three reactions and evidence and/or research from this chapter to support your opinion.
7. One of the main causes of social problems in Canada today has to do with the fact that the majority of mothers with young children are working outside the home. Discuss whether this statement can be proven.

8. Write a letter stating the need for good-quality child care in your community. Choose an appropriate audience—newspaper editor, city hall, or MP—to address the letter to. Use research on child development from this chapter and other sources.
9. Investigate the number of local companies and organizations that assist parents in caring for children. What types of programs do they offer? How flexible are they? As a future parent, which company do you feel would best meet your needs?
10. Canadian society does not support involved fathers. Choose one of the following tasks related to this statement:
  - a) Write an essay expressing and supporting your point of view on this topic.
  - b) Interview an involved father about the support, or lack of support, for fathers.

**Knowledge/Understanding****Thinking/Inquiry****Communication****Application**

11. Write and conduct a survey to determine the changes couples encountered upon becoming parents. Consider the factors discussed in this chapter. Tabulate the results and present them in the form of a graph or chart.
12. Conduct an observation of a parent and child interacting with each other. Record anecdotal notes as you observe their behaviours. Write a summary of your observations.
13. Interview a couple who are parenting in a non-traditional manner (for example, the father stays home while the mother works; the parents work alternate shifts to enable their children to be with a parent at all times; the parents work from home). Write a case study describing their parenting roles.

# chapter 11

## Parent-Child Issues and Trends

### KEY TERMS

artificial  
insemination  
assisted  
reproductive  
technologies  
(ART)  
child abuse  
child neglect  
congenital  
anomalies  
diminished  
parenting  
ecofeminists  
embryo implants  
in vitro  
fertilization  
low income  
cut-off (LICO)  
perinatal  
persistent  
poverty  
physical abuse  
self-fulfilling  
prophecy  
sexual abuse  
verbal/emotional  
abuse

### CHAPTER EXPECTATIONS

While reading this chapter, you will:

- describe current perceptions, opinions, and demographic trends relating to childbearing and childrearing, and speculate on the significance of these trends for parent-child relationships
- explain the impact that current issues relating to parents and children have on the bearing and rearing of children
- demonstrate an understanding of the nature, prevalence, and consequences of child abuse, and describe strategies and programs that would facilitate its prevention and remediation
- summarize current research on the effects of divorce on child development and socialization
- summarize the impact of economic and political instability and migration on child development and socialization
- formulate research questions and develop hypotheses reflecting specific theoretical frameworks
- identify and respond to the theoretical viewpoints, the thesis, and the supporting arguments of materials found in a variety of secondary sources
- use current information technology effectively to compile quantitative data and present statistical analyses of data or to develop databases

## RESEARCH SKILLS

- accessing demographic information from media and databases using the Internet and other sources



Parenting is a challenging job, especially when other factors enter into it to make it even more difficult.

## CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

There are many changes and challenges facing parents and their children in Canada today. In this chapter, significant issues that affect parent-child relationships will be explored. Topics surrounding reproductive technologies will be discussed, then the impact of divorce on the development and adjustment of children will be considered. Following that, some of the difficulties that immigrant families encounter when adapting to a new culture will be examined. The long-lasting effects of poverty on children will be explored. Also in this chapter, the causes and effects of child abuse will be discussed. Finally, parents' and siblings' reactions to the death of a child in the family will be considered.