Parent education evaluation a study of attitude change.

Claudia Carver
University of Windsor

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NAME OF AUTHOR/NOM DE L'AUTEUR: Claudia Carver


UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITÉ: University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario

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DATED/DATÉ: Oct 5/82

SIGNED/SIGNÉ: Claudia J. Carver

PERMANENT ADDRESS/RÉSIDENCE FIXÉ: 

__________________________________________
NAME OF AUTHOR/NOM DE L'AUTEUR: Janice Imeson

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DATED/DATE: Sept. 21/82

SIGNED/SIGNÉ: Janice Imeson

PERMANENT ADDRESS/RÉSIDENCE FIXÉ: 3461 Peter St. Apt. 410,

Windsor, Ontario N9C 3Z6.

Phone No.: 252-1023
PARENT EDUCATION EVALUATION: A STUDY OF ATTITUDE CHANGE

by

Claudia Carver and Janice Imeson

A thesis presented to the University of Windsor in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work in School of Social Work University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, 1982

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

M.S.W. APPROVAL

NAME OF STUDENTS: Claudia Carver
Janice Imeson

APPROVED BY:
Committee Chairperson
Committee Member
Committee Member
Director
DATE:

778814
ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to evaluate a Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) program in terms of its ability to change participants' attitudes towards child rearing.

A selective review of the literature provided the theoretical and practical knowledge on child rearing and parent education. Parent education was examined from an historical perspective and specific programs were reviewed in detail. The evaluation of parent education research focused on P.E.T. studies.

The population studied in this research project consisted of all parents who registered for, and attended at least one session of, a ten week P.E.T. course sponsored by the Windsor Separate School Board. The population consisted of 27 parents. The attrition rate for the course was 33%. Of the 27 parents who registered for the course, 18 attended regularly and actually completed the program. Subjects completed a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course. This consisted of demographic data, the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey, and open ended questions which encouraged participants to share their opinions on the program.

The results of the study showed that, upon completion of the P.E.T. program, parents' attitudes towards child rearing had significantly improved. Parental confidence, trust, and understanding had all significantly increased. Education was found to be a significant factor in parental attitude change.
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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

To be a good parent has always been a great challenge. Because of the rapid changes in society in North America parenting has become an even greater challenge than it has been in the past. The isolation from the extended family, the stress of inflation and unemployment, and the lack of a universal child-rearing philosophy leave many parents bewildered. Socialization of children is still the major function of parents and it is obvious that many parents need help in this area.

A variety of approaches to and philosophies about parent education have attempted to meet these needs. Research has begun to answer some questions about the effectiveness of these various programs. Effectiveness may be evaluated in terms of behaviour and/or attitude change of parents and/or children.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate a specific parent education program, P.E.T., in terms of its ability to change the participants' attitudes towards child rearing.

The two main approaches to parent education are the humanistic or communication approach and the behavior modification approach. The researchers' rationale for
choosing to evaluate a humanistic, communication model of parent education such as P.E.T., as opposed to a behaviour modification model, is that the former was viewed as being more closely aligned with social work values and principles. The humanistic model's broad appeal speaks to the three-pronged emphasis of social work—the prevention of inadequate social functioning, the treatment of dysfunction, and the enhancement of adequate social functioning. It stresses the importance of attitude change. The behaviour modification model, on the other hand, is concerned primarily with the reduction of undesirable "target" behaviour and therefore has a much narrower treatment focus. Rather than an emphasis on pathology the humanistic approach reflects a more holistic view of man, which recognizes and encourages the ability of individuals to grow and develop, and to find new and more creative ways of interaction.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to selectively review the literature pertaining to the study, with the intention of providing theoretical and practical knowledge on child rearing and parent education.

Firstly, the history of child rearing is discussed. Then, the emergence and history of parent education is outlined. Present trends in parent education are examined looking at the mass, individual, and group modes of parent education. The specific parent education programs, Parent Effectiveness Training, Adlerian, and Behavior Modification are reviewed in detail. The similarities and differences between them are presented as well as a critique of the programs. Then, there is an evaluation of the parent education research that has been done, specifically, focusing on P.E.T. studies.
2.2 HISTORY OF CHILD REARING

Before we can understand parent education in its historical context it is important to place the various approaches to child rearing in historical perspective. Miller and Swanson (1958) believe that studying the background from earlier times helps one to better understand the current and conflicting approaches to child rearing.

Writers on child care in the 18th century and into the mid 19th century spoke with authority. Mothers were told to keep their baby's life as regular as possible—feeding, sleeping, and playing were all to be at routine times. Overfeeding was considered dangerous and there were to be no snacks between meals. Toilet training was started early; one doctor praised a mother who completed her child's toilet training at one month of age. If a child cried he was to be examined and then allowed to cry. This was known as "breaking the will" and was believed to make the child less demanding in his adult life. Children were taught to be neat, clean, and orderly as soon as possible. Masturbation was definitely forbidden and was linked with disease, insanity, and even death. Firm discipline was considered essential, but there was some dispute regarding the use of corporal punishment (Miller and Swanson, 1958).

There were three conflicting attitudes towards children emerging during the 19th century. Firstly, the influence of Calvinism was very strong. Within this context, the infant
was considered as one "born in sin". He was viewed as a "depraved, degenerate creature, full of rebellion against God and His laws" (Miller and Swanson, 1958, p.8). His evil impulsive will had to be broken for his own good through stern discipline and moral training. Secondly, society was influenced by the Environmentalism movement; by such philosophers as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The mind of the child was seen as a blank slate and his experiences of life formed his adult personality. Therefore, parents played a key role in the child's development. It was imperative to harden a child for the difficult life ahead. The third attitude was a spin off from the liberal reform movement taking place in Britain. Children were seen to be ignorant of right rather than being inherently evil (Sunley, 1955). This view espoused the belief that children should be led, not driven; persuaded rather than commanded. Encouragement and reward were considered positive means of influencing children and corporal punishment was viewed as ineffective and damaging (Miller and Swanson, 1958).

During the period of time from the mid 19th century to the beginning of World War I there was a mounting case against corporal punishment. Many believed that not only did it crush the growing child's independence, but that it also destroyed the moral relationship between parents and children, and awakened the animal instincts in both. The
natural goodness of children was espoused and there was more emphasis placed on encouraging independence and individualism (Miller and Swanson, 1958).

Lest we believe that this has been a smooth and steady road to enlightened parenthood, excerpts from writings on infant care and child psychology from the period of 1914-1930 indicate that restrictive child rearing practices were still very much in evidence and were actually encouraged by many experts in the field. Parents were still warned against bad habits such as "thumbsucking, nail-biting, dirt-eating, bedwetting and masturbation" (Miller and Swanson, 1958, p. 6). Infant Care, a publication of the United States Children’s Bureau gave the following directive against masturbation in 1914.

The child should have his feet tied to opposite sides of the crib so that he cannot rub his thighs together; his nightgown sleeves should be pinned to the bed so that he cannot touch himself. (Wolfenstein, 1951; p. 16)

John Watson, a noted psychologist, writes the following in 1928.

There is a sensible way of treating children. Treat them as though they were young adults. Dress them, bathe them with care and circumspection. Let your behavior always be objective and kindly firm. Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinarily good job of a difficult task. (Watson, 1928, p. 81-82)
Towards the end of this period a contrasting view was reflected in *Infant Care* (1942-45). A child's "wants" and "needs" were no longer seen as separate entities. Previously, "wants" were seen as a child's illegitimate pleasure strivings and "needs" as legitimate requirements. Writers on child care encouraged parents to rear children to become more flexible and creative and many felt that the most important thing a child could learn was the technique of problem solving. This more permissive trend continued into the 1950's and 1960's. Many people, however, felt that a large number of parents went overboard in encouraging creativity and well known authorities on child care such as Dr. Benjamin Spock, were held responsible for the undisciplined and disrespectful youth of the 1960's. The 1960's became a time to question and disagree with the child rearing "experts". The general attitude was that the "experts" did not know any more about raising children than parents did themselves, and as a result there was general confusion as to the best method of child rearing. There has been a general swing to a more conservative attitude toward child rearing in the 1970's and 1980's in response to the more liberal views of the 1950's and 1960's.

In viewing child rearing from an historical perspective two general trends can be seen. Firstly there has been a trend towards more liberal child rearing attitudes and democratic parenting. There is also a trend for the current
generation to react to the extreme attitudes of the previous generation in the opposite direction which counterbalances its effect.

2.3 EMERGENCE AND HISTORY OF PARENT EDUCATION

In a loose sense it is clear that activities which we might call parent education are as old as human culture. Indeed, many of the classics from Plato's Republic to Rousseau's Emile give considerable attention to the duties of parents. This is not unexpected, since the child-rearing function ascribed to the parent is fundamental to survival of society, and thus, like the society's economic system, religion, and politics, receives the attention of critical commentators upon the social order in every historical period. (Brim, 1959, p. 322)

However, more specifically

Parent education can be defined as an activity using educational techniques in order to effect change in parent role performance. (Brim, 1959, p. 20)

Croake and Glover (1977) trace the history of parent education from the early 19th century in America. Although very active the parent education movement was primarily informal and unorganized prior to the 1920's. The 1930's saw tremendous expansion in the movement with the beginnings of government and university involvement. However, in the late 1930's and into the 1940's there was a significant decline in interest. During this time, social scientists were questioning the permanency of traditional family life and the desirability of parental as opposed to institutional child rearing. World War II also shifted energy away from
parent education and onto other more pressing economic and political concerns. From the late 1940's to the present, parent education has continued to expand (Cronke and Glover, 1977).

Brim (1965) views the development of a broad social movement to educate parents as necessitated primarily by the breakdown of the traditional child rearing practices which were illustrated in the previous section. Although most of these practices seem archaic to us today, they nevertheless provided a structure and some security for parents.

Brim also identifies three further factors which have encouraged the development of the parent education movement. These are:

1. change in the status of woman which has affected women's familial and non-familial role
2. decline in the frequency of intergenerational family interactions, primarily because of increased mobility of the nuclear family
3. increased contact through immigration and social mobility between members of different ethnic backgrounds and classes who may have contrasting traditions of child care

Added to all these factors was a growing belief on the part of many professionals that there existed better ways of rearing children than those prescribed by tradition. This
belief was supported by an accumulation of research on child
development in Europe and North America (Brim, 1965).

Callahan (1973) identifies another factor which has
contributed to the widespread interest in parenting and
parent education. This is the secularization of society.
While secularization might reduce some guilt and pressures
it also places even more responsibility upon parents. The
"survival of the fittest" implies that parents must impart
both moral and genetic strength to their children. A child
is viewed as a product or project rather than as part of a
divine plan. Carried to an extreme, the only legitimation
for parents becomes the pragmatic success of their children.

North American culture is hybrid, pluralistic, and
complicated. Parents are heirs to the highly pressured
parental experiences of an immigrant people. There are also
the effects of mobility. Thus, leaving home has become a
profound part of the American experience and a high value is
placed on independence and individuality. Immigration and
mobility are certainly associated with stress and strain,
but they also demonstrate an optimistic view of life and a
hope that the future will be better than the past, both for
oneself and one's children. North Americans, being
immigrants or offspring of immigrants, believe in
improvement and have a greater tendency to try new ideas
(Callahan, 1973).
2.4 Present Trends in Parent Education

Parent education is now characterized by both public and private sponsorship, the involvement of professionals and nonprofessionals alike, and the use of various forms of media. Brim (1965) identifies three basic modes of parent education— the mass mode, the individual mode, and the group mode.

2.4.1 Mass Mode

The mass mode includes all parent education activities addressing an anonymous audience. There is no direct, personal contact between the educator and the audience. The mass includes anyone who is willing and able to participate. The mass mode includes books, booklets/pamphlets, magazines and newspapers, radio and television. Books are the major source of parent education.

There are over 200 titles in print excluding scholarly, theoretical or empirical books on child development which would increase that number. (Clarke-Stewart, 1977, p. 15)

There are over 50,000 books sold annually on child development and parenting in North America. The three best sellers in the last ten years are Spock's The Common Sense Book of Baby Child Care (1946), White's The First Three Years of Life (1975) and Ginott's Between Parent and Child.

Ginott's approach might be summed up by saying that he believed healthy child rearing practices would emerge from a self aware parent who was able to accept the child including the child's feelings and actions and who was able to offer the child the experience of a parent as a "real person". (Fine, 1980, p. 7)
Parents can choose from a wide range of books depending on their needs and desires.

The media of booklets and pamphlets has been popular since the beginnings of the parent education movement. They provide specific information in regard to particular problems in a very concise, yet helpful manner.

The third and last method of printed education is magazines and newspapers. This media can provide current information for the reader. Often magazine articles are written by journalists and not by experts in the field of parenting, yet they continue to be very popular.

Radio plays a lesser role in parent education than television. However, radio shows will at times have experts on the air, discussing childrearing, with phone in question and answer time for the listeners. There are three types of parent education programs on television:

1. explicit attempts to educate parents, for example, Dr. Spock discusses child rearing
2. programs aired to raise critical issues regarding child rearing, and families, for example, teenage pregnancy, child abuse etc.
3. programs primarily to entertain but which are relevant to parent education as it deals with family life themes, for example, All in the Family (Harman and Brim, 1980)
In Australia there are courses of instruction on parent education both on radio and television in which the audience can obtain a certificate or degree for completing course material. A program such as Footsteps, giving instruction in parenting was aired on television in North America but, it only attracted a limited audience.

Other mass media methods of parent education are films, filmstrips, slides, puppet shows, and plays.

2.4.2 Individual Mode

Individual and family counselling is parent education which is directed toward individual parents through social services, health services, schools or religious organizations. This is usually considered as part of a treatment plan for a particular problem.

2.4.3 Group Mode

The group method has become a very popular mode for providing parent education.

The developments of recent decades constitute not so much the invention of the small group as an agent of change, but rather a belief that through more systematic theorizing and practical testing of theories we might make better use of a mechanism which is already closely woven into the structure of society (Smith, 1980, p. 1).

The group method varies in terms of the group process itself, the role of the leader, and the structure and duration of the group. There are also differences in terms of the content and method of instruction.
The unstructured discussion group finds its beginnings in the annual PTA meetings. This group method gained widespread popularity in the 1960's. People for the first time were coming together and ventilating their frustrations and expressing their opinions on such controversial subjects as parenting. Once the novelty of the group discussion wore off, parents wanted more than just to discuss; they wanted concrete ideas and specific suggestions on parenting. Since the 1960's systematic and conceptually based approaches to parent education have emerged and these continue to be popular at the present time. These programs usually consist of structured teaching by the group leader and some discussion by group members.

One's functioning is enhanced by the actual group experience as well as by learning from the subject material.

We are focusing specifically on the experience of parents meeting under skilled professional leadership in small discussion groups...The attention of the members is not focused directly on the "group process or roles they play" in it. While there is reason to believe that if they learn to function more effectively in a group they may function more effectively in other human relations their primary purpose in coming is to become better parents. (Auerbach, 1954, p. 1-2)

A group experience allows for the sharing of ideas and providing of mutual support amongst its members. Parents may come to see they have a great deal in common with others and then they need not feel as isolated.

Parents in groups, by means of shared thinking around common problems, are consciously exposed to varied experiences from which they can make choices suitable to their own needs and situations (Auerbach, 1954, p. 4)
Also the group method allows for a more efficient use of time, as professionals can work with a number of persons together rather than seeing them individually.

The following section will discuss the three main parent education programs which make use of the group mode, namely, Parent Effectiveness Training, Adlerian Parent Training, and Behavior Modification. Their similarities and differences will be outlined and some of their strengths and weaknesses will be discussed.

2.5 PARENT EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING

The theoretical base for Gordon's P.E.T. Program is the personality theory of Carl Rogers. Rogers developed his theory of personality based largely on his clinical experience as a counsellor and psychotherapist. He is the originator of nondirective counselling (1942) and of client-centered therapy (1951) which is an outgrowth of the former.

As a personality theorist, Rogers is both a humanistic psychologist and an existentialist. With the humanists he emphasizes the importance of considering the whole person, and the special need to pay attention to subjective experience, the self and purposive striving. With the existentialists he shares the focus upon present conscious experience but especially those "emotionally tinged" experiences that he would call feelings. (Cartwright, 1974, p. 26)

When Carl Rogers came on the scene personality theory and psychotherapy were dominated by the influence of psychoanalytic theory. Rogers was more concerned with
relationships between people, as opposed to the intrapsychic aspects, and with feelings as opposed to behaviour.

Rogers makes some basic assumptions about man in his non-directive, client centered approach to therapy. "Each individual, human being is a person of worth, with the right and capacity for self-direction" (Cartwright, 1974, p.27). He felt man was basically good and if he was allowed to do so, would do the right thing. He felt people were capable of making their own decisions and needed only support rather than direction.

Carl Rogers must be regarded as a significant contributor, not only to psychology as a discipline, but also as a respondent to society's greatest challenge—the need to develop a means for the improvement of the intellectual and psychological health of its members and, by so doing, to develop an optimistic, self-determined, positive philosophy about human existence rather than one that is cynical, negative and externally determined. (Evans, 1975, p. xxvi)

Man's view of himself (his self structure) is a combination of an individual's perception of himself and his perception of how others see him. All human beings need to have positive regard from significant others (such as parents). They need acceptance and approval as well as positive self regard. When man receives this positive regard he can more genuinely meet the experiences of his life. It is only when a person can accept and express his feelings that he can face the difficulties and become more self-actualized. Man's goal seeking behaviour is directed toward becoming more self actualized and is always accompanied by emotion. (Rogers 1951).
Rogers' theory was first clinically applied by Virginia Axline in her work with children in play therapy. Rogers' approach to therapy stresses the importance of sensitive, empathetic understanding of the client's feelings. He provides a new definition of relationship in which people can function more fully and be more self-determined.

Rogers' ideas about child rearing and education have led millions to try and solve the problems of parenting and teaching in less power-centered, authoritarian ways. In his view, the traditional method of teaching which consists primarily of the imparting of knowledge only makes sense in an unchanging environment. Because modern man lives in an environment that is continually changing, and at a very rapid rate, the goal of education should be the facilitation of change and learning. In other words one must learn how to learn; how to adapt and change.

Facilitation consists of the ability ... to free curiosity; to permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interests; to unleash the sense of inquiry; to open everything to question and exploration; to recognize that everything is in the process of change. (Rogers, 1969, p. 105)

The parental role is therefore one of facilitator. Parents need to learn the art of active-listening and to learn how to help children become more self-reliant.

Thomas Gordon has developed the P.E.T. program using Rogerian beliefs as a theoretical base. P.E.T. is one of the parent education programs that has developed as a result
of the humanist movement of the 1960's. Humanistic psychology emphasizes the importance of
1. actualizing human potential for creativity and growth
2. regarding the person in the "here and now"
3. the centrality of self
4. the experiential as well as the behavioural aspects of human existence (Evans, 1975)

This method of parent education is firmly grounded in proven counselling methods developed by clinicians and applied to parenting skills by Gordon. It is a combination of the lecture format and group discussion. The goal of P.E.T. is to improve communication, particularly, allowing for the expression of feelings of both parent and child. It emphasizes the importance of co-operative resolution of parent-child conflicts. Gordon believes parents can and should, give up absolutely and forever the use of power. In his view, there is no such thing as a misbehaving child; children behave in order to have their needs met. Therefore, it is important to identify whose needs and what needs are being frustrated in a given problem situation.

The key concepts of P.E.T are active-listening, I-messages, and the no-lose method of conflict resolution. Active listening involves listening and reflecting feelings. The parent acts as a counsellor when a child has some particular problem. If a child's needs are not being met, a key technique taught to parents is the art of active-
listening which involves reflecting a child's feelings of frustration. The parent's response should reflect an understanding of what the child's communication means. The parent does not attempt to solve the problem; rather, the parent is a sounding board for the child to solve the problem. An example of active-listening follows:

Child—"There is this group of girls that are the top ones in the school. They are the most popular girls. I wish I could get in their group, but I do not know how."

Parent—"You would really like to belong to this group, but you are stumped as to how to do it." (Gordon, 1976, p. 19)

The I-message confronts the child with the fact his behaviour is interfering with the parent's needs or rights. If a child is interfering with a parent's needs a parent must express this to his child by sending an I-message, expressing his feelings about the behaviour. There are three parts to an I-message:

1. the non-blameful description of the unacceptable behaviour
2. the tangible effect on you of the behaviour
3. your feelings about the behaviour or about the tangible effect

An example of an I-message is:

When you kids talk during the news broadcast (behaviour) I really get frustrated (feeling) because I cannot hear what the newscaster is saying (effect). (Gordon, 1976, p. 26)
When conflicts do arise the no-lose method of conflict resolution can be used to reach a compromise satisfactory to both. "It is a democratic approach to conflict resolution in which power is not used and both parent and child engage in a search for a mutually acceptable solution to the problem" (Rinn and Markle, 1977, p. 96). This differs from the authoritarian approach where the parents use their power to "win" while the children "lose", and the permissive approach where children use power to "win" and parents "lose". There are six steps to no-lose method of conflict resolution:

1. define the problem and really get to understand it
2. think up all possible solutions
3. check to see which ones look the most promising
4. decide on the best one
5. try it out
6. check to see if it solved the problem (Gordon, 1976)

The advantages of this method of problem solving are that it eliminates the need for parents to exert control and encourages the child to be responsible for his own behavior and to recognize the needs and rights of his parents. It also helps to develop the child's cognitive and communication skills in the actual problem solving process. Active-listening, I-messages, and the no-lose method of conflict resolution are the three basic concepts of the P.E.T. program.
In P.E.T. parents are encouraged to view themselves as real people who can become angry, delighted, frustrated, or whatever. By owning and expressing their own feelings they do not need to project them onto their children. There is no need to assume the all-loving, perfect parent role. Parents learn how to help their children develop self-reliance and improve their problem-solving ability, thus demonstrating a non-possessive kind of caring.

P.E.T. pilot programs began in 1962-63. Today, they are the most widespread of the parent education programs and they are considered by many to be the most radical in terms of the equalization of power (Brown, 1976).

The program is run by a profit-making corporation, The Effectiveness Training Association which makes no attempt to hide its interest in expansion. Other associated programs are L.E.T. (Leader Effectiveness Training), T.E.T. (Teacher Effectiveness Training), Y.E.T. (Youth Effectiveness Training), and W.E.T. (Women Effectiveness Training).

2.6 ADLERIAN PARENT TRAINING

The theoretical base for Adlerian Parent Training is the personality theory of Alfred Adler. He parted company from Freud and the psychoanalytic school because he saw the drive for power, not sex, as the prime motivator of human behaviour. He viewed humans as masters of their fate rather than mere victims.
There are four basic concepts of Adlerian theory: social interest, creative self, life style, and striving for superiority. The basic principle, social interest, is reflected in Adlerian Parent Training. Humans are social beings motivated by social urges. Even a young child seeks to become part of a group (a family) as human beings have a natural desire to be socialized. The self is perceived as meaningful in terms of experience and what expectations have developed from interaction with others and the environment. People develop fundamental patterns of behavior in childhood which establish their life style in adulthood. All behavior is purposive and goal seeking. People create life styles which reflect the sum totals of their attitudes, beliefs, and goals. People are rational beings aware of their goals and capable of change. All humans are striving for superiority which is defined as self actualization. Therefore, in order to enhance one's dignity and respect one needs to work cooperatively to maximize satisfaction. Although individual freedom exists, it must be accompanied by responsibility (Fears, 1976).

A child feels a sense of powerlessness in comparison with adults. Within the Adlerian framework, one attempts to overcome his feelings of weakness by using what has been learned. The method of seeking safety may be a faulty one and the reaction received from parents determines whether the behavior will reoccur. A misbehaving child is
considered to be a discouraged child who is attempting to get some kind of response from his parents. Therefore, it is important to encourage children recognizing their efforts. The Adlerian approach to family education and the philosophy reflects a systematic approach with special emphasis on family constellation (Hinkle and Williams, 1981).

The goal of the Adlerian Parent Study Group is to create a democratic family atmosphere. To achieve such a goal the focus is on encouragement, mutual respect, discipline in line with misbehavior, firm limits, offering choices, making suggestions, and joint decision making (Hinkle and Williams, 1981).

There are two major programs that have developed from the Adlerian school of thought. First, is the Children the Challenge Program developed by Dr. L Rudolph Dreikurs and then a later development, Systematic Training for Effective Parenting. Dr. L Rudolph Dreikurs was connected with the Adlerian Institute. He elaborated on the practical aspects of child rearing in his book, Children the Challenge (1964). This book is written in nontechnical language for parents, and a program based on it has also been established. The Soltz manual which was developed in 1967 outlines the role of the group leader, techniques for coping with problems in a group, how to organize a group, and an actual course for study. The writings and program of Dr L. Rudolph Dreikurs
represents a strategy of parenting based on a number of assumptions:

1. behaviour is purposive or caused, it does not merely happen
2. in order to understand behaviour one needs to understand the child's interpretation of the situation
3. belonging to a social group is a basic need of all people young and old
4. people, including children, develop a life plan that guides their behavioural decisions even though these decisions may be based on faulty assumptions (Bigner, 1979)

These assumptions form the basic guide for parent's interactions with their children. It is very evident they are consistent with Adler's personality theory.

The Systematic Training for Effective Parenting program is also considered to be based primarily on the Adlerian approach to child rearing. Dreikurs' work forms the core of the program, but Gordon's ideas on communication are also incorporated. S.T.E.P. also is considered to have a humanistic orientation. It was developed by Don Dinkmeyer and Gary D. McKay. The focus is on building a positive parent-child relationship. The S.T.E.P. program helps parents understand some of the reasons for children's misbehaviour and explores possible alternatives for handling
difficult situations. It has been designed to be given to parents as a group and is a combination of structured teaching and discussion. The leader is not expected to be an "expert", rather one's role is to facilitate discussion. Homework assignments are given to parents to encourage them to put their new knowledge to practice.

S.T.E.P. is considered to be the fastest growing parent education program. It is neatly and completely packaged, requires a minimum of leader training, and is considered by many to combine the strengths of both the Rogerian and the Adlerian approaches.

2.7 BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION PARENT TRAINING

The founding father of the Behaviour Modification approach is B.F. Skinner. The program is based upon the idea of operant conditioning. The biological or inherited aspects of man are accepted, but behaviour is considered as learned through the individual's interaction with the environment. The focus is not so much on understanding humanity, but rather behaviour. If learning is the basic problem, then learning must be the basic solution. Behaviour is subject to change by re-learning; to re-learn or change the behaviour the environment may need to change. Therefore, parents must become change-agents, who influence, control and direct their child's behaviour and development.
The basic principles of Behaviour Modification have been presented in a number of different parent education programs. Andrasik and Murphy (1977) report that no fewer than thirty-nine behavior modification training manuals and primers are on the market. "However, what all behavioral programs have in common is the belief in positive reinforcement as the 'sine qua non' of behavior management" (Fine, 1980, p. 8). Probably one of the most commonly used behavioural techniques is extinction; for example, a parent is advised to ignore a child's temper tantrum and by not giving him attention a child will no longer act out, as, without reinforcement, the behaviour has no reason to occur. There are four general goals of a behavioural training program.

1. to train parents in observational and assessment skills
2. to give formal training in learning theory concepts
3. to teach parents to apply these concepts to their children
4. to conduct a program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of intervention

The overall goal of the program is to change behaviour in children.

The standard behaviour modification techniques are taught in lecture form to small groups. The first step is to define the problem behaviour precisely and then keep
track of the number of times it occurs. This provides a recorded basal on which to measure change. Sometimes, just the fact that parents are so busy counting "problem" behaviour means they do not have time to reinforce it and it stops. There are four ways to change the strength of a behaviour:

1. add a positive reinforcer after the response
2. take away or allow a person to avoid an aversive event
3. add a punisher or aversive event
4. take away a positive reinforcer

It is felt that punishment should always be paired with positive reinforcement. Parents are considered to have the power, and they are taught to use it, positively and effectively (Brown, 1976).

Directive Parental Counselling (D.P.C.) is an example of a specific behaviour modification program. (Holland, 1976-77) This is a thirty step procedure geared to help parents of children with "behaviour problems". D.P.C. instructs parents in basic operant conditioning. Parents must choose the "target" or "problem" behaviour, keep track of the number of occurrences and make use of the various techniques outlined above.
2.8 SIMILARITIES OF PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

All of the programs regardless of their philosophy and method aim to provide a powerful, favourable experience for the participants. The key factor is sharing problems with a sympathetic audience and learning from other people's difficulties. Although the group may start as a collection of individuals, it often becomes a cohesive mutual-support group.

There is general parental satisfaction toward the group experience—they feel less helpless, more able to love and enjoy their children. (Brown, 1976, p. 48)

Most programs use some lecturing or instruction and employ discussion and role playing as part of the group process. The amount of each varies in degree, depending on the particular program. All programs help parents deal with the somewhat trivial yet chronic, problems of untidiness, neglect of chores, homework, sibling fights, general disobedience and lack of communication.

Parent education programs are attended mainly by women (Brown, 1976). This may be due to the fact that parenting is still viewed primarily as the mother's responsibility. Alternatively, women may be less comfortable with the role of authority figure and therefore are more likely to seek out different methods of child rearing.

Although P.E.T., Adlerian, and Behaviour Modification programs vary in their theoretical base they share five common assumptions. All the programs advocate
1. teaching children to become more responsible
2. helping parents become more aware of their own and their child's needs
3. improving communication and parent-child relationships, by advocating both listening and sending clear messages
4. parental change before a child can change
5. a preventive approach, for example, educating before there are serious problems is best (Brown, 1976)

The most diverse program is the Behaviour Modification method, whereas the other Humanistic approaches such as P.E.T. and Adlerian have the following similarities. They

1. attempt to lessen the degree of power of parents in controlling a child's behaviour
2. are child oriented methods recognizing child's needs in relation to parents
3. see the way power is used as the problem
4. attempt to educate adults in new patterns of equalitarian interaction with children
5. help parents teach children self-control
6. encourage less time discipling children, thus allowing a parent to have more energy for building an emotional bond
7. emphasize understanding a child's behaviour, feelings and problems (Bigner, 1979)
2.9 DIFFERENCES OF PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

All of the programs stress different beliefs about man, human abilities and rights. The issue of power is a very controversial one. P.E.T. advocates the elimination of parental power—parents and children should be engaged in a co-operative effort. Adlerian Training programs advocate equality between parents and children, in terms of human worth and dignity; however, the democratic parent is the adult who provides opportunities for children to make decisions, within limits. The Behaviour Modification programs clearly view the parents as the source of power. Parents are change-agents who control and direct the child’s behaviour. These programs teach parents to use their power positively and effectively. Therefore, the question of power and degree to which a parent or child is responsible for change varies greatly according to the program’s philosophy.

Although, parent education programs attempt to deal with parent-child conflict and to develop healthier parent-child relationships, the focus of training differs and the goals of programs vary. The P.E.T. and Adlerian programs focus on improving maladaptive communication patterns and attitudes. The behaviour modification approach emphasizes the need to change behaviour and parents are taught direct ways to modify a child’s behaviour (Pinkser and Geoffroy, 1981).
2.10 CRITIQUE OF PROGRAMS

The biggest shortcoming in all the training programs is their attempt to encompass all age groups without always taking into account the normal developmental processes. For example, the P.E.T. program may be too "talky" for preschoolers; as a parent giving an egocentric four year-old an I-message could expect to have little effect on behaviour. The programs can at times be quite vague in dealing with particular problem areas. Each program only has a small set of techniques which can become quite tedious if a leader uses them over and over again. Often an advocate of a particular program becomes so enmeshed in their program's philosophy they are unable to make use of creative ideas from other sources.

The more difficult but most honest solution involves the effort to be intelligently eclectic and to draw upon all sources of relevant information. This course demands that the parent educator himself, learn to be critical, to weigh
the evidence where he can, to consider theories and research findings on their merits. Perhaps most important of all it means that he must be willing to shift allegiance from one idea to another as our knowledge of personality development in children (as well as the nature of parents and parenthood) grows. This is perhaps the most difficult, but one's attitude toward knowledge must be such that at any given time he uses the most valid information available, although he knows that it will soon be replaced by something still more valid. (Brim, 1959, p. 49-50)

2.11 AN EVALUATION OF PARENT EDUCATION RESEARCH

The growth and increasing popularity of parent education programs certainly cannot be questioned. However, the questions that do need to be addressed are those concerned with whether or not, and in which ways, the various programs can be said to be effective. There is continuing controversy over the effectiveness of parent education programs, and the single thing most researchers and practitioners can agree on is that "evidence about the effectiveness of parent education is small in comparison to the abundance of programs in operation" (Harman and Brim, 1980, p. 229). In addition...

Evaluation of programs is hampered by research studies that are limited in scope, subjects, goals, control groups and contrasting methods. (Hicks and Williams, 1981, p. 583)

An important question that comes to mind is by which criteria should a program's effectiveness be evaluated. Brim outlines three basic categories which are appropriate to evaluate parent education:
1. the needs of the parents—i.e. the extent to which the program meets their diverse needs; this involves looking at indicators of satisfaction
2. changes in parents—i.e. changes in knowledge, attitude, self-concept, or behaviour
3. changes in children—i.e. changes in cognition, attitude, self-concept or behaviour (Harman and Brim, 1980)

Parent education programs may be evaluated in terms of one or more of these criteria.

Tavormina (1974) has distinguished two basic models of parent counselling or training—the communication, reflective counselling or humanistic model and the behavioural counselling or behaviour modification model. Both the Adlerian and the Rogerian approach fall into the reflective counselling model. Each model defines and assesses outcome from a different perspective. Consistent with their respective assumptions, success criteria used by the communication approach involves changes in cognitions or attitudes.

Unlike some other areas of education, that of parent-child relations is concerned primarily not with knowledge, information and facts but with concepts, ideas and attitudes. Since the ultimate goal in any attempt at educating parents in the parental role is to change the parent's behavior in his relations with his child, merely providing the parent with factual knowledge is not enough. The main problem lies in those parental difficulties which stem not from ignorance but from attitudes, feelings and emotions. From this point of view, therefore, the most appropriate goal of an educational program for parents is that
of attitudinal change which will in turn lead to behavioral change. (Hereford, 1963, p. 4)

The success criteria used by the behaviourists involves changes in target behaviour.

Parent education programs are directed at parents or parents-to-be in an attempt to have an impact upon immediate child rearing behaviors of the former and eventual behaviors of the latter. In turn, the behaviors of parents are intended to produce beneficial results in one or another or several aspects of development of children—physical, emotional, cognitive and mental health. Hence, the ultimate criteria of effectiveness of a program should be some characteristics of children rather than parents. On the basis of this logic, one could argue that the effects that should be measured in order to determine program efficacy are observed changes in children resulting from improved child rearing practices. (Harman and Brim, 1980, p. 232)

Obviously, an argument can be made for both positions.

The relationship of attitude to behavior has been discussed at length by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977). Beginning in the 1930’s with the work of Gordon Allport, attitude was viewed as the most distinctive and indispensable concept in social psychology. There were four major studies done prior to 1960, (Chandler, 1955; Davis & McGinnis, 1939; Hendrick, 1934; Shapiro, 1956) that found significant parent attitude change after completion of a parent education program. More recently a much more sceptical view of the attitude concept’s utility was generally expressed. However, Ajzen and Fishbein have attempted to show that disenchantment with the attitude concept may be unwarranted and that findings concerned with the relationship between attitude and
behaviour only appear to be inconsistent. Their review of
the attitude-behaviour relationship research indicates that
A person's attitude has a consistently strong
relationship with his or her behavior when it is
directed at the same target and when it involves
the same action. (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977, p.
912)

2.11.1 Evaluation of P.E.T. Research

Because Parent Effectiveness Training focuses on the
changing of attitudes towards child rearing, success
criteria for most evaluation studies is attitude change.
One may assume that attitude change will be related to
behaviour change because it is directed at the same target
(i.e. participant's own children) and involves the same
action (i.e. active-listening, I-messages, and no lose
method of problem solving). In other words P.E.T. involves
specific skill training which consists of demonstration and
modelling by the instructor as well as practice sessions
using role playing and coaching. Parents learn to think and
talk about their children in terms of their discrete
existential behaviour.

Although Hereford (1963) was not involved with P.E.T.
his research is definitive in reporting favourable results
of attitude change and his scale (Hereford's Parental
Attitude Survey) is the most frequently used measure to
assess P.E.T. outcome. Hereford's research design included
an experimental, a lecture-control (placebo), a
nonattendant-control, and a random control. The parents who participated in the experimental discussion group showed significant positive change in attitude and Hereford concluded that the treatment method per se was the critical change agent.

Rinn and Markle (1977) reviewed 14 research studies on P.E.T. outcome. Their findings were that research on P.E.T. has been limited in scope and inadequate in research design. They reviewed five single-group outcome studies and concluded that they had shown some positive attitudinal changes by P.E.T. recipients. However, the limitations of a single-group outcome study is that the question of whether these changes were a function of P.E.T., the passage of time or other nonspecific placebo variables cannot be answered. Their review of the five experimental studies was also very critical and the following problems were cited:

1. a lack of random assignments of subjects to treatment conditions
2. a strong reliance on self-report data at the expense of objective behavioural measures
3. inappropriate and inadequate statistical procedures
4. the absence of adequate control groups—e.g. a no-treatment control and a placebo control
5. a disregard for problems surrounding experimenter bias and demand characteristics
6. an absence of long-term follow ups (Rinn and Markle, 1977)

Gordon (1980) reviews 25 separate studies—many of them the same as reviewed and criticized by Rinn and Markle (1977) such as (Andelin, 1975; Garcia, 1971; Hanley, 1973; Haynes, 1972; Larson, 1972; Lillibrige, 1971; Miles, 1974; Peterson, 1971; Schmitz, 1975; and Stearn, 1971). As to be expected, Gordon's presentation of research findings is much more positive. While admitting that the quality of the studies varied with respect to instrumentation, sample size, the degree to which other variables are controlled, and statistical techniques chosen by the researchers, he states that all 25 studies found positive changes in participants and/or children that were statistically significant.

Unfortunately, the vast bulk of research on P.E.T. is unpublished so it is difficult to verify these two (i.e. Rinn and Markle's and Gordon's) positions. The six major unpublished studies which evaluate P.E.T. using the Hereford Attitude Survey will be examined. The studies' limitations and research findings will be discussed.

Andelin (1975) used a pre-posttest design with two groups. One group consisted of parents who participated in a P.E.T. program and their children who attended a P.E.T.+C program. The second group of parents participated in a P.E.T. group but their children received no training. There was no control group for this study. The findings indicate
the P.E.T.+C group's parents improved significantly on their total scores on the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey as well as on the subtests Confidence and Trust. Parents who participated in the P.E.T. group and whose children attended the P.E.T.+C had a more improved positive attitude overall, they were more confident in their ability as parents, and they were more trusting of their children upon completion of the program.

Garcia's (1971) study consisted of 33 participants who completed the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey Scale. The study did not make use of a control group. Also posttest questionnaires were returned by the participants by mail. Therefore, it is more likely the participants who had acquired P.E.T. skills or who had enjoyed the program were more likely to return the questionnaire than the dissatisfied parent, biasing the returns in favour of a positive outcome. Bearing in mind these limitations the study did show that parents had increased confidence in their roles, a greater understanding, and increased trust in their children.

Hanley (1973) employed a three group pre-posttest design to test the effects of P.E.T. The three groups consisted of one group of parents who participated in a P.E.T. program, the second group attended a Family Enrichment Program (parent-child interaction training), and there was a no-treatment control group. However, there was
no random assignment to the groups. Also the two group programs, the P.E.T. and the Family Enrichment Program varied a great deal in terms of the length of the course and the content. Therefore, it is questionable whether these two programs can be compared. The P.E.T. group scored significantly higher on the acceptance and understanding scales in comparison to the group who participated in the Family Enrichment Program and the control group.

Haynes (1972) used a four-group design which included a P.E.T. group, a lecture group, wait-listed control group, and another control group. Like Hanley's study the diversity of groups in terms of length of training may be responsible for the differences in scores, rather than the change being accounted for by the P.E.T. program itself. It was found in this study that the parents who took P.E.T. did significantly better on the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey than the other three groups.

Lillibridge (1971) compared a P.E.T. group, a wait-listed control group, and a control group who had no interest in parent training. All parents in the three groups completed the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey before and after the P.E.T. course. Although there is some question as to the accuracy of the statistical analysis, the study indicated parents felt more confident in their ability to parent and were more trusting of their children. Also, children perceived their parents as being more accepting after completing the P.E.T. program.
Schmitz (1975) using a pre-posttest survey compared parents who received P.E.T. training and a group who received no training. The P.E.T. and control group could not be described as being matched with similar characteristics as the control group consisted of parents who had no interest in taking a P.E.T. course and who were friends, neighbours, etc. of the researcher. The results of the study did show an overall positive attitude change for the P.E.T. group and in particular parents were more trusting of their children.

Two studies that have been published that evaluate P.E.T. using the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey are Larson's (1972) and Schofield's (1979). Roland S. Larson compares the effectiveness of three different small group approaches; the Achievement Motivation Program (AMP), the Parent Effectiveness Program (P.E.T.) and the Discussion Encounter Group Method (DEG). The AMP program is based upon the assumption that there are many things right with people. It focuses on building upon parents' present strengths. DEG is a discussion group where parents speak about problems that concern them. It focuses on getting parents to express their emotions directly and accurately. The Hereford Parent Attitude Survey instrument was used to measure attitude change giving the questionnaire before and after the completion of the groups. The study has two major limitations; firstly, there was no random assignment to the
control group and secondly, no inferential statistics were used. The findings showed the P.E.T. and AMP groups had an overall improvement in their attitudes where as the DEG did not. P.E.T. parents became more confident in their role as parents as well as being more insightful regarding the causes of their children's behaviour. Also, P.E.T. parents were more trustworthy in their relationships with their children. The P.E.T. group profited most from the experience in comparison with the AMP and DEG groups (Larson, 1972).

Rod Schofield's study examines the correlation between parental attitude and a child's self-esteem. Both P.E.T. and a Behaviour Modification Program are evaluated in terms of the effect they have on children whose parents are taking one of the above mentioned parent education programs.

This is the first study to compare the effects produced in the self-esteem of children as a result of their parents attending school-based education groups, using P.E.T. and behaviour modification approaches with the same population. (Schofield, 1979, p. 32)

Both the experimental groups—P.E.T. and Behaviour Modification Group's children showed positive gains in self-esteem. The P.E.T. group, when compared with the control group children, showed significant difference in self-esteem which was not found for the behaviour modification program. This was also true for the P.E.T. group at the time of a four month follow-up. Therefore, Schofield concluded for the predominantly white, middle to upper-middle socioeconomic class represented in this
study, parental involvement in P.E.T. group education can be considered a superior means of raising their children's self-esteem. (Schofield, 1979, p. 32)

Felbaum's study is one of the few studies to measure the effectiveness of a Behaviour Modification program by using the Hereford Parent Attitude Survey. The HPAS is one of a number of instruments used in his study. He found significant positive change, in parents' feelings of confidence, trust and their overall attitude.

Salzinger, Feldman, and Portnoy (1970) found in training parents of brain-injured children in the use of operant conditioning procedures "the success or failure of the parents tended to relate to the parents' level of formal education and to their performance on written tests of knowledge of operant conditioning and of verbal ability." (Salzinger, 1970, p. 4)


Anchor and Thomason compared the reflective and behavioural approaches of child rearing. There were 41 participants in their study, who were mostly of high educational and socioeconomic status. Two P.E.T. and two Behaviour Modification groups were run and participants were assigned randomly to the groups. The groups did not differ significantly on any measure before the intervention. This study failed to support the expectation that parent-training
courses facilitate desirable changes in parents. Also these findings did not demonstrate the differences between the reflective and behavioural approaches. There are several possible reasons for the above results—one reason being

The lack of treatment effects may be due to the high educational level of the participants. Parents who volunteer for such training programs may be those who need them least. (Anchor and Thomason, 1977, p. 134)

Hampson and Tavormina's (1980) study compared the reflective and behavioural mode using a sample of 42 foster mothers. The results of the study indicate the reflectively trained mothers improved in their parental attitudes whereas the behavioural group improved in terms of a decreased number of problem behaviours cited in their children. It is the view of this study that one method of training whether it be reflective or behavioural is not better than the other per se. Rather they both focus on meeting different needs. Therefore, trainers must be sensitive to the needs of a group and choose what is best for them. It may also be a combination of the two approaches which would provide optimal parent education.

Pinkser and Geoffroy (1981) also compare P.E.T. and Behaviour Modification. There were 40 parents who participated in the programs. Participants were assigned randomly and there was also a no-treatment control group. The Parent Effectiveness Training was found to be more effective in increasing positive parental consequences, and
family cohesion, and decreasing family conflict. The Behaviour Modification workshop was found to be more effective in reducing deviant child behaviour and parental perceptions of the problem child behaviour.

Parent training is useful in attaining a number of different goals. It would be beneficial for the parent instructor to decide what goals he or she would like to have achieved before beginning the session and choose the most appropriate method to meet those goals. *(Pinkser and Geoffroy, 1981, p. 67)*

2.12 CONTINUING CHALLENGES IN PARENT EDUCATION RESEARCH

Evaluative research on parent education has become preoccupied with evaluating the ends and not the means. In other words, the bulk of research has sought to examine the effects of programs rather than the inner dynamics. Parent education research is still trying to justify parent education's "raison d'être" and as a result is not evaluating its different methods, content, and clients. By not evaluating more specific aspects of the programs there is little new knowledge being generated regarding what kind of program is most effective for whom *(Harman & Brim, 1980)*.

Parent education has no single theoretical framework as its development has emerged from a wide variety of disciplines--education, philosophy, physical and biological sciences, religion, and social sciences. Many of these disciplines are not founded in research, and a cyclical problem develops regarding research. Because of a lack of a
theoretical framework it is difficult to generate hypotheses and speculate on cause-effect relationships which would generate further research to establish a theoretical base. Most parent education leaders are practitioners, not researchers; consequently, participant satisfaction is often the main criteria by which program effectiveness is judged.

Also, most parent education research attempts to prove linear cause-effect relationships when a systems approach might prove more beneficial.

Research on parent-child relationships has emphasized a cause-effect relationship of parent to child, but a more accurate appraisal would include reciprocal relationships between parent and child and how they influence each other. (Walters & Walters, 1980, p. 33)

It is important to consider the weaknesses of research in parent education in terms of research design, program goals, program content, method of delivery, and role of the leader, and weaknesses in the measuring instrument itself.

In terms of research design, the major difficulty appears to be the proper use of control groups. There are very few studies which have a placebo control as well as a non-treatment control. Many studies which the researcher has classified as "experimental" do not really qualify as such because there is no random assignment to treatment and control groups. The behavior modification evaluation studies do by and large have better research designs. There is very little information on the long term effects of parent education programs due to the sparcity of
longitudinal studies. Usually the samples are biased, consisting of parents who have volunteered to participate. The majority are middle class females, who have substantial education.

The goals of the programs are quite diverse and often vague; therefore, it makes it difficult to evaluate a program's effectiveness. For example P.E.T. attempts to improve relationships. However, it is difficult to operationally define such a concept in order to measure it. The P.E.T. program and other communication models are concerned with general "enhancement" whereas behaviour modification is concerned with the extinguishing of "target" behaviour. Therefore, it is questionable whether in fact a comparison can be made between such programs whose goals are so different.

Each parent education program may vary in terms of its actual content, ranging for example from the structured P.E.T. program to a more general communication skills course. However, very little attention is given to the specifics of the individual programs. Parent education programs are only broadly classified rather than in a more specific way which would describe the particulars of the content. As a result, it is often difficult for an instructor to duplicate a program or a researcher to compare studies.
Questions regarding the instructional format and instructor competency and styles need to be researched. Whether a program's method of delivery was that of the lecture format, or discussion format, or a combination of the two is not often specified, so later studies cannot accurately compare the results. Research seems to have ignored the idea that different methods can be used and would be specifically evaluated in terms of their effectiveness. Hereford states, "in order for attitude change to take place the learner must not be passive, he must be actively involved in the education process" (Hereford, 1963, p. 9). Hereford advocates the group discussion method as opposed to the lecture format. However, further research is necessary to substantiate such a statement as well as to answer other questions about the method of delivery.

The role of the leader may also be another important variable which has been ignored in regard to research evaluation. Such questions as which leader-style is more effective, the "advice giver" or facilitator, need to be examined.

Also a further question arises as to the validity of the measuring instruments, themselves? Do they measure what they say they measure?

An argument presented by many is that the education programs for parents do produce changes but that for several reasons, they will continue to escape detection, given the current measurement procedures. The changes which occur are alleged
to be too subtle to be captured by other than clinical techniques or too small to show up in the sparse examples of parents utilized in most evaluation studies or are delayed in their occurrence so that they are not discernible except through a longitudinal study. (Brim, 1959, p. 312-313)

2.13 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The current trends of parent/education may help to correct some of the criticisms of parent education research. The first new development is that federal support in the United States has been given to the parent education programs to be provided to the low income minorities. Therefore, for the first time parent education will be reaching a new population of parents. Secondly the government will also undertake to evaluate the programs in terms of their effectiveness in order to justify their allocation of such funds. Therefore, this could generate new and extensive research that hopefully will be more rigorous in regard to its method of evaluation.

The general consensus of parents is that they do like parent education programs and they feel they are being helped. More empirical evidence is necessary to support these basic impressions and to specifically distinguish input variables in parent education programs in relation to outcomes. Researchers and practitioners need to make clearer statements as to their goals and their procedures for achieving those goals. Questions regarding the program
content, instructional format, and instructor's style and competence need also to be researched. More explicit research will inevitably lead the researcher (practitioner) to develop and implement more effective parent education programs (Fine, 1980).

The review of the literature has included discussion on the history of child rearing and the emergence and history of parent education. There is a review of the specific parent education programs examining the similarities and differences between them and the strengths and weaknesses of each program. Parent education research is evaluated, specifically, focusing on the P.E.T. studies. Finally the continuing challenges are explored. The intention of the review was to provide a theoretical and practical framework within which the present study can be examined.
Chapter III
METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will begin by discussing the setting for the study and the program to be evaluated. The research will be classified according to Tripodi, Fellin, and Meyer, (1969) and the hypotheses, operational definitions, and assumptions will be stated. The population, the data collection methodology and instrument, and the data analysis will also be discussed. Finally, the limitations of the study will outline the limitations of the design, of the population, of the data collection method and instrument, and of the theory base of the program.

3.2 THE SETTING

The setting for this research project was the City of Windsor, population 192,083 (Statistics Canada, 1982). The economic base of Windsor is industrial, and the manufacturing of automobiles is the primary industry. During the period of time that the research was conducted, the city was suffering from a severe economic recession and the unemployment rate was 15.3% in June of 1982 (The Windsor Star, 1982). The city is composed of numerous ethnic groups.
and enjoys a close proximity to Metropolitan Detroit which exerts a strong cultural influence.

The research was conducted through the Windsor Separate School Board. Parent education with the Separate School Board has been growing steadily for the past few years. In 1978 the Board received a provincial government grant which enabled them to initiate some special programs for parents and their children. These programs were informal in nature, but their ultimate aim was to increase children's school performance. During this time the need for more structured parent education programs became evident and two teachers were hired to work full time in this area. Parent's Place continues to play an active part in educating parents. It services all schools in the Separate School Board. In 1982 a need for parent education and a willingness on the part of parents to be involved was recognized in the Forest Glade area. As a result, a structured Parent Effectiveness Training program was offered through H.R. McManus Separate School.

3.3 THE PROGRAM

Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) is an 8-10-week structured parent education course. The flyer that was sent home with the children from three schools in Forest Glade advertising the program indicated that the following could benefit.
- those who feel that they are doing a good job but want to do better
- those who already have problems
- those with very young children
- those with adolescents
- those with normal children
- those with exceptional children (Parent's Place flyer)

The flyer also outlined the program content.

1. Session 1- PARENTS ARE HUMAN They do not have to be consistent, present a united front, be forever tolerant, submerge their own needs.

2. Session 2- HOW TO LISTEN SO CHILDREN WILL SHARE PROBLEMS "Active Listening," a new way to really hear.

3. Session 3- PUTTING YOUR NEW SKILLS TO WORK Coaching and classroom practice.

4. Session 4- HOW TO TALK SO KIDS WILL RESPECT YOUR NEEDS Effective confrontation that really works.

5. Session 5- OTHER WAYS TO PREVENT AND CHANGE UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR Modifying the environment.


7. Session 7- THE NO-LOSE METHOD Why this method avoids rebellion and resentment.

8. Session 8- HOW TO AVOID BEING FIRED AS A PARENT How to be a good consultant so your child will listen to your values. (Parent's Place flyer)
This particular P.E.T. course ran for 10 weeks. The first session dealt with class administrative duties, introductions, setting objectives, and the administration of the questionnaire by the researchers. The remainder of the program dealt with the content as outlined above, but over a nine week period, rather than eight.

The instructor for the course was Bernie LeVasseur, M.S.W. He received 40 hours of instructor training in P.E.T. in 1977 in Detroit, Michigan, and since then has taught a total of nine P.E.T. courses in the Windsor area. He is employed full-time as a social worker with the Catholic Family Service Bureau.

3.4 CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH

The classification of research depends on the purpose of the research and the procedures used. The purpose of this research project was to evaluate a P.E.T. program in terms of its ability to change the participants' attitudes towards child rearing.

The category of quantitative-descriptive studies includes research investigations having various purposes with respect to the seeking of knowledge. These purposes fall into two general classes: (i) the testing of hypotheses, and (ii) the description of quantitative relations among specified variables. (Tripodi et al, 1969, p. 34)

This study may be classified as quantitative-descriptive, as six hypotheses concerning parental attitude change will be tested.
Hypotheses subject to testing are either (1a) those which posit cause-effect relationships or (1b) those hypotheses which simply state the existence of a measurable relationship between two or more variables. (Tripodi et al, 1969, p. 34)

This study cannot be classified as experimental because it was not possible to obtain a control group and therefore, there could not be random assignment to experimental and control groups. However, approximations to experimentation may include such devices as matching or the use of an experimental group as its "own control". (Tripodi et al, 1969, p. 35)

In this way the participants in this study are "compared to themselves with respect to their performance at two different time periods" (Tripodi et al, 1969, p. 36). Because of this, and also because the researchers have control over the independent variable, the hypotheses to be tested may be considered to posit cause-effect relationships.

3.5 **THE HYPOTHESES**

1. There will be a positive change in parental attitude towards child rearing upon completion of the P.E.T. program.

2. There will be a positive change in parental confidence upon completion of the P.E.T. program.

3. There will be a positive change in parents' belief that they can influence their children's behaviour upon completion of the P.E.T. program.
4. There will be a positive change in parents' acceptance of their children as individuals upon completion of the P.E.T. program.

5. There will be a positive change in parents' understanding of their children upon completion of the P.E.T. program.

6. There will be a positive change in parents' ability to trust their children upon completion of the P.E.T. program.

3.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF VARIABLES

In order to test the hypotheses, the variables were operationally defined as follows:

1. Parents Those parents who participated in a structured P.E.T. course offered through the Windsor Separate School Board from March 30, 1982 to June 9, 1982, who consented to participate in this research project, and who attended at least one session.

2. P.E.T. Program A structured 10 week Parent Effectiveness Training course, offered through the Windsor Separate School Board and led by Bernie LeVassour, M.S.W.

3. Confidence The score calculated from the Confidence sub-test of the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey (HPAS). The score could range from -15 to +15. This refers to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity as a
parent as opposed to assuredness and unconcern about the difficulties of child rearing.

4. **Influence** The score calculated from the **causation** sub-test of the HPAS. The score could range from −15 to +15. This refers to a view of child behaviour as inherited and unchangeable, rather than determined by parent-child interaction, environmental influences and parental behaviour and attitudes.

5. **Acceptance** The score calculated from the **Acceptance** sub-test of the HPAS. The score could range from −15 to +15. This refers to overt and complete rejection of the child as opposed to permissive and accepting parenting.

6. **Understanding** The score calculated from the **Understanding** sub-test of the HPAS. The score could range from −15 to +15. This refers to a failure to share ideas, attitudes, and feelings with the child, as contrasted to the reciprocal exchange of the intellectual and emotional aspects of living.

7. **Trust** The score calculated from the **Trust** sub-test of the HPAS. The score could range from −15 to +15. This refers to the extent to which parent-child relationships are marked by suspicion and deceit, as against co-operative, trusting relationships characterized by mutual confidence.
8. Positive Parental Attitudes The total score (all sub-tests) received on the HPAS. Scores could range from -75 to +75.

3.7 ASSUMPTIONS

An assumption is "a proposition that is taken as given in the particular investigation" (Ripple, 1960, p. 35). Several assumptions have been made which are related to the hypotheses and to the choice of methodology. These are:

1. That parents are capable of changing their attitudes towards child rearing.

2. That reported attitudes towards child rearing in general have a more specific and concrete meaning in parents' own child rearing practice.

3. That change in parental attitude is a valid indication of a P.E.T. course's effectiveness.

4. That the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey is a valuable research tool for measuring parental attitude toward child rearing.

3.8 THE STUDY POPULATION

A flyer had been sent home with all children in three schools in the Forest Glade area of Windsor giving details of a proposed parent education program. Parents who registered did so on a voluntary basis and all those interested were accepted into the program.
The population studied in this research project consisted of all parents who registered for, and attended at least one session of a ten week P.E.T. course, sponsored by the Windsor Separate School Board. The population consisted of 27 parents.

The attrition rate was 33%. Of the 27 parents who registered for the course, 18 attended regularly and actually completed the program.

3.9 DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

The choice of data collection methodology can at times be obvious. At other times, a careful cost-benefit analysis is required. "The decision on what method to use depends on the research problem, the population to be studied, and the study resources" (Jenkins, 1975, p. 151).

The advantages of using an administered questionnaire to collect the required data made this the obvious choice for this project. Questionnaires are most useful when the hypotheses are precise. They are generally less expensive to use than other methods of data collection, such as interviewing or observation, both in terms of time and money. Because responses can be anonymous, respondents may be more honest than they could be in a face to face encounter. A matchword known only to the individual participants was used so that the pre-posttest responses could be compared. Generally, questionnaires are more
reliable and easier to tabulate. The major portion of the questionnaire used in this study consisted of close-ended questions which are less likely to be misinterpreted by the scorer.

The major weakness of the use of questionnaires as the method of data collection is the problem of non-returns. For this reason, this questionnaire was administered to the participants by the researchers. Permission was granted to administer the pretest during the break in the first session and also during the break in the second session for any participants who were absent the first week. The posttest was administered during the ninth session and again during the tenth, for any who were absent the previous week. Group members were told that participation in this research project was completely voluntary and was not required for participation in the P.E.T. course. They were asked to sign consent forms if they were agreeable to taking part in the study.

A disadvantage to the use of a close-ended questionnaire is that there is no opportunity for the respondent to explain answers, ask questions, or introduce new ideas. The researchers attempted to counteract this disadvantage by adding a few open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, so that respondents could express themselves freely. Also, because the questionnaire was administered, the researchers were available and were able to deal with any misunderstandings.
3.10 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The data collection instrument used in this study consisted of a three part questionnaire. The first section consisted of demographic data, the second section was Hereford's Parental Attitude Survey (HPAS) (1963), and the third section consisted of several open-ended questions relating to motivation for taking the program, expectations of the program, and a subjective evaluation of the course.

The demographic data was required to describe the total population. It was pretested at the beginning of the P.E.T. program and a revised version was given as part of the posttest. This revised version requested the respondent's age, marital status, and sex, the age and sex of children, the employment status, occupation of respondent and spouse, education, family income, and country of birth.

In reviewing the literature the researchers found that the HPAS was the most commonly used scale for evaluating P.E.T. programs. The HPAS is a 75 item test consisting of five 15 item sub-tests. The sub-tests on this particular scale, namely, confidence, causation, acceptance, understanding, and trust, are particularly well suited to an analysis of the effectiveness of a P.E.T. course, as it is precisely these attitudes which the Rogerian child rearing philosophy advocates and encourages.

The HPAS is a simple summated five point Likert-type scale. Subjects are asked to respond to a series of items
with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items of the various sub-tests are randomized and several items are reversed to reduce systematic bias.

The split-half reliability co-efficients for each scale range from .68 to .84, which is well within the satisfactory range of reliability for measuring instruments of this type. Interscore correlations range from .33 to .62, which is high enough to indicate that all the sub scales are measuring related parental attitudes towards child rearing, but not so high as to suggest duplication (Hereford, 1963).

Items that make up the test were either chosen from similar instruments or were written by one of the test authors. They began with over 200 items and the number was reduced by five judges working independently of each other. Items had to be selected by at least four out of five judges to be accepted. Further reduction of items was achieved by using a discrimination index consisting of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between each item and its total score. Fifteen items with the highest correlation coefficients in each of the five areas were used in the final version of the test (Hereford, 1963).

Two additional items are used as "set breakers" and are not scored. These are the first two items of the instrument. The first is a statement to which most people will disagree and the second is an item to which most people will agree.
3.11 **DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES**

The population was described by examining the following demographic data: marital status, religion, sex, age range of children, employment status, and education. Measures of central tendency were calculated for age, number of children, marital status, and religion. Frequency distributions were used to describe the sex, employment status, and education variables. Employment status was classified as full-time, part-time, unemployed, or homemaker. Education was classified according to Statistics Canada (1979). The five categories of education were:

1. 0-8 years
2. 9-13 years—some high school and no post-secondary
3. some post secondary—no diploma or degree
4. post secondary certificate or diploma
5. university degree

The continuers were further described by examining the variables: income, country of birth, and occupation, using measures of central tendency and frequency distributions. Country of birth was classified as Canadian and non-Canadian. Occupation was classified according to Blishen's (1967) index; the six categories being, specialist, professional, upper management, lower management, tradesman, and labourer. A comparison between the total population and the continuers was made.
Ferguson (1976, p. 15) notes that for statistical purposes researchers are justified in treating attitudinal scales as interval. Therefore, the hypotheses were tested by using a t test procedure which tested for significant differences between means for correlated samples. Directionality was stated and the confidence level was set at .05. A comparison between various demographic variables and attitude test scores was also made.

The measuring instrument (HPAS) was tested for reliability using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient to calculate the relationship between pretest and posttest scores.

Statistical analysis was performed using S.A.S. (Helwig & Council, 1979).

The analysis of the open-ended questions was not subjected to statistical procedures. However, a general summary of the responses to each question was made.

3.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation of this study was connected with the inability of the researchers to obtain a control group(s). As a result, changes in the dependent variable (parental attitude) cannot, strictly speaking, be directly attributed to the independent variable (P.E.T.), as the researchers were unable to control for "history, maturation, initial measurement effects, instrumentation, statistical
regression, and interactions among internal validity factors" (Tripodi, 1981). The posttest was given at the conclusion of the P.E.T. program and since a follow-up was not feasible the researchers have no idea of the long-term effects of the program.

With regard to the population used in the study, the researchers were well aware that it was a highly select group of parents. Although few if any, generalizations could be made to the population of parents at large this population was similar to other groups of parents who participate in parent education programs (Brim, 1981; Brown, 1976; Croake & Glover, 1977). Parent education programs have been criticized for catering to predominantly middle-class, motivated parents, while neglecting the needs of the working class and the disadvantaged. With this in mind, the researchers made plans early in the year to offer a parent education program in an area of Windsor that has been described as one of the city's poorest and in which community leaders felt a parent education program was much needed. This particular area has a much higher rate of unemployment and single parent families than the city as a whole (Census of Canada, 1976). Keeping this in mind the researchers were prepared to offer a free parenting course in the afternoon and/or evening and to provide free babysitting services for preschool children for the afternoon sessions. Despite these overtures and good
publicity from the area schools, social agencies, and churches, the response was very poor and there were not enough interested parents to form a group. As a result, the research project could only focus on the group of motivated, middle-class parents in the Forest Glade area.

Another limitation was that those subjects involved volunteered to participate. The voluntary component introduces a form of bias.

The pitfall is the likelihood that volunteers differ from nonvolunteers, compromising the interpretation and generalizability of the results. (Isaac & Michael, 1971, p. 147)

An additional limitation was that some of the attitude change might be accounted for by increased awareness of the correct response on the part of the participants. Frequently, as a result of taking a course, participants become more aware of the desired response to test items. When the group leader is also the researcher, this effect is often increased, as participants attempt to please the leader. In this study the researchers were not acquainted with the participants, so therefore, "experimenter expectation" was kept to a minimum.

The scope of the study was limited by the use of a questionnaire which was composed predominantly of close-ended questions. However, as stated previously, it was felt that the advantages of this method of data collection outweighed the disadvantages and the use of some open-ended questions tended to broaden the scope.
A further limitation was related to the choice of the data collection instrument and the decision to measure parental attitude change as opposed to changes in parental behaviour, child behaviour or attitudes, or more importantly, parent-child interaction. However, it is the belief of the researchers that, within a systems framework, changes in parental attitude will eventually lead to changes in parental behaviour, and thus, improved parent-child interaction. A further limitation of the data collection instrument (MPAS) was the fact that it measures general child rearing attitudes and not specific child rearing attitudes towards a specific child.

The final limitation is concerned with the limitations of the theory base of the P.E.T. program itself. Rogerian theory is by nature linear, rather than curvilinear. In other words, its concepts are based on the belief that the more you have of something the better; rather than the belief that you can have too much of a good thing. When considering such human attributes as acceptance, understanding, trust, confidence, and influence, this linear thinking may fail in the extreme. Rogers' view of relationship ignores the concepts of "role, power, status, culture, politics, history, systems, technology, and the paradoxical quality of human experience" (Evans, 1975, p. 17).
3.13 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methodological procedures used in the research study and included the limitations of these procedures. The following chapter will discuss the analysis of the data.
Chapter IV
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter will describe the population used for the study. It will also outline some of the differences between the total population and the continuers. The research hypotheses will be analyzed. A comparison between some of the demographic variables and the change scores will be made. The measuring instrument will be analyzed in terms of its reliability and validity and the responses to the open-ended questions will be summarized.

4.2 POPULATION DESCRIPTION
The population for this study consisted of 27 parents who registered for a P.E.T. program at H.B. McManus Separate School in Windsor, who attended at least one session, and who completed the pretest administered by the researchers. As is true with most parent education programs, females predominated. There were 22 (81.48%) females and 5 (18.52%) males. All 5 males were accompanied by their wives. With the exception of one parent, all the participants were married. Parents ranged in age from 26 to 42 years and the mean age was 34.12 years. The children's ages ranged from 1
to 23 years, and the mean age was 8.9. The mean family size was 2.7 children. All but one parent was Roman Catholic. The participants' educational level was classified according to Statistics Canada (1979). The educational level of the participants is illustrated in Table I

**TABLE I**

**Education of Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>% of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>51.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Post Secondary</td>
<td>14.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate or Diploma</td>
<td>25.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.01</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the male participants were employed full time. Thirty-six percent of the females were employed full time and 28% were employed part-time. Thirty-six percent of the females were homemakers.
4.3 THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTINUERS

The continuers were those parents who attended seven or more sessions and agreed to complete the researchers' questionnaire at the end of the program. There were 18 continuers out of 27 persons, who met these requirements. In many respects the continuers did not differ from those in the total population. However, it should be noted that three out of five males dropped out, leaving only two males in the group that continued. The differences between the educational level of the continuers and the drop-outs is illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Comparison of Continuers and Drop-outs by Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>% Continuing n=18</th>
<th>% Dropping Out n=9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>88.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Post Secondary</td>
<td>22.22</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate or Diploma</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99.99</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas half of the original population had only a high school education, (see Table 1) the final group was dominated by people with a higher education. As can be seen
from Table 2, the majority (88.89%) of the drop-outs had only a high school education.

Although the continuers had somewhat more positive parental attitudes towards child rearing, as measured by HPAS, (mean=57.44), than the drop-outs (mean=49.22), these differences were not significant.

The mean income for the continuers was $33,525,000. The most current figures available for a comparison were found in Statistics Canada (1981). This publication lists average family income for Ontario for the year 1979. The mean income for the continuers would fall in the top 30% of incomes for 1979. This mean is well within the top 30% range so for 1982 it would likely be very close to the top 30% as well.

The Blishen Index (1967) categorizes occupation in Canada according to the occupation of the head of the household. Table 3 illustrates the occupations of the continuers, using Blishen's index.

As Table 3 illustrates, the majority of the participants fall into the labourer and tradesman categories. This may seem somewhat surprising in view of the high mean income previously mentioned. However, the working class in Windsor, when employed, enjoy higher levels of income than in other parts of Ontario.

The majority of the participants were Canadian born (77.78%). Of the four born outside Canada, two were from England, one was from Italy and one was from Portugal.
TABLE 3

Occupations of the Continuers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>% of Sample n=16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradesman</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Management</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Management</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n=16 rather than 18 because only one occupation per household was considered.

4.4 **ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

A t test of significant difference between means was conducted in order to determine if there was a significant difference between pre-posttest scores on the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey. Because directionality was implied, a one-tail test was used. Significance was set at the .05 level. The following results were found.

1. There will be a positive change in parental attitude towards child rearing upon completion of the P.E.T. program.

The t score obtained for overall parental attitude change was t (17) = 2.44, p < .03. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted and it can be stated that
there has been a positive change in parental attitude towards child rearing at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

2. There will be a positive change in parental confidence upon completion of the P.E.T. program.

The t score obtained for parental confidence change was $t(17) = 2.81$, $p < .01$. Therefore, the hypothesis can be accepted and it can be stated that there has been a positive change in parental confidence at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

3. There will be a positive change in parents' belief that they can influence their children's behaviour at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

The t score obtained for change in parents' belief that they can influence their children's behaviour was $t(17) = .32$, $p < .75$. This was not significant at the .05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis cannot be accepted. There was no evidence of a positive change in parents' belief that they can influence their children's behaviour.

4. There will be a positive change in parents' acceptance of their children as individuals at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

The t score obtained for change in parents' acceptance of their children as individuals was $t(17) = -.24$, $p < .81$. This was not significant at
the .05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis cannot be accepted. There was no evidence of a positive change in parents' acceptance of their children as individuals at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

5. There will be a positive change in parents' understanding of their children at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

The t score obtained for change in parents' understanding of their children was \( t(17) = 2.9, p < .01 \). Therefore, the hypothesis can be accepted and it can be stated that there is evidence of a positive change in parents' understanding of their children at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

6. There will be a positive change in parents' ability to trust their children at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

The t score obtained for change in parents' ability to trust their children was \( t(17) = 3.5, p < .003 \). Therefore, the hypothesis can be accepted and it can be stated that there is evidence of increased parental trust at the completion of the P.E.T. program.

In summary, at the completion of the P.E.T. program, parents viewed themselves as being more confident, understanding, and trusting. There was no evidence that parents' acceptance of their children as individuals or
parents' belief that they can influence their children's behaviour had changed. However, the overall attitude toward child rearing had improved.

These results were similar to Felbaum's (1978) research on the effects of Directive Parental Counselling. Comparing treatment and control groups he also found significant differences on the HPAS confidence, understanding, and trust subscales and on the overall total score. Garcia (1971) and Larson (1972) also reported similar findings.

4.5: COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES TO CHANGE SCORES

Table 4 lists the mean change scores for the demographic variables of sex, country of birth, and attendance mode.

TABLE 4
Mean Change Scores for Sex, Birth, & Attendance Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean Change Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex - Female (n=16)</td>
<td>11.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex - Male (n=2)</td>
<td>15.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Birth - Canadian (n=14)</td>
<td>11.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Birth - Non-Canadian (n=4)</td>
<td>14.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance - as a couple (n=4)</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance - as a single (n=14)</td>
<td>12.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was found that parents who came as individuals exhibited more attitude change than those who attended as a couple. Males had a higher mean change score than females. Therefore, one must conclude that women who came with their husbands changed less than those who attended on their own. Non-Canadian born participants showed more attitude change than those who were born in Canada.

Males had lower pretest scores than females which indicates there was more possibility for them to improve. The same can be said for the non-Canadian born vs. the Canadian born. None of the above differences between means were significant.

Table 5 illustrates the mean change score for the various categories of the demographic variable, education.

TABLE 5
Mean Change Scores for Education Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Mean Change Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School (n=6)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Post Secondary (n=4)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate or Diploma (n=6)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree (n=2)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was obvious that those who had post secondary education or more did much better than those with only a
high school education. A t test of significant differences between means of independent samples was conducted. The post secondary, certificate or diploma, and degree categories were combined, in order to compare all those with a post secondary education to those with only a high school education. The t score obtained was \( t(16) = -3.19, p < .005 \). It may be concluded, therefore, that those participants with only a high school education showed significantly less attitude change, and that what change did occur was negative.

Although most of the research on parent education describes the educational level of participants, very few studies were found that considered significant differences between the various educational groups. One exception is a study by Salzinger, Feldman & Portnoy (1970). They found in studying group counselling in a behavioural framework, that parental success was related to parents' educational level, intelligence, and reading ability. Higher educated parents had more success. Hereford's (1963) findings were contrary to these. He found that participants from the lower socioeconomic group (which had been operationally defined as the educational level of the head of the household) made the greatest gains.
4.6 **DISCUSSION OF THE HEREFORD SCALE**

The original reliability figures on the HPAS ranged from .68 to .84 for split-half reliability coefficients. (Hereford, 1963) The researchers calculated Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients for pre-posttest scores for the subscales and the total score. These correlations are illustrated in Table 6.

**TABLE 6**

Correlation Coefficients for Pre-Posttest Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-tests</th>
<th>Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (r)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (all sub-tests)</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subscale which showed the lowest reliability score was the confidence subscale. The researchers also had concerns about the validity of this particular subscale. Some statements assumed that if the respondent agreed with a very general statement it reflected his own particular view. For example, if a parent agrees to the statement, "Most parents aren't sure what is the best way to bring up children." (Question 18, HPAS), it is scored as a lack of
confidence in regard to their own parenting ability. Also, some statements reflect outmoded ideas. For example, agreement with the statement, "No woman should be expected to take care of a small baby all by herself." (Question 3, HPAS), may in the 1980's, reflect a belief in shared parenting, rather than a lack of confidence.

4.7 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

People's reasons for taking the P.E.T. course were varied. They ranged from a global desire to create a "loving, learning, giving, home atmosphere", to a more specific interest in learning how to deal with a child's unacceptable behaviour. Many participants expressed similar views, such as a desire to understand their children better, a desire to be a better parent, or a wish to be more relaxed as a parent. Some others' reasons for taking the course which were also directed towards self improvement, were a desire to become more confident, patient, thoughtful, a better listener, or to become less authoritarian or less apt to take their own problems out on their children.

Other parents' reasons were directed towards changing their children—wanting them to become more confident, more responsible, more sensitive, or more self-expressive.

Finally, there was one person who wanted to be able to handle future difficulties, one who wanted to get other
people's opinions and compare them, one person who had an open mind, and one who wanted to learn how to have more control and peace in the home.

In terms of reasons for taking the course, there appeared to be no major differences between the continuers and the drop-outs.

Participants were asked what they had learned in the course. Most referred directly to course content and the concepts of active-listening, I-messages, and problem solving. Active-listening was the concept most frequently mentioned. Understanding children's needs and feelings, seeing children as real people, and allowing children to express their feelings were all cited as new concepts learnt in the program. One person expressed an analytical appreciation of the program, another stated problem ownership as something learned, and another learned how to better understand and deal with unacceptable behaviour.

Benefits from the group process were also cited as things learnt during the course. Feelings of not being alone and a recognition that their children were normal were obviously facilitated by sharing ideas and feelings with other parents.

Finally, many parents discussed areas of personal growth such as improved confidence, a more relaxed attitude, and a recognition that they are human and that they have needs and feelings too. Some expressed their learning in
terms of a reduction of negative behaviour, such as less nagging and lecturing, learning to control one's temper, or learning to stop and think before yelling.

Only one parent expressed learning that was contrary to P.E.T. philosophy. She felt that the course had affirmed her discipline of the children and helped her recognize the importance of guidance and restriction.

In terms of recommendations for improvements in the course, several participants indicated a desire for more time to practice new skills and more time to deal with concrete specific problems. These responses may indicate a need for a refresher course in a few month's time. Anchor and Thomason (1977) in conducting a follow-up study of behaviour modification and P.E.T. parent education programs found that 29 out of 32 respondents indicated a desire to participate in a refresher or advanced course if it were offered.

Problems with the wide age variation of children were also mentioned. A concern that their children were too young for all the P.E.T. concepts and a desire to have more information geared to teenagers were both expressed. Another parent felt that the program was too one-sided for parents and that an additional course for older children should be offered so that they could learn the P.E.T. concepts as well.
Finally, one person recommended the use of films and another expressed some dissatisfaction with the use of small groups, feeling that at times they tended to drift from the issue at hand and that there was poor feedback to the central group.

Although several participants did have specific recommendations to make, in general responses to open-ended questions indicated that satisfaction with and enjoyment of the course was very high. Many expressed a very positive response to the group leader.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter on data analysis began by describing the population. Then the research hypotheses were analyzed and a comparison between demographic variables and change scores was made. Reliability figures for the measuring instrument (HPAS) were presented and some concerns that the researchers had about this instrument were also discussed. Finally the responses to the open-ended questions were summarized. The final chapter will deal with the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations of the study.
Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The researchers found that at the conclusion of a P.E.T. program, participants' parental attitude towards child rearing had significantly improved. The global parental attitude studied consisted of five dimensions: namely, confidence, causation, acceptance, understanding, and trust. Parental confidence, trust, and understanding were all significantly increased. However, there was no evidence that the other two dimensions, parents' acceptance of their children as individuals or parents' belief that they could influence their children's behaviour (causation) had significantly improved.

Education of participants was found to be a significant factor in parental attitude change. This was somewhat anticipated as it is a generally accepted fact that P.E.T. programs are geared towards higher educated verbal parents. The final group of parents who participated in this study consisted primarily of higher educated people, and it may well be that they dominated the discussion and that, as a result, the needs of the lower educated parents were not
The lower educated parents may need more time and practice to integrate new knowledge and at the completion of the 10 week course, may not yet have been able to replace their previous attitudes with more positive ones. This may account for their decrease in positive parental attitudes.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. There was no control group in this study.

2. There has been no follow-up study, so the long term effects of the program cannot be assessed.

3. The evaluation was restricted to a specific population. Therefore, the generalizability of the results were limited.

4. Although the population was large enough to obtain significant results for the group as a whole, the comparisons of demographic variables to change scores showed inconclusive results because of the small numbers within the various sub-groups, such as male vs. female, etc.

5. Some of the attitude change might be accounted for by "experimenter expectation". In other words, at the completion of the 10 week course, participants would have become more aware of which responses would be considered favourable and their responses to test items might reflect this awareness.
6. The researchers have concerns about the validity of the confidence subscale of the HPAS.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following recommendations were made based on the research findings and the review of the literature.

1. Since the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey is so widely used to evaluate parent education and for other survey purposes, the researchers recommend that it be refined and updated.

2. The researchers have found participants' educational level to be a significant factor in parental attitude change. Since few other studies have explored this dimension and the results of these few studies are conflicting, further research should be done in this area.

3. If further research confirms that higher education is a significant factor in parental attitude change the format of P.E.T. may need to be revised for people with high school education or less. For example, mini refresher courses may help participants of less education to integrate and consolidate new knowledge. This could also be an opportunity to gain important follow-up data on the participants.

4. If further research confirms that higher education is a significant factor in parental attitude change, it
may be inadvisable to mix participants of widely divergent educational levels as the higher educated tend to dominate the discussion group.

5. Further and more rigorous research needs to be done on parent education programs. This will not only evaluate the various programs' effectiveness but will improve their quality, so that future parent education programs can begin to meet the needs of a wider variety of parents. Research should also attempt to discover why some parents drop out of parent education programs and how services can be provided for them to meet their needs more effectively.

6. This study has illustrated that P.E.T. is effective in terms of bringing about attitude change and therefore it is imperative such programs continue. Social workers need to be made aware of the merits of parent education programs and keep this in mind as a possible method of helping families.
Appendix A
QUESTIONNAIRE

A.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA PRETEST

Matchword

Marital Status Sex Age

Children's age and sex


Employment Status

Occupation

Education (last grade completed)

Approximately yearly income

Religion
A.2  DEMOGRAPHIC DATA POSTTEST

Matchword____  (First and last two digits of your phone number)

Marital Status____  Sex____  Age____

Children's age and sex

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----------

Employment Status:  Full time____
Part-time____
Homemaker____
Unemployed____

Occupation:  Your own____
Your spouse's____

Education:  (last completed)
Elementary School____
High School____
College____
University____
Other (please specify)____

Approximate yearly income of yourself____, your spouse____
Religion Country of Birth

How many of these P.E.T. sessions have you attended? (There was a total of 10)

A.3 HEREFORD'S PARENTAL ATTITUDE SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages are a number of statements regarding parents and children. Please indicate your agreement with each statement in the following manner:

- Strongly Agree - cross out letter "A" on answer sheet
- Agree - cross out letter "a" on answer sheet
- Undecided - cross out letter "u" on answer sheet
- Disagree - cross out letter "d" on answer sheet
- Strongly Disagree - cross out letter "D" on answer sheet

For example: if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would mark it in this way:

Boys are more active than girls.  A a u d D

This survey is concerned only with the attitudes and opinions that parents have; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Work as rapidly as you can -- it is your first impression that we are interested in. There is no time limit.

REMEMBER.............A = Strongly Agree
a = Agree
u = Undecided
d = Disagree
D = Strongly disagree

Please go ahead...

1. Parents have to sacrifice everything for their children.
   A a u d D

2. Parents should help children feel they belong and are needed.
   A a u d D

3. Taking care of a small baby is something that no woman should be expected to do all by herself.
   A a u d D

4. When you come right down to it, a child is either good or bad and there’s not much you can do about it.
   A a u d D

5. The earlier a child is weaned from its emotional ties to its parents the better it will handle its own problems.
   A a u d D

6. Most of the time giving advice to children is a waste of time because they either don’t take it or don’t need it.
   A a u d D

7. It is hard to let children go and visit people because they might misbehave when parents aren’t around.
8. Fewer people are doing a good job of childrearing now than 30 years ago.

9. With all a child hears at school and from friends, there's little a parent can do to influence him.

10. If a little girl is a tomboy, her mother should try to get her interested in dolls and playing house.

11. A child has a right to his own point of view and ought to be allowed to express it, just as parents express theirs.

12. If children are quiet for a while you should immediately find out why.

13. It's a rare parent who can be even-tempered with the children all day.

14. Psychologists now know that what a child is born with determines the kind of person he becomes.

15. One reason that it is sad to see children grow up is because they need you more when they are babies.
16. The trouble with trying to understand children's problems is they usually just make up a lot of stories to keep you interested.

17. A mother has a right to know everything going on in her child's life because her child is part of her.

18. Most parents aren't sure what is the best way to bring up children.

19. A child may learn to be a juvenile delinquent from playing games like cops and robbers and war too much.

20. There is no reason why a child should not learn to keep his clothes clean very early in life.

21. If a parent sees that a child is right and the parent is wrong, they should admit it and try to do something about it.

22. A child should be allowed to try out what it can do at times without the parents watching.

23. It's hard to know what to do when a child is afraid of something that won't hurt him.
24. Most all children are just the same at birth; it's what happens to them afterwards that is important.

25. Playing with a baby too much should be avoided since it excites them and they won't sleep.

26. Children shouldn't be asked to do all the compromising without a chance to express their side of things.

27. Parents should make it their business to know everything their children are thinking.

28. Raising children isn't as hard as most parents let on.

29. There are many things that influence a young child that parents don't understand and can't do anything about.

30. A child who wants too much affection may become a "softie" if it is given to him.

31. Family life would be happier if parents made children feel they were free to say what they think about anything.
32. Children must be told exactly what to do and how to do it or they will make mistakes.

33. Parents sacrifice most of their fun for their children.

34. Many times parents are punished for their own sins through the bad behaviour of their children.

35. If you put too many restrictions on a child, you will stunt his personality.

36. Most children's fears are so unreasonable it only makes things worse to let the child talk about them.

37. It is hard to know when to let boys and girls play together when they can't be seen.

38. I feel I am faced with more problems than most parents.

39. Most of the bad traits children have (like nervousness or bad temper) are inherited.

40. A child who misbehaves should be made to feel guilty and ashamed of himself.
41. Family conferences which include the children don't usually accomplish much.

42. It's a parent's duty to make sure he knows a child's innermost thoughts.

43. It's hard to know whether to be playful rather than dignified with children.

44. A child that comes from bad stock doesn't have much chance of amounting to anything.

45. A child should be weaned away from the bottle or breast as soon as possible.

46. There's a lot of truth in the saying, "Children should be seen and not heard."

47. If rules are not closely enforced children will misbehave and get into trouble.

48. Children don't realize that it mainly takes suffering to be a good parent.

49. Some children are so naturally headstrong that a parent can't really do much about them.
50. One thing I cannot stand is a child's constantly wanting to be held.

51. A child's ideas should be seriously considered in making family decisions.

52. More parents should make it their job to know everything their child is doing.

53. Few parents have to face the problems I find with my children.

54. Why children behave the way they do is too much for anyone to figure out.

55. When a boy is cowardly, he should be forced to try things he is afraid of.

56. If you let children talk about their troubles they end up complaining even more.

57. An alert parent should try to learn all his child's thoughts.

58. It's hard to know when to make a rule and stick by it.
59. Not even psychologists understand exactly why children act the way they do.

60. Children should be toilet-trained at the earliest possible time.

61. A child should always accept the decision of his parents.

62. Children have a right to activities which do not include their parents.

63. A parent has to suffer much and say little.

64. If a child is born bad there's not much you can do about it.

65. There's no acceptable excuse for a child hitting another child.

66. Children should have a share in making family decisions just as the grown-ups do.

67. Children who are not watched will get in trouble.

68. It's hard to know what healthy sex ideas are.
69. A child is destined to be a certain kind of person no matter what the parents do.

70. It's a parent's right to refuse to put up with a child annoyances.

71. Talking with a child about his fears most often makes the fear look more important than it is.

72. Children have no right to keep anything from their parents.

73. Raising children is a nerve-wracking job.

74. Some children are just naturally bad.

75. A child should be taught to avoid fighting no matter what happens.

76. Children don't try to understand their parents.

77. A child should never keep a secret from his parents.
A.4 OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS PRETEST

How did you hear about this course?

What do you hope to learn in this program?

A.5 OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS POSTTEST

What did you learn from this program?

What would you want to change in this program?
Appendix B

PARENTS' PLACE FLYER
P.E.T.
Parent Effectiveness Training

P.E.T. is a special program for parents to teach them the skills they need for the most important job they will ever have - raising responsible children.

Who can benefit from P.E.T.?
- Those who feel that they are doing a good job but want to do better
- Those who already have problems
- Those with very young children
- Those with adolescents
- Those with normal children
- Those with exceptional children

P.E.T. teaches methods and skills that can be effectively used by any parent.

************
P.E.T. will be offered March 30th through June 1st, 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. at H.B. McManus School, 9367 Esplanade Drive (Forest Glade area). The fee will be $15.00 per person to cover the cost of the materials required.
************

What Is Taught in P.E.T.?

- Session 1: PARENTS ARE HUMAN, They do not have to be consistent, prevent a united front, the forever inherent submerge their own needs
- Session 2: HOW TO LISTEN SO CHILDREN WILL SHARE PROBLEMS, A new way to really hear
- Session 3: PUTTING YOUR NEW SKILLS TO WORK, Tactful management, coaching and classroom practice
- Session 4: HOW TO TALK SO KIDS WILL RESPECT YOUR NEEDS, Effective confrontation that really works
- Session 5: OTHER WAYS TO PREVENT UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR, Modifying the environment
- Session 6: THE INEVITABLE CONFLICTS WHO WILL WIN? Avoiding power struggles
- Session 7: THE NO-LOSE METHOD, Why this method avoids rebellion and resentment
- Session 8: HOW TO AVOID BEING FIRED AS A PARENT, How to be a good consultant so your child will listen to your values

Return coupon on back to your local school by March 18, 1982 with cheque or money order made payable to the Windsor Separate School Board. The course will be limited to twenty-five participants.
Appendix C
PERMISSION FOR THE PROJECT

Permission to conduct this research project was granted from the Roman Catholic Separate School Board by Don Diabaldo, Area Superintendent, Ruth Ann Schnarr, Director of the Social Work Department, and by the parent education department (Parent's Place), which was sponsoring the Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) program. The P.E.T. group leader, Bernie LeVasseur, granted permission to administer the required questionnaire during the break in the scheduled P.E.T. sessions. In addition, all parents who participated in the study signed consent forms.
Appendix D

STATEMENTS OF LIMITATIONS
STATMENTS OF LIMITATIONS

I agree to protect the anonymity of the students and institutions involved both in formally published reports of the research, contact with the news media, personal conversations, or other forms of communication.

I do not intend to employ procedures which unduly or unnecessarily invade the privacy of a student or his family or disturb or threaten their integrity.

I shall supply at least one copy of my research project to the Board and its administrative staff.

[Signature]
(Researcher's Signature)

1. Researcher's Supervisor [Signature] [Date]
2. Research Coordinator [Signature] [Date]
Appendix E

INFORMATION RELEASE CONSENT FORM

Date:

I hereby agree to participate in a research study by completing a questionnaire before and after attending the Parent Effectiveness Training Program. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the program's effectiveness in providing parents support and direction in child rearing.

I understand that the information contained in this questionnaire will be treated as confidential and used for the purpose of research only. No identification is required and no one other than the researchers will have access to the questionnaire.

Parent's Signature
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Vincent, C. E. An Open Letter to the 'Caught Generation'. The Family Coordinator, April 1972, 143-150.


VITAE ACTORI

Claudia Carver was born on October 30, 1943 in Fort Erie, Ontario. She graduated from John Reanie High School in Pointe Claire, Quebec in 1960. In 1964 she graduated from Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Quebec with a B.A. in Psychology and Philosophy.

Upon graduation she worked for the St. Catharines Children's Aid Society as a protection worker. From 1966-1972 she held several positions as a psychometrist, working for the North York Board of Education, the Eastern Townships Regional School Board in Sherbrooke, Quebec, the Ontario Hospital in Orillia, and the Department of Corrections in Hagersville, Ontario. She returned to social work in 1976-1980, working for Family and Children's Services in Waterloo, Ontario.

In 1980 she returned to university and graduated with a B.S.W. in 1981 from the University of Windsor. She expects to graduate in 1982 with an M.S.W.

She has been married since 1967 and has four children, ages 9 to 14.
VITAE ACTORI

Janice Imeson was born April 29, 1956 in Windsor, Ontario. She completed her grade 13 at General Amherst High School in Amherstburg and graduated in 1975. Following graduation she enrolled in the four year Bachelor of Social Work Program at the University of Windsor. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology in 1978 and Bachelor of Social Work in 1979.

From July 1979 until August 1981 she was employed at the London Family and Children's Services in London, Ontario.

In September 1981 she entered the Master of Social Work Program at the University of Windsor and expects to graduate in 1982. She has accepted a social work position with the Windsor Separate School Board commencing September 1, 1982.