

Reducing Chronic Neglect in Utah

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Summary of Neglect Project from September 30, 1985 to December 30, 1987

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Introduction

In January 1986, a program was implemented designed to reduce chronic neglect in families living in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. Specifically, the purpose of the project was threefold:

1. To replace old, unwanted neglecting parenting and child-rearing patterns with new, nurturing parent-child patterns of interaction.
2. To test the effectiveness of a validated program in treating physical and emotional abuse with families experiencing chronic neglect.
3. To train protective service workers and other professionals and paraprofessionals working with chronically neglecting families to implement the Nurturing Program for Parents and Children.

Procedures

Project staff met with the administration of the Utah Division of Family Services (DFS) to present the proposed project. After learning of the project, several DFS administrators from Salt Lake City and surrounding districts agreed to implement the proposed project with their staff. Project staff also met with the staff of the Family Support Centers located throughout the Salt Lake metropolitan area to elicit their support and involvement in the project. Family Support Centers are non-profit agencies which provide parenting and support programs for families in their community. Often DFS and Family Support Centers work in conjunction to provide parenting services to families in crisis.

The program model to be implemented with families identified as having experienced chronic neglect was the Nurturing Program for Parents and Children (Bavolek & Comstock, 1983; Bavolek & Bavolek, 1986). The Nurturing Program is a family-based program providing both parenting and nurturing for parents and their children birth to 5 years (Bavolek, et al., 1986), and parents and their children 4 to 7 years (Bavolek, et al., 1983) identified as physically and emotionally abusive.

The Nurturing Program was developed from extensive clinical and empirical research by the authors in identifying and validating the parenting and nurturing needs of families exhibiting physical and emotional abuse. Activities, goals, and objectives focus on remediating four distinct patterns of inappropriate parenting that lead to parent-child interaction difficulties:

1) Inappropriate Parental Expectations of the Child

Beginning very early in the infant's life, many abusive parents tend to inaccurately perceive the skills and abilities of their children. Often abusive parents prematurely expect and demand a great deal from their infants and children. Children are expected to perform in a manner incongruent to what may reasonably be expected for their developmental stage. These inappropriate expectations stem from two primary factors: One, a lack of knowledge of appropriate capabilities and needs of children at each developmental stage; and two, attempts to increase feelings of personal worth by the parent through their roles as mothers and fathers. In this case, children who obey and comply to the parent's demands enhance the parent's positive perceptions of self. Children who don't obey or comply are viewed as threats to an already weak self-concept and self-esteem. Treated as if children were older than they really are, children are often left to care for themselves, or are left to take care of younger siblings. Children are expected to be toilet trained by six to twelve months of age; to be able to talk before two years of age; and to help with the washing, housecleaning, food preparation and serving at a very early age.

The effects of inappropriate parental expectations upon the young child's development are debilitating. When these expectations are impossible to meet, biologically and/or cognitively, children perceive themselves as being worthless, failures, and as unaccountable and disappointing to adults.

2) Parental Lack of Empathy

A second common parenting trait among abusing parents is their inability to be empathically aware of their child's needs, and to be able to respond to those needs in an appropriate fashion. Abusive parents are unable to empathize with their children's needs, often due to their own frustrated dependency needs. Not only do abusing parents have a high expectation and demand for their children's performance, but also a corresponding disregard for the children's own needs. Limited abilities, and helplessness.

Empathic awareness of a child's needs entails the ability of a parent to understand the condition or state of mind of the child without actually experiencing the feelings of the child. To empathize as a parent is to participate in your child's feelings and ideas. Abusing parents often demonstrate the inability to be empathically aware of their infant's or child's needs. Based on a fear of "spoiling" their child, abusing parents often ignore their child, which results in the child's basic needs being left unattended. A high premium is placed on the child being good, acting right, and

learning to be obedient. However, what constitutes "good" behavior is seldom clarified.

The effects of inadequate empathic parental care during the early years of an infant's and child's life are profound and enduring. A child who is ignored and whose basic needs are neglected often fails to develop a basic sense of trust in him/herself and in others. A child who lives in a world where parents pay no attention to him/her, where he/she is not permitted to make demands on the parents, and where parents are interested in him/her acting right and learning to be obedient, provides little or no basis for learning respect for rules and for being able to distinguish right from wrong. As a result, the child fails to develop confidence in him/herself and in his/her basic abilities. Acting his/her age usually means being pliable to the demands of the parents, and does not mean testing reality. Violence, cruelty, and causing pain to others are not considered bad to the child. The parent(s) with whom the child identifies, models violent, cruel, and physically/psychologically abusive behaviors under the aegis of teaching, helping, and controlling him/her. The results are viewed in the child's tragically low sense of self-esteem and a distorted sense of guilt.

3) Parental Value of Physical Punishment

Closely interwoven with the misperceptions of a child's abilities, the lack of empathic awareness of the infant's/child's needs is the abusing parent's strong belief in the value of physical punishment.

Abusive parents may believe babies should not be "given in to" nor allowed to "get away with anything;" they must periodically be shown "who is boss" and to respect authority so they will not become sassy or stubborn. Many abusive parents not only considered corporal punishment a proper disciplinary measure but strongly defended their right to use physical force.

Physical attacks by the abusing parents are not often a haphazard, uncontrolled, impulsive discharge of aggression by the parent onto the infant. On the contrary, abusing parents utilize physical punishment as a unit of behavior designed to punish and correct specific bad conduct or inadequacy on the part of the child. For the abusive parent the punishment carries the approval of traditional family authority and an aura of righteousness.

4) Parent-Child Role Reversal

A fourth common parenting behavior among abusive parents is parent-child role reversal. When the phenomenon of a role reversal exists, children are usually

expected to be sensitive to and responsible for much of the happiness of their parents. Essentially, the parents act like helpless, needy children looking to their own children as adults who are capable of providing care and comfort.

Children are expected to make life more pleasurable for their parents by providing love, assurance, and a feeling that the parents are needed, worthwhile individuals. When the obvious reality sets in that children are very needy people in their own right, emotional and physical abuse and neglect are often the outcome.

When expressed over a period of time, these parenting behaviors lead to a negative self-concept, lowered self-esteem, increased frustration, lack of communication, role confusion among family members, and child abuse.

The Nurturing Philosophy of Raising Children

The Nurturing philosophy of raising healthy children identifies five major learning principles:

- (1) The family is a system. TO change the system, all members must be involved in learning new skills.
- (2) Appropriate and inappropriate parenting exist on a continuum. All families experience healthy and unhealthy interactions to some degree.
- (3) Adults and children learn on two levels: the cognitive (knowledge) level and the affective (feelings) level. To be effective, education/intervention must engage the learner on both levels.
- (4) Adults who feel good about themselves as either men or women stand a better chance of being nurturing parents. Children who feel good about themselves as boys and girls are more capable of being nurturing sons and daughters. A major goal of the Nurturing Program is to help men, women, boys and girls increase their positive self-esteem and self-concept.
- (5) All families, given a choice, would rather display happy, healthy interactions than abusive, problem interactions.

The Nurturing Program for Parents and Children adheres strongly to the aforementioned philosophy.

Program Rational and Format

The Nurturing Program involves parents and their children 4 to 12 years in changing existing inappropriate interaction patterns. Parents and their children participate in separate programs that meet at the same time for 2 ½ hours once a week, for 15 consecutive weeks. Each weekly session includes a snack activity in which parents and children meet together to share positive experiences. Weekly sessions are presented with specific goals, objectives, and procedures for carrying out program activities. Children work in groups (4-7 years and 8-12 years) learning nurturing skills.

Separate activities manuals have been developed to conduct both the parents' program and the children's program. Audio-visual programs are used to teach parents new skills in behavior management. Two group facilitators are suggested for each 7 adults participating in the program. Two group facilitators are suggested for every 10 children participating in the program. Professionals who have experience working with adults and children in group and individual settings can effectively conduct the Nurturing Program.

Validation of the Nurturing Program

The Nurturing Program was extensively field tested across the country. More than 100 parents and their children completed the program in Chicago, Cleveland, Eau Claire, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, and South Bend. Families who participated in the field testing of this program did so voluntarily after being referred by Department of Social Services, Parents Anonymous chapters, mental health agencies, family courts, family counselors, and school counselors.

Formal and informal measures were utilized to validate the treatment program. A total of 121 abusive adults and 150 abused children in six cities began the program. Of this group, 79% of the adults (95) and 83% of the children (125) voluntarily completed the program. Significant ($p < .05$) pre-post test results indicated that abusive parents learned and used alternatives to corporal punishment such as praise and time-out; demonstrated empathy towards their children's needs; increased their own self-awareness and self-concept as men and women; and learned age-appropriate expectations of their children. Data also indicate abusive parents gained ($p > .05$) increase in cohesion, communication, and organization, while showing a significant ($p > .05$) decrease in family conflict. A yearlong follow-up of abusive families completing the program shows 42% of the families are no longer receiving services from county departments of social services for child abuse and neglect. Recidivism among the families was only 7%. In-home observations of family interactions indicate a maintenance of posttest changes.

Training Trainers Workshop

Each DFS agency and Family Support Center who agreed to participate in the project participated in a two-day training of trainers workshop designed to teach the staff the nurturing philosophy of raising children and how to implement the Nurturing Program for Parents and Children. The expectation was that the agency staff would implement the program with families identified as experiencing chronic neglecting parent-child interactions.

Identifying Target Population

Families referred to the Division of Family Services and Family Support Centers as experiencing chronic child neglect or neglect and abuse were identified as the target population for the project. The identification of neglect as the primary referral was made by each Family Support Center and each of the Division of Family Services districts placing families in the program. Social workers and/or staff from each of the participating agencies met with the families to explain the purpose of the program and to elicit a commitment to attend all 15 weeks of the group program or 4 sessions of the home-based program. Many of the families who agreed to participate in the Nurturing Program also continued to receive additional services provided by the county. Some families were court ordered to attend based on their long-standing inability to change their neglecting parenting patterns.

Pre and Post Test Assessment Inventories

A battery of inventories was identified to assess the impact of the Nurturing Program in reducing chronic neglecting parenting patterns. Inventories were administered during the first and last sessions of the program. In some instances, when parents did not complete all the inventories, agency staff followed up to gather the data. The following inventories were utilized to gather information prior to (pre) and subsequent to (post) the treatment:

1. The Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI). The AAPI is developed from the four treatment areas of the Nurturing Program: lacking empathy of children's needs, belief in the use of corporal punishment, role reversal, and inappropriate expectations of children's developmental capabilities. The AAPI is a 32-item inventory presented in a 5-point Likert format from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The AAPI is a valid measure normed on over 12,000 adults and adolescents.
2. The Family Environmental Scale (FES). The FES is a brief True/False inventory of 60 items that generates data on 10 different family interactive patterns.
3. The Nurturing Quiz. The Nurturing Quiz is an informal multiple choice inventory assessing parents' knowledge of behavior management. The test items are

generated from the behavior management concepts presented in the Nurturing Program.

4. The Family Social History Questionnaire (FSHQ). The FSHQ is a questionnaire collecting demographic data of self, mate, and family.
5. The 16 PF. The 16 PF is a personality inventory that assesses an individual's personality in 16 different factors. Personality traits assessed range from self-concept, extraversion, anxiety.

Results and Attrition Rates

A total of six agencies throughout the Salt Lake metropolitan area implemented the Nurturing Program with families experiencing chronic child neglect during a two-year period. Four of the agencies were Division of Family Services; one Family Support Center; and one social services agency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS Social Services). A total of 125 adults began attending the 15-week Nurturing Program. A total of 103 adults completed the program for an attrition rate of 12% and a retention rate of 82%, a rate significantly higher ($p < .01$) that the retention rate of participants in similar program throughout the state.

Table 1
Family Description

1. Total Number of Participating Parents

| | N | % | Age |
|------------|-----|------|------------|
| a. Females | 75 | 73% | 30 years |
| b. Males | 28 | 27% | 31 years |
| c. Total | 103 | 100% | 30.5 years |

2. Marital Status

| | Males | | Females | | Total | |
|---------------------|-------|----|---------|----|-------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| a. Married | 23 | 82 | 28 | 37 | 51 | 50 |
| b. Divorced | 2 | 7 | 27 | 36 | 29 | 28 |
| c. Single | 1 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| d. Separated | 1 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| e. Living with Mate | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| f. Widow(er) | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |

3. Race

| | Males | | Females | | Total | |
|--------------------|-------|----|---------|----|-------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| a. White | 27 | 90 | 67 | 88 | 94 | 89 |
| b. Black | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| c. American Indian | 2 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| d. Asian American | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| e. Hispanic | 1 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| f. Other | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

4. Religious Preference

| | Males | | Females | | | Total | |
|---------------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-------|--|
| | N | % | N | % | % | N | |
| a. Protestant | 3 | 12 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 9 | |
| b. Catholic | 3 | 12 | 13 | 20 | 16 | 18 | |
| c. Jewish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| d. Islamic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| e. None | 1 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 7 | |
| f. Mormon | 18 | 72 | 41 | 63 | 59 | 66 | |

5. Highest Grade Completed

| | Males | | Females | | | Total | |
|---------------------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-------|--|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| a. Grade School 1-6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| b. Jr. High 7-9 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 20 | 14 | 16 | |
| c. Sr. High 10-12 | 17 | 68 | 38 | 58 | 55 | 61 | |
| d. College 13-16 | 5 | 20 | 14 | 22 | 19 | 21 | |
| e. Post College 17+ | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | |

6. Training Schools Attended

| | Males | | Females | | | Total | |
|---------------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-------|--|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| a. None | 13 | 52 | 39 | 60 | 52 | 58 | |
| b. Vocational | 5 | 20 | 18 | 28 | 23 | 26 | |
| c. Technical | 2 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | |
| d. Business | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | |
| e. Other | 4 | 16 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 8 | |

7. Are you Currently Employed?

| | Males | | Females | | | Total | |
|--------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-------|--|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| a. Yes | 17 | 68 | 18 | 28 | 35 | 39 | |
| b. No | 8 | 32 | 47 | 72 | 55 | 61 | |

8. Annual Income Level of Family

| | Males | | Females | | | Total | |
|----------------------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-------|--|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| a. Below \$5,000 | 5 | 20 | 24 | 37 | 29 | 32 | |
| b. \$5,000-\$8,000 | 3 | 12 | 9 | 14 | 12 | 13 | |
| c. \$8,000-\$12,000 | 3 | 12 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 10 | |
| d. \$12,000-\$15,000 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 6 | |
| e. \$15,000-\$20,000 | 5 | 20 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 14 | |
| f. Over \$20,000 | 7 | 28 | 6 | 9 | 13 | 14 | |
| g. Not sure | 2 | 8 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 10 | |

9. Who were you raised by?

| | Males | | Females | | | Total | |
|---------------------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-------|--|
| | N | % | N | % | % | N | |
| a. Birth Parents | 20 | 80 | 43 | 66 | 63 | 72 | |
| b. Step Parents | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| c. Adoptive Parents | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | |
| d. Foster Parents | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | |
| e. Relatives | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| f. Siblings | 2 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 6 | |
| g. Single Parent | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 7 | |
| h. Other | 1 | 4 | 9 | 14 | | 9 | |

10. How my children do you have?

| | Males | | Females | | | Total | |
|----------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-------|--|
| | N | % | N | % | % | N | |
| a. One | 0 | 0 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 8 | |
| b. Two | 4 | 16 | 14 | 22 | 18 | 20 | |
| c. Three | 6 | 24 | 16 | 25 | 22 | 25 | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| d. Four | 9 | 36 | 17 | 27 | 26 | 29 |
| e. Five | 5 | 20 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 11 |
| f. Six | 1 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| g. More than Six | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

A review of the data presented in Table 1 indicates the vast majority of the parents participating in the project and attending the Nurturing Program were females (73%), White (88%), approximately 30 years old, predominantly Mormon (63%), unemployed (47%), with some high school experience (58%). A total of 37% of the mothers were currently married while 59% indicated they were either divorced, single, widowed, or separated from their spouses. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the families had three or more children under the age of eight years.

Further review of the data presented in Table 1 indicates 28% of the total number of parents participating in the project and attending the Nurturing Program were fathers with the majority of the fathers married (82%). Like the women attending the program, the majority of the men were White (90%), approximately 31 years old, and predominantly Mormon (72%). However, unlike the women participating in the program, more men were employed (68%), more men had some high school education (68%) or training school experience (48%), and had a higher family income level of \$15,000 or more (48%).

Interest existed in the perceptions parents had of their own childhood and whether or not they felt they had been abused or neglected as children by their parents, or whether they had been abused and or neglected by their siblings, boy/girlfriends, or spouse. The child abuse and neglect literature abounds with clinical data that supports the perpetuation of maltreatment from parents to children. Since all families participating in the Nurturing Program had been referred for neglect or neglect and abuse, the likelihood they had experienced maltreatment as children is highly likely. The responses generated from the administration of the Family Social History Questionnaire regarding past experiences of childhood or spouse abuse are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Previous Experiences as Children

| 1. Do you feel you were abused or neglected by your mother as a child? | Males | | Females | | Total | |
|--|-------|----|---------|----|-------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| a. Yes, physically abused | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| b. Yes, emotionally abused | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| c. Yes, sexually abused | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| d. Yes, neglected | 0 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| e. Yes, abused and neglected | 0 | 0 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 7 |
| f. No | 23 | 92 | 41 | 63 | 64 | 71 |
| g. Not sure | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| h. Not applicable | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| 2. Do you feel you were abused or neglected by your father as a child? | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|----|---------|----|-------|--|----|
| | Males | | Females | | Total | | N |
| | N | % | N | % | % | | |
| a. Yes, physically abused | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 7 | | 8 |
| b. Yes, emotionally abused | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| c. Yes, sexually abused | 0 | 0 | 6 | 9 | 6 | | 7 |
| d. Yes, neglected | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 4 | | 4 |
| e. Yes, abused and neglected | 2 | 8 | 11 | 17 | 13 | | 14 |
| f. No | 19 | 76 | 37 | 57 | 56 | | 62 |
| g. Not sure | 3 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 4 | | 4 |
| h. Not applicable | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |

| 3. Do you feel you were abused or neglected by siblings or other family members? | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|----|---------|----|-------|--|----|
| | Males | | Females | | Total | | N |
| | N | % | N | % | % | | |
| a. Yes, physically abused | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| b. Yes, emotionally abused | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| c. Yes, sexually abused | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 7 | | 8 |
| d. Yes, neglected | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 1 |
| e. Yes, abused and neglected | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | | 2 |
| f. No | 21 | 84 | 53 | 82 | 74 | | 82 |
| g. Not sure | 2 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 3 |
| h. Not applicable | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |

| 4. Have you ever been maltreated by your spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend? | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|----|---------|----|-------|--|----|
| | Males | | Females | | Total | | N |
| | N | % | N | % | % | | |
| a. Yes, physically abused | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 3 | | 3 |
| b. Yes, emotionally abused | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 1 |
| c. Yes, sexually abused | 3 | 12 | 10 | 15 | 13 | | 14 |
| d. Yes, neglected | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| e. Yes, abused and neglected | 0 | 0 | 24 | 37 | 24 | | 27 |
| f. No | 21 | 84 | 27 | 42 | 48 | | 53 |

A review of the data in Table 2 indicates a majority of the males and females participating in the program felt they were not abused or neglected by their mothers (71%), fathers (62%), or siblings (82%). When adults did indicate they were maltreated by their parents or other family members, fathers were more commonly mentioned than mothers. Females did indicate a higher percentage of sexual abuse by siblings than other types of maltreatment. A proportionately high number of females also indicated they had been sexually abused by their spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends.

Interest existed in gathering information from parents regarding their abuse and/or neglect. Information was generated from parents regarding their children and experiences they've had with their children. The data generated from statements regarding their children is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Previous Experiences with Children

| | Males | | Females | | Total | |
|---|-------|-----|---------|-----|-------|-----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Are your children currently having difficulty in school? | | | | | | |
| a. Yes, learning or behavioral | 25 | 100 | 64 | 72 | 89 | 100 |
| b. No | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| c. Not sure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Does your child have a recognized handicap? | | | | | | |
| | N | % | N | % | % | N |
| a. Yes | 25 | 100 | 64 | 100 | 89 | 100 |
| b. No | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| c. Not sure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Have your children ever been abused or neglected? | | | | | | |
| | N | % | N | % | % | N |
| a. Yes, by me | 6 | 24 | 22 | 34 | 28 | 29 |
| b. Yes, by my spouse | 9 | 36 | 27 | 42 | 36 | 39 |
| c. Not by me | 19 | 76 | 42 | 66 | 61 | 71 |
| d. Not by my spouse | 14 | 56 | 25 | 39 | 39 | 48 |
| e. Not sure | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 7 |

A review of the data in Table 3 indicates 100% agreement among parents responding to the statements that their children have some recognized handicap and are currently having behavioral and/or learning problems in school.

The data also indicate that 71% of the parents in the program felt they had not abused or neglected their children. More parents (39%) felt their spouse had maltreated their children than they felt they themselves had maltreated their children (29%).

Parenting Attitudes of Parents

The Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI) was administered to each parent pre and post treatment. The data presented in Table 4 show the pre and post test group means. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed to test for significance* between and among the groups' means.

Table 4
AAPI Mean Scores

| AAPI Constructs | Pre | | Post* | |
|-----------------|--------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| A | 22.32 | 23.00 | 22.96 | 25.56 |
| B | 027.20 | 29.03 | 31.64 | 33.43 |
| C | 033.80 | 36.20 | 38.64 | 41.66 |
| D | 24.88 | 27.90 | 28.60 | 32.04 |

* Post test scores increases significant at the (p<.001) level

Pre and post test data gathered from the administration of the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI) indicate significant ($p < .001$) positive changes occurred in the parenting and child-rearing attitudes of neglecting parents. These changes reflect more appropriate expectations of children, increase in the empathic awareness of children's needs, a reduction in the belief of using corporal punishment, and more appropriate family role recognition of children and parents.

Intragroup analyses to assess the differences between males and females found a significant difference ($p < .05$) between the group scores. A review of the group means indicate this difference was in favor of the females whose scores were consistently higher. However, there were no significant differences with sex over time. Both groups had made significant ($p < .001$) positive changes in their parenting attitudes during the 15-week program.

Personality Characteristics of Parents

A personality profile of the neglecting parents who participated in the study was developed. Adults were requested to complete the 16PF personality inventory prior to (pre) and subsequent to (post) their participation in the Nurturing Program. The results of the pre test administration of the 16PF is presented in Table 5.

A review of the data in Table 5 shows significant differences between personality characteristics of males and females attending the Nurturing Program ($p < .05$). Females tend to be more shrewd (N), apprehensive (O), self-sufficient (Q2), but careless of social rules (Q3) than males. Males on the other hand tend to be more dominant (E), touch minded (I), but easily intimidated (H). Males also tended to be more impractical (M) but more intelligent (B) than females. Males and females both tended to be experimenting (Q1).

Analysis of variance conducted to determine the impact of the Nurturing Program on the personality of the parents found no significant changes of the treatment on the personality of the parents or over time.

Family Interaction Patterns

An interaction profile of neglecting families participating in the Nurturing Program was sought. The intent of the interaction profile was to determine the impact of the treatment on the ways parents of neglected children perceived their interaction patterns. The Family Environmental Scale (FES) was utilized as the unit of measure. Parents were asked to complete the FES prior to (pre) and subsequent to (post) the 15-week Nurturing Program

The data generated from the administration of the FES to neglecting parents are presented in Table 6. Pre and post test group mean scores (X) are also presented for males and females.

Table 5
Personality Characteristics of Parents

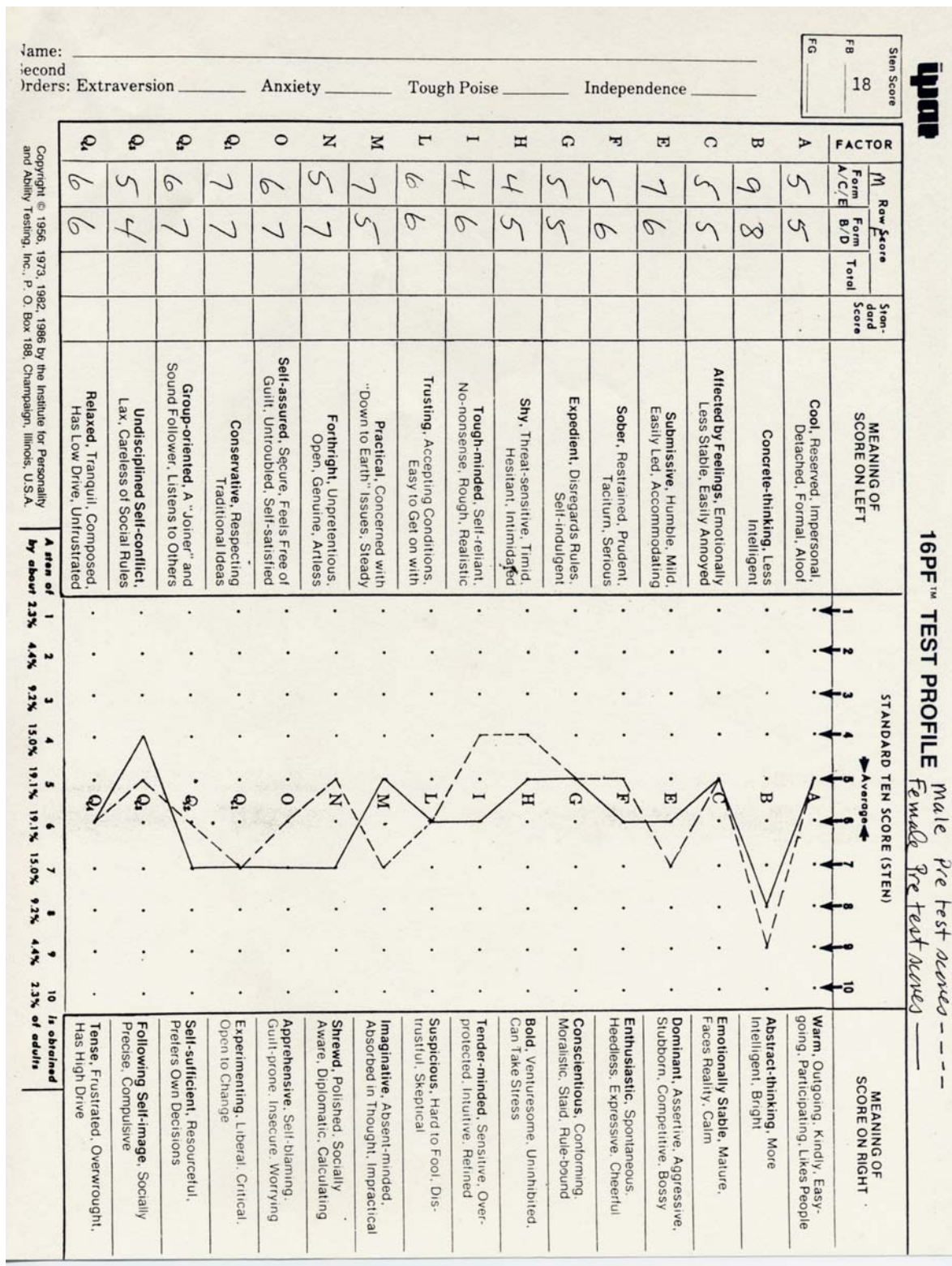


Table 6
Family Interaction Patterns

| Family Environmental Scale 10 Interaction Constructs | Males | | Females | |
|---|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | <u>Pre</u> | <u>Post</u> | <u>Pre</u> | <u>Post</u> |
| | X | X* | X | X* |
| 1. Cohesion | 5.4 | 6.9 | 5.4 | 7.1 |
| 2. Expressiveness | 4.7 | 6.2 | 4.6 | 6.2 |
| 3. Conflict | 3.7 | 3.7 | 5.0 | 3.5 |
| 4. Independence | 5.4 | 6.8 | 5.0 | 6.5 |
| 5. Achievement | 5.3 | 6.9 | 5.5 | 6.7 |
| 6. Intellectual-Cultural | 3.6 | 5.6 | 4.0 | 6.0 |
| 7. Active-Recreational | 3.9 | 5.5 | 3.6 | 5.7 |
| 8. Moral-Religious | 6.1 | 7.2 | 6.1 | 7.3 |
| 9. Organization | 3.7 | 5.8 | 4.9 | 6.5 |
| 10. Control | 4.7 | 4.2 | 5.7 | 4.4 |

* Significant increases at $p < .001$ level.

An analysis of variance was employed to test for treatment effect among and between parents over time. A review of the information presented in Table 6 indicates significant ($p < .001$) positive changes in family interaction patterns. Family cohesion, expressiveness, organization, independence, achievement, reaction, cultural and moral interactions increased while family conflict and control decreased. No significant differences were found between males and females and between males and females over time.

Knowledge of Parenting

The Nurturing Quiz, an informal multiple choice inventory, was utilized as the unit of measure to assess the impact of the Nurturing Program in increasing the parent's knowledge of parenting and child-rearing practices.

The information generated from the analyses of pre and post test scores is presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Knowledge of Parenting

| | Males * | Females* |
|-------|---------|----------|
| | X | X |
| Pre | 15.8 | 17.5 |
| Post* | 20.4 | 21.5 |

A review of the data in Table 7 indicates a significant positive change ($p < .001$) in parents' knowledge of parenting and child-rearing techniques. The data also indicate a significant difference ($p < .001$) in mean scores between males and females. Based on the mean scores, this difference is in favor of females. This difference, however, was not significant with time.

Discussion

A review of the findings indicates several significant results and interesting trends.

1. The vast majority of parents who began the Nurturing Program completed the 15 weekly sessions. Of the 125 parents who began the program, post test data were collected on 103 parents equaling a completion rate of eighty-two percent significantly higher ($p < .01$) than state averages. The rate of neglecting parents completing the 15-week program requirement is comparable to the rate of completion of abusive parents (79%) in initial development and field testing of the Nurturing Program (Bavolek, et al., 1983). Since only a minimum of families was ordered by the court to attend (8%), the success of the program's goals, objectives, activities and philosophy in meeting the needs of families is further validated.
2. Significant pre and post test changes were measured in parenting attitudes, knowledge and family interaction patterns. The impact of the Nurturing Program seemed to achieve its goal of decreasing neglecting patterns.
3. No significant pre-post changes were noticed in the personality constructs as measured by the 16PF. Two explanations are plausible: (1) only 27 parents completed the personality inventory pre and post. Such a low number of completed inventories undoubtedly influenced the results; (2) the personality characteristics of neglecting parents are well established and many of the characteristics frequently appear in the average range of personality as assessed in the 16PF. However, interesting personality traits appear that could influence the neglecting parenting patterns that had been established. Females tended to be insecure, critical, guilt-prone, and lax or careless of social rules, while also portraying a shrewd social awareness and self-sufficiency. Men tended to be dominant, touch minded, and critical of others while also being easily intimidated and impractical. Both males and females tended to be more intelligent than the norm group of the 16PF, Form E-low functioning scale. Future research needs to address the longitudinal impact of the Nurturing Program training on the maintenance of the learned behaviors.

4. The majority of the families who participated in the study were White, predominantly Mormon. Nearly one-quarter of the parents attending the program were intact families (22%). Just over three-quarters of the adults were single-parent families. An outstanding number of families were unemployed (61%) which undoubtedly contributed to the high rate of families at or below the parenting level (45%). Coupled with the fact that 72% of the families had three or more children, the neglect experienced by the families is a logical but harsh reality. In light of these data, race and religious preference seem to have a minimal contributing influence on the study's findings.

5. Of the 83% of the families who completed the information regarding their children, all (100%) were in agreement that their children were having troubles in school and that each child had some sort of learning or behavioral handicap. Research continues to debate the question of whether the special needs of children contribute to their own abuse or neglect or has the neglect and abuse resulted in the development of special needs in children. In any instance, it appears clear that a relationship between special needs children and child neglect is obvious and factual.

Summary

The intent of the project was to develop the parenting and nurturing skills of families experiencing chronic neglect in the metropolitan Salt Lake City area. To this end, the project has met its goals. Significant post test findings and program rate of completion suggests the Nurturing Program has made a substantial contribution to replacing neglecting parenting interactions with nurturing parenting interactions. Future research, however, needs to focus on the longitudinal impact of the Nurturing Program on the maintenance of assessed findings to determine if the environmental limitations of poverty and unemployment contribute to re-establishing neglecting parent-child interactions.

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