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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the Sesame Mother Pilot Project was to increase the effectiveness of the television program with preschool children in densely populated, low-income, inner-city areas. Volunteer Mothers selected from the inner-city areas of Los Angeles and Chicago were trained to conduct viewing sessions in their own homes. Following the viewing of each program, the Sesame Mother directed activities to reinforce specific aspects of the program and relate the program to the children's experiences. Effectiveness tests (including cognitive and attitudinal measures) indicated that in most cases the Sesame Mother program improved children's skills and that more child involvement resulted in more improvement. Preschoolers for the project, recruited by each mother in her own neighborhood, were between 3 and 5 years old with little or no previous school experience. Parents' own evaluations showed that most parents thought the Sesame Mother program increased their children's learning skills as well as their attitudes. (Author/NK)

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THE SESAME MOTHER PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

by

**Robert T. Filep, Gary R. Millar, and
Pearl T. Gillette**

AUGUST 27, 1971

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ABSTRACT

SESAME MOTHER PILOT PROJECT

The main objective of the Sesame Mother Pilot Project was to increase the effectiveness of the television program Sesame Street with preschool children in densely populated, low-income, inner-city areas. Volunteer Mothers selected from the inner-city areas of Los Angeles and Chicago were trained to conduct viewing sessions in their own homes. Active participation was sought of children recruited to attend the sessions from the mothers' own neighborhoods. Following the viewing of each program, the Sesame Mother directed activities to reinforce specific aspects of the program and relate the program to the children's experiences. Effectiveness tests included cognitive and attitudinal measures.

Project sites selected were determined by surveys in Los Angeles and Chicago which identified the Watts/South Central and East Los Angeles sections of Los Angeles, and the Grand Boulevard section of Chicago.

Preschoolers for the project, recruited by each mother in her own neighborhood, were between three and five years old with little or no previous school experience. In the Watts/South Central area the largest percentage of the children was black. In East Los Angeles all the children were Mexican-American. In Chicago all the children were black. The total enrollment was more than 400, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls.

More than 120 parents from these areas were trained. Mothers for the project were mainly recruited by door-to-door surveys in each city. In Watts/South

Central Los Angeles and Chicago most of the mothers were black. In East Los Angeles all the mothers were Mexican-American. In Los Angeles the mothers were between 18 and 30 years old; in Chicago they were about 40. The average Sesame Mother in Los Angeles had 11 years of formal schooling; in Chicago she had 12 years.

Target site selection was aimed at low-income families. An annual family income of less than \$4,000 was reported by 45% of the mothers in Los Angeles and by 56% in Chicago. In Los Angeles the average Sesame Mother had three children in her family under 12 years. In Chicago the average mother had two children, but they were older--6 to 18 years.

Cognitive aspects were assessed by pre- and post-testing children with an instrument developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in conjunction with the Children's Television Workshop (CTW). Additional objectives were assessed using forms developed by the project staff. These forms included the "Child's Attitude Record" and the "Evaluation of Viewing Group." Each mother's performance was monitored by project staff.

Results showed that in most cases the Sesame Mother program improved each child's skills learned through viewing Sesame Street, and that more involvement resulted in more improvement. Pre- and post-analysis of the "Child's Attitude Record" showed improvement in about 90% of the items. The parent's own evaluations, as measured by the "Evaluation of Viewing Group", showed that most parents thought the Sesame Mother program increased their children's learning skills as well as their attitudes.

Other products of the Sesame Mother Pilot Project included A Survey of Two Cities: Viewing Patterns in Inner City Los Angeles and Chicago, Sesame Street Viewing Volunteers Guide (English and Spanish Versions), and Sesame Street Viewing Volunteers Training Manual.

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A popular daily television series, Sesame Street has been revolutionizing preschool education. Its effect has been felt at all economic levels and in every segment of American society. The show is based on the premise that learning from *formal* education is increased by *preschool* education, something that is too often missing in the lives of inner-city youngsters. Producers of the show believe television is a powerful tool for reaching these children, and gives them a reasonable chance to prepare for formal schooling. But shortly after the series began, questions were raised. How well was Sesame Street received by inner-city audiences? Were the children really watching it? Even more important, were they benefiting from it? Could the program's impact be enhanced?

In an attempt to answer some of these questions, the Children's Television Workshop, producers of Sesame Street, asked the Institute for Educational Development (IED) to study the viewing habits of children in Los Angeles and Chicago.

Three inner-city communities were surveyed by personnel recruited from the communities being studied. The survey by IED, a national educational research and development organization, covered a number of selected inner-city communities. The survey showed that in inner-city poverty areas a large number of children do watch Sesame Street. But it was found that in areas such as Los Angeles, where the show is seen only on UHF, many people do not have sets receiving UHF in their homes.

The survey indicated that the Watts/South Central and East Los Angeles areas of Los Angeles and the Grand Boulevard section of Chicago could provide excellent target areas for a pilot study. More than 120 parents from inner-city areas of the two cities were trained to conduct a series of viewing sessions in their own homes, working with their own children as well as children of neighbors and friends. The pilot Sesame Mother Project in both cities was begun in the fall of 1970, coinciding with the beginning of the second year of the Sesame Street broadcasts. After a five-week field-test, the project was evaluated and revised, then continued for another 16 weeks.

This report provides basic information on the selection of target sites, scheduling, recruiting, and training of volunteers. It also profiles Sesame Mothers and children in the program, and the evaluative procedures and results of the study. The Appendix contains all the instruments used in the study and the detailed data obtained. Two additional documents were developed during the pilot endeavor: (a) a manual to guide those conducting a viewing volunteer activity such as the Sesame Mother Project,¹ and (b) a manual for those conducting home viewing groups.² These guides give detailed information about developing and conducting the project.

¹Filep, R., Gillette, P., and Boyarsky, N., Sesame Street Viewing Volunteer Training Manual, El Segundo, California, Institute for Educational Development, 1971.

²Filep and Others, Sesame Street Viewing Volunteer Guide, (English and Spanish, El Segundo, California, Institute for Educational Development, 1971.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the Sesame Mother Pilot Project was to enhance, localize, and increase the impact of Sesame Street in highly populated, inner-city areas. Through this project, over 400 preschoolers who might not otherwise have had the opportunity, were able to view the program and participate in learning activities before, during, and after the television show. The specific objectives of the project were:

- To define procedures for recruiting Sesame Mother volunteers and preschoolers, and involving them in the pilot project.
- To develop techniques to train and observe mothers in their homes while they interacted with children.
- To implement a procedure for training volunteers and evaluate training effectiveness, both during the training sessions and the actual viewing sessions of Sesame Street.
- To assess logistical requirements for conducting a successful 2-hour Sesame Mother Viewing Group with 6 to 8 children and variations of that model.
- To design and identify home-training materials to be used by children in reinforcing activities after each program, which could be readily made from "scrap" items such as shirt cardboards, egg cartons, magazines, and newspapers.

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- To obtain and analyze data on children in the program to determine the effectiveness of the Sesame Mother Pilot Project, and the relative effectiveness of viewing Sesame Street without any follow-up activities.
- To collect and analyze data from the mothers (obtained through home observations, mothers' comments, and personal and demographic data forms) regarding the effectiveness of current training procedures and practices.
- To identify potential "career ladders" for those mothers trained in the program who want to step up to paid positions in preschool education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Advisory Committee--An advisory committee provided valuable assistance in defining the general parameters for the project, outlining the theoretical model, providing ideas for sampling strategies for the survey, and reviewing drafts of project documents.³

Members of the committee are:

Dr. Nancy L. Arnez, Board of Directors, Association for Inner City Development, Chicago

Mrs. Evelyn Davis, Vice President, Community Relations, Children's Television Workshop

³The project staff also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the following Project Associates with the review of project documents: Dr. Carolyn Stern, Director Project Head Start Evaluation and Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles; and Dr. Amy Hostler, former President of Mills College of Education and past Vice-President of the Association for Childhood Education and the Association of Childhood Education International.

Dr. Robert T. Filep, Vice President, Institute
for Educational Development

Mr. Robert Hatch, Director of Information,
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Church, Los Angeles, California

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High School, San Fernando, California

Dr. Joseph Rosen, Superintendent of Schools, Dist-
rict Ten, Chicago

Dr. Donald H. Smith, Director of Educational
Development, Baruch College, City University of
New York

Participants in Planning Seminar--Before begin-
ning the project, planning seminars were conducted both
in Los Angeles and Chicago. Parents, educators, and
community leaders helped design the study. Their valuable
ideas and advice throughout the study contributed to the suc-
cess of the project. Those who participated in these plan-
ning seminars and assisted the staff during the year included:

Los Angeles

Mrs. Addalyne Beneford, Parent-Volunteer

Mrs. Shirley Better, Assistant Professor of
Sociology, Los Angeles State College

Mr. Roy T. Dawson, Human Resources Agency

⁴Also originator of some key dimensions of the project
plan for which the IED staff remains very appreciative.

Mrs. Pearl T. Gillette, Institute for Educational
Development
Mrs. Carol Grewe, Los Angeles Council of Churches
Mr. Robert Hatch, Children's Television Workshop
Mr. Edward Moreno, KCET-Project Director "Ahora"
Mr. Edward V. Moreno, Mexican American Foundation
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Studies, Whittier College
Mrs. Lupe Reaza, Ford Boulevard Elementary School
Mrs. Gwendolyn Richards, Institute for Educational
Development
Mr. Edward "Abie" Robinson, Community Worker
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Chicago

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Mrs. Evelyn Davis, Children's Television Workshop
Mrs. Carolyn Ditto, Community Consultant
Dr. Robert T. Filep, Institute for Educational
Development
Mrs. Leander Jones, Social Worker
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Dr. Donald Smith, Baruch College, City University
of New York
Mrs. Virginia Smith, Community Consultant
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Mrs. Marie Veazey, Principal, Crown School
Miss Eileen Washington, Association for Inner
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Robert T. Filep
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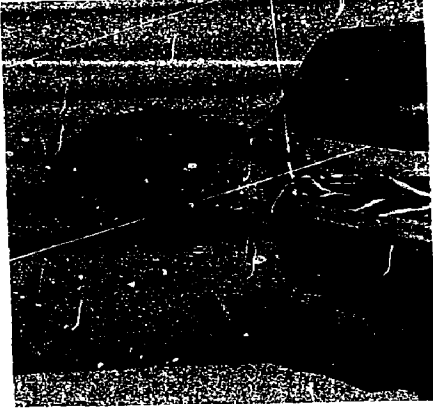
Roy T. Dawson
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Gwendolyn Richards
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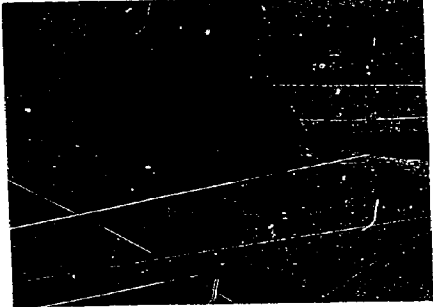
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Pearl Gillette
IED Sesame Project Coordinator



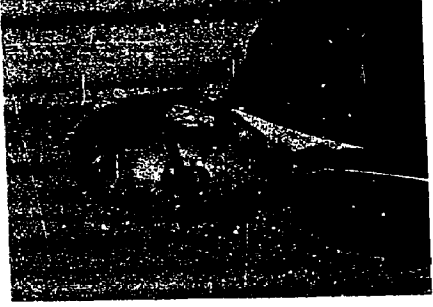
Edward V. Moreno
Mexican American Foundation



Margaret Wright
L. A. Parent-Community Worker



Val Norman
Archdiocese Pre-School Project



Robert Hatch
Children's TV Workshop

Fig. 1. Sesame Mother Pilot Project Seminar - Los Angeles

Association for Inner City Development--Liaison
with mothers and children in Chicago and conduct of the
program in that city was aided by Miss Carol L. Adams and
Mrs. Bertha Purvis.

Sesame Mothers--The project staff express apprecia-
tion to Sesame Mothers who gave so much time to the project.
They were a cooperative, dedicated group; their enthusiasm
and commitment to the project were contagious. Mothers
who were still active when the project was completed are
listed below:

Watts/South Central

Peggy Analco
Paulette Baker
Dorothy Banks
Azalee Barnes
Amy Bazadier
Patricia Carter
Ruth Chapple
Evelyn Crawford
Carol Ann Doucette
Carol English
Helen Fowler
Brenda Goodwin
Hattie Graham
Blanche Howard
Nancy Sidel
Gearlean Smith
Jennie Snead

Joan Jackson
Louise Jackson
Bettye Jarrett
Gonzie Jenkins
Dorothy Johnson
Hazel Johnson
Carrie Millender
Melba Nelson
Gloria Nix
Alma Pigg
Bettye Raven
Katherine Richardson
Annie Satterwhite
Jean Taylor
Marjorie Wafford
Barbara Webb
Vivian Williams

East Los Angeles

Lucy Alba
Martha Arzate
Carmen Bocanegra
Mary Camacho
Carmen Delgado
Marta Dominguez
Adriana N. Garcia

Hortencia Gonzalez
Ines Ibarra
Lydia Llamas
Angelita Mora
Felipa Quintero
Clara Romero

Chicago

Deborah Appleberry
Josephine Booker
Martha Carr
Myrtle Cheatham
Louise Deberry
Carolyn Ditto
Juanita Fields
Edith Gardner
Billie Guilbeau
Roslynne Gully
Maudess Hammond
Juanita Harris
Margaret Heywood
Irene Hill
Anna Smith
Ionia Smith
Gwendolyn Taylor
Sylvia Taylor

Inez Hobbs
Dolores Hopkins
America Howard
Florance Howard
Olan James
Laura Johnson
Leola Keaton
Marion Keith
Christy King
Edna Moore
Connie Moorman
Amtullah Raheem
Ora Richardson
Ruth Shinault
Imogene Trice
Penny Womack
Marion Woolridge

The John and Mary R. Markle Foundation--The generous support of this foundation made the pilot project possible. Lloyd Morrisett, president of the Foundation, has had a long-standing commitment to quality, innovative education for preschool children. His advice and assistance are gratefully acknowledged.

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

The Sesame Street Mother Project is unique in many respects. During its inception a detailed survey of the literature was made to determine which aspects of previous studies could aid the project's success. Those studies are cited in the bibliography; those aspects that contributed the most to the success of the pilot project are noted in the following discussion.

Various studies have indicated that parents, as para-professionals, can be a valuable resource in teaching their children both in the classroom and the home. This is especially pertinent to preschool children who have limited or no other resources (Boger, 1969; Gordon, 1969).

Training the low-income, inner-city mother is most successful in a relatively supportive, non-structured atmosphere. Active involvement of mothers in an informal atmosphere is more productive than lecturing (Kagan, 1969; Horton, 1970). Role-playing is an important part of the training, as is role definition (Reissman, 1968). Perhaps the best motivation for the mother is seeing children improve (Barbrack, 1970); this should be emphasized during training.

Another important aspect of training is the use of homemade materials. Mothers who make and use their own materials tend to have a confident approach in teaching their children. Readily available resources found in the home can be highly effective in the learning situation (Karnes, 1969; Matthews, 1967).

Discipline and reinforcement skills are essential techniques in working with children (Becker, 1971; Matthews, 1967). The effectiveness of parental attention, conversation, and praise has been well demonstrated (Cegelka, 1968; Filep and Gillette, 1969). A study by the Office

of Economic Opportunity suggests that staff members explore and employ the same techniques they wish the parents to use in working with children.

Finally, follow-up and feedback procedures should be used. Periodic, informal home visits have been successful (Barbrack, 1970; Karnes, 1969; Gray, 1966). They provide an opportunity to deliver additional materials, give individual attention, and get feedback on the program. During home visits and discussion sessions, the project staff members have excellent opportunities to learn more about the participants and the community in which they are working (Badger, 1969; Reissman, 1968).

PROCEDURE

SELECTION OF TARGET AREAS

The IED survey of the inner-city areas of Chicago and Los Angeles preceded the Sesame Mother Pilot Project and is documented in the survey report, A Survey of Two Cities: Sesame Street Viewing Patterns in Inner City Los Angeles and Chicago.⁵ In selecting target areas for the projects, information such as density of low-income families, density of ethnic minority groups, and number of preschoolers was taken into account. The selection of Watts/South Central and East Los Angeles and of the Grand Boulevard/Oakland areas of Chicago provided samples of black, Mexican-American, and some white communities. Figures 2 and 3 are maps showing survey areas and the pilot study.

SCHEDULING

An initial 5-week pilot program began on November 9, 1971, coinciding with the beginning of the second year of the Sesame Street show. The project staff felt that this period would provide an opportunity to try out training procedures and materials, obtain feedback, and make necessary modifications and revisions. Then a new group of mothers would be trained for a more extended trial of the project concepts.

At the end of the 5-week pilot program, mothers were asked to state the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Informal discussion and a structured questionnaire were used to obtain reactions and suggestions.

⁵ Accessioned by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education, Urbana, Illinois, and available through ERIC ED 047 788.

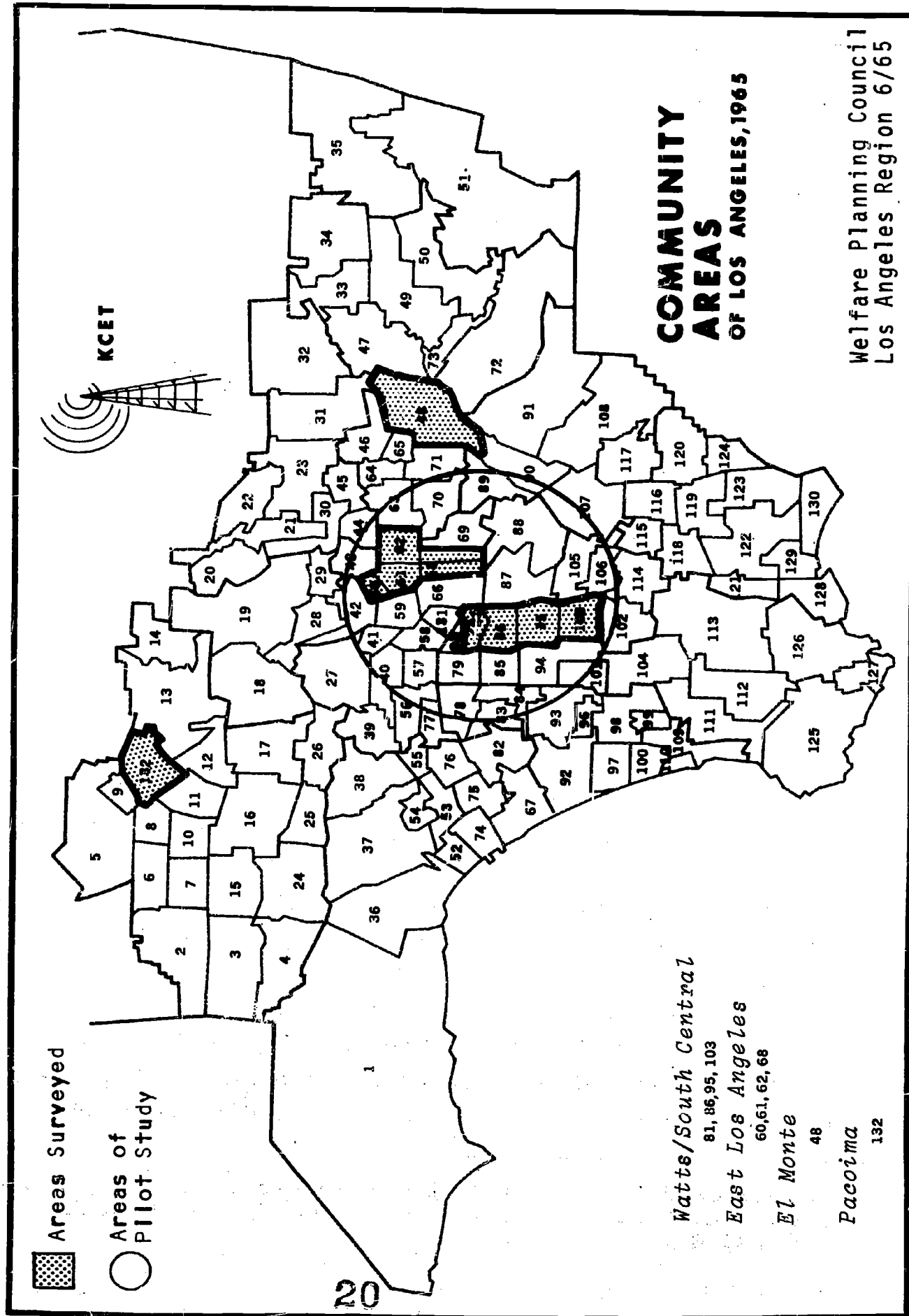


Fig. 2. Community Areas of the Study--Los Angeles

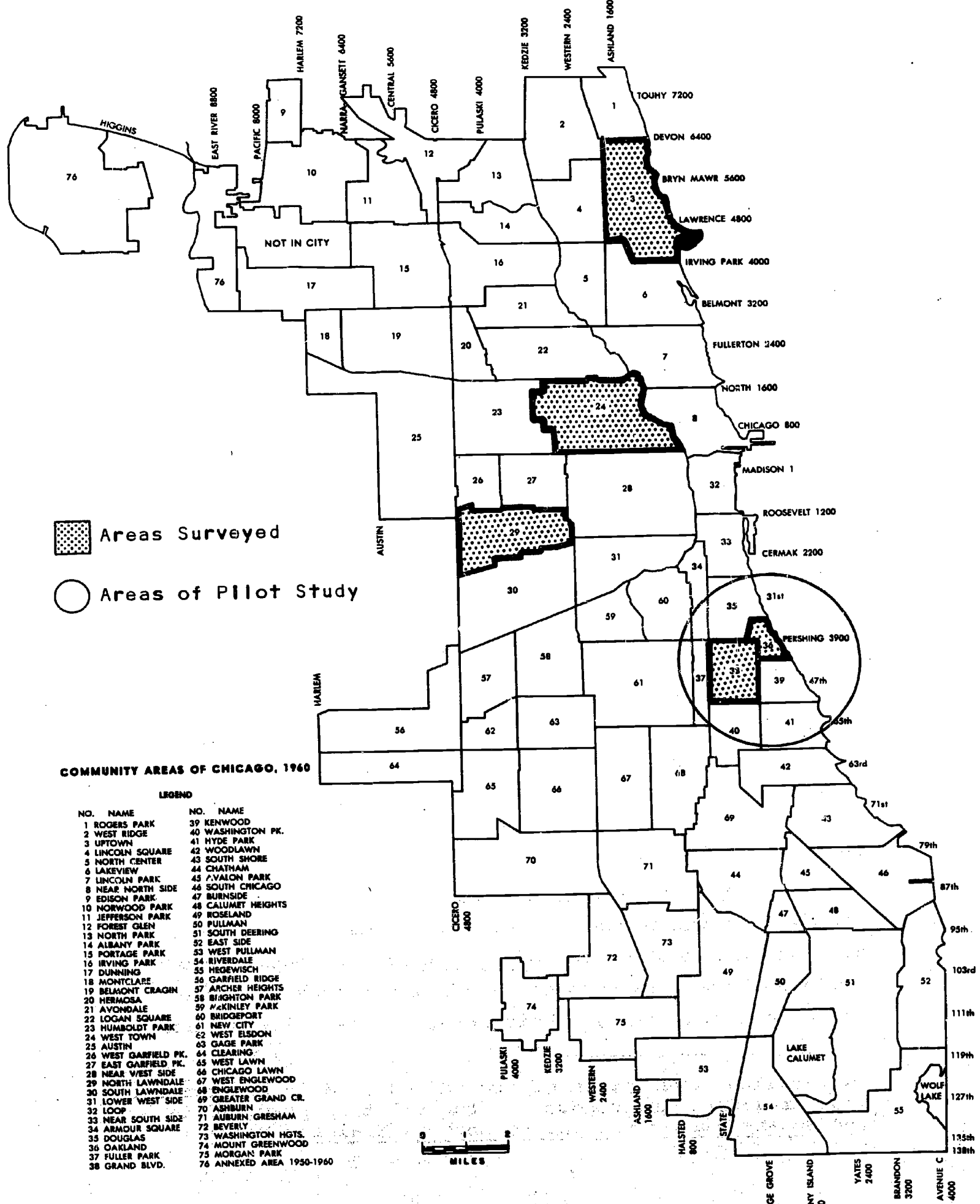


Fig. 3. Community Areas of the Study--Chicago

RECRUITING OF SESAME STREET VIEWING VOLUNTEERS

The first group of Sesame Street Mother volunteers was recruited through personal contact during a door-to-door survey. Members of the advisory committee and the planning seminar participants provided referrals, as did church groups, community groups, and various PTA organizations. Press releases and radio and television spot announcements were also successful. (Copies of these are provided in the Training Manual.) The best sources of referral, however, were the Sesame Mothers themselves. They not only brought their friends into the program, but often provided replacements for their own viewing group when they were unable to continue for any reason.

The project initially recruited 40 mothers in Los Angeles and 40 in Chicago. To qualify as a volunteer, a mother had to live in an inner-city area and have access to a television set that received Sesame Street. She also had to enjoy the respect of the neighbors whose children attended the viewing group. Although not every mother recruited was satisfied with this type of work, there were no statistically significant differences in the characteristics of those who stayed with the program and those who dropped out.

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS⁶

After the volunteers had been signed up, the next step was to train them to work with preschool children and make the most of the Sesame Street lessons. Before training began, the project staff interviewed all the volunteers and visited their homes. This allowed them

⁶A detailed description of procedures used in the recruiting, training, and conduct of the pilot is provided in the Sesame Street Viewing Volunteers Training Manual.

to understand the volunteers' daily problems and contributed to the effectiveness of the sessions and project activities.

The Sesame Mother information form (see Appendix), usually filled out when the volunteer signed up for the project, provided much information.

Volunteers attending the training sessions were given a small amount of money to help pay for travel, babysitting, and incidental expenses. But they had not expected to be paid, and most agreed that the money made little difference in their participation.

Scheduling--Training sessions were scheduled two weeks in advance with a telephone call, with a call the day before as a reminder. The sessions took either one whole day or two half days.

If the training group was very large, it was divided into small groups so each volunteer could ask questions and discuss her participation problems.

Selecting Sites and Transportation--Training sites had to be large enough for the activity, but close enough so that volunteers could walk. Community centers, park recreation buildings, homes, schools, and churches were used. Since some volunteers brought youngsters to the sessions, a nursery was set up in a separate room with adult supervision.

Training Sessions--At the training sessions there was a variety of activities to teach the volunteer how to run a viewing session in the home. One activity involved the volunteers' own children watching Sesame Street. This allowed the project coordinator or other staff to demonstrate how volunteers might guide program viewing. When possible, the activity was held early in the morning, giving volunteers a chance to get settled, have coffee and

donuts, and watch a demonstration of the viewing session. All mothers introduced themselves at the first session, and each participant wore a name tag to encourage sociability and help stimulate participation. Training personnel addressed all volunteers by their full names. (Name tags were not used at later sessions.)

After viewing Sesame Street, there was a demonstration of useful follow-up activities (types of learning games, materials, etc.).

Volunteers were encouraged to interact with children in groups and to start to play their own viewing volunteer mother role. For many volunteers, working with children in a group was a new experience. Each mother was given an opportunity to lead the children through parts of the Sesame volunteer module. (The module is a complete daily session with the children, including pre- and post-program activities.)

Since the home must also be a planned environment, emphasizing the safety and comfort of the children, volunteers and staff suggested ways to change a room or the immediate area so that it was safe and comfortable, contributed to learning, yet did not change the home setting.

Volunteers were shown the many home items that could be used as supplies (for example, cartons and spoons). Ideas for developing new games and methods of learning were discussed. Constructing homemade materials was discussed. Finally, volunteers were introduced to the CTW Sesame Street Magazine with "Parents' Guide" (which can be obtained by writing the producers of Sesame Street, Children's Television Workshop, One Lincoln Plaza, New York, New York 10023).

Several times during the session, small group discussion groups were led by a staff member fluent in Spanish.

Volunteers also worked with a staff member in scheduling home visits and future meetings of volunteers. The home visits allowed the staff to observe the viewing sessions, make suggestions, and answer questions.

Objectives--The basic objective of the training sessions was to teach volunteers how to work with children and how to teach them Sesame Street concepts. Training included the games, methods, and ideas found in the Training Manual.

Some Training Session Models--Since most volunteers were mothers and housewives, they preferred half-day sessions. For one portion of the pilot program, two half-day training sessions were used, followed by a week of regular children's viewing sessions in the volunteer's home. In this way, the volunteer learned some of the problems and what information and training was lacking. The following week, another training session was attended; this time what was learned before was briefly reviewed. The volunteer now knew what questions to ask. Volunteers met every six weeks after the program had begun to discuss their problems and achievements.

The following is a typical agenda for an initial training session. This guideline was not followed precisely; in fact, an informal agenda without a specific time schedule seemed to work best, especially in the Spanish-speaking community.

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 9:00 - 10:00 | View <u>Sesame Street</u> |
| 10:00 - 10:30 | Welcome the volunteers |
| | Introduction: |
| | <i>The purpose of the program</i> |
| | Background--overall goals: |
| | <i>What the program will do</i> |
| 10:30 - 10:50 | Examine the day's activities |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 10:50 - 11:20 | Plan the home teaching environment Group discussion |
| 11:20 - 11:45 | Interacting with a preschooler Role playing |
| 11:45 - 12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30 - 1:15 | Explain about the Sesame module 1) Welcoming children 2) Things to do while show is on 3) Follow-up activity Questions and answers |

Provision for Children and Lunch--Many preschoolers were included in the training session since some volunteers were encouraged to bring their preschool children, and since some volunteers who worked as babysitters brought these children too. Eight preschoolers to one volunteer supervisor was found to be a good ratio.

A nursery was provided for children who were not taking an active part in the session. The volunteer read stories, played games with the children, led them in songs, or took them for walks to a nearby playground or park. The nursery served three purposes. First, it allowed volunteers to come without the added expense of a babysitter. Second, having the children there allowed the staff to demonstrate techniques to use during the viewing of Sesame Street and after the program. Finally, the nursery introduced the children to the Sesame group format.

Lunch was provided for the children and volunteers.

Plans for the Viewing Session--At the conclusion of training, several ways to organize viewing groups in volunteers' homes were discussed. The volunteer was advised to select the plan that best fit her situation, depending on space and time available, the number of

children in the group, the time of day they view the program, and other factors influencing her plans.

RECRUITING THE CHILDREN

Each volunteer in Los Angeles recruited youngsters for her own viewing sessions. In Chicago the leader spent a considerable time recruiting children for the viewing groups. Some had friends and neighbors with preschoolers. Some went out and rang doorbells in their immediate neighborhoods to find children.

When the volunteer herself recruited children in her own neighborhood, the arrangement was likely to be more friendly and relaxed than if the children were signed up by a "stranger." Parents felt more comfortable talking with someone they knew, and usually let her know immediately whether or not they wanted their children enrolled.

When the volunteer undertook the job of recruiting, it increased her responsibility and involvement in the project. Also, she was able to: 1) choose the children she wanted to work with, 2) assess which ones needed the program most, 3) find children who lived nearby, and 4) reassure parents that their children would be at the home of someone they knew and trusted.

As children were signed up, the volunteer filled out a brief form (see Appendix for Sesame Street Child's Profile) giving basic information such as child's age, mother's telephone number, and emergency information, etc. During this interview the volunteer would ask the mother if the child watched Sesame Street and would discuss any preschool programs the child had attended. Recruiting gave the volunteer a chance to make an informal agreement with the parents; she was to be responsible for the care and safety of the child during the viewing session.

As volunteers went from door-to-door, they carried some kind of identification and Sesame Street literature to distribute. This included a simple flyer without a picture telling what the program was about and giving the volunteer's or the project leaders's telephone number for parents who were hesitant at first. (An example of an informative flyer illustrated with Big Bird is in the Viewing Volunteer Guide.) In the pilot program, some volunteers equipped with literature and identification had such success signing up children that they had to turn some down. Others acquired volunteer assistants among parents and were able to move their viewing sessions to church auditoriums, community centers, and storefront churches where they could accommodate more children.

If the volunteer could not find enough children to fill the group, the project leader helped her by publicizing the project and the need for more participants. Supermarket flyers, neighborhood papers, club meetings, radio public service announcements were used--all the kinds of publicity listed in the "Established Links with Your Community" section herein. Project leader solicitation was usually less desirable because children signing up might live some distance away, and parents might have less chance to interact with the volunteer teaching their children. Wherever she recruited, the volunteer met with the children's parents before viewing sessions began.

SCHEDULING FOLLOW-ON MEETINGS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Once the program began, meetings were held with all the volunteers in one group. Here they discussed their problems and shared new ideas. From their discussion the staff gauged the progress of the overall program and the

success of individual activities. At these meetings, volunteers discovered that their individual problems were not unique--they had many problems in common.

Like a training session, this meeting was scheduled at a time convenient to the majority of volunteers. It was more effective to tell volunteers about the meeting first by telephone. The staff mailed out reminder cards, following up with a telephone call the night before the meeting. These sessions usually lasted about two hours, and a nursery for young children was provided.

Some volunteers found the kind of support and information they got from other volunteers so valuable they wanted meetings every few weeks. The kind of information they got from each other and gave to the staff was vital to the program's growth.

ONGOING SUPPORT FOR THE VIEWING VOLUNTEERS

Keeping in close personal contact with volunteers and their problems was perhaps the most important job for the project leader and her staff. Volunteers appreciated interest and concern. They also relied heavily on staff advice and welcomed staff attendance at their viewing sessions. If the staff failed to make frequent contact during the four to six weeks, the volunteers were disappointed and felt let down.

HOME VISITS AND TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UPS

Telephone calls were the most common method of communicating between the project leader and volunteers. As a matter of course, the leaders called at least weekly. On the other hand, volunteers were free to call any time they needed advice. Calling provided a chance to ask how

the group was progressing and review daily attendance, parent interest, needed supplies, and new teaching games and ideas, and to hear the mothers' reactions to their children's progress.

Home visits were very important but were less frequent than phone calls because of time restrictions on the availability of project staff. A staff member visited a volunteer every four or five weeks during the viewing sessions period, and used a Home Observation Checklist to evaluate a volunteer's skills and progress in working with the children (see Appendix). Later, a review of all the checklists revealed what topics would require special attention in the next training session. The staff member could also see how the children reacted to the volunteer: were they happy, relaxed, and comfortable with her? Was the atmosphere in the home a happy one? Later, constructive discussion of strong and weak points was held with the volunteer. During the viewing sessions, behavior problems were observed first hand and solutions suggested. The staff member also talked with parents who were picking up and delivering their children. This provided an opportunity for parent-staff conferences, to answer questions and get parents' reactions and suggestions.

When the children were not there, the leader often dropped by to deliver supplies and have a relaxed chat with the volunteer. The leader also kept in contact by mail, sending volunteers notes of encouragement, new learning games, bits of information from the newspaper, and dates of meetings and television programs that might be useful to them.

In additional recognition of her important role, each mother was given a colorful Sesame Mother smock that doubled as a functional household garment. The smocks were sewn by local inner-city sewing trainees.

Observation Results--Home observation visits allowed the staff to watch the dynamics of the ongoing program. They learned that during the show volunteers mainly used demonstration materials and repeated the ideas presented on the show. The materials consisted of both home-made materials and the Sesame Street Magazine. Few mothers took notes during the show.

After the show, mothers reviewed the material and encouraged verbalizations from the children. Demonstration materials used were usually the same as those on the show, and the children had ample opportunity to participate.

Home observation visits showed the staff that interaction between children and mothers was very good. Mothers were relatively relaxed with the children and encouraged questions and comments.

Although cooperation among the children was fairly good, there was room for improvement. The mothers were able to use the skills of positive and negative reinforcement well. However, they were sometimes at a loss to explain why one child's answer or performance was better than another's. Nevertheless, the reinforcement techniques were considered helpful.

The children were generally free to move about, but there was more restriction during the post-program activities than before and during the program. Activity areas were well defined. The overall atmosphere observed in the homes was highly positive. Affection between the volunteers and the children was particularly noticeable. The

Sesame Mothers seemed to be enjoying the sessions as much as the children.⁷

GRADUATION

At the end of the program, a graduation luncheon was held in honor of the volunteers. Food was donated by local markets and prepared in advance by the mothers.

Each volunteer received a certificate stating that she had successfully completed the Sesame Mother program. Children also received graduation certificates. (A copy of each certificate is provided in the Training Manual.) The Sesame Mother Graduation Certificate inspired pride in the volunteers. It was later used by some volunteers as a credential for paid employment as school aide or infant care aide in a school district.

⁷A number of topics are not discussed in this report such as involving parents of the children in the program, organizing viewing sessions, developing teaching games, suggestions for working with the children, arranging the viewing area, and links with the community. These topics, as well as an expansion of the topics covered can be found in the Training Manual and Viewing Volunteer Guide.

A PROFILE OF SESAME MOTHERS

The "Profile of the Sesame Mother" and the "Sesame Mother Community Involvement" forms (see Appendix) produce the following personal and demographic data:

A majority of the volunteers in Los Angeles were between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, while in Chicago the average was closer to 40.

The ethnic composition of the Los Angeles mothers was 62% black, 36% Mexican-American, and 2% white. In Chicago all the volunteers were black.

The average Sesame Mother in Los Angeles had 11 years of formal schooling, while in Chicago the average was 12 years.

In Los Angeles the average Sesame Mother had three children, ranging from infants to 12 year olds. In Chicago the average mother had two children, but they were older--6 to 18 years old.

Geographic target site selection resulted in a high proportion of low-income families. An annual income of less than \$4,000 per family was reported by 45% in Los Angeles and 56% in Chicago. Results of the "Sesame Mother Community Involvement" form showed that the volunteers were active in church, school, and community related activities. The percentages of mothers involved in each activity are shown in Figure 4.

More than 50% of the Los Angeles mothers worked with five to seven children in the Sesame group. In Chicago the average mother worked with four children in each group

Personal contact during the door-to-door survey was the most effective mode of contact for Sesame Mothers

in Los Angeles. In Chicago most of recruited through recommendations f

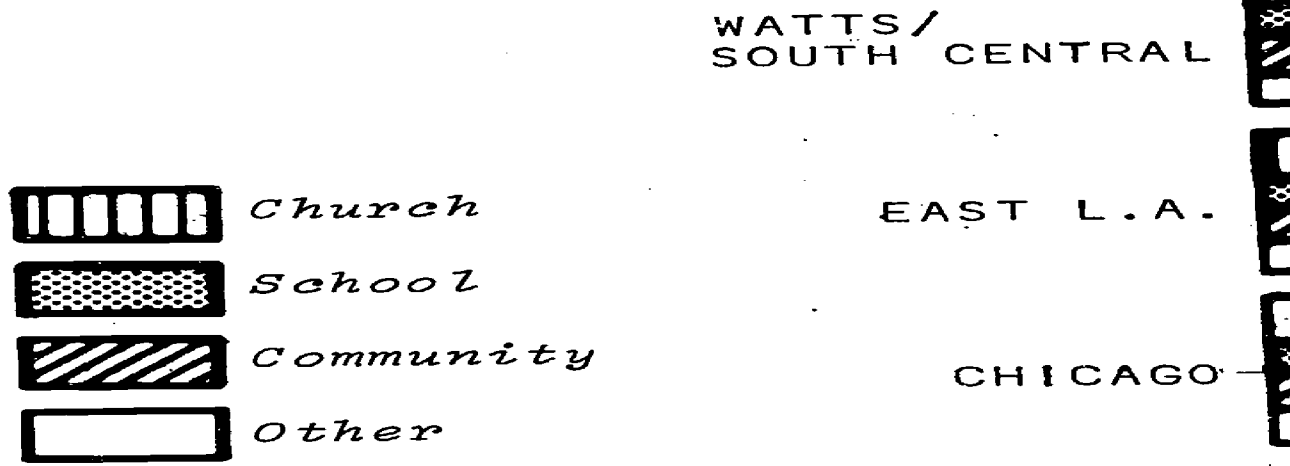
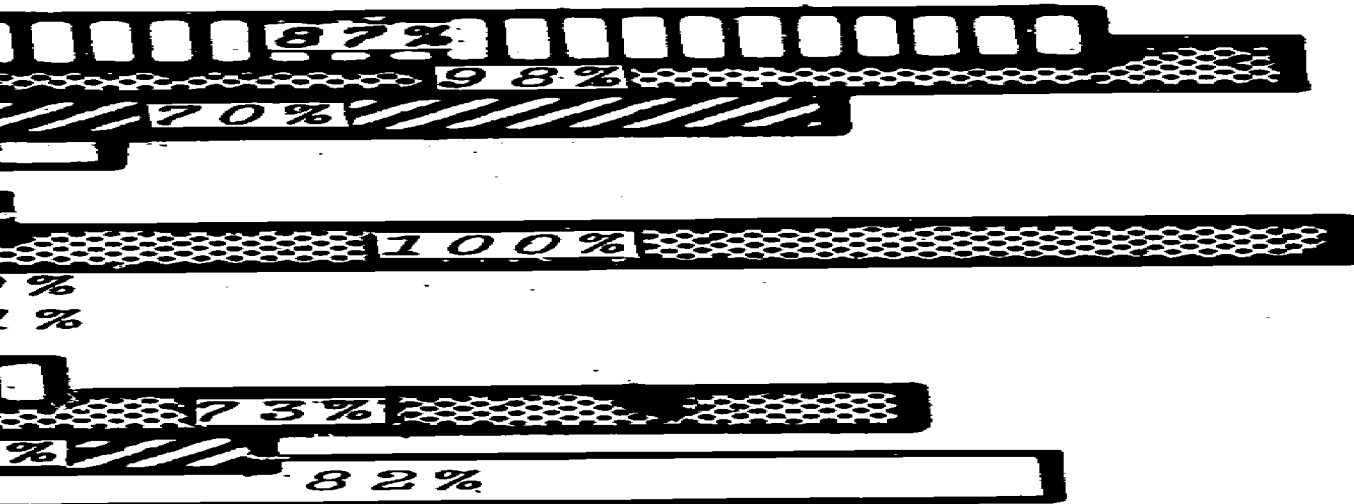


Fig. 4. Sesame Mother Comm

Generally, viewing volunte out of the program were not signif those who remained active. Of tho 31% were Mexican-American, roughly as for those who stayed with the p Puerto Rican. These volunteer mot years old and had four children of ages of 6 and 12. The one area wh differed was in education; those w have less formal education than th active. Age, ethnic background, a Mothers are presented in Figure 5

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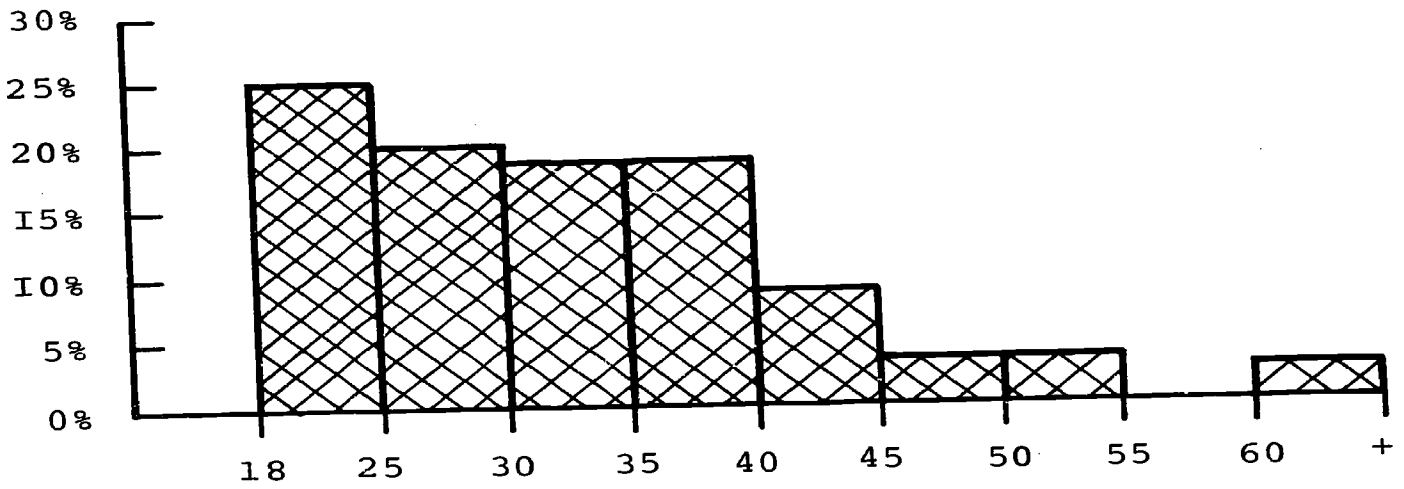


Fig. 5A. Age Of Los Angeles Mothers

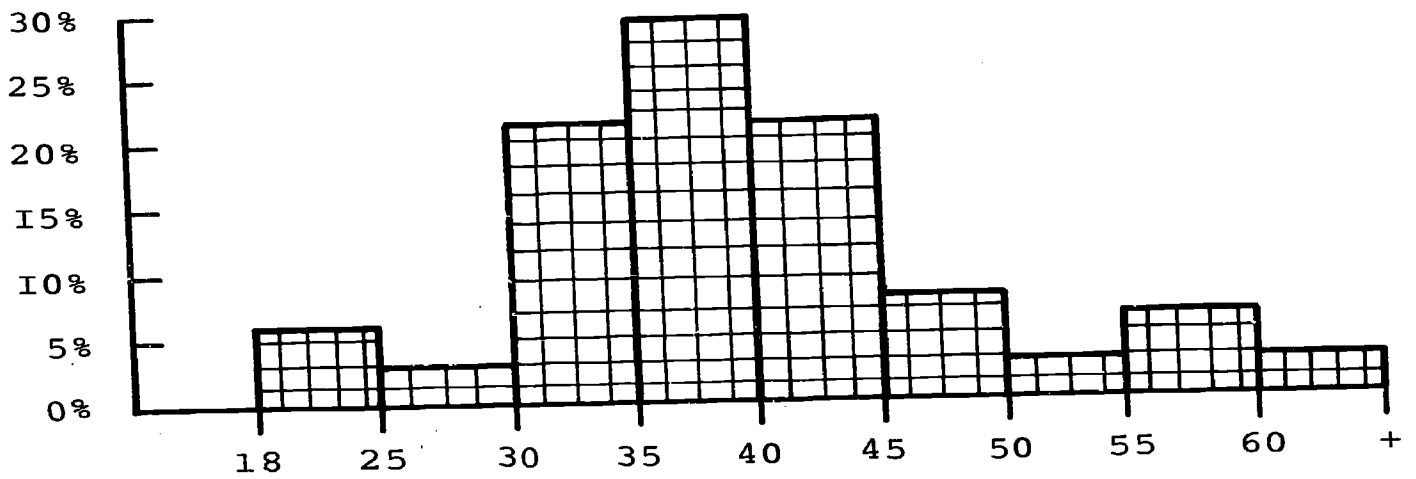


Fig. 5B. Age Of Chicago Mothers

Fig. 5. Age of Sesame Mothers (Total N=123)

TABLE 1. Ethnic Group Membership
Of Sesame Mothers

| <u>Race</u> | <u>Los Angeles</u> | <u>Chicago</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <i>Black</i> | 62% | 100% |
| <i>Mexican-American</i> | 36% | 0% |
| <i>White</i> | 2% | 0% |

TABLE 2. Total Family Income
Of Sesame Mothers

| <u>Income</u> | <u>Los Angeles</u> | <u>Chicago</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <i>\$4,000 + under</i> | 45% | 56% |
| <i>\$4,000 - \$8,000</i> | 42% | 38% |
| <i>\$8,000 + over</i> | 13% | 6% |

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

Personal and demographic data on the children who were tested were acquired at the time of testing, using the "Child's Attitude Record" form. A copy of the test booklet cover sheet and the "Child's Attitude Record" can be found in the Appendix.

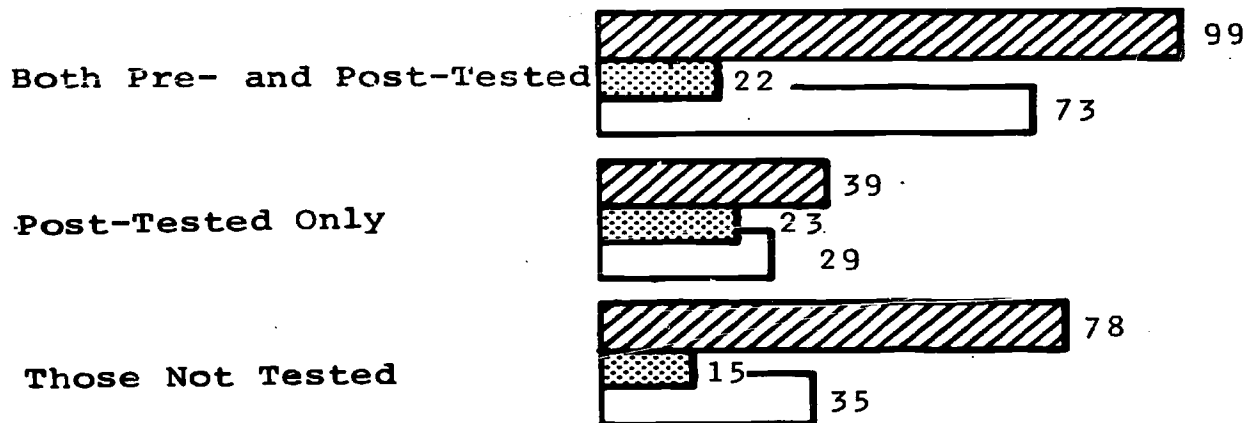
In the Watts/South Central group there was an even number of boys and girls, most of whom were three or four years old. In this group 99% were black and 1% were white. In East Los Angeles more girls than boys were three or four years old but all were Mexican-American. The Chicago group consisted of an even number of boys and girls, all about three or four years old. As noted, all these children were black (see Table 3). There were 413 children involved in the study, of which 285 were tested and 172 were both pre- and post-tested. A profile of all children (those tested and not tested) is presented in Figure 6.

TABLE 3. CHILDREN WHO WERE PRE- AND POST-TESTED

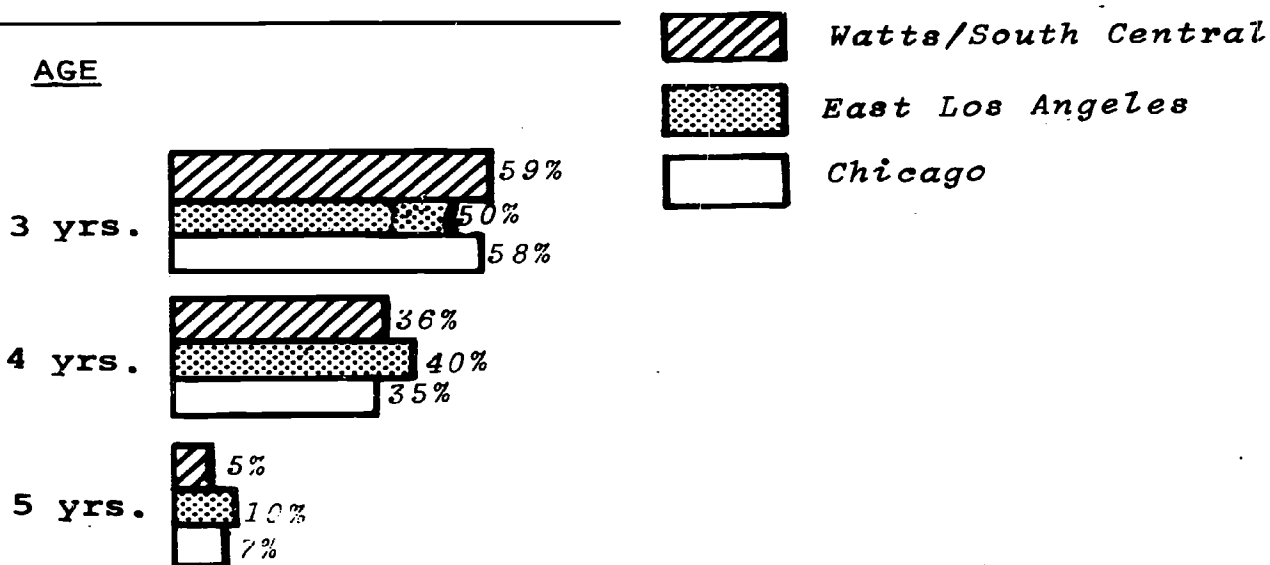
| <u>Sex</u> | Watts/ South Central | | East Los Angeles | Chicago | Population |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----|---------------------|---------|------------|
| | Total | N % | % | % | Total % |
| Boys | 143 | 54 | 31 | 55 | 50 |
| Girls | 142 | 46 | 69 | 45 | 50 |
| <u>Age</u> | | | | | |
| 3 yrs. | 171 | 57 | 49 | 61 | 60 |
| 4 yrs. | 103 | 38 | 42 | 39 | 36 |
| 5+yrs. | 11 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 4 |
| <u>Ethnic Group</u> | | | | | |
| Black | 257 | 99 | 0 | 100 | 90 |
| Mexican- American | 23 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 8 |
| White | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

TOTAL POPULATION (CHILDREN)

N = 413



AGE



ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF TOTAL POPULATION

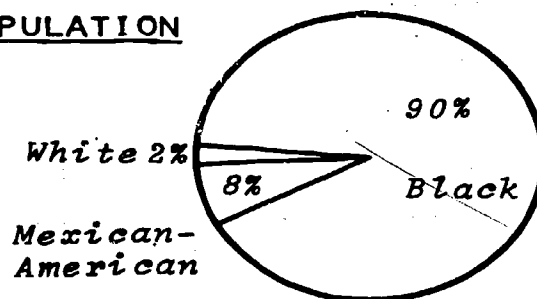


Fig. 6. Characteristics of the Children

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT

The importance of several dimensions of this pilot project are considered in this section. Methods used to select children for study are outlined, possible factors contributing to differences in performance are presented, instruments used to assess the importance of factors related to children's performance are described, and results of various statistical tests applied to collected data are discussed.

SAMPLE STUDIED

Target populations for the study were black and Mexican-American children between the ages of three and five years who had not attended nursery school or kindergarten and lived in high-density, low-income, inner-city areas. A survey conducted at the beginning of the project helped determine the geographic areas of concentration for the study.⁸ Communities selected included Watts/South Central and East Los Angeles, and the Grand Boulevard area of Chicago.

To determine if the IED samples in the Watts/South Central and East Los Angeles areas were representative of the area, the Peabody Mental Age and IQ scores of the IED groups were compared with those of more than 300 preschoolers who were subjects for a different project being conducted in the same area. No significant differences were seen. A similar comparison was made using the pre-test IQ's of more than 50 preschoolers enrolled in Head Start programs in the Los Angeles inner-city areas. Again no significant difference was seen.

⁸ Sesame Street Survey.

PROGRAM INVOLVEMENT

It was hypothesized that involving a child in a structured viewing group would improve his learning of the skills presented on Sesame Street. It was also expected that a longer involvement with the Sesame Mother Project would produce more learned skills than a brief encounter. The number of months in the viewing group was the involvement measure used.

There were several reasons why children might be in the program less than the full seven months. They could have: (1) joined at the beginning of the project, and then stopped because of moving, disinterest, illness, etc., (2) joined after the program was initiated and dropped before its completion, or (3) joined after the project was begun but continued to the end.

Children in each of the geographic areas with both pre- and post-test data available were divided into high and low involvement groups. In Los Angeles, children who had been in the viewing group for five, six, or seven months were considered the high involvement group; those in the viewing group for four months or less made up the low involvement group. In Chicago, the average length of involvement was longer than in Los Angeles; seven months was considered high involvement, while six months or less was considered low involvement.

Viewing Group Size--It was hypothesized that children attending smaller viewing groups (5-8 children and one mother) would benefit more than those attending larger groups. Children attending smaller groups would get more individual attention; directing them in skill-related behaviors would be easier. However, if large groups proved equally effective, communications and logistics would be simplified. In one group studied, five volunteer mothers

formed a viewing group of about 45 children in a local church in the Watts/South Central area of Los Angeles. With the large group, two television sets were required and greater opportunities were afforded the children to interact with more than one Sesame Mother and many different children. Sesame Mothers also had greater attendance flexibility.

Children's Age--As older children generally have more experience in "how to learn" than younger children, it was expected that a positive relationship between age and performance would be demonstrated.

Children's Sex--To ensure that the Sesame Mother Project did not favor children of either sex, it was decided to determine and evaluate the project's effectiveness for both boys and girls.

Children's Attitudes--In addition to studying evidence of improvement in cognitive areas, it was also considered relevant to evaluate such changes as attitudes toward other children, school, the Sesame Mother, and the Sesame Street program.

Parental Perceptions--Project staff (including Sesame Mothers) had only a limited opportunity to observe changes in each child. To provide a more complete picture of a child's improvement, parents were therefore asked to rate their children on several factors.

Sesame Mother Information--To identify characteristics of the Sesame Mother Project contributing to improved performance of children, an effort was made to determine whether Sesame Mothers of relatively successful children had any particular set of characteristics setting them off from the others. Variables considered were age, income, number of children in the family, number of preschoolers in the family, number of preschoolers in the viewing group,

morning versus afternoon viewing of Sesame Street, amount of training received by the mother, source of referral into the program and years of formal schooling. None of the combinations proved to be statistically significant. This indicates that personnel with varying characteristics may be candidates for the Sesame Mother role.

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Educational Testing Service: Sesame Street Test Battery (SSTB)--The major instrument used to assess changes in children's cognitive performance was a battery of several subtests of the SSTB.⁹ This was designed as part of a first year evaluation of Sesame Street being conducted by ETS.¹⁰ The SSTB was selected for three reasons: (1) reliability and validation information for this instrument is favorable; (2) inner-city testers find it relatively easy to administer to preschoolers; and (3) comparable data obtained as part of the ETS study would be available to permit a test of the effectiveness of the Sesame Mother.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test--This test was used to determine how the group sampled by IED compared to other children in the same geographic area and age range.

IED Child's Attitude Record--This was designed so that Sesame Mothers could indicate changes in a child's

⁹Tests of the ETS battery administered as part of the IED study included: General Knowledge, Letters, Sorting Skills, Numbers, Relation, Classification and Sesame Street Recognition. To reduce testing time, the Emotions, and Parts of the Whole subtests were not administered.

¹⁰Ball, S. and Bogatz, G. A., The First Year of Sesame Street: An Evaluation, Princeton, New Jersey, Educational Testing Service, October, 1970.

attitude from the beginning to the end of the project.

Areas explored included the child's attitude toward:

(1) leaving home for a while, (2) other children, (3) the Sesame Mother, (4) the Sesame Street program, and (5) attending regular school. (A copy of this instrument together with detailed data obtained are included in the Appendix.)

IED'S Evaluation of Viewing Group Rating Scale--

This scale was designed by IED staff to measure to what degree the child's involvement in the Sesame Mother Project helped him develop good learning patterns. Data were obtained from all children active at the conclusion of the current phase of the study. It was estimated that an 80% return was obtained on all of the children. (The scale and detailed results are presented in the Appendix.)

Instruments Used with Sesame Mothers--

Two forms were designed to obtain demographic data on the population of Sesame Mothers, the "Sesame Mother Information Form," and the "Sesame Mother Community Involvement Form." Information was obtained on family income, number of children in the family, years of formal schooling, number of workshops attended, number of children in their viewing group, etc. This information was collected from the outset of the project.

In addition to the demographic data, IED staff members observed each of the Sesame Mothers at least four times at approximately equally spaced intervals throughout the project and recorded their observation on the "Sesame Mother Observation Form." Factors observed included the mothers' planning and implementation of pre-program activities, program activities, and post-program activities. The interaction between the mother and the children, the home environment, and the overall atmosphere of the group were observed. (The form and detailed results are produced in the Appendix.)

PROCEDURE

Sesame Street Test Battery--For those children available at the beginning of the project in the Los Angeles area, SSTB pre-tests were administered during November and December, 1970; children in the Chicago area were pre-tested during January and February, 1971, after being in the project for about a month.

During the spring an effort was made to post-test all the children who had been pre-tested. Although the refusal rate was extremely low in each of the areas (less than 2%) the high mobility rate hampered this effort. Of those pre-tested, an overall average of 74% were post-tested (80% in Watts/South Central, 58% in East Los Angeles, and 72% in Chicago). In addition to children pre-tested, a sample of children still active in the program at the end of the study was selected for post-testing. Again, age requirements (3, 4, and 5 years) and lack of "formal" schooling applied. A random sample, stratified over the various viewing groups, was selected.

Analysis Strategy--A complete analysis was made for each group of the effects of viewing group involvement on post-test total scores. As indicated, not all children entered the project at the beginning; for groups in each geographical area, several children entered a viewing group almost every month after the project's inception and remained until the end.

A series of t tests was performed to provide a basis for making inferences about cognitive changes in the children's ability throughout the project. To make inferences about changes in performance of a single group throughout the project, t tests for correlated measures were used; where performance differences of separate groups are compared, t tests for uncorrelated measures were used.

Using total SSTB scores and subtest scores, the following comparisons were made: (1) pre- versus post-test results of the high involvement group, (2) pre- versus post-test results of the low involvement group, (3) pre-test sample (high versus low involvement), and (4) post-test sample (high versus low involvement) for each of the three geographic areas.

Generally, no significant difference was expected in the results of (3) above, but significant differences were expected in (1), (2), and (4). In addition to these statistical tests, high and low involvement groups were compared by analyzing covariance of total and subtest scores of the SSTB. These analyses answered the question of whether post-test scores differed significantly, after variability in those scores predictable from pre-test scores were removed.

Once the subjects were assigned to high and low involvement groups, it was necessary to decide whether data from children in the three geographic areas would be considered a single sample. Comparison of pre-test data collected in each geographic area showed significant differences in mean value ($p < .05$). These findings together with the large variability evidenced (see standard deviations in Table 4), indicated the need for a separate detailed examination of data in each group. With this type of data-variability control, significant changes in performance throughout the project have a greater probability of detection.

To provide a basis for inferring that children highly involved improved significantly more than low involvement children, each of the following "criterion set" of statistical tests had to be obtained: (1) the high and low involvement groups could not differ significantly at

TABLE 4. PRE- AND POST-TEST RESULTS

Total score means
ETS/CTW Sesame Street Test Battery (IED Version)

| | <u>LA W/SC</u> | | <u>LA ELA</u> | | <u>CHICAGO GB</u> | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| | MEAN | SD | MEAN | SD | MEAN | SD |
| High Involvement Pre-test | 60.75 | 21.43 | 76.77 | 31.29 | 86.86 | 24.84 |
| Post-test | 95.32 | 26.17 | 118.23 | 26.04 | 99.05 | 15.02 |
| Low Involvement Pre-test | 56.52 | 29.81 | 72.67 | 26.39 | 99.20 | 28.71 |
| Post-test | 78.52 | 33.81 | 100.56 | 40.14 | 105.33 | 14.11 |

the time of pre-testing; (2) both groups would have to show improvement between pre- and post-testing; and (3) the post-test mean of the high involvement group had to be significantly greater than the comparable mean for the low involvement group. The subtests for which the certain set of statistical tests was obtained are summarized in Table 5.

HOW DID THE CHILDREN DO?

Cognitive Changes--Pre- and post-test scores of the high and low involvement groups for the SSTB total score were presented in Table 4. Results based on analysis of subtest scores are presented in Table 5. Changes in mean post-test scores with measures in the number of months in a viewing group are shown for each group in Table 5 and Figure 7. It is clear from Figure 8 that performance does increase, but not always uniformly, with increases in viewing time. Part of the fluctuation in these plots is due to sampling variability and unreliability; some means were estimated with few observations. Nevertheless, best fitting straight lines to these plots for each group would show that performance does generally increase with increased participation in a viewing group.

TABLE 5. SSTE Test Analysis

| TOTAL SCORES | ANALYSIS I | | | ANALYSIS II | | | ANALYSIS III | | | ANALYSIS IV | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----|------|-------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|-------------|------|------|
| | WSC | ELA | CHI | WSC | ELA | CHI | WSC | ELA | CHI | WSC | ELA | CHI |
| Subtests | * | * | * | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1 labeling body parts | * | * | * | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 2 function of body parts | * | * | * | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 3 body parts total | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 4 naming forms | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 5 recognizing forms | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 6 forms total | * | * | ** | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 7 rules of community member | * | * | * | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 8 matching by form | * | * | * | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 9 matching by position | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 10 recognizing letters | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 11 naming letters | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 12 letter sounds | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 13 initial sounds | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 14 decoding | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 15 reading | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 16 left-right | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 17 pre-reading skills | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 18 recognizing numbers | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 19 naming numbers | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 20 enumeration | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 21 conservation | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 22 counting strategies | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 23 number correspondence | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 24 addition and subtraction | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 25 numbers total | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 26 relational terms | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 27 classification | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 28 double classification | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 29 classification total | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 30 sorting total | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 31 Sesame Street | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 32 Alphabet (A-Z) | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 33 counting (1-30) | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 34 writing name | * | * | ** | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| | n=46 | n=9 | n=30 | n=53 | n=13 | n=21 | n=99 | n=22 | n=51 | n=99 | n=22 | n=51 |

TOTAL TEST SCORE *

*=Significant at <05
 **=Significant at <05 but pre-test higher than post-test or low involvement higher than high involvement.

I. Subtests on which the low involvement showed significant improvement.
 II. Subtests on which the high involvement groups showed significant improvement.
 III. Subtests on which the post-test scores (adjusted by covariance analysis) of high and low involvement groups were significantly different.
 IV. Subtests on which the high involvement group improved significantly more than the low involvement group (inferential analysis).

WSC=Watts/South Central
 ELA=East Los Angeles
 CHI=Chicago



Fig. 7. Pre- and Post-Test Results.

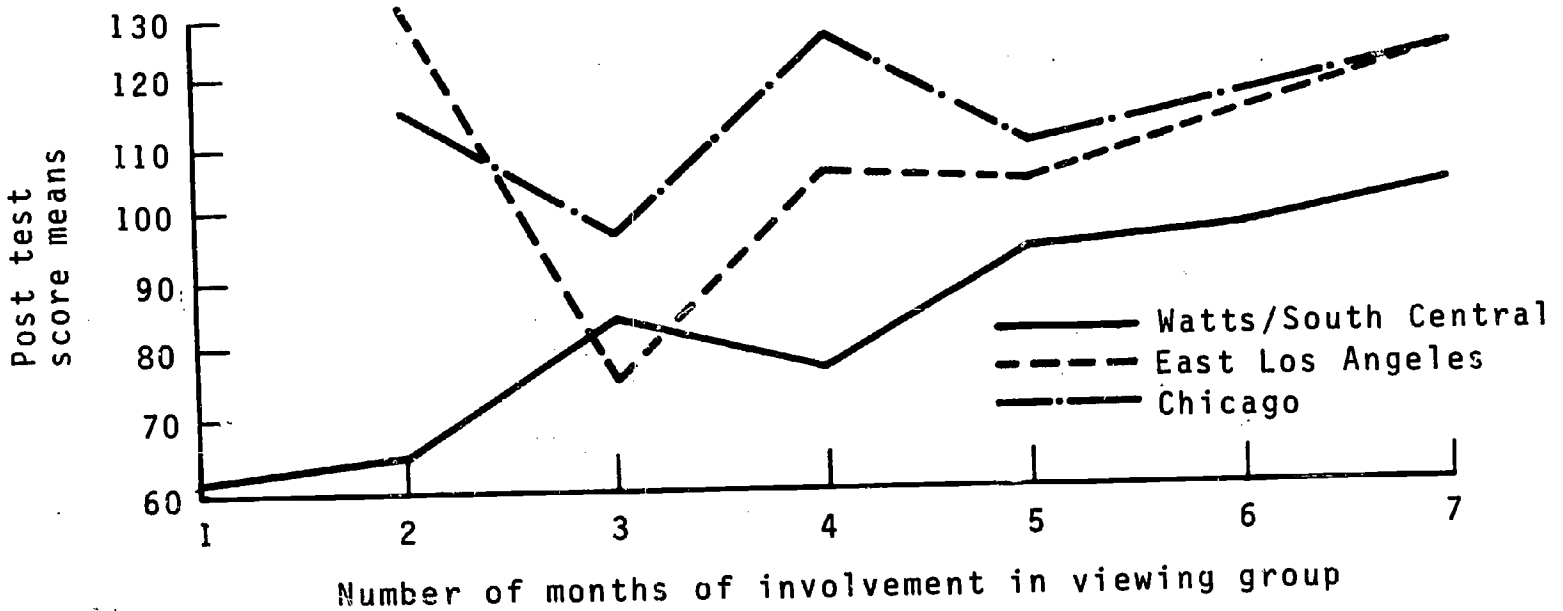
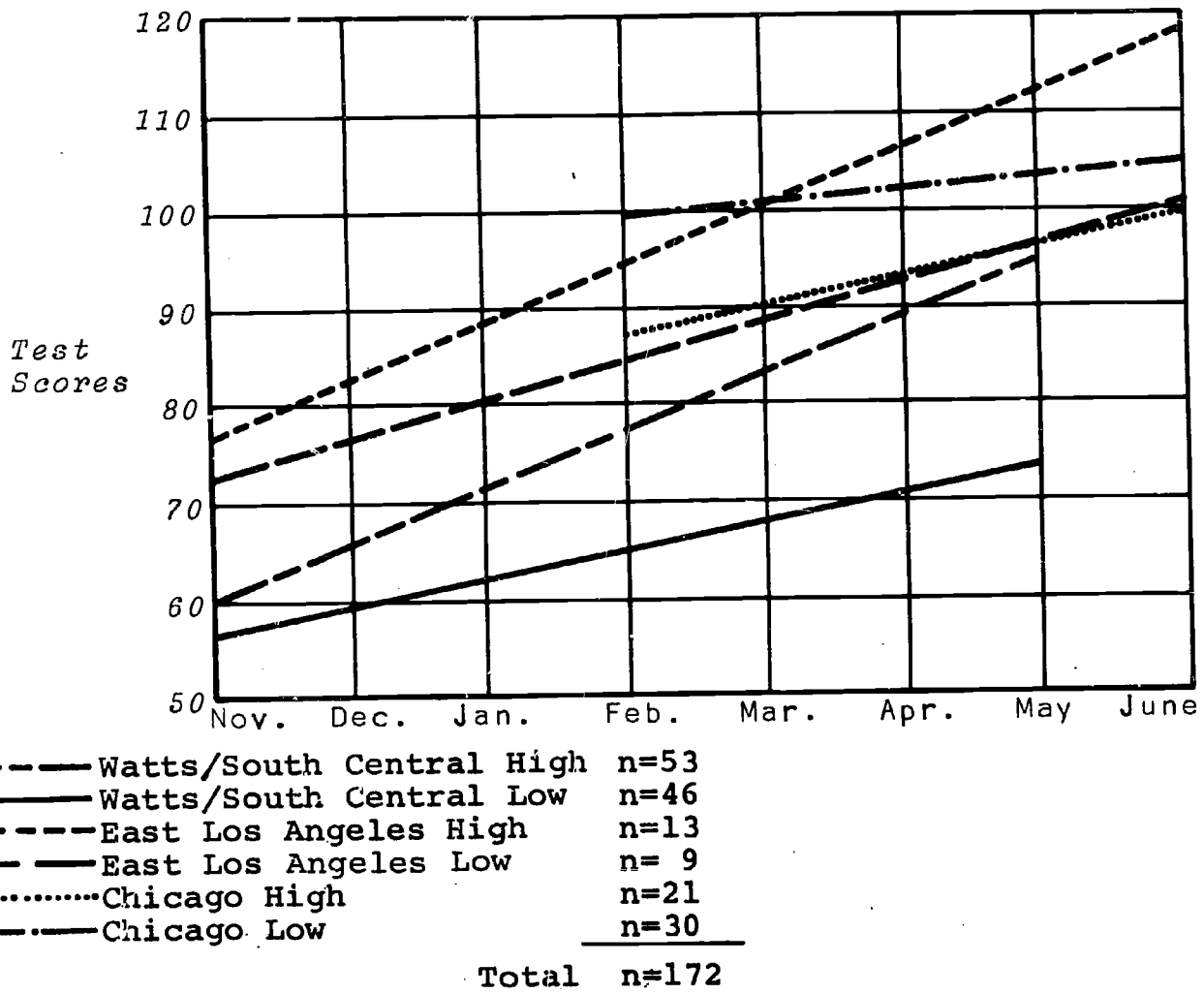


Fig. 8. Post-Test Scores As A Function Of Number Of Months Of Involvement.

Watts/South Central--When total SSTB scores were used the criterion set of statistical tests was obtained. Those tests indicated that both groups showed improvement during the Sesame Mother Project but the high involvement group showed significantly greater benefit.

When analyzed, significant improvement was seen in all but three of the 34 subtest means of the high involvement group (Table 5). These three subtests were matching by position, recognizing letters, and letter sounds. For the means of the low involvement group, improvement occurred in all but 11 of the subtests. The subtests on which improvement did not occur were primarily concerned with letters, pre-reading skills, recognizing numbers, relational terms and classification. Further analysis indicated that the criterion set was obtained for 14 of the 34 subtests (Table 5, Analysis IV).

East Los Angeles--As was the case with the Watts/South Central groups, there was no difference in the pre-test means of the high and low involvement groups in this area. The high involvement group showed significant improvement. The low involvement group improved but the improvement was not significant at the .05 level. This may possibly be due to the small sample size (n=9) of the low involvement group. There was a significant difference in the post-test means of the high and low involvement groups. It can be concluded that the high involvement group improved as a result of the program, and that the low involvement group improved, but not significantly. Again, more involvement resulted in more improvement.

When the 34 subtest means of the high involvement group were analyzed, improvement was noted in 24 cases. Subtests in which significant improvement was not shown concerned function of body parts, forms, initial sounds,

pre-reading skills, number recognition, counting strategies, and double classification. The low involvement group showed improvement in only 16 cases. This group tended to do best with numbers, classification, and sorting skills. Further analysis indicated that in only three subtests was the improvement of the high and low involvement groups significantly different (Table 5, Analysis IV). The smaller sample size and associated higher variability of the test scores for this group may in part account for failure of this group to show the same number of significant differences evidenced in the Watts/South Central group.

Chicago--Grand Boulevard--The data for the Chicago tests is difficult to interpret. Children in Chicago were pre-tested after participating in the study for at least a month and the test administrators were not as experienced as their counterparts in Los Angeles.

Note that in Table 4 the pre-test scores for the low involvement group were higher than those for the high involvement group, although the difference did not attain statistical significance. The high involvement group did improve significantly ($p < .05$) while the low involvement group improved, but not significantly. There was little difference between the two groups on post-test means.

Summary of SSTB Findings--Discounting somewhat the data obtained from the Chicago group, it is encouraging that the data obtained in Los Angeles is highly consistent. Children involved in the Sesame Mother Project demonstrated improvement in the skills taught through Sesame Street, and more involvement resulted in more improvement.¹¹ As

¹¹ While these results are consistent with the hypothesis i.e., the Sesame Mother Project did contribute to the improvement noted in the children, these data will nonetheless need to be compared with any data collected by ETS that might be utilized as "control" or anchor data.

noted in Analyses III and IV in Table 5, analyses of covariance and the pattern of tests satisfying the criterion set yield identical inferences for each group on each subtest.

Age Contributed to Higher Post-Test Scores--As expected, older children did better on the ETS/CTW tests. In the Watts/South Central area of Los Angeles, the correlation between age and post-test total scores was .41, and in East Los Angeles, the correlation was .44. In Chicago the correlation between age and the post-test scores was .11.

Boys Did as Well as Girls on Post-Test Scores--Table 6 shows a comparison of girls and boys post-test

TABLE 6. COMPARISON OF BOYS AND GIRLS POST-TEST
(Total Scores)

| | | WSC | ELA | CHI |
|-------|------|-------|--------|--------|
| BOYS | N | 44 | 7 | 31 |
| | MEAN | 87.57 | 118.43 | 102.32 |
| | S.D. | 31.13 | 36.93 | 16.83 |
| GIRLS | N | 55 | 15 | 20 |
| | MEAN | 87.47 | 107.53 | 102.19 |
| | S.D. | 31.13 | 31.55 | 11.99 |

Key: WSC = Watts/South Central
 ELA = East Los Angeles
 CHI = Chicago--Grand Boulevard

scores. The scores are highly comparable in each of the geographic areas. The difference of eleven points in the East Los Angeles area may be attributable to sampling variability; however, this difference was not significant.

LARGE VERSUS SMALL VIEWING GROUPS

An analysis of covariance was made comparing the SSTB post-test scores of children in a large viewing group with those in a small viewing group as a covariate. The large viewing group consisted of 30 to 45 children with five volunteers; the small viewing groups consisted of five to eight children with one Sesame Mother for each viewing group. These data indicated that children in small viewing groups did better, but this difference was not significant (see Table 7).

TABLE 7. COMPARISON OF LARGE AND SMALL VIEWING GROUPS

| | <u>Large Group</u> | <u>Small Group</u> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sample size | 30 | 69 |
| Average number of months of involvement | 3.73 | 3.78 |
| Average post-test scores | 71.37 | 83.57 |

Although mean differences obtained failed to differ significantly, the results are in the predicted direction. However, this finding should not imply that large viewing groups effect performance changes equal to those of small groups.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES

Data collected with the IED Child's Attitude Record were received on 165 children from Watts/South Central, 43 children from East Los Angeles, and 118 children from Chicago. The results are presented in Figure 9.

Chi-square analyses of pre- and post-test attitude data were performed to determine whether significant changes in attitude occurred throughout the project. In the Watts/South Central group improvement occurred in 28 out of 30 items measuring socially desirable behavior. Improvement was significant on three of the 30 items ($p < .05$). In the East Los Angeles group, improvement occurred in 22 of the items with improvement being significant ($p < .05$) in three of the 30 items. In Chicago, improvement was observed in 18 of the items 9 of which were significant at the .05 level.¹² Combining the three geographic areas, the most gain was observed in the following:

Child gained confidence in doing new things.

Child improved in communicating with Sesame Mother.

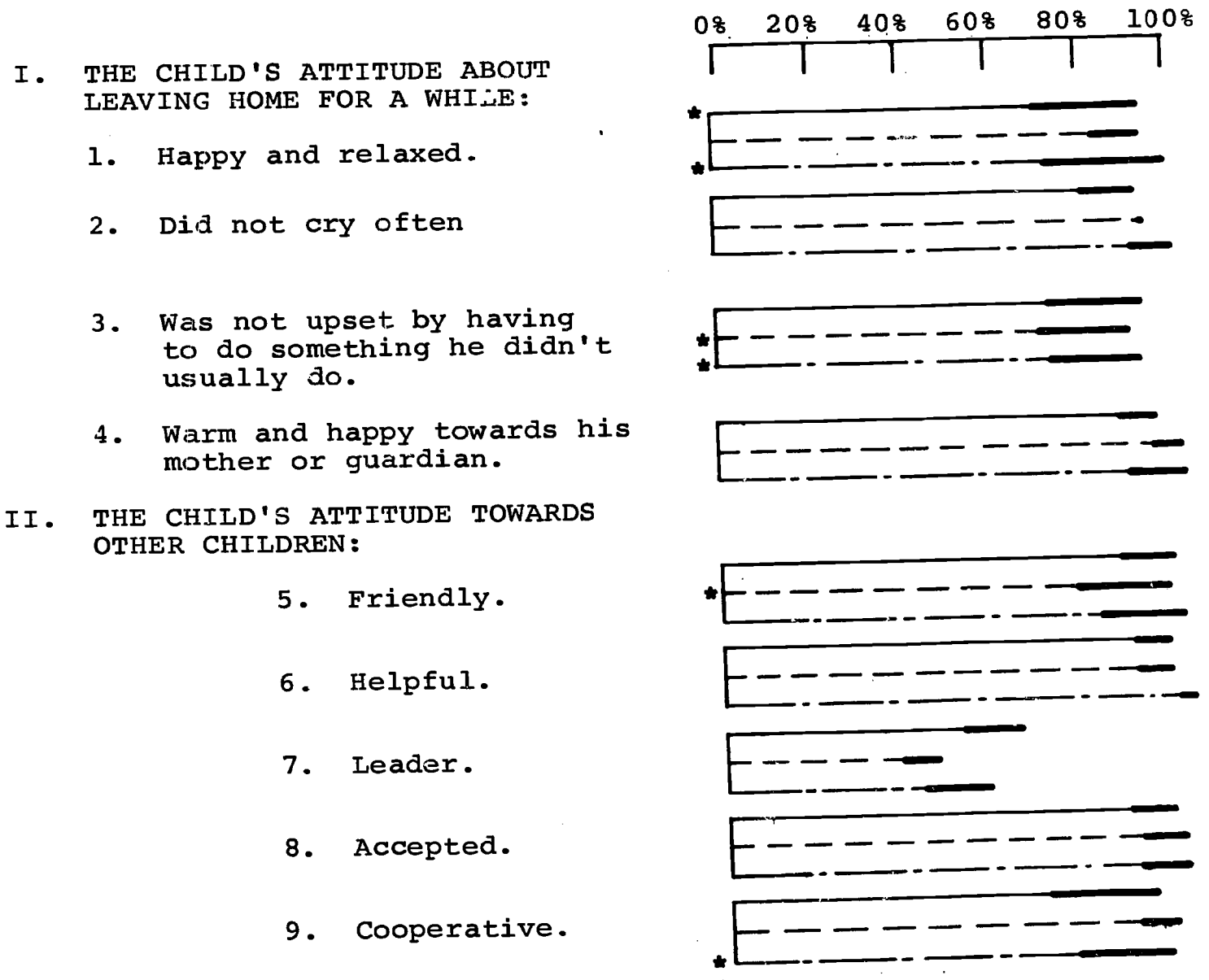
Child's empathy towards Sesame Street characters improved.

Child developed leadership qualities.

Child became more friendly with other children.

Child talked about Sesame Mother as being his teacher.

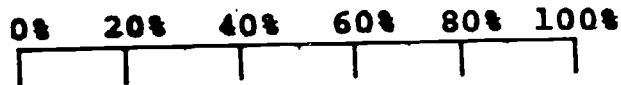
¹²Assistance in the data analysis and interpretation phase were provided by Dr. Otto H. Heuckeroth of the IED staff and Dr. Robert L. McCornack, IED Project Associate who is Director of Institutional Studies at San Diego State College.



_____ Watts/South Central (at beginning of project) n=165
 - - - - - East Los Angeles (at beginning of project) n=43
 - · - · - Chicago (at beginning of project) n=118
 _____ Gain observed (at completion of the project)
 ~~~~~ Negative gain observed (at completion of the project)  
 \* Significant gain observed ( $p < .05$ ) using  $X^2$  analysis.

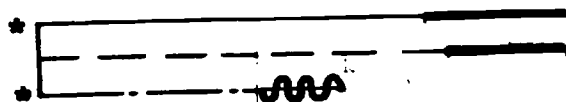
Fig. 9. Child Attitude Record Results



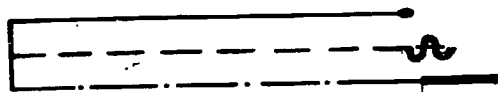


III. THE CHILD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SESAME MOTHER:

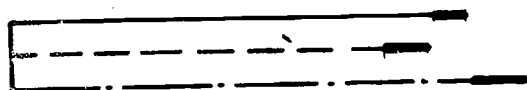
10. Responsive to Sesame Mother.



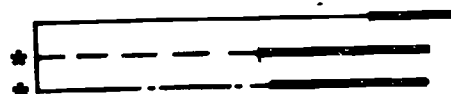
11. Did not tend to cling close to Sesame Mother.



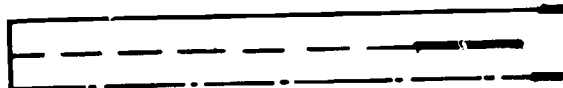
12. Did not demand more attention than most children.



13. Friendly.



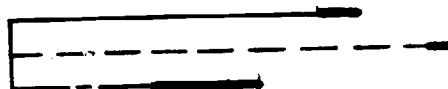
14. Trusting.



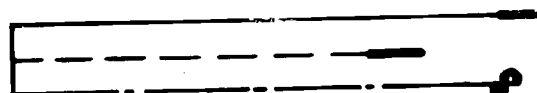
15. Made an effort to talk with Sesame Mother.



16. Showed that he liked being praised.



17. Did not resent being corrected.

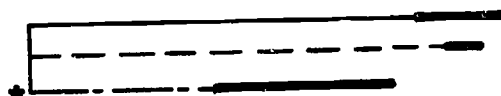


18. Talked about the Sesame Mother as being his teacher.

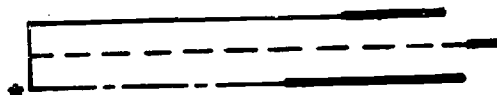


IV. THE CHILD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SESAME STREET PROGRAM:

19. Participated in singing and counting games on show.

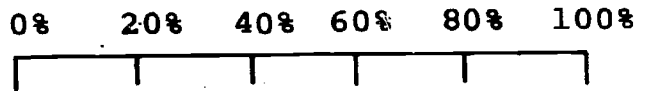


20. Showed feelings about the Sesame Street characters.



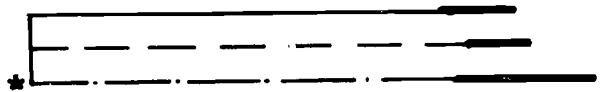
- Watts/South Central (at beginning of project) n=165
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- ===== Gain observed (at completion of the project)
- ~~~~~ Negative gain observed (at completion of the project)
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Fig. 9. (continued) 55



IV. THE CHILD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SESAME STREET PROGRAM:

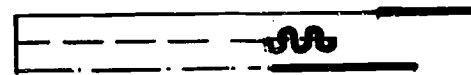
21. Usually alert and attentive.



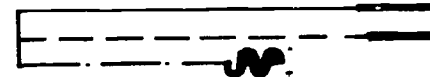
22. Spoke a lot and understandably.



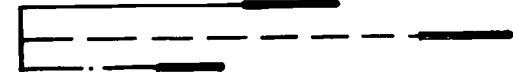
23. Not easily distracted.



24. Obeyed limits and rules set by Sesame Mother.



25. Enjoyed sharing experience with others.

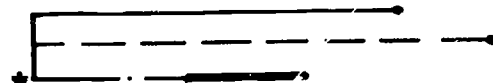


V. THE CHILD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ATTENDING REGULAR SCHOOL:

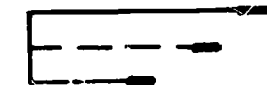
26. Talked about going to school with older children.



27. Referred to Sesame Street sessions as "his school."



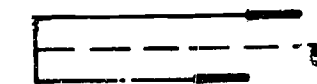
28. Asked for homework to be given to him.



29. Talked about trying to learn to count before going to regular school.



30. Talked about trying to learn the alphabet before going to regular school.



- Watts/South Central (at beginning of project) n=165
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- Gain observed (at completion of the project)
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- ~~~~~ Significant gain observed ( $p < .05$ ) using  $X^2$  analysis.

Fig. 9. (continued)

## PARENT'S EVALUATIONS

Both the Sesame Mothers and other parents tended to be highly positive in their evaluations of children. Most thought that the Sesame Mother Project had helped their children in many of the learning skills specified on the "Evaluation of Viewing Group" form. Major results obtained from analyzing the data are presented graphically in Figure 10. Parents felt that children were helped most in these areas:

- Learning to identify parts of the body and their use;
- Becoming more sure of themselves;
- Knowing how to identify things found in the home with things seen on the Sesame Street program;
- Getting interested in books and magazines;
- Learning cooperation and good manners;
- Recognizing community personnel such as butchers, mailmen, policemen, firemen, etc. and understanding the job of each;
- Improving ability to play "nicely" with other boys and girls.