A descriptive study of foster parents attitudes toward-child contact.

Donald Kevin. Butler

University of Windsor

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd

Recommended Citation
https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/594

This online database contains the full-text of PhD dissertations and Masters' theses of University of Windsor students from 1954 forward. These documents are made available for personal study and research purposes only, in accordance with the Canadian Copyright Act and the Creative Commons license—CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution, Non-Commercial, No Derivative Works). Under this license, works must always be attributed to the copyright holder (original author), cannot be used for any commercial purposes, and may not be altered. Any other use would require the permission of the copyright holder. Students may inquire about withdrawing their dissertation and/or thesis from this database. For additional inquiries, please contact the repository administrator via email (scholarship@uwindsor.ca) or by telephone at 519-253-3000ext. 3208.
NOTICE

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

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

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

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

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

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS-RECEIVED

AVIS

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

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

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

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

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

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RECUE
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF FOSTER PARENTS ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENT-CHILD CONTACT

by

Donald Kevin Butler

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
(c) Donald Kevin Butler, 1982
THESIS COMMITTEE

Chairman: Dr. E.C. Hansen
Member: Professor B.J. Kroeker
Member: Dr. S. Selby

778449

- iii -
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the attitudes of foster parents toward natural parent-child contact while the foster child is in foster care. The review of the literature indicated the importance of parent-child contact toward the fulfillment of natural family reunion. The review of the literature also revealed that the frequency of parent-child contacts remains quite low despite the knowledge of the importance of parent-child contact. There were also a number of explanations offered for the existence of low frequencies of parent-child contacts. The one assumption underlying this research study was that foster parents' attitudes to parent-child contact could either inhibit or facilitate this contact, and thus is an important area for study.

A stratified random sample was drawn from both the Children's Aid Society for the County of Essex and the Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society for the County of Essex. Forty foster homes were selected from each agency and questionnaires were mailed to each foster mother and foster father, from the selected foster homes. Of these one hundred and sixty questionnaires mailed out, eighty-one were returned, representing a 50.63% rate of return.

The research study revealed that although the majority of foster parents expressed an understanding of the goal of family reunion and the importance of parent-child contact, their attitudes would suggest behaviour that would tend to inhibit family reunion and parent-child
contact. The responses to questionnaire items suggested a reluctance by foster parents to cooperate with the tasks of fulfilling parent-child contact and family reunion.

Based on the results of this research study, recommendations were made for future research and for the training of foster parents for their roles as "colleagues" in the foster care system.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to acknowledge the efforts of those who helped with the completion of this research study. Firstly I would like to thank Dr. Hansen for his time, support and direction that were essential to the completion of this research study. I also wish to thank the other two members of the thesis committee, Professor Kroeker and Dr. Selby, for taking the time to offer suggestions and direction.

I would also like to thank all those foster parents who participated in this research study. Their job is a never ending and often thankless one. Also I wish to thank the Children's Aid Society of the County of Essex and the Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society for the County of Essex, for their cooperation and permission to complete this research study within their agencies.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Joanne for being understanding of my long absences, and for being supportive throughout the course of this past year. More importantly I would like to thank her for almost single handedly raising our two sons, Tyler and Justin, both of whom will soon find out who dad really is.
# CONTENTS

MSW APPROVAL ................................................. iii

THESIS COMMITTEE ............................................. iv

ABSTRACT ......................................................... v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................. vi

Chapter | page
--- | ---
I. INTRODUCTION ............................................... 1

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ....................................... 4

   Historical Perspective of Foster Care .................. 4
   Foster Care in the Present ................................ 6
   Contact Between Natural Parent and Foster Child .... 8
     The Importance of Contact .............................. 8
     Frequency of Parent-Child Contact ................... 11
     Reasons for Low Frequency of Contact ................. 13
   The Role of the Children’s Aid Society in Encouraging
     Contact .................................................. 15
   Role Perception of Foster Parents ....................... 16
   Problem Formulation ...................................... 19
   Summary of the Review of Literature .................... 21

III. METHODOLOGY ............................................... 23

   Classification of the Project ............................. 23
   Sample Source and Sampling Method ...................... 25
   Data Collection Method ................................... 28
   Data Collection Instruments .............................. 29
   Limitations of the Research Design ...................... 30
   Summary of the Methodology .............................. 31

IV. FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS ............................ 32

   Characteristics of Sample ................................ 33
     Age of Respondents ..................................... 33
     Sex of Respondents ..................................... 34
     Educational Background .................................. 35
     Combined Family Income ................................ 36
     Marital Status ......................................... 37
     Children’s Aid Society ................................ 37
     Parenting Experiences of the Respondents ............. 38
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Age of Respondents</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sex of Respondent</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Educational Background of Respondents</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Combined Family Income</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Children's Aid Society</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Number of Years as a Foster Parent</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Number of Foster Parents' Own Children</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Number of Own Children Still Living at Home</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Number of Children Fostered</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Time that Present Foster Child has been with Foster Parents</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Length of Time Since Last Parent-Child Contact</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Frequency of Parent-Child Contact</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Foster Parent Attitudes to Parent-Child Contact</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Parent-Child Contact Occurring in Foster Home by CAS Affiliation</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Restrict Parent-Child Contact if Child Unhappy by CAS Affiliation</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Restrict Parent-Child Contact if Parents Make Unrealistic Promises by CAS Affiliation</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Foster Parents' Role Selection</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Questionnaire Items Related to Foster Parent's Role Selection</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Foster Parents' Understanding of the Goal of Foster Care</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Foster Parents' Commitment to the Goal of Foster Care</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21. Importance of the Foster Parent—Natural Parent Relationship by CAS Affiliation ................. 67
22. Foster Parents Wanting "Less To Do" With Natural Parents by CAS Affiliation ..................... 68
23. Foster Parents Allowing Natural Parents to Spend Day in Foster Home by CAS Affiliation ................. 68
24. Questions on The Scale of Possessiveness .................................................. 70
25. Scale of Possessiveness ............................................................................. 72
26. Foster Parent's Perception of Their Training for Foster Parenthood .............. 73

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure page
1. Categories for Scale of Possessiveness Scores .............................................. 71
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to determine the attitudes of foster parents toward natural parent-child contact in the foster care relationship. In formulating the research purpose a number of items were taken into account. Firstly the general aim of foster care was defined. This is best expressed by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services in their paper, *Foster Care: Proposed Standards and Guidelines for Agencies Placing Children* (1981) when they state

> The intention of foster care is to provide substitute family life to meet the needs of a child received into care for a planned period of time until the cause of the breakdown in the family can be remedied, and the child can return to his home and family, or the child is provided with another type of permanent living situation (p. 27).

There are a variety of concepts that are essential to the facilitation of the natural family reunion. The concept that is addressed in this research is that of maintaining contact between a child in foster care and the child's natural parents. The maintaining of this parent-child contact is considered to be essential if family reunion is to be accomplished. In those cases of permanent care where family contact is not desired, the emphasis will then shift to providing an alternate type of permanent living situation for the child. This alternate type of permanent living can refer to adoption, self-sufficiency for the child, remaining in a foster home until adulthood (this is usually the age of 18), placement in some other form of foster
care, etc. This situation can present a dilemma for foster parents, and will be more obvious to those foster parents who have had several years of fostering experience. On the one hand foster parents are trained to view fostering as a short term program for a child, or as being for "a planned period of time". The dilemma arises when the fostering becomes long term for a child, or when the "permanent living situation" for a child becomes the foster home. Foster parents must then choose to either accept the child into their home for the duration of the child's wardship or revert to their original fostering commitment, which was to foster on a short term basis. With the knowledge that such a situation can and may occur foster parents could find it difficult to know whether fostering any one particular child will remain short term or eventually become long term. Although the maintaining of parent-child contact will not ensure the reunion of the natural family, the lack or absence of contact will postpone or diminish the prospect of family reunion.

If family reunion is to be accomplished, then all foster care participants must actively encourage and work towards increasing parent-child contact. In the past there was not as much concern over the importance of contact between natural parent and foster child. In those times the primary role of foster parents was that of a caretaker or substitute parent to the child. There has since been a shift away from this role as foster parents are now considered to be paid professionals, working together as colleagues with other foster care staff. Despite this shift in roles, there remains a number of foster parents operating in the old role, which is in direct competition with the natural parents. Foster parents can therefore play an integral role
in the reunion of the foster child with the natural family. Likewise
the foster parent's attitudes towards natural parents and in reference
to parents having contact with their children in care, can directly
influence the success or failure of the foster care program. It is for
these reasons that foster parents' attitudes to parent-child contact
have been identified as the area to be researched.

The intention for completing this study of foster parents'
attitudes towards this critical area of foster care is to determine the
foster parents' level of understanding about the importance of parent-
child contact while also determining the extent to which foster parents
have adapted to their new role in the foster care program. This goal is
based on the assumption that foster parents' attitudes toward parent-
child contact can directly influence the amount of parent-child contact
that occurs. The goal of this research study is to increase the
awareness of foster care participants towards the importance of parent-
child contact in fulfilling the goal of family reunion with the hopes of
decreasing the number of children adrift in the foster care system.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of the review of literature is to provide a theoretical basis for the problem to be researched. The literature review is designed to give a historical perspective of foster care, as well as review the previous research studies relevant to the problem area.

2.1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF FOSTER CARE

The concept of foster care has been traced by Slingerland (1919, p.29) back to the days of the Old Testament. In that period the Jews made the care of dependent children a special duty under law. Slingerland (1919, p. 29) goes on to state that the practice of the Jews carried over into the early Christian Church, where dependent children were boarded out with "worthy widows", who were paid from church collections. This was the beginning of the boarding out system, that was reinstituted in the nineteenth century. Child care institutions or orphanages were prominent by the fourth century and continued in a similar manner for a thousand years or more.

The system of indenture was the next form of foster care to come to prominence, offering child placement for profit. Under indenture, children were sent to a master workman, where they were presumably expected to learn the master's trade in exchange for labor, which was meant to repay the master for training and keeping the child. The child
would remain under indenture until he reached the age of majority. By 1875 the system of indenture was less prominent, as it fell into disrepute in that children were found to be receiving less and less training, while being required to give more and more labour, a relationship that more closely resembled that of a master to a slave. Another system that gained widespread acceptance was that of almshouses. The almshouses were intended to provide a healthy life for children, with proper education, until they reached suitable working ages. This system was preferred to the system of "outdoor relief" or public welfare, which was also prominent, and was designed to keep a family intact. About the same time as indenture was being less accepted as an alternative, the almshouses also fell from grace, as the poor conditions of the children became public knowledge.

While outdoor relief, indenture and almhouse care were being debated, children's institutions were being established. These institutions or orphanages were not much better than the almshouses for care, but they were nevertheless supported from the public treasury, which acted as an incentive to the operators of the orphanages. These operators were usually of various religious groups, who would take the children in and teach them their faith. When the children were taken into the orphanages, the parents were required to surrender all their rights to the children. Once the children received some education and religious training, they were moved back to the community through the use of indenture.

In 1853 Charles Loring Brace began the free foster home movement, whereby he would take needy or homeless children from the city and send
them to rural areas where they were placed in the homes of farmers and tradesmen. Brace conducted this operation under the auspices of the Children's Aid Society, which he founded. In his recruiting campaigns for foster homes, Brace clearly identified the need for homes for these children as well as emphasizing the willingness of the children to pay through work. The free foster home system quickly began to resemble the old indenture system, as children were paying for their keep through labour, and by the early part of the twentieth century many concerns were being raised. In 1864 a spokesman for the Catholic Protectory of New York, denounced Brace's Children's Aid Society's efforts, as they were designed to split up the natural family with little chance of reunion (Thurston, 1930, p. 127).

It was Charles Birtwell, of the Boston Children's Aid Society, who changed the aim of foster care, in the late 1800's. It was his view that the child's place was with the family and therefore foster care should be directed at strengthening the family unit and maintaining parental responsibilities (Thurston, 1930, p. 191). Birtwell's methods of operation for foster care took many years to become widely accepted by social work practice, but have remained in practice for many more years and forms the basis of present day foster care goals.

2.2 FOSTER CARE IN THE PRESENT

In the present system of foster care the objective is to reunite the foster children with their natural families, with the exception of those children surrendered for adoption purposes. This goal of reuniting the family has been emphasized by many writers and researchers

Foster family service should be designed in such a way as to .... bring about the child's ultimate return to his natural family whenever desirable and feasible.

They go on to emphasize that

Where return of the child to his own family is the anticipated outcome, continuing help to the parents in maintaining and enhancing their relationship with the child and in working closely with the agency, individually and in groups, should aim to facilitate re-establishment of the child's own home as soon as possible.(pp. 19-20)

Despite the fact that such a clear understanding of the goals of foster care exists, there is still a great deal of difficulty in accomplishing this preferred outcome. The fact still exists that there are a number of children who remain in foster care for extended and indefinite lengths of time. There have been a number of reports of children's length of stay in care, an example being Garret's (1977) identification of major problems in foster care. Her report is based on a study by Vassal (1966) and she states that "the average length of placement of children in care on any one day (the cumulative load) is five years" (p. 3).

Sherman, Neumann and Shyne (1973) indicated that

the problem of children adrift in foster care has been a matter of recurrent concern in the child welfare field. It is a problem found in just about any area, and it is found among some of the most progressive and concerned agencies.(p. 3)

A report from New Hampshire illustrates the extent of the problem
In a Child and Family Service Study of all the foster children (316) for whom four New Hampshire counties were liable in 1971: 90 had been in placement 2 to 6 years; 138 over 6 years. Of all these children, only 21 were returned home and eight adopted out in that calendar year. (Child and Family Services of New Hampshire, 1972, pp. 11-12)

One of the most explicit examples of the problem is that represented by Maas and Engler’s study of children in foster care. They determined that

Time was a most important factor in the movement of children out of care in every setting, for staying in care beyond a year and a half, greatly increased a child’s chances of not being adopted or returned home. (1959, p. 351)

To simply identify the fact that many children are adrift in the foster care system is not enough. To gain a better understanding of the problem one must try to identify reasons why the problem exists. The number of possible reasons are almost as numerous as the number of children affected by the problem of drifting in foster care. The area of concern that has been selected for study in this research project is that area of contact between natural parent and foster child.

2.3 CONTACT BETWEEN NATURAL PARENT AND FOSTER CHILD

2.3.1 The Importance of Contact

It is apparent that if the goal of foster care, for any particular child, is to return to their natural family, then contact between the foster child and natural parents must be maintained. Despite having the explicit goal of natural family reunion, many agencies had policies that tended to restrict the amount of contact between parent and child. This has been identified by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (1981), report on foster care guidelines, when they state
Traditionally, natural parents have not been encouraged to be involved with their children in care. The desire to place the child and allow him to adjust to a substitute family often has resulted in agency workers discouraging contact between foster children and their natural children. As well, a visit from natural parents may disrupt the foster home and upset the child. Consequently, personal contact between natural parents and their children in care often does not occur, leading to permanent foster care for the child. The standards require the involvement of the child with his natural parents, and set out practices for the placement agency to ensure the support of the child, natural parents and foster parents during visits. It is strongly believed that the sometimes disruptive effect of visiting must be put in perspective. Research shows that the more contact natural parents have with a child, the more likely the child is to return home. (p. 16)

Contact is not only important in aiding in the accomplishment of the goal of natural family reunion, but also offers benefits in numerous other ways. The most notable of studies was that by Weinstein (1960). His findings were basically that those children maintaining contact with their natural parents scored higher on "well being" scales than did those not having any contact with their natural parents (p. 17). In 1939 Cowan and Stout released the results of their study where they found that children who maintained contact with their natural parents were less likely to show behaviour indicating insecurity, than did those children experiencing a complete break from parental contact (p. 335). Jenkins (1969) found that 57% of foster children over 1 1/2 years of age at placement with no parental contact were disturbed, as opposed to 35% having regular contact (p. 352). Jenkins bases her study on the argument that disturbance in foster children is related to the children's mourning for their parents and a conflict of identity between their natural parents and foster parents. Holman (1973) observed that the less the contact between natural parents and child the higher the incidence of certain emotional and physical symptoms in the child, such
as soiling and ill health (p. 192). Holman suggests that the lack of parental contact causes a higher incidence of emotional and physical symptoms in the child, although we do not know for certain which incident occurred first. For example, the lack of parental contact could just as easily have been precipitated by the emotional and physical symptoms of the child.

The meanings of these studies about contact is best summarized by Holman (1973) when he says:

Six main benefits are claimed from contact: it causes the child to feel less rejected by his parents; it promotes his adaptation to and feeling of security with the foster home; it gives him a greater understanding of why he was separated; it promotes his intellectual and emotional development; it facilitates his eventual return home; and, finally, it encourages the foster parents to have a realistic view of the placement and not to regard themselves as natural parents. (p. 187)

By far the findings most relevant to this research study are that contact facilitates the child's return home. This finding, which is now widely accepted as a theoretical basis in foster family care, has been duplicated in a few research studies. An early study was that by Maas and Engler (1959), who concluded that those children falling into the category of the unvisited were "destined to remain in long term foster care" (p. 357). David Fanghel (1978) found strong association between frequency of parental visiting and discharge of children from care, in his five year study completed in New York. The statistics showed that 66% of children who did not receive any visiting from parents, and 54% of children receiving a minimum of visiting, were still in care at the end of five years. In contrast only 31% of children receiving frequent but irregular visiting from parents and 27% of children receiving the
maximum visiting permitted, were still in care at the end of five years (p. 96). In Britain Jane Aldgate (1976) completed a study into foster care with reference to the foster child and the natural parents. She found a significant difference between the visiting patterns of children released from care and those remaining in care. In her study 100% of the children released from care had parental contact at least every three months, whereas on the other hand only 50% of children in care at the time experienced the same frequency of contact (p. 35). Despite the overriding evidence of these studies, there is still a marked lack of parent-child contact. The next section will look at studies that detail the low frequency of contact and how contact tends to diminish the longer a child remains in care.

2.3.2 Frequency of Parent-Child Contact

With the preponderance of evidence supporting the importance of parent-child contact, one might expect that there would be increased pressure to improve the number of parent-child contacts. This improved contact does not occur, as will be outlined in the following results from various studies. The number of children not having any contacts with their natural parents in the Fanshel (1977) study was alarmingly high at 59.5% of all reported studies (p. 4). The findings of other authors are similar. Adamson (1973) found 21% of the children in her study had never had any contact with their parents, while 38% hadn't seen their parents within the last year (p. 228). George (1970) found some 54% of his study population did not have any visits between parents and children (p. 185). Jenkins and Norman (1975) in their study of
biological mothers, found that in 13% of the cases these mothers reported that they did not have any visits over a six month period. The authors do warn the reader that the natural mothers may tend to overstate their frequency of visiting (p. 66). Rowe and Lambert (1973) found in their study of children in foster care, that 41% had not had any contact with either parent, during the study period (p. 43). Rachel Jenkins (1969) reported 46.4% of the children she studied did not have contact with any member of their natural family since they were placed in care and, that 16.1% of the children did not see either parent as often as once a year (p. 191). Gruber (1978) completed a study in Massachusetts during the time that the child was in foster home care (pp. 142-143). Finally, Thorpe (1974) reported an amazing figure of 72.6% where there was not any parent-child contact (p. 693).

The low frequency of contact is in itself a very distressing fact, yet gets even more so when one considers the fact that the frequency of parent-child contact diminishes appreciatively the longer a child remains in care. Panshel and Shinn (1978) completed a longitudinal study of foster care over a five year period. Data collected at Time I (during 1966-67) reflected an 18.2% rate of non visitation. At Time II (1967-68) 31.3% of the children were reported as having been unvisited. Time III (1969-70) showed a 36% rate of unvisited children, and finally, at Time IV (1971) there was a total of 56.9% of the children who were unvisited (pp. 84, 88-89). These findings reflect not only the poor visitation/records of children in care with their natural parents, but also points to the importance of creating an early pattern of parent-child contacts, as the frequency of contact will diminish the longer a
child remains in care, while also increasing the possibility of the child remaining in care a lot longer, if not indefinitely. These findings are further supported by the following research studies: Fashel's Computerized study (1977, p. 6); Aldgate's article on parent-child contacts (1976, p. 35); and, the study of Rowe and Lambert (1973, p. 156).

2.3.3 Reasons for Low Frequency of Contact

The various research studies mentioned above have presented a number of reasons for low frequency of contact, either from the authors viewpoint, or from information gathered from the study sample. The explanation that is relevant to this research study is that foster parents tend to discourage visiting, have a negative attitude towards visiting and natural parents, and they make visiting uncomfortable for natural parents. Examples of these situations are found in the following research reports. Rachel Jenkins (1969) reported that 49 out of 97 foster parents were assessed by their child care officers as negative in their attitudes towards natural parents. These negative attitudes ranged from "very hostile and condemning" through "critical" to "fearful" (p. 350). In 1970 Victor George stated that the foster parents he studied desired to retain the power to regulate the frequency of parent-child contacts. The results of the questionnaire "show that foster parents will use such power to curtail rather than encourage visits from natural parents" (p. 64). Adamsen (1973) concluded that the foster parents he studied found contact with natural parents to be the most difficult part of fostering, as 46% felt that the foster child
would be better off if there was no contact with the natural family (p. 142). Patricia Cautley (1980) studied the attitudes of new foster parents at various stages of a child's placement in their foster home. She found that 26% of the foster mothers studied were critical or unaccepting towards the natural family of the child, who had been placed with them for three months. This 26% was a significant increase from the 12% found when the children had been in placement for only 4 weeks. This negative attitude increased again at six months of placement, although figures were not given (pp. 109, 134).

The studies already discussed have been studies looking at visitation from the foster parents' viewpoints. There have been relatively fewer studies completed from the natural parents perspective. Some of the results of these studies follow. Aldgate (1980) reported that

one of the most significant factors (likely to cause a decline in contact) which influenced the study parents was the attitude of the caretakers towards them. (p. 31)

Shirley Jenkins and Elaine Norman (1975) reported that 11% of the natural parents that they interviewed, blamed foster parents for making visiting difficult, as a reason why they, the natural parents, failed to visit as often as they would like (p. 67). Alan Gruber (1978) had similar findings where almost 20% of the natural parents attributed their lack of contact to the fact that parent-child contact was discouraged by foster parents (p. 145).
2.3.4 The Role of the Children's Aid Society in Encouraging Contact

Although this research study is not directing its focus at the role of the agency or the social worker in the process of encouraging or facilitating parent-child relationships, their importance in the foster care system should not be overlooked. It is the foster agency that is responsible for the selection and training of foster parents to fulfill their role. Naturally if the foster agencies do not adequately prepare foster parents, then one could not expect the foster parents to perform their proper roles and functions.

The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services has prepared a paper entitled Foster Care: Proposed Standards and Guidelines for Agencies Placing Children (1981). As all of the Children's Aid Societies in the province of Ontario are responsible to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, they can likely be expected to follow these guidelines, as will the two Children's Aid Societies involved in this research study. The paper outlines a number of areas of agency responsibility with respect to the training and preparing of foster parents for their roles in the foster care program. In the section on Orientation in the manual, the Ministry states that "the worker should lead the foster parents to understand their responsibilities and the functions they perform for a foster child and how these differ from being a parent (p. 139)." The guidelines go on further to state that

One of the most important responsibilities the foster parent may have will be to support and encourage positive aspects of the child's relationship with natural parents and to prepare foster children to leave the foster home. (p. 139)

The agency is directed to go further in their orientation procedure, as they "should establish clear practices or procedures for}
foster parents in handling emergency situations, court hearings, vacations, and visiting" (p. 140). In the section of the Ministry's paper on Foster Parent Development, guideline number 30.3 (b), states that:

The curriculum developed for training foster parents should include... (b) natural family relationships: why these are important, how to arrange and end visits, what to do and what to avoid when natural parents visit, the most frequent problems and how to manage them. (p.154).

The guidelines outlined above are very clear in their desire to have Children's Aid Societies emphasize the importance of parent-child contact to foster parents.

2.4 ROLE PERCEPTION OF FOSTER PARENTS

There has been much emphasis in the literature on the importance of the role assumed by foster parents in the foster care relationship. The role that is assumed by a foster parent may have a bearing on the fulfillment of the goal of foster care, which is the reunion of the natural family. Before going into this area in any great detail this paper will complete a brief review of Holman's concept of exclusive and inclusive fostering.

Holman has identified two main types of foster care, exclusive and inclusive. The exclusive model is identified by "it(s) attempts to contain the foster child within the foster family while excluding other connections" (1980, p. 31). He goes on to say that the exclusive concept is based on two premises. Firstly, foster children need to be protected from the influence of, and knowledge about natural parents. Secondly,
the foster children and foster parents' greatest need is freedom from any fear that the fostering will be disturbed or even that the fact of fostering will be brought to their attention. (1980, p. 76)

The inclusive concept on the other hand places emphasis on the child's need to "obtain a true sense of their present identity and past history, within a framework of affection" (p. 77). The inclusive model recognizes the need to include all foster care participants in working towards a goal of family reunion. From Holman's discussion of exclusive and inclusive fostering, it is easy to see the importance of the role assumed by foster parents when considering a goal of reuniting the natural family.

There are a number of indicators that are easily identified, which will help to determine which category, exclusive or inclusive, any particular foster home falls within. Some of these indicators have been discussed previously, such as foster parents' attitudes towards natural parents, and foster parents' attitudes towards parent-child contact etc.

Another indicator is the foster parents' perception of their role in the foster care relationship. Beyond Holman's exclusive and inclusive concepts of foster care, the role assumed by foster parents is quite important in fulfilling the goal of natural family reunion. The theoretical argument states that it is best for foster parents to consider themselves to be most like paid professionals of the agency, whose duty is to provide day to day care, love and attention without becoming attached to a foster child. Despite this, when given a choice, a great number of foster parents choose a role resembling that of a foster child's natural parent. By assuming such a role, foster parents put themselves in direct competition with natural parents, which will
inhibit parent-child contact and impede the goal of natural family reunion. Foster parents assuming such a role would fall into Holman's fostering category of exclusive fostering, which means foster parents will likely try to exclude all other foster care participants. This aspect of foster parent role assumption has been reviewed by many of the research studies completed. The most common means of determining this role assumption is to have foster parents indicate which role most closely resembles that of a foster parent. Foster parents are given choices ranging from natural parent of the foster child, to a relative of the foster child, all the way to a paid employee of the agency. Foster parents have also been questioned as to their desires and intentions regarding returning the children to their natural parents, or keeping the children with views to adopting. The results of some of these studies are as follows. Holman (1973) reported that 63% of the foster mothers studied, regarded their foster child as their own (p. 73). Such an attitude does not make the reunion of the natural family an easy task. In 1970, Georges study revealed that 62.1% of the foster parents surveyed viewed the role of foster parents as being most like that of the child's own parents (p. 54). Wolins in a similar study found 77% of the foster parents compared themselves to the child's own parents or an adoptive parent (1963, p. 14). Adamson attempted to seek out the foster parents' role performance through the use of her self devised "scale of possessiveness". The scale contained a series of questions designed to assess foster parents' attitudes about their own current foster-child or children. The attitudes were supplied through responses given on the basis of a five point Likert-type scale, which
were then scored in terms of their possessiveness. The results were that 43% of the foster parents fell into the category of being possessive of their foster child (1973, pp. 189-190, 227).

2.5 PROBLEM FORMULATION

After having reviewed the literature relevant to the areas of foster care and the attitudes of foster parents, it was appropriate to proceed with the problem formulation. Ripple says "to formulate is to express in precise form: state definitely or systematically" (p. 27).

This research study was designed with five main areas of interest to be gathered through the data collection instrument. These five areas are:

1. Foster Parents' Attitudes to Parent-Child Contact.
2. The Role Perception of Foster Parents.
3. Foster Parents' Understanding of The Goals of Foster Care.
4. Foster Parents' Scoring on a Scale of Possessiveness.
5. Foster Parents' Perception of Their Training For Foster Parenthood.

These five areas of interest were selected on the basis that the literature points to the present goal of foster care as being the reunion of the child and the family. The literature also strongly suggests that in order to facilitate this goal, parent-child contact must be maintained. This research is based on a further assumption that parent-child contact should be encouraged.

These five areas of interest will be covered in the data collection instrument with specific goals in mind. In the area of parent-child
contact, the overall goal is to determine foster parents' attitudes to this contact. This area also contains three sub-categories for study, designed to determine,

1. What foster parents know about the importance of parent-child contact.

2. Whether or not foster parents are accepting of parent-child contact and whether this acceptance is conditional or unconditional.

3. How prepared foster parents are for parent-child contact.

In the area of role perception the goal will be to determine what role foster parents feel most closely resembles their position. This area is based on the indication in the literature that the role assumed by foster parents will either be beneficial or detrimental to the goal of natural family reunion. For example, a foster parent assuming a role that resembles that of a natural parent, will be in direct competition with the natural parent and will inhibit the fulfillment of family reunion.

In the next area, foster parents' understanding of the goals of foster care are sought, in particular the goal of family reunion. This area will be designed to determine,

1. What foster parents' perception of the goal of foster care is, and

2. How committed foster parents are to this goal.

The "scale of possessiveness", developed by Adamson (1973), was designed to determine how possessive a foster parent is towards their foster child. The literature states that overly possessive foster
parents will not be committed to a goal of family reunion, and will likewise have a poor understanding of their role. Adamson's "scale of possessiveness" has not been widely used and is therefore not standardized. The scale was not replicated in its exact form, but was modified for use in this research study. The findings will still be comparable to the findings of Adamson despite these modifications.

The final area of interest was that of foster parent training. In this area the goal was to determine whether or not foster parents felt that their training for foster parenthood, adequately expressed the goal of natural family reunion and the importance of parent-child contacts.

2.6 SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter has been to review the pertinent literature relating to foster parents' attitudes and roles. The goals of foster care have advanced progressively from the early days, when foster children were expected to remain in foster care until adulthood. Nowadays these foster children are expected to return to their natural families as soon as possible. Despite this explicit goal the fact still remains that many of these foster children remain in foster care for many years and often on into young adulthood. The predominant explanation for this lapse of time is the reality that natural parents, for numerous reasons, do not maintain contact with their children in care, despite the overwhelming abundance of literature stressing the importance of parent-child contact. There have been almost as many explanations as to why parent-child contact is low, with the one explanation of utmost importance to this research study being that
foster parents' attitudes and assumed roles inhibit the parent-child relationship. The importance of these attitudes and assumed roles was highlighted in the discussion of Holman's (1980) two concepts of foster care, exclusive and inclusive fostering, and the identification of the roles assumed by foster parents and how these roles can again inhibit any parent-child relationship.

The last section of this chapter on the review of the literature addressed the problem formulation. The following five areas of interest were identified and discussed:

1. Foster parents' attitudes to parent-child contact.
2. The role perception of foster parents.
3. Foster parents' understanding of the goals of foster care.
4. Foster parents' scoring on a scale of possessiveness.
5. Foster parents' perception of their training for foster parenthood.
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The methodology portion of this research report, is the section designed to elaborate on the techniques and strategies utilized in this research project. These strategies and techniques are employed from the research design, which according to Selzitz, Wrightman and Cook (1976) is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (p. 90).

The research design must also involve "the specification of the logical approach to answer the questions posed for study" (Tripodi, Fellin and Meyer, 1969, p. 3). Any research project must be logically formulated and arranged, so that data can be collected and analyzed in such a manner that conclusions can be drawn from it. The methodology section will also outline the classification of the research project, the sample source, sampling methods used, the data collection methods, and the type of data collection instruments used.

3.1 CLASSIFICATION OF THE PROJECT

This research project falls into the category of a descriptive type as labelled by most authorities in the field of research. Finestone and Kahn (1975) state that the general purpose of the descriptive type study is "to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon when the characteristics of interest are known" (p. 62). As the purpose of
this research project is to take a survey of foster parents' attitudes towards natural parents', this can be seen as meeting the criteria of the descriptive type study, with foster parents' attitudes being the characteristic sought. Tripodi, Fellin and Meyer (1969) adhere to a similar type of category that they have labelled Quantitative-Descriptive type research, with a similar definition to that of Finestone and Kahn (1975). The difference between the two types of research is that Tripodi, Fellin and Meyer (1969, pp. 38-44) further sub-divide the Quantitative-Descriptive type study into four sub-categories. The four subcategories are Hypothesis Testing Studies; Program Evaluation Studies; Variable Relation ships Studies; and Population Description Studies.

When determining the most suitable classification the researcher ruled out the first three subcategories as being inappropriate. These decisions were arrived at by looking at the specific purposes of each subtype and comparing it with the purpose of this research. Firstly it is not an hypothesis testing study as there is not an "explicit hypothesis to be tested" nor any desire to test any cause-effect relationships or associations. Secondly it is not a program evaluation study because there is no "specific program or method of helping" that is being studied to determine its effects. Thirdly it does not belong in the variable relationship type study as it is not concerned with the finding of variables "pertinent to an issue or situation".

Therefore the research study undertaken here must fall into the last category of population description which is described as follows:

Population Description Studies ... are those quantitative-descriptive studies which have as their primary function the accurate description of quantitative characteristics of
selected populations, organizations, or other collectivities. These studies frequently use survey procedures. They usually use sampling methods to claim representativeness, and they contain a large number of variables. Some of these studies are descriptive of characteristics of designated populations such as roles, functions, needs, attitudes and opinions (p. 42).

The research topic of a Description of Foster Parents Attitudes Towards Parent-Child Contact, can be seen to fit into this category by a number of means. To begin with, the research is intended to accurately describe some characteristics of a population, the foster parents. There are a large number of variables that will be explored through the use of a survey questionnaire. Lastly the research project conforms to the latter part of the population description definition, as it will be describing the characteristic of attitudes of the foster parents (designated population) towards parent-child contact.

3.2 SAMPLE SOURCE AND SAMPLING METHOD

The sample source of my research project is drawn from the population that has been selected for study. A population has been defined by Ferguson (1976) as

any defined aggregate of objects, persons or events, the variables used as a basis for classification or measurement being specified (p. 130).

The population first identified for the purpose of study in this research project are all foster parents in the Essex County area. This includes all foster parents presently enlisted by both Children’s Aid Society’s in Essex County, to be referred to hereafter as Children’s Aid Society "A" and Children’s Aid Society "B". The total number of foster parents in the population numbers approximately two hundred sets of
foster parents, or four hundred individual parents. As it would be too
time consuming and costly to study all four hundred foster parents, it
was decided that a sample of the population would be studied. Ferguson
(1976) defines a sample as "any subaggregate drawn from the population"
(p. 130). Yeakel and Ganter (1975) go a little further to state that "a
sample is a group of subjects selected from a larger group and including
less than all the subjects in that larger group" (p. 93).

When employing sampling procedures there are two basic areas where
the researcher must devote some concern and attention. These areas are
those of randomness and representativeness. A random sample is defined
by Yeakel and Ganter (1975) as "a sample drawn in such a way that each
and every case has an equal chance of being chosen at each drawing" (p.
99). Therefore it is the researchers duty to ensure that all members of
a population are given an opportunity to be selected to form the sample
group. The issue of representativeness in sampling is described by
Labovitz and Hagedorn (1971) in the following manner "a sample is
representative to the degree to which it reflects the characteristics of
a population" (p. 29). Yeakel and Ganter (1975) describe the issue in a
simpler terms when they state

The characteristic of representativeness ... means that an
obtained sample is, in effect a miniature edition of the whole
study population in all major respects that are significant to
the study's purpose (p. 95).

Representativeness is extremely important in a research study especially
if one is going to draw a conclusion about the population, based on the
study of a sample. As Labovitz and Hagedorn (1971, p. 29) state,
checking for representativeness of a sample is difficult if not
impossible, without studying the whole population, which if done would
defeat the purpose of selecting a sample. Yeakel and Ganter (1975, p. 29) go further in their discussions of representativeness to state that random sampling does not guarantee representativeness of a sample, but experience has shown that randomly chosen samples tend to be representative.

The two major types of sampling most frequently referred to, are that of probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling essentially states "that one can specify for each element of the population the probability that it will be included in the sample" (Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook, 1976, p. 516). As the size of the study population is already known we can assume that the sampling method used will be of the probability type. The probability sample can be obtained through a number of different methods. The method used in this research study is that of stratified random sampling. Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook (1976) state that "in stratified random sampling, ... the population is first divided into two or more strata" (p. 526). The foster parent population in this study is comprised of foster parents from two separate Children's Aid Societies, different by virtue of their religious affiliation. As the researcher intends to compare the responses of foster parents from each agency, stratified random sampling appeared to be the most appropriate method to employ, so as to gain enough cases from each stratum to allow for such a comparison.

Therefore the complete lists of foster parents from each of the two Children's Aid Societies were drawn together according to their respective affiliation. Each foster family from each agency was then assigned a number. The numbers were then randomly selected by the
researcher until forty families had been chosen, representing a possible eighty cases. This procedure was carried out for each agency which gave a total of eighty families, which represented a possible one hundred and sixty cases.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The method used to collect the data for this research study was through the vehicle of the questionnaire. The reasons that the questionnaire was chosen are numerous. The main reason for this choice is the ease with which the questionnaire can be administered. The questionnaire can be simply mailed or given to the respondents to complete and return on their own. By administering the questionnaire in this way the entire sample can be responding to the questionnaire at the same time, whereas an interviewer can only do one interview at a time, which will take much more time and effort. The self administered questionnaire also allows for anonymity of responses which can lead to less reluctance to answer according to ones conscience, without fear of disapproval or retribution from higher authorities. The questionnaire also allows for some uniformity, in that all subjects are responding to the same questions, without the added interpretation that the interview situation can provide. Furthermore the questionnaire can be distributed over a large geographical region with relative ease and expense.

Therefore two questionnaires were mailed to each of the eighty foster families in the sample, for completion by each the foster mother and the foster father. Included with each questionnaire was a covering letter from each agency, and a letter from the researcher giving
instructions for the completion of the questionnaire. The respondents were also requested to return the questionnaires in the self addressed stamped envelope that were provided with the questionnaires.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used in the questionnaire can be classified into three categories described by S. Jenkins (1975, p. 138). Firstly, demographic and descriptive data, such as age of respondents, sex of respondents, religious affiliation of respondents, etc., were sought in the questionnaire. The second type of data is experiential and behavioural data, which refers to "what has happened, been seen or heard, in current or previous circumstances" (S. Jenkins, 1975, p.138) by respondents. Some examples of such data are the number of children fostered, number of contacts between natural parents and their foster children, etc. Lastly the attitudinal type data was sought. This area constituted the main body of the questionnaire, to which the respondents replied. Respondents were given a number of statements to which they were to either agree or to disagree. Each of these statements was provided with answers on a Likert type scale, with six possible answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements did not provide an area of response that would allow the respondent to choose a non-committal type answer, such as "undecided", but instead forced the respondents to commit themselves one way or the other. Respondents were not given the choice of a non-committal answer as such a response does not always indicate the respondents true choice but can instead indicate a lack of effort in completing the questionnaire.
These types of questions are usually referred to as closed-ended or fixed alternative questions, as the respondent cannot give his own answer but must select one of the answers provided. These questions are also referred to as structured questions in that all respondents have the same possible choices, as all questions are presented in the same manner and order.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This researcher was cognizant of the fact that the respondents may have been reluctant to reveal their true feelings and might rather respond as they believed that they were expected to respond. That is, they possibly looked for the "correct" response, instead of answering according to their own feelings.

The use of the questionnaire as a method of data collection also presented limitations. In order to expect a high rate of return on a questionnaire, it must be administered to a captive group with a strong incentive to respond and return the questionnaire. The sample group of foster parents was considered to be captive, but may have lost some of their incentive to respond, due to the time of year that the questionnaire was mailed. July is that time of year that parents typically arrange family vacations to coincide with their children's summer vacation from school.

The quantitative-descriptive design also had some limitations. The descriptive type of study is not considered to offer the reliability and validity, which can be found in the other more rigorous forms of research. There was also the limitation of the questionnaires being of
These types of questions are usually referred to as closed-ended or fixed alternative questions, as the respondent cannot give his own answer but must select one of the answers provided. These questions are also referred to as structured questions in that all respondents have the same possible choices, as all questions are presented in the same manner and order.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This researcher was cognizant of the fact that the respondents may have been reluctant to reveal their true feelings and might rather respond as they believed that they were expected to respond. That is, they possibly looked for the "correct" response, instead of answering according to their own feelings.

The use of the questionnaire as a method of data collection also presented limitations. In order to expect a high rate of return on a questionnaire, it must be administered to a captive group with a strong incentive to respond and return the questionnaire. The sample group of foster parents was considered to be captive, but may have lost some of their incentive to respond, due to the time of year that the questionnaire was mailed. July is that time of year that parents typically arrange family vacations to coincide with their children's summer vacation from school.

The quantitative-descriptive design also had some limitations. The descriptive type of study is not considered to offer the reliability and validity, which can be found in the other more rigorous forms of research. There was also the limitation of the questionnaires being of
the "one shot case study" attempt to reveal attitudes, as it is described by Campbell and Stanley (1963, pp. 176-178). This limitation is in contrast to the studies designed to compare the observed group with a comparison or control group. This limitation is also in contrast with those studies of a longitudinal nature designed to study changes occurring over a time period. Despite these limitations, given the scope and nature of this study, the quantitative-descriptive type study seemed to be the most appropriate.

3.6 SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY

This chapter has dealt with the techniques and strategies used in this research project. The research was first classified as a Quantitative Descriptive type study in the sub-classification of Population Description. A discussion of the sample source and the sampling methods employed was then presented. In the area on sampling the population was identified as foster parents in Essex County. A sampling method of stratified random sampling was employed with attention being paid to the importance of randomness and representativeness, to provide a sample from the population. The method of data collection used was the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained three types of data collection instruments:

1. Demographic Data
2. Experiential and Behavioural Data
3. Attitudinal and Feeling Data

Finally this chapter reviewed the limitations in this research design.
Chapter IV
FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

A random sample totalling eighty foster families was selected from the two Children's Aid Societies. This total consisted of forty foster families from each agency. As each foster family represented two potential respondents, foster mother and foster father, the total potential sample was one hundred and sixty respondents. Of these one hundred and sixty questionnaires, eighty-one were returned, representing a response rate of 50.63%. A further four questionnaires were returned but were not completed. Two were returned by the respondent, while two were returned by the postal service, as the foster parents had moved and left no forwarding address with the postal service.

The findings are presented as they appeared on the questionnaire, beginning with the demographic data, then the experiential and behavioural data which is then followed by the analysis of the attitudinal questions on the questionnaire. The findings for the attitudinal questions are presented according to the areas of relevance, as discussed in the problem formulation.
4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE

The variables that are reported in this area of characteristics include: the age of the respondents; the sex of the respondents; the respondents' level of education; the respondents' combined family income; the marital status of the respondents; and, the Children's Aid Society affiliation of the respondents.

4.1.1 Age of Respondents

TABLE 1
Age of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVER 70 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREQUENCY

| 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |

Table 1 shows the age ranges of the foster parents in the research. Of the sample group of foster parents, the ages ranged from twenty-four
years to eighty years. This age range is representative of an adult population that would be considered suitable for foster parenting and is likely to have had or is presently gaining some child-rearing experience.

4.1.2 Sex of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48.15</td>
<td>48.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>51.85</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the sex of the foster parents in the research. The sample group of foster parents was represented by 39 (48.15%) males and 42 (51.85%) females. The response rate was relatively equal between the foster mothers and foster fathers, with a slight advantage to the foster mothers. This slightly higher response rate for the foster mothers is typical of most foster care situations, whereby the foster mother is the more active of the foster parents.
It should be noted that it was obvious from some of the questionnaires that both the foster mothers responses, and the foster fathers responses, from the same family, were completed twice by the same foster parent. This was evident through the same handwriting and the identical selection of responses. One respondent offered an explanation about the situation, as the foster mother completed one questionnaire and wrote on the top that her husband's replies would be identical to hers, so they only completed one questionnaire. Although the responses in most of these cases do not provide any indication as to who completed the questionnaires, for both foster parents, it would suggest that the findings of previous studies, that foster mothers are the more active foster parent, may be supported by this research study.

4.1.3 Educational Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRADE SCHOOL</td>
<td>*****</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>****************</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE</td>
<td>****</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 20 30 40

FREQUENCY
Table 3 shows that by far the majority 48 (60%) of the foster parents in this sample had completed some level of secondary school education. The Table further reveals that 16 (20%) had only some level of grade school education, 10 (12.5%) had some college education, and 6 (7.5%) had some university education. One of the respondents did not report a level of education. This sample is representative of most foster parent populations with a relatively average level of education.

4.1.4 Combined Family Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNREPORTED</td>
<td>******</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER $10,000</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$14,000</td>
<td>**********</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-$19,000</td>
<td>**********</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$24,000</td>
<td>**********</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$29,000</td>
<td>**********</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000-$39,000</td>
<td>**********</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>12.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-$44,000</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVER $50,000</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 10 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figures in Table 4 show that the sample group was divided rather evenly over the various income brackets. The highest frequency of 18 (22.22%) appeared in the income range of $15,000-19,000 annually. Of the remaining respondents 16 (19.75%) were in the $20,000-24,000 bracket; 14 (17.28%) fell within the $25,000-29,000 bracket; 11 (13.58%) of the respondents were in the $10,000-14,000 range; 10 (12.35%) were in the $35,000-39,000 bracket; and 2 (2.47%) were in each of the following brackets, $40,000-44,000, under $10,000 and over $50,000. There were also 6 (7.41%) of the respondents who did not report their income. By far the majority of the respondents (74.69%) reported an income of under $30,000 a year which is indicative of a single income, in the middle class bracket.

4.1.5 Marital Status

The entire sample, 81 (100%) reported a marital status of married. This is an understandable situation considering that the standards for foster parenthood usually indicate a preference for married persons, with families. This is not to suggest that single persons or couples living common-law do not qualify for foster parenthood, but that by far the majority of foster parents are married.

4.1.6 Children's Aid Society

Table 5 shows the Children's Aid Society Affiliation of the foster parents in this research. The total sample of foster parents was represented by 47 (58.02%) from Children's Aid Society "A" while the remaining 24 (41.98%) were from Children's Aid Society "B", as presented


in Table 5. What these figures indicate, although not detailed in Table 5, is that of the eighty foster parents originally selected from each agency 58.75% of the foster parents from Children's Aid Society "A" responded, while only 42.5% of the foster parents from Children's Aid Society "B", responded.

4.2 PARENTING EXPERIENCES OF THE RESPONDENTS

The variables that are presented and discussed in this section include: the number of years that the respondents have been fostering; the number of the foster parents own children; the number of the foster parents own children still living at home; the length of time that the respondents present foster child has been living with them; the length of time since the respondents foster children have seen their natural parents; and, the frequency of parent-child contacts.
4.2.1 Number of Years as a Foster Parent

TABLE 6
Number of Years as a Foster Parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEARS AS A FOSTER PARENT</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDER 1 YEAR</td>
<td>*****</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 YEARS</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 YEARS</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 YEARS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 YEARS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29 YEARS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVER 35 YEARS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREQUENCY

The largest number of foster parents 33 (40.74%) had been fostering between one and four years, with 43 (53.09%) having less than four years experience as a foster parent. The remainder of the sample had been fostering for more than four years with some foster parents reporting over thirty-five years of active foster parenting. Generally this sample is representative of most foster parent populations having relatively few years of service. This result is understandable with the high turnover that is common in foster care. This could also be
explained by the desires of the Children's Aid Societies to enlist foster parents to conform to the new role of 'foster parents as colleagues'. It may sometimes be easier to enlist new foster parents who fit this revamped role than to change the role sets of some of the present foster parents.

4.2.2 Number of Foster Parents' Own Children

This aspect of the questionnaire had two components, firstly the number of own children that the foster parent has, and secondly the number of those children still living at home.

**TABLE 7**

Number of Foster Parents’ Own Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>14.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20.99</td>
<td>35.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.69</td>
<td>60.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>32.10</td>
<td>92.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIVE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>95.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEVEN</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>97.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIGHT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 10 15 20 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the first area, presented in Table 7 the majority of the foster parents 49 (60.49%) reported having between one and four children, while the remaining 32 (39.51%) had more than four children with the highest number being eight children. These figures are typical of most family sizes in today's society.

The second component was that of the number of the foster parents own children still living at home and is presented in Table 8.

**TABLE 8**

Number of Own Children Still Living at Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.69</td>
<td>24.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23.46</td>
<td>48.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.46</td>
<td>71.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>86.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| FREQUENCY          | 5    | 10       | 15      | 20 |

In this area 20 (24.69%) of the foster parents reported having no children of their own living at home, while the other 61 (75.31%) had at least one child still living at home with the highest number of own children still at home being four. These figures are consistent with
the number of foster parents in the study that are over fifty years of age, and likely to have already completed raising their own families, while those reporting children still at home is consistent with the number of foster parents in the socially accepted child rearing age bracket.

4.2.3 **Number of Children Fostered**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN FOSTERED</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM.</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44.44</td>
<td>44.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19.75</td>
<td>64.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>69.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>74.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td>82.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>90.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVER 100</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FREQUENCY**

Table 9 shows that the majority of the foster parents 52 (64.20%) had fostered less than ten children during their time as foster parents.
The remainder of the foster parents had fostered at least ten children, with some foster parents reporting over two hundred children fostered. For the most part though, the foster parents in this sample had very little experience in fostering as judged by the number of children fostered. These figures are also indicative of the number of foster parents with relatively few years of fostering experience.

4.2.4 Length of Time that Foster Child has been In Foster Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENGTH OF TIME</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNKNOWN</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER 1 MONTH</td>
<td>****</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 6.15</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-6 MONTHS</td>
<td>***************</td>
<td>18 23</td>
<td>27.69</td>
<td>35.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 MONTHS</td>
<td>*************</td>
<td>11 34</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>52.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 YEARS</td>
<td>*****</td>
<td>8 42</td>
<td>12.31</td>
<td>64.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 YEARS</td>
<td>***************</td>
<td>14 56</td>
<td>21.54</td>
<td>86.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 YEARS</td>
<td>*****</td>
<td>5 61</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>93.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 YEARS</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>2 63</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>96.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVER 15 YEARS</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>2 65</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREQUENCY 5 10 15
Table 10 shows that of those foster parents with foster children in their homes 22 (33.84%) of the children have been in the foster home for six months or less. Further, 11 (16.92%) of the foster parents indicated that their foster child has been with them for more than six months but less than one year. The remainder of the foster parents 31 (47.69%) with foster children in their home reported periods of more than one year in their home, with some children being with the foster parents for more than fifteen years. These latter figures represent a high number of foster children who have remained in foster care for an excessive period of time. As the literature indicates the longer that a child remains in care the more unlikely that successful family reunion will occur.

4.2.5 Length of Time Since Last Parent-Child Contact

Table 11 shows that 40 (61.54%) of the foster parents with foster children, reported that their foster children had seen their natural parents within the past two months. Further 11 (16.92%) of the foster children had seen their parents between three months and two years ago. The most alarming figure is that 14 (21.53%) of the foster parents reported that their foster children either seldom or never saw their natural parents. This data indicates a high number of foster children who have not seen their natural parents in a long period of time, if at all, since placement, which according to the literature will be detrimental to the goal of natural family reunion.
### TABLE 11

Length of Time Since Last Parent-Child Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELDOM</td>
<td>****</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAST WEEK</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27.69</td>
<td>33.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 WEEKS AGO</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>50.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 MONTHS AGO</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>67.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 MONTHS AGO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9.23</td>
<td>76.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 MONTHS AGO</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 YEARS AGO</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>84.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREQUENCY

4.2.6 Frequency of Parent-Child Contacts

Table 12 shows the frequency of parent-child contact, as reported by the foster parents in this research. Table 12 shows that of the foster parents reporting on this variable, 26 (41.27%) reported that parent-child contact occurred at least every two weeks. Further 9 (14.28%) reported that parent-child contact occurred at least every three months, and 4 (6.34%) reported parent-child contact as occurring at least yearly. Again, there were 24 (28%) of the foster children who either never seen or seldomly seen their natural parents. This again
TABLE 12

Frequency of Parent-Child Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Weekly</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.70</td>
<td>55.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>58.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>60.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-Monthly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>69.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Annually</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>73.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>76.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.81</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 représente a high number of children who are without parental contact, which is a deterrent to their reunion with their natural family.
4.3 ATTITUDINAL DATA

In this section the thirty-five likert type statements, from Section "B" of the questionnaire, along with question number 15 from Section "A" of the questionnaire will be analyzed. The data will be presented in the five relevant areas, detailed in the problem formulation. The five areas are:

1. Foster Parents' Attitudes to Parent-Child Contact.
2. The Role Perception of the Foster Parents.
3. Foster Parents' Understanding of the Goals of Foster Care.
4. Foster Parents' Scores on a Scale of Possessiveness.
5. Foster Parents' Perception of Their Training for Foster Parenthood.

4.3.1 Foster Parents' Attitudes to Parent-Child Contact

Table 13 shows the results of the questions on the questionnaire that are relevant to the area of parent-child contact. The table gives the frequency of responses and their corresponding percentages, for each question, according to the level of agreement or disagreement indicated by the foster parents. Of these questions six had a clear majority (more than 68%) of the responses in one direction or the other (agree or disagree). These were questions 2, 13, 14, 16, 20, and 22. Of these questions all but one of the responses were in the preferred direction, as supported by the literature. Question number 16 was the one exception, and dealt with the restricting of parent-child contact during the first two weeks in foster care. Table 13 shows that 85% of the foster parents who responded, felt that contact should be
**TABLE 13**

Foster Parent Attitudes to Parent-Child Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STR</th>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>SLT AGR</th>
<th>SLT DIS</th>
<th>DIS</th>
<th>STR DIS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A child's own parents have a right to visit their children in the foster home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERC</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.25</td>
<td>13.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. A child's own parents do not need to arrange visits; they may come whenever they want.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>N=80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>61.25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. The foster parents should not allow the child's own parents to visit him if they make him unhappy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>N=78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>20.51</td>
<td>19.23</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. I think that it would be better if my foster children never saw their families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>34</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>N=80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. I think that people like my foster child's parents should not be allowed to see their children while they are in care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>42</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>N=79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>53.17</td>
<td>22.79</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. A child's own parents should not be allowed to have visits with their children until they have had at least two weeks to settle into their new foster home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>28</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>N=80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>36.25</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. A foster child will eventually forget about his own parents if there is no contact between the two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>N=81</th>
<th>4.40</th>
<th>1.59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>39.51</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Contacts between foster children and their own parents, only serves to disrupt the child's life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N=79</th>
<th>3.89</th>
<th>1.37</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>25.32</td>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>31.65</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. It is important for foster children to have frequent contacts with their own parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>38</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>N=79</th>
<th>2.59</th>
<th>1.30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.92</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Natural parents who make unrealistic promises to their children in care should not be allowed to have contact with their children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>N=79</th>
<th>3.20</th>
<th>1.38</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.92</td>
<td>18.99</td>
<td>22.79</td>
<td>24.05</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. Foster parents should encourage a foster child's own parents to visit with him.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>N=80</th>
<th>3.09</th>
<th>1.43</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. A child will adjust better to a foster home if he has continuing contact with his own parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N=79</th>
<th>3.52</th>
<th>1.39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>26.58</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>24.05</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: STR = STRONGLY
SLT = SLIGHTLY
ACR = AGREE
DIS = DISAGREE
restricted during the first two weeks, which is contrary to the recommendations in the literature which emphasizes the importance of contact throughout care and especially during the initial period in care. The maintaining of contact during this initial period in care will help the child's adjustment to foster care as the child will not feel rejected by his natural parents. Question number 35 also addresses this issue and was designed to determine foster parents' understanding of the importance of parent-child contact. The results in Table 13 show that slightly less than half (48.1%) of the foster parents disagreed with the statement that foster children would adjust to a foster home better if the children had continuous contact with their natural parents.

Likewise I feel that it is equally important for natural parents to start off with a positive visiting pattern as soon as possible after their child enters foster care. This is so because the longer that they remain out of contact with the foster child the more difficult it will be for them to start a positive visiting pattern. This immediate visitation by natural parents will also lay to rest any thoughts that the foster parents may have about their new foster child remaining with them on a permanent basis.

The remainder of the questions presented in Table 13 had frequencies relatively evenly split between agree and disagree. These results indicate a lack of consensus in one direction, while also indicating that a great number of foster parents are backing the non-preferred response. In question number one, 45% of the respondents did not agree with parent-child contact occurring in the foster home. It is
this type of attitude that can act as a deterrent to parent-child contact. In his study, Selecting Foster Parents (1963), Wolins found, in a similar question, that less than 10% of the foster parents interviewed disagreed with the statement (p. 20). This research study shows an extremely higher percentage of foster parents that disagree with contact occurring in their home. This is not consistent with what this researcher had expected. The researcher expected that the increased emphasis on parent-child contact in recent years, and the advancements towards a more enlightened foster care era, would have resulted in fewer foster parents disagreeing. This would suggest that foster parents’ attitudes are moving further away from the ideal as opposed to getting closer.

When presented with a further question on parent-child contact, with an added complication, foster parents remained somewhat divided, but with the majority of responses being in the non-preferred direction. Table 13 shows that in question number four, 61.54% of the respondents felt that natural parents should be restricted from visiting their child if they make the child unhappy. This compares to the similar question in Wolins’ (1963) research study, where 69% of the foster parents felt that visiting should be restricted in this circumstance (p. 20). This situation represents a very slight decrease from Wolins’ (1963) research study. The decrease is very minimal and would again suggest that foster parents’ attitudes are not getting any closer to the ideal.

In the same theme of restricting parent-child contact, question number 24, from Table 13, shows that 55.7% of the responding foster parents felt that natural parents should not be allowed to have contact
with their child if they make unrealistic promises to the foster child. In George's (1970) research study a similar question revealed that 37.5% of the foster parents would restrict visits in this type of situation. Again this shows an increase in the negative response rates from George's (1970) research study, and would suggest that foster parents' attitudes are moving further away from the ideal.

When tests of significance were completed on these three related questions, they were all found to be significantly related with the variable Children's Aid Society affiliation. Tables 14, 15, and 16 show the results of these tests of significance.

### TABLE 14

Parent-Child Contact Occurring in Foster Home by CAS Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CAS &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>CAS &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>70.59%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43.48%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>56.52%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHI-SQUARE 5.805, DF = 1, PROB = 0.0160
Table 14 presents the chi-square results for question number one and Children's Aid Society affiliation. The chi-square test results in Table 14 show a chi-square score of 5.805, which is greater than the critical value, for one degree of freedom, of 5.41, and is significant at a .02 probability level. The Table and chi-square results suggest that foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "B" will be more inclined to allow parent-child contact to occur in their foster home, than the foster parents from Children's Aid Society "A".

Table 15 presents the chi-square test results for question number 4 and Children's Aid Society affiliation.

**TABLE 15**

Restrict Parent-Child Contact if Child Unhappy by CAS Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CAS &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>CAS &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGREE</strong></td>
<td>47.06%</td>
<td>72.73%</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESTRICT</strong></td>
<td>7.94%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISAGREE</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |

CHI-SQUARE: 5.339  DF= 1  PROB=0.0209

The chi-square test score of 5.339 is greater than the critical value, for one degree of freedom, of 3.84, and is significant at a .05
probability level. The Table and chi-square results again suggest that foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "B" will be less likely to restrict parent-child contact if the contact makes the child unhappy, than the foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "A".

Table 16 presents the chi-square test for question number 24 and Children's Aid Society affiliation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Restrict Parent-Child Contact if Parents Make Unrealistic Promises by CAS Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>CAS &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>CAS &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCENT</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>55.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESTRICT CONTACT</td>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>44.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHI-SQUARE: 5.100 DF=1 PROB=0.0239

The chi-square score of 5.1 is greater than the critical value, for one degree of freedom, of 3.84, and is significant at a .05 probability level. The Table and chi-square results also suggest that foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "B" will be less likely to restrict parent-child contact if the natural parents make unrealistic
promises to the child, than, the foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "A".

The results of these three questions (numbers 1, 4, 24) suggest that well over half of the foster parents who responded would agree to parent-child contact but would reserve the right to restrict contact, if in their opinion, natural parents do not follow certain rules. This is a direct contradiction to recommendations in the literature that stress the maintaining of parent-child contact, when reunion is the preferred goal, no matter what the circumstances, and that these complications should instead be shared with the natural parents and worked out in a constructive manner, with the social worker.

Question number 21 from Table 13 indicates that almost 40% of the foster parents who responded believed that the only results of parent-child contact was that the child's life was disrupted. This suggests that these foster parents would not likely be in favour of parent-child contacts, which would impede the reunion of the foster child and the natural family. This also indicates that a great number of these foster parents do not realize the benefits gained from the parent-child contacts, nor do they appear to understand the other possible causes of a child's upset after a contact with natural parents.

Finally from Table 13, question number 33 is aimed at determining how far foster parents feel that they should go to facilitate parent-child contact. When asked if they should encourage the natural parents to visit the foster child, 35% indicated that foster parents should not encourage the natural parents to visit the foster child. This indicates that in 35% of the cases the foster parents would not go too far out of their way to facilitate parent-child contacts.
As a summary on this subsection on parent-child contacts it would be best to say that foster parents appear to understand the importance of parent-child contact, although some of their actions may tend to inhibit this parent-child contact. Their understanding is exhibited through their responses to questions such as number 22 in Table 13, to which more than 80% of the foster parents who responded to the question agreed that parent-child contact was important. An example of their actions that would inhibit parent-child contact, can be seen in the questions where a great number of the foster parents chose to restrict parent-child contact, if in their opinion the foster child's natural parents did not follow certain rules. The inhibiting actions of foster parents is also evident in their negative responses to questions asking for their active support and encouragement of these parent-child contacts.

4.3.2 Role Perception of Foster Parents

Table 17 shows that by far the majority of the foster parents, 68.83%, chose a role that resembles that of a parent, either natural or adoptive. This figure is quite high, yet is none the less lower than those figures reported by Wolins and George. Wolins (1963) found that approximately 75% of the foster parents studied chose either a natural parent or adoptive parent role. George's 1970 research study determined that over 90% of the foster parents questioned selected either a natural parent or adoptive parent role. As indicated in the literature review, it is this role that is most in competition with the foster child's natural parents. These foster parents would definitely fall into the
### TABLE 17

Foster Parents' Role Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CUM. PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADOPTIVE PARENT</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38.96</td>
<td>38.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWN PARENT</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29.87</td>
<td>68.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIVE</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24.68</td>
<td>93.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL WORKER</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>94.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAID EMPLOYEE</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>96.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Frequency

exclusively concept of fostering, as described by Holman (1980, pp. 75-76). This role is also the basis of the foster parent role confusion referred to by Wolins (1963, p. 15). Holman (1973) describes this resultant role confusion as follows:

On the one hand ... foster parents develop the attitudes and behavior appropriate to a natural parent. They give great affection, may be determined to keep the child whatever happens, [and] integrate him into the family. On the other hand their actions and attitudes are not compatible with natural parenthood; they take payment for the child, and in many cases, as will be shown, accept even encourage visits from natural parents, which implies the eventual return home of the child. The foster parents are thus trying to act in two conflicting roles, that of a parent and of a foster parent. (p. 79)
This position discussed by Holman is supported in this research, as evidenced by the role selection of the foster parents. The position is also supported in the previous section on Parent-Child Contact, where in table 13, 82.8% of the foster parents agreed that frequent parent-child contact was important. Further, 65% of the foster parents studied indicated that foster parents should encourage a foster child's parents to visit the child.

Table 17 indicates that most of the remainder of the foster parents in the research study 24.68% chose a role resembling that of a relative to the foster child. Table 17 also shows that 1.3% of the foster parents selected the social worker role, and another 1.3% chose the role of the paid employee. The final 3.9% of the foster parents chose the "other" category and indicated that the "other" role was represented by a "loving and caring person".

In Table 18 foster parents were very definite about their role preferences or choices in three of the five questions. In question number 12 foster parents were asked if their role most closely resembled that of a paid employee, and they most adamantly opposed such a role, as 90% disagreed with the statement. Speculation would suggest that the strong opposition to being referred to as paid employees comes from not wanting to be thought of as "in fostering for the money". Question number 19 reveals the area where foster parents feel that their role truly resides, as 82.28% of the foster parents agreed with the statement that likened their role to that of a child's own parent. When offered a role resembling an adoptive parent, 79.01% agreed with the statement. It is interesting to note that one foster parent who chose a
# Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STR</th>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>DIS</th>
<th>STR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of a social worker.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N=80</th>
<th>4.33</th>
<th>1.39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERC</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>21.25</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. **A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of a paid employee of the children's Aid Society.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N=80</th>
<th>5.11</th>
<th>1.20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. **A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of a child's own parent.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N=79</th>
<th>2.48</th>
<th>1.39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. **A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of a relative of the foster child.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N=81</th>
<th>3.60</th>
<th>1.49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. **A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of an adoptive parent.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N=81</th>
<th>2.59</th>
<th>1.22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

NOTE: STR = STRONGLY

AGR = AGREE

DIS = DISAGREE
natural parent role in Table 17 rejected the natural parent role in question number 19 from Table 18. The same situation existed with the adoptive parent role, in Table 17 and question number 32 in Table 18.

The remaining questions in Table 18 show a little more ambivalence to the role choice. In question number 3 foster parents were offered a role resembling that of social worker, and only 66.25% rejected this role. This is interesting when one considers that only one foster parent selected this role in the first part of the questionnaire that was reported in Table 17. Question number 26 from Table 18 shows even more confusion as 53.09% of the foster parents are willing to accept the role of relative to the foster child, whereas only 24.68% originally selected the relative role in Table 17. Further four of the foster parents who chose the relative role in Table 17 disagreed with the relative role in question number 26 in Table 18.

This section on foster parents responses in relation to their role shows a great deal of confusion and some inconsistency by the foster parents. The overwhelming selection of the natural parent role puts most of the foster parents in direct competition with the natural parents. They are also placed into the exclusive model of fostering.

4.3.3 The Goal of Foster Care

This section will look at the questions from the questionnaire that were relevant to the goals of foster care. It should be noted that some of the questions discussed here also form part of the "Scale of Possessiveness", which is discussed in the next section. Those questions that fall into both sections will be analyzed as separate
questions in this section, and as part of the scale of possessiveness in the next section.

The questions in this subsection are presented according to what they were designed to determine, that is either foster parents perceptions of the goal of foster care or foster parents commitment to the goal, which is family reunion.

Table 19 shows the results of the questions related to foster parents understanding of the goal of foster care, which is determined from their answers to the various questions. Seven of the nine questions show that the majority of the foster parents responded in one direction or the other, either agree or disagree. In five of these seven questions the foster parents answered in the direction that would be considered to be the most preferred direction. In the other two questions, the concensus is in the non-preferred direction. Question number 30 indicates that 85% of the foster parents were very definite that natural parents should not be involved in the selecting of foster home for their child. The response in itself is not all that surprising coming from foster parents who desire to protect their privacy and their status. The response becomes interesting when one examines the guidelines from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, presented in their Proposed Standards and Guidelines for Agencies Placing Children (1981), where guideline number FPC-09.3 states that,

The natural parent should be encouraged to participate in and share responsibility for the selection of the foster placement under the supervision of the placement agency and in cooperation with the potential foster parents or other persons who may provide an alternate placement. (p. 47)
TABLE 19

Foster Parents' Understanding of the Goal of Foster Care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STR</th>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>DIS</th>
<th>STR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. A child should feel closer to his foster parents than to his natural parents.

| FREQ | 0 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 36 | 21 | N=78 | 4.76 | 1.18 |
| PERC | 0 | 7.69 | 8.97 | 10.26 | 46.16 | 26.92 | 100% |

6. Some foster parents think of their foster child as being one of their own. Do you?

| FREQ | 23 | 33 | 13 | 1 | 10 | 0 | N=80 | 2.28 | 1.25 |
| PERC | 28.75 | 41.25 | 16.25 | 1.25 | 12.5 | 0 | 100% |

7. I sometimes forget that my foster child is not one of my own.

| FREQ | 16 | 26 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 6 | N=78 | 2.90 | 1.61 |
| PERC | 20.51 | 33.33 | 12.82 | 10.26 | 15.39 | 7.69 | 100% |

8. I would wish to adopt my foster child if that were possible.

| FREQ | 11 | 18 | 12 | 5 | 31 | 0 | N=77 | 3.35 | 1.55 |
| PERC | 14.29 | 23.38 | 15.58 | 6.49 | 40.26 | 0 | 100% |

11. If it is considered in his best interest, I would feel glad for my foster children to return to live with their own families.

| FREQ | 48 | 22 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 2 | N=79 | 1.66 | 1.14 |
| PERC | 60.76 | 27.85 | 5.06 | 0 | 3.8 | 2.53 | 100% |

13. I think that it would be better if my foster children never saw their families.

| FREQ | 4 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 34 | 21 | N=80 | 4.56 | 1.43 |
| PERC | 5 | 8.75 | 6.25 | 11.25 | 42.5 | 26.25 | 100% |

17. The goal of foster care is to reunite a foster child with his own parents.

| FREQ | 30 | 32 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 3 | N=81 | 2.16 | 1.36 |
| PERC | 37.04 | 39.51 | 8.64 | 3.7 | 7.4 | 3.7 | 100% |
29. It is more important for a foster child to become part of my family than to maintain ties with his own family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>19.23</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=78</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. A child's own parents should be involved in the selection of a foster home for their child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>37</th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46.25</td>
<td>33.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=80</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: STR = STRONGLY
AGR = AGREE
SLT = SLIGHTLY
DIS = DISAGREE

This guideline is set out by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, to which both Children's Aid Society "B", and Children's Aid Society "A" are accountable.

The second question from Table 19 that indicates a majority of responses in the non-preferred direction is question number six. This question shows that 86.25% of the foster parents thought of their foster child as being one of their own children. This question was designed to determine how attached the foster parents were to their foster children. This would in turn indicate whether or not foster parents accepted the goal of family reunion. Unfortunately this question could have been interpreted by foster parents as meaning that they "treat" their foster children as their own, which, as Adamson (1973, p. 138) indicated is not the same thing. In order to get an accurate idea of foster parents' attitudes to this question, personal follow-up would be required. Question number six is also related to questions number seven and eight.
Question number 7 asks foster parents whether they sometimes forget that their foster child is not one of their own. Table 19 indicates that 66.67% of the foster parents agreed with this statement. In question number eight 53.25% of the foster parents indicated that they would wish to adopt their foster child if that were possible. Although these figures do not represent a large majority of the foster parents, they do represent a large number of foster parents who, as it might be suggested, are not totally committed to natural family reunion, especially if they wish to keep their foster child as one of their own. The interesting fact about these responses is that it suggests a lack of commitment by foster parents to the goal of family reunion, although 85.19% agree with question number 17 in Table 19, which states that family reunion is the goal of foster care.

Table 20 lists the questions from the questionnaire that were designed to determine the foster parents commitment to the goal of family reunion, and to see exactly what foster parents believed they should be prepared to do to fulfill this goal. Table 20 shows that in two of the questions a majority of the foster parents responded in one direction. Question number 31 from Table 20 shows that 69.23% of the foster parents would not refuse to listen to the problems of a natural parent. On another issue involving natural parents, 91.25% of the foster parents in question number 18, did not believe that they should ever initiate contact with the natural parents.

The remainder of the questions in Table 20 show a lack of concensus in one direction by the foster parents. Question number 23 from Table 20 revealed that 67.5% of the foster parents agreed that it was
TABLE 20
Foster Parents’ Commitment to the Goal of Foster Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STR</th>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>DIS</th>
<th>STR</th>
<th>DIS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. I think that the less that I have to do with my foster child’s parents, the better.

FREQ
8
13
11
17
20
11

PERC
10
16.25
13.75
21.25
25
13.75
100%

18. Foster parents should not initiate contacts with a foster child’s own parents.

FREQ
25
40
8
2
5
0

PERC
31.25
50
10
2.5
6.25
0
100%

23. It is important for foster parents to have a good relationship with a foster child’s own parents.

FREQ
9
30
15
5
15
6

PERC
11.25
37.5
18.75
6.25
18.75
7.5
100%

28. I would feel comfortable having my foster child’s own parents spend a day in my home.

FREQ
2
17
16
7
27
10

PERC
2.53
21.52
20.25
8.86
34.18
12.66
100%

31. Foster parents should refuse to listen to the problems of a foster child’s own parents.

FREQ
4
12
8
8
27
19

PERC
5.13
15.39
10.25
10.25
34.62
24.36
100%

33. Foster parents should encourage a foster child’s own parents to visit with him.

FREQ
9
25
18
10
14
4

PERC
11.25
31.25
22.5
12.5
17.5
5
100%
34. It is important for me to keep a foster child's own parents informed of the child's progress while he is in my home.

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N=78</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>30.77</td>
<td>19.23</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>30.77</td>
<td>12.82</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: STR = STRONGLY  SLT = SLIGHTLY
       AGR = AGREE         DIS = DISAGREE

important for them to have a good relationship with natural parents.

What these results indicate is that some 17% of the foster parents who agreed that the goal of foster care was family reunion, might suggest that this reunion can occur without the existence of a good foster parent-natural parent relationship.

A test of significance was completed on a table of question number 23 and Children’s Aid Society affiliation. The results are presented in Table 21.

The chi-square score of 5.946 is greater than the critical value, for one degree of freedom, of 5.41 and is significant at a .02 probability level. The Table and chi-square results suggest that foster parents affiliated with Children’s Aid Society "B", will likely place more importance on the foster parent-natural parent relationship, than foster parents from Children’s Aid Society "A". Along the same topic is question number 33 from Table 20, where 35% of the foster parents indicated that they should not encourage natural parents to visit their children.

Forty percent of the foster parents in question number 15 felt that the less that they had to do with the foster child’s natural parents, the better. A test of significance was completed for question number 15
TABLE 21

Importance of the Foster Parent-Natural Parent Relationship by CAS Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>CAS</th>
<th>&quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>82.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPORTANT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHI-SQUARE 5.946 DF= 1 PROB=0.0147

and Children's Aid Society affiliation. The results are presented in Table 22.

The chi-square score of 4.51 is greater than the critical value, for one degree of freedom, of 3.84, and is significant at a .05 probability level. The table and chi-square results suggest that foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "B" will likely be more inclined to want to have "more to do" with natural parents, than foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "A".

Question number 28 from Table 20 shows that 55.7% of the foster parents would not feel comfortable having a foster child's parents spend a day in the foster home. A test of significance was completed on a table of question number 28 and Children's Aid Society affiliation. The results are presented in Table 23.
TABLE 22
Foster Parents Wanting "Less To Do" With Natural Parents by CAS Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CAS &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>CAS &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WANT &quot;LESS&quot; TO DO&quot; WITH PARENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.47%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.53%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHI-SQUARE 4.510 DF= 1 PROB=0.0337

TABLE 23
Foster Parents Allowing Natural Parents to Spend Day in Foster Home by CAS Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>CAS &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>CAS &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALLOW PARENTS TO SPEND DAY IN FOSTER HOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58.82%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>44.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>55.70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHI-SQUARE 5.100 DF= 1 PROB=0.0239

The chi-square score of 5.1 is greater than the critical value, for one
degree of freedom, of 3.84, and is significant at a .02 probability level. The results of the Table and chi-square test suggest that foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "B", would be more likely to agree to having natural parents spend a day in the foster home with the foster child, than foster parents affiliated with Children's Aid Society "A". The purpose of having natural parents spend a day in a foster home would be to create a role model situation where the natural parent could observe the foster parent in an approved parental role with the foster child.

Finally from Table 20 question number 34 reveals that 47.44% of the foster parents did not think that they should keep a foster child's parents informed of the child's progress in the foster home.

What the results from this section on the goal of foster care suggest is that although foster parents appear to understand that the goal of foster care is family reunion, they may be not totally committed to this goal. This lack of commitment is suggested by the large numbers of foster parents who did not feel that their roles extended past the day to day care of the foster child.

4.3.4 Scale of Possessiveness

The questions in Table 24 formed the "Scale of Possessiveness", that was adapted from Adamson (1973). Each respondent was given a score for their answer to each of the nine questions as indicated in Table 24. The scale was then totalled for each respondent and then divided by the number of questions on the scale, which was nine. This meant that a respondent could score as low as one and as high as six, leaving a range
### TABLE 24

Questions on The Scale of Possessiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STR</th>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>DIS</th>
<th>STR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Some foster parents think of their foster child as being one of their own. Do you?

- **FREQ**: 23
- **PERC**: 28.75

7. I sometimes forget that my foster child is not one of my own.

- **FREQ**: 16
- **PERC**: 20.51

8. I would wish to adopt my foster child if that were possible.

- **FREQ**: 11
- **PERC**: 14.29

9. If I were no longer able to have my foster child, I would apply for another child.

- **FREQ**: 32
- **PERC**: 40.5

10. No other child could replace my foster child.

- **FREQ**: 10
- **PERC**: 12.99

11. If it is considered in his best interest, I would feel glad for my foster children to return to live with their own families.

- **FREQ**: 48
- **PERC**: 60.76

13. I think that it would be better if my foster children never saw their families.

- **FREQ**: 4
- **PERC**: 5
14. I think that people like my foster child's parents should not be allowed to see their children while they are in care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N=79</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. I think that the less that I have to do with my foster child's parents, the better.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N=80</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.25</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>21.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: STR = STRONGLY
SLT = SLIGHTLY
AGR = AGREE
DIS = DISAGREE

*Scoring for negative statements 9 and 11 was reflected (reversed) for comparison across items.

of five. The respondents scores were then categorized into the categories shown in Figure 1, according to their final score.

1.00 - 2.25 Very Possessive
2.26 - 3.5 Possessive
3.51 - 4.75 Not so Possessive
4.76 - 6.00 Very Non-Possessive

Figure 1: Categories for Scale of Possessiveness Scores

Any respondents who did not answer all nine scale questions were excluded from the scale. This meant that a total of seventy-one, out of a possible eighty-one foster parents were included in the scale. Table 25 shows the results of the scale.
### TABLE 25

**Scale of Possessiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSESSIVENESS</th>
<th>FREQ</th>
<th>CUM. FREQ</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERY POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>★★★★★★</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>★★★★★★★★★</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY NON-POSESSIVE</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FREQUENCY**

Of the seventy-one foster parents on the scale 21 (29.58%) were within the possessive region of the scale, while 50 (70.42%) were in the non-possessive range.

It was felt that a possessive attitude could be found to correlate significantly with a number of sociological characteristics, such as age of the foster parent, level of education, income level, etc. As it turned out none of these sociological variables nor any other variables were found to be significant.

#### 4.3.5 Foster Parent’s Perception of Their Training for Foster Parenthood

Although most of the questions on the questionnaire have some relevance to the training that foster parents have received, only two of the questions were directed specifically towards the foster parents'
attitudes towards their training. These two questions are presented in Table 26.

### TABLE 26

Foster Parent’s Perception of Their Training for Foster Parenthood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STR</th>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>SLT</th>
<th>DIS</th>
<th>STR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STD DEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>DIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. My training for foster parenthood adequately prepared me to deal with a child’s visits with his own parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>37.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=75</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. When I first became a foster parent I fully expected to have contact with my foster child’s own parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=81</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: STR = STRONGLY  SLT = SLIGHTLY
AGR = AGREE          DIS = DISAGREE

Table 26 shows that 65.33% of the foster parents who responded to question number 25, felt that their training adequately prepared them for parent-child contacts. It is interesting to note that six of the foster parents, for reasons unknown to the researcher chose not to answer this question, which represents the highest frequency of non-response of all the thirty-five questions in the questionnaire.
The second question in this section that is related to the training of foster parents, indicated that just over half (50.62%) of the foster parents had expected to have contact with the foster child's natural parents, when they first became foster parents.

4.4 LIMITATIONS

This study contained limitations, some of which were discussed in the sections where they occurred. The limitations that are of note, are as follows:

1. There were no means to control against one foster parent answering two questionnaires, one for themselves, and one for their spouse.

2. Although foster parents were requested to complete the questionnaires on their own, there was no means of preventing collusion between foster parents.

3. Questions in the questionnaire could have been interpreted in ways different than originally intended. Specifically question number six could have been misinterpreted. (See Appendix "C")

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the analysis of the data, according to the sections outlined in the problem formulation, and was presented in the same order as it appeared in the questionnaire. The numerical data has been analyzed in relation to the characteristics of the respondents and their respective scoring on the attitude scales. The data has been summarized giving frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and tests of significance.
Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary and conclusions of the research study. The main aim of this research study was to determine foster parents' attitudes towards the five areas of concern, which were:

1. Foster parents' attitudes to parent-child contact.
2. The role perception of foster parents.
3. Foster parents' understanding of the goals of foster care.
4. Foster parents' scoring on a scale of possessiveness.
5. Foster parents' perception of their training for foster parenthood.

Recommendations from the research study are also an important part of this chapter. Recommendations pertain to actions that can be taken by the foster care agencies, to better prepare foster parents to fulfill their roles as foster parents, and to help facilitate the reunion of foster children with their natural families, there were also recommendations for areas of future research.
5.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 Characteristics of Respondents

This research study had a sample group of eighty-one foster parents. The sample group represented a response rate of 50.63% from the original one hundred and sixty questionnaires mailed to foster parents.

Of the sample group 42 respondents were female and 39 were male. The age ranged from 24 years to 80 years of age. The respondents were of an average educational background with the majority (58.97%) having a secondary school level of education. The majority of the respondents (58.02%) had average family incomes of less than $25,000 a year. The sample group consisted of 47 foster parents from Children's Aid Society "A" and 34 were from Children's Aid Society "B".

5.1.2 Experiential Data of Respondents

The majority of the respondents (53.09%) had been fostering for less than four years time. The majority (92.59%) of the foster parents had reported having between one and four of their own children while 24.69% of the foster parents reported having no children presently living at home. The results indicated that 64.2% of the foster parents had fostered less than ten foster children in their fostering career. Almost half (47.69%) of the foster parents indicated that their present foster child had been living with them for over one year. The majority (55.39%) of these foster children had not seen their natural parents in the past month, while 53.97% of the foster children did not see their natural parents as frequently as every two months.
5.1.3 Attitudinal Data

There were five main areas of concern with regards to foster parents' attitudes. The analysis of the data revealed a description of these attitudes towards the five areas of concern.

5.1.3.1 Parent-Child Contact

As outlined in the review of literature, parent-child contact is essential if family reunion is going to occur successfully. The frequency of parent-child contact, is also important to the attainment of this goal. Many research studies have revealed a very low frequency of parent-child contact, as has this study. The literature has suggested a number of reasons why the frequency of parent-child contact is low. The one proposed reason for the low frequency of parent-child contact that is relevant to this research, is that foster parents attitudes to natural parents, and parent-child contact can either inhibit or facilitate this contact.

In this research study foster parents attitudes indicated that they have an adequate understanding of the importance of contact, but that their actions in certain situations suggest that they would tend to inhibit parent-child contact. The respondents indicated that frequent parent-child contact was important. Despite this the foster parents responses suggest that a great number of them (45%) believe that natural parents do not have a right to visit their children in their foster homes. It should be remembered that the foster home becomes an integral part of the foster child's life during their stay in care, and it is therefore important for natural parents to be able to share this new
home environment with their child. Likewise it is important for foster children to see that their natural parents are approving of this new home for their child, and that they also have accepted the foster parents as new people in their lives. This will allow the child to freely adjust to his new home environment, without feeling compelled to choose between the two sets of parents.

The foster parents' responses in this study also suggest a tendency to restrict parent-child contact, if in their opinion, natural parents do not follow the rules. This was apparent in three situations where the majority of the respondents chose to restrict parent-child contact. These three situations were:

1. During the foster child's first two weeks in the foster home.
2. If the foster child's natural parents make the child unhappy.
3. If the foster child's natural parents make unrealistic promises to the child.

The most important factor to be considered in all three of these situations, is that parent-child contact should be maintained if at all possible. In the first situation presented here, the idea that a foster child needs two weeks to settle into and adjust to a new foster home, is no longer accepted by foster care agencies and authorities. Instead this is seen as a crucial time period to initiate a good parent-child relationship. By curtailing or breaking this contact during the first two weeks in a foster home, we are not only disturbing the parent-child relationship, but we are also placing greater emphasis on the foster parent-child relationship rather than the natural parent-child relationship. The maintaining of parent-child contact also serves to
allay any fears of abandonment that the child may have. It also provides the opportunity for the natural parents to give permission to their child to have a positive relationship with the foster family.

In the second and third situations, the foster parents chose to restrict parent-child contact because the natural parents made the child unhappy, and they made unrealistic promises to the foster child. These are natural punitive reactions by the foster parents, but these reactions will not make the child happy, nor will they stop the natural parents from making unrealistic promises to the child. Instead it is imperative that the parent-child contact be maintained. If the foster child is unhappy it is the social work task to find out why the child is distressed and help the child work through the problems. In all likelihood the unhappiness witnessed by the foster parents is the result of the foster child’s not being able to leave the foster home with the natural parents. When a child that shows signs of distress at the separation from natural parents then there is more likelihood that a parent-child relationship is already in existence. To remove the parent-child contact will only serve to make the foster child more distressed and increase the distance that already exists between parent and child.

If the natural parent makes unrealistic promises to the foster child, the social work task is to remedy the situation by trying to find out from the natural parents why they make the unrealistic promises, and to explain to the natural parents the problems that occur when they do this. It is imperative for foster parents to understand the basis for these promises. In most instances natural parents are feeling
inadequate as parents to their children for not providing a proper home environment. As their guilt builds they feel a need to give some hope and security to the child. The easiest means available to them is to tell the child that they will get a new house or job, so as to provide for the children. The natural parent does not usually think of the future consequences of these promises when they remain unfulfilled, but instead only think of the immediate gratification they have given to their children and received back from the child's happiness shown in response to the promise.

5.1.3.2 Roles

The review of literature on roles indicated that the role assumed by foster parents will have a bearing on their attitudes and actions towards parent-child contact and the goal of family reunion. Previous research studies have found that when given a choice of roles that resemble a foster parents' role, foster parents most frequently choose a parental role, either natural or adoptive. This was also the case in this research study, where the majority (68.83%) of the foster parents chose one of these two roles. By assuming a role resembling the natural parent, foster parents are placing themselves in direct competition with natural parents. When foster parents and natural parents are in competition for the same role, it is unlikely that they will be able to work together towards increasing natural parent-child contact and accomplishing family reunion. Foster parents assuming a parental role also place themselves into the exclusive model of foster care, as
described by Holman (1973). According to the exclusive model, foster parents will try to contain the foster child within the foster family, while restricting other relationships for the child. This need of foster parents to keep the foster child to themselves only serves to forestall family reunion.

In the second portion of the questionnaire, foster parents consistently agreed that their role resembled that of an adoptive or natural parent. The foster parents also strongly rejected a role resembling that of a paid employee of the Children's Aid Society. When it came to choosing a role resembling a social worker there appeared to be some confusion as one third of the foster parents accepted this role, whereas in the previous section of the questionnaire only one foster parent chose this role. This lack of consistency about roles, or the strong rejection of the most preferred role by the foster parents, would suggest that the role assigned to foster parents by placement agencies, that of "colleagues" whose role "goes beyond the traditional one that identifies the foster parent as playing solely the role of a substitute parent" (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 17), has not been effectively communicated to foster parents. The role confusion can also be seen when one considers the fact that foster parents see themselves in a parental role even though they accept board payments for the foster child, and they accept and even encourage visitations between natural parents and foster children, which is contrary to the true parental role. Foster parents choosing a parental role are trying to act in two conflicting roles (Holman, 1973, p. 79).
5.1.3.3 Goal of Foster Care

As indicated in the review of literature, the general aim of foster care is to reunite the foster child with the natural family, except in those cases where the child has been surrendered for adoption. In this research study, the foster parents indicated a clear understanding of the goal of foster care as 85.19% agreed that family reunion was the goal of foster care. Despite the large number of foster parents acknowledging this goal, two-thirds of the foster parents stated that they sometimes forgot that the foster child was not their own, while more than half of the foster parents would wish to adopt the foster child. By holding these views about their foster children, these foster parents are suggesting a lack of total commitment to the goal of family reunion.

The second portion of the research study which looked at the goals of foster care, dealt with foster parents' commitment to the goal of family reunion, or was an attempt to determine exactly what foster parents are prepared to do towards fulfilling this goal. The foster parents agreed that they should listen to the problems of the natural parents. They also agreed that they should have a good relationship with natural parents. Despite their agreement to these aspects, over 90% indicated that they should not initiate any contact with natural parents. Over one-third of the foster parents indicated that they should not encourage parent-child contact, while the same percent indicated that the less they had to do with natural parents, the better. Further, almost one-half indicated that they should not inform a foster child's natural parents of the child's progress. Lastly, over one-half of the foster parents would not agree to having a natural parent spend the day in their foster home.
What these attitudes reveal is that although foster parents understand that the goal of foster care is the reunion of the natural family, the majority of the responses suggest a reluctance to actively facilitate and support this goal. Instead the attitudes suggest behaviour that would not only compete with natural parents but would inhibit natural parents from maintaining contact with their child in foster care. This does not necessarily entail that foster parents knowingly implement policies of "no help" and "no visitations" and "no cooperation" for natural parents. What it suggests is that they can simply place unattainable demands on natural parents, make natural parents feel unwelcome, by criticizing natural parents directly or indirectly, along with many other indiscreet and sometimes unintentional tactics, all with the same outcome. To disillusion and frighten off natural parents, who will be reluctant to visit their children in care, with the end result being too many foster children remaining in care unnecessarily.

5.1.3.4 Scale of Possessiveness

The scale of possessiveness was designed by Adamson (1973) and was adapted for use in this research study. The purpose of the scale was to determine how possessive a particular foster parent was towards a foster child, based on the foster parents' answers to the questions on the scale. In this research study almost 30% of the foster parents were found to be possessive, which compares to 43% found by Adamson (1973, p.190). It was originally thought that a possessive attitude could be found to correlate significantly with a number of sociological
variables. As it turned out there was absolutely no significant correlations to be found with possessiveness.

5.1.3.5 Training

The section on training was intended to determine how foster parents perceived their training for foster parenthood and in particular parent-child contact. The results showed that almost two thirds of the respondents felt that their training adequately prepared them for parent-child contact, while just over half of the foster parents had expected to have contact with natural parents when they first became foster parents. These results represent a relatively good rate of foster parent preparation, if the foster parents' self appraisal is to be accepted as a fair means of assessment.

5.1.4 Summary of Questionnaire Data

Before we can properly review the results of this research, we must first review the original purpose for conducting the research study. It is assumed that foster parents can influence, either positively or negatively, parent-child contact, through their attitudes to this contact. This research study was therefore undertaken with the intention of determining foster parents' attitudes towards the area of parent-child contact, with the specific goal of natural family reunion in mind.

The overall results showed that the majority of the foster parents believe that parent-child contact is important, although their attitudes to other areas directly related to parent-child contact suggest the
absence of a clear understanding or commitment to this contact. This lack of understanding is evident in the following areas:

1. The restricting of parent-child contact for unwarranted reasons.

2. The selection by foster parents, of a natural parent role as the role which most resembles a foster parent role. This role selection puts the foster parent in direct competition with the natural parent.

3. The desire expressed by foster parents to keep their foster child as one of their own children i.e. through adoption.

4. By the suggested lack of willingness to assist or encourage parent-child contact by foster parents, obvious through the desire to maintain a substitute parent role.

Suggestions will be offered in the next section, as to how these situations may be remedied.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The final segment of this research report will deal with recommendations. These recommendations are aimed at increasing the amount of parent-child contact, with the ultimate aim being to increase the number of family reunions which would mean fewer children remaining in foster care for unnecessary and extended periods of time. Some of these recommendations can be achieved through direct social work intervention, while other recommendations are designed for areas of future research, all arising from the findings of this study.

The following recommendations are based on the assumption that all foster care participants must actively work towards increasing parent-
child contact. This does not refer strictly to foster parents, but is equally important for natural parents, social workers and foster children where possible.

1. The training programs for foster parents must place more emphasis on the short term nature of foster care and the general goal of foster care, which is family reunion. Given the lack of consistency between the goals and the attitudes expressed in this study it is important to review with present and prospective foster parents, their understanding of what the goal of foster care is and to add clarification where necessary.

2. The training and orientation programs of foster parents must include substantial reference to the importance of parent-child contact, if family reunion is expected to be accomplished. Foster parents need to be aware of the behaviours, attitudes and emotions that may be anticipated from a natural parent whose child is being fostered.

3. The training of foster parents must include the role they are to play in the foster care program. Foster parents should be informed that they are considered colleagues in the foster care system and are not simply substitute parents.

4. This study and other studies have revealed confusion in foster parents as to what exactly is their role. This confusion is understandable when one considers that we are in fact telling foster parents two different things. On the one hand we suggest that they are colleagues in the foster care system, and we tell them not to act in a parental role that would compete with
natural parents. On the other hand we tell them to be a parent to a foster child and even more confusing we call them "foster parents". Therefore it is recommended that if the focus of foster care is going to include some added dimensions then the name of the program should be changed to something that focuses less upon the parenting aspect.

5. The "Scale of Possessiveness" was not found to be appropriate for this research. Possessiveness cannot necessarily be considered to be a negative indicator but can sometimes be positive for some foster families. The scale is designed to determine attachment and possession, which are two distinctly different variables. Therefore it is recommended that the scale be adapted for use in future research studies.

6. Further research should be conducted to look at some of the other areas related to parent-child contact. The more obvious areas are:

a) The reluctance of natural parents to maintain contact with their children in care and why this situation exists.

b) What role should social workers play in the encouragement and support of parent-child contact?

c) What role does the foster care agency play in the encouragement and support of parent-child contact?

d) A research study should be conducted to look at both sides of the contact issue. That is to look at foster parents attitudes, as in this research, but with the added dimension of natural parents and their attitudes to foster parents and
reasons for low frequency of contact. The two sides could then be correlated to see if there was any significant correlation between foster parents and natural parents, who are associated with the same foster child.

e) A research study should be conducted, over an extended period of time, to determine what relationship, if any, exists between foster parents' attitudes to parent-child contact and the foster child's resulting life. That is whether the children remain in some form of alternative care, or if the children return to live with their own families.

7. Research also needs to be conducted to determine why foster children frequently remain in foster care for extended periods of time. Some areas that could be researched are as follows.

a) Are children remaining in care because of inaccurate original diagnostic assessments?

b) Are natural parents being provided sufficient help or are they the lowest priority in the foster care program?

c) Are the expectations of the social workers appropriate for the families that are being referred for help?

d) Are societies expectations for these families appropriate?

e) What are the needs of the foster families?

f) What are the foster family's needs in regards to funds from the fostering program?

The ultimate aim of this study is to significantly decrease the number of children who remain in foster care for lengthy periods. It is therefore important for all foster care participants to be aware of the
beneficial as well as the detrimental effects of each participants
actions. If all participants strive to attain natural family reunion
then this ultimate aim can be accomplished.
Appendix A

COVERING LETTERS FROM THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES
Appendix B

INSTRUCTION LETTER
Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE
QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

1. AGE: __________

2. SEX: Male _____
   Female _____

3. EDUCATION: Elementary School _____
   High School _____
   College _____
   University _____
   Other: (Specify) __________________________

4. COMBINED FAMILY INCOME: Less than $10,000 _____
   10,000-14,000 _____
   15,000-19,000 _____
   20,000-24,000 _____
   25,000-29,000 _____
   30,000-34,000 _____
   35,000-39,000 _____
   40,000-44,000 _____
   45,000-49,000 _____
   50,000 and over _____

5. MARITAL STATUS: Single (never married) _____
   Married _____
   Common Law _____
   Separated _____
   Divorced _____
   Widowed _____

6. OCCUPATION: ____________________________________________

7. CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY ASSOCIATED WITH:
   Essex County CAS _____
   Roman Catholic CAS _____

8. How long have you been a foster parent? __________

9. How many of your own children do you have? __________

10. How many still live with you? ________________________
11. How many children have you fostered? ___________

12. How long have your present foster children been with you?
   Child 1: ___________
   Child 2: ___________
   Child 3: ___________

13. When did your foster children last see their natural parents?
   Child 1: ___________
   Child 2: ___________
   Child 3: ___________

14. How often do your foster children see their natural parents?
   Child 1: ___________
   Child 2: ___________
   Child 3: ___________

15. Which of the following is a foster parent most like:
   1. Foster child's own parent ___________
   2. A paid employee ___________
   3. A relative to the foster child ___________
   4. A social worker ___________
   5. An adoptive parent ___________
   6. Someone else (who?) ___________

SECTION B

Instructions

Please respond to the following statements by circling the response that most closely resembles your feelings.

1. A child's own parents have a right to visit their children in the foster home.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

2. A child's own parents do not need to arrange visits; they may come whenever they want.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

3. A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of a social worker.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
4. The foster parents should not allow the child's own parents to visit him if they make him unhappy.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

5. A child should feel closer to his foster parents than to his natural parents.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

6. Some foster parents think of their foster child as being one of their own. Do you?

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

7. I sometimes forget that my foster child is not one of my own.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

8. I would wish to adopt my foster child if that were possible.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

9. If I were no longer able to have my foster child, I would apply for another child.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

10. No other child could replace my foster child.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

11. If it is considered in his best interest, I would feel glad for my foster children to return to live with their own families.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree

12. A foster parents role most closely resembles that of a paid employee of the children's Aid Society.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Strongly Disagree
Agree    Agree    Disagree    Disagree
13. I think that it would be better if my foster children never saw their families.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

14. I think that people like my foster child's parents should not be allowed to see their children while they are in care.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

15. I think that the less that I have to do with my foster child's parents, the better.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

16. A child's own parents should not be allowed to have visits with their children until they have had at least two weeks to settle into their new foster home.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

17. The goal of foster care is to reunite a foster child with his own parents.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

18. Foster parents should not initiate contacts with a foster child's own parents.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

19. A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of a child's own parent.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

20. A foster child will eventually forget about his own parents if there is no contact between the two.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

21. Contacts between foster children and their own parents, only serves to disrupt the child's life.

Strongly Agree  
Slightly Agree  
Slightly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
22. It is important for foster children to have frequent contacts with their own parents.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

23. It is important for foster parents to have a good relationship with a foster child's own parents.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

24. Natural parents who make unrealistic promises to their children in care should not be allowed to have contact with their children.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

25. My training for foster parenthood adequately prepared me to deal with a child's visits with his own parents.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

26. A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of a relative of the foster child.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

27. When I first became a foster parent I fully expected to have contact with my foster child's own parents.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

28. I would feel comfortable having my foster child's own parents spend a day in my home.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree

29. It is more important for a foster child to become part of my family than to maintain ties with his own family.

Strongly Agree Slightly Slightly Disagree Strongly Agree Disagree
30. A child's own parents should be involved in the selection of a foster home for their child.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

31. Foster parents should refuse to listen to the problems of a foster child's own parents.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

32. A foster parent's role most closely resembles that of an adoptive parent.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

33. Foster parents should encourage a foster child's own parents to visit with him.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

34. It is important for me to keep a foster child's own parents informed of the child's progress while he is in my home.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

35. A child will adjust better to a foster home if he has continuing contact with his own parents.

   Strongly Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

If you would like to elaborate on any of your answers to the above questions, or make any comments, please do so here:
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Jenkins, R. Long Term Fostering, Case Conference, 1969, 15, 349-353.


VITA AUCTORIS

Donald Kevin Butler was born in Sarnia, Ontario on December 28, 1955. He attended Devine Street Public School and Northern Collegiate Institute and Vocational School in Sarnia. Upon graduation from high school in 1974, he enrolled at the University of Windsor, in the General Arts program. On May 1, 1976 he married Joanne Deschenes. In the summer of 1976 he completed a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in History and was then enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work program at the University of Windsor. In the Spring of 1978 he completed his Bachelor of Social Work and then commenced employment with the Department of Social Services and Community Health for the Government of Alberta. In August 1981 he returned to Windsor on an educational leave, to take the Masters of Social Work program at the University of Windsor. He is still employed by the Government of Alberta and will return to Fort McMurray, Alberta to assume duties as a foster care worker. He expects to graduate in October, 1982.