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ABSTRACT

This research study examines the types of social behaviors portrayed by families in various television series and explores children's impressions of the TV family members. Content analysis of nine family-oriented TV series was employed to describe the ranges of behaviors of fathers, mothers and children on television. Eleven shows from each series was taped. Behaviors portrayed were coded as being either pro-social or anti-social. Survey data were collected from 388 children in second, fifth and eighth grades. Each child interviewed was asked to "Describe a (character) so that someone would know what he was like, and why he was like that" in order to elicit children's impressions of father, mother and child characters from two series. Results of the analyses indicated that depictions of families on television are fairly pro-social. Fathers' and children's behaviors were mixed, while mothers' behaviors were consistently pro-social. Children at all three ages fairly accurately perceived TV characters' behavior patterns. Both father and child characters were uniformly well liked by the children regardless of their behavior patterns, while mother characters were less well liked overall. It is suggested that future research should investigate how TV character portrayals might build children's expectations of how people should behave. (Author/RH)

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## Children's Impressions of Television Families

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Research on the effects of television on children has tended to focus on children's learning of social behaviors from television (Surgeon General's Report, 1972; Stein and Friedrich, 1975). Frequently, research has examined such social learning without reference to the characters who portray these behaviors. Similarly, far too little attention has been devoted to children's understanding of social roles and interpretations and evaluations of television characters apart from the social behaviors such TV characters portray (see for example Leifer, Gordon and Graves, 1974). Since behaviors are performed by characters one might expect that children's evaluations of televised behaviors may be modified by their interpretations and evaluations of the characters themselves. For example, aggressive actions by "funny" characters may be interpreted differently than violent actions by "sinister-villian" type characters. Consequently, since social roles are elaborated by specific characters engaging in a variety of social actions, research focusing on children's interpretations and evaluations, or impressions of characters on television should lead to better understanding of children's social learning from the medium. Social role learning from television should include children's learning about the range of acceptable behaviors, attitudes and norms appropriate for various roles.

Indeed, the depiction of social roles, norms, attitudes and behaviors of both a violent and non-violent sort is standard fare in American television.

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Of particular interest here is children's learning about appropriate family roles and behaviors from family oriented television programs. In recent years, family relationships have been frequently depicted in both situation comedy formats and "family dramas." Child viewers may acquire much socially important information about how families—particularly fathers, mothers and children—are supposed to behave by watching such programming. To this end, this research study was designed to examine the types of social behaviors portrayed by various television families and child viewers' impressions of these television family members.

A general assumption underlies the research: children's social learning from complex naturalistic stimuli such as television programs is, in part, a function of their age-related cognitive capabilities. Support for this assumption comes from a variety of studies examining children's comprehension of television content (e.g., Collins, 1975; Flapan, 1968; Leifer and Roberts, 1972; and Ward, Wackman and Wartella, 1977). These cognitive capabilities may affect both understanding of a given televised episode, and children's impressions of characters across a series. Learning from television, then, is assumed to be influenced by the interaction of cognitive capabilities and the stimulus characteristics of television programs.

A program of research carried out by Collins and his associates (Collins, 1975) has provided evidence that both age-related information processing skills and bases for judgment of social acts affect children's understanding and evaluation of the social content of television programs. Similarly, research on impression formation, or how children develop understanding of other persons, has found that children's impressions of others (both real-life and TV characters) are influenced by the child's general cognitive abilities to organize and relate information about their world (Gollin, 1968; Iversly and Bromley,

1973; and Wartella and Alexander, 1978). Thus we should expect that children's social learning about television families should follow a developmental pattern.

In order to assess both the range of behaviors portrayed by television families and children's impressions of such characters, two types of data were collected in the current study. Content analysis of 10 family-oriented television shows was employed to describe the range of behaviors of fathers, mothers and children on television. Secondly, children in second, fifth and eighth grades were surveyed about their impressions of several of these television families. A brief description of each of these data sets is provided below.

#### Content Analysis

A forty percent sample of all the late afternoon and evening TV series that involved family settings broadcast in the Twin Cities area during the 1975-76 season were taped for content analysis. These included three dramatic series—Little House on the Prairie, The Waltons, and Swiss Family Robinson—and seven situation comedies—The Brady Bunch, The Partridge Family, All in the Family, Good Times, Happy Days, The Jeffersons, and Phyllis. Of these, eight series continued from prior years, and two were new in fall, 1975—Swiss Family Robinson and Phyllis. For each series, we taped three shows during September, and two each during the following four months. Thus, eleven shows from each series were taped.

Behaviors portrayed were coded as being either pro-social or anti-social. Conceptually, pro-social behaviors are considered to represent a willingness to work with others in attaining goals, using socially acceptable methods. Anti-social behaviors, on the other hand, generally reflect an unwillingness to work with others, or the use of aggressive methods to attain goals. Robert Liebert's research provided the basis for the measurement of pro and anti-social behaviors. In his research, five major cate-

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gories of pro-social behavior and one category of anti-social behavior (aggression) are distinguished. In this study, the same five pro-social behavior categories were retained, but for each of the categories, anti-social behaviors at the opposite end of the same continuum were identified. The major categories of behaviors and specific behaviors included within each category are as follows:

- | <u>Pro-Social</u>   | <u>Anti-Social</u>  |
|---|---|
| 1. Altruism<br>a. Sharing<br>b. Helping<br>c. Cooperating   | 1. Refusing altruism<br>a. Refusing to Share<br>b. Ignoring request/<br>refusing to help<br>c. Refusing to cooperate        |
| 2. Expressing remorse<br>a. Admitting mistake/apology<br>b. Attempting to repair<br>physical damage   | 2. Refusing to express remorse<br>a. Refusing to apologize or<br>admit mistake<br>b. Refusing to repair<br>physical damage  |
| 3. Concern for others<br>a. Affection<br>b. Sympathy<br>c. Explaining self (feelings,<br>intentions, interpretations)<br>d. Showing respect | 3. Lack of concern for others<br>a. Rejecting affection<br>b. Rejecting sympathy<br>c. Refusing to listen<br>d. Selfishness |
| 4. Control of aggression<br>a. Control of verbal aggression<br>b. Control of physical aggression  | 4. Aggression<br>a. Verbal aggression<br>b. Ordering/demanding<br>c. Physical aggression<br>d. Non-verbal aggression        |
| 5. Resisting temptation<br>a. Resisting wrongdoing  | 5. Succumbing to temptation<br>a. Doing dishonest/devilish<br>things  |

The ten major categories and 16 specific behaviors represent a relatively complete catalogue of both pro and anti-social behaviors. However, there are many other social behaviors which are not clearly either pro or anti-social such as conversational statements, joking, laughter and many nonverbal cues. These neutral behaviors, which in this research accounted for nearly two-thirds

of the television characters' behavior, were not coded. Therefore, in the analysis below, data reported indicate the relative frequency of pro and anti-social behavior when a behavior was either clearly pro-social or anti-social.

About 150 behaviors were coded per half hour show, or one behavior every ten seconds. Coders viewed each show three times, stopping the show as often as necessary to fill in details regarding each behavior and verifying initial coding. Although coders had a relatively low agreement in their identification of behaviors to be coded (about 60 percent), when there was agreement that a specific behavior was to be coded, there was high agreement on the behavioral category (86 percent). Also, after all of the coding was completed, the coders always had high agreement on the total number of behaviors coded (within ten percent) and on the distribution of pro and anti-social behaviors coded (mean correlation of .91 for the major behavior categories).

### Survey

The data reported here were collected in the second wave of a panel survey conducted in October, 1975 and May, 1976 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The panel survey was designed to examine developmental changes in children's interpretations of television series and characters and the subjects own social behavior. After ascertaining the frequency with which children viewed each of the ten "target" family oriented programs the children were subsequently interviewed for their impressions of father, mother and child characters on each of two of these programs.

An open ended question, similar to that used by Livesly and Bromley (1973) was employed to measure children's impressions of the TV characters. It asked the children to indicate the kind of person the character was: "Describe (character) so that someone would know what he was like and why he

was like that." Interviewers recorded verbatim the children's responses to the task. Coding of the answers utilized a complicated coding scheme which indicated whether the child was making an interpretation in terms of appearance or identify characteristics, behavioral actions, or personality traits or motivations as well as whether the assertions about the character was positive (mention of pro-social characteristics), negative (mention of anti-social characteristics) or neutral. Subsequent to the impression description task the children were asked how much they liked each character and how realistic each character appeared to them.

In order to operationalize the developmental aspects of the research design, subjects from three age groups spanning six years of the cognitive development continuum were sampled--second, fifth and eighth grades. In October, 1975, a random sample of 510 names of children were made from lists of students at five grade schools and two junior high schools in the Mounds View school district in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota. Four hundred and twenty children were interviewed in the Fall, 1975. The data reported here were collected in May, 1976 in followup interviews with 388 of the children, including 127 second graders, 138 fifth graders and 128 eighth graders. In each group, approximately equal numbers of boys and girls were interviewed.

#### Content Analysis Results

In the data to be presented in this section, data for only nine of the ten series we taped are reported. Phyllis has been deleted from consideration because, as the series progressed, her daughter assumed a very minor role and was not even written into a number of shows. Thus, this series did not really qualify as a family series.

For purposes of analysis, the series were grouped into two categories, based on our expectations that the father characters in each group would vary

in their multi-dimensionality of pro and anti social behaviors\* Five series are included in Group I shows, unidimensional, strongly pro-social category,-- the three family dramas (Little House, Waltons, and Swiss Family Robinson) and two situation comedies (Brady Bunch and Partridge Family). Group II, multidimensional father programs, are those in which we expected the father to be depicted in less strongly positive terms with substantial doses of anti-social as well as pro-social behavior. Four series, all of which are sitcoms, are included in this category (All in the Family, Good Times, Happy Days, and Jeffersons). We based our classification on our general impressions of the various series.

As Table 1 indicates, each program generally included more pro-social behavior than anti-social. However, as we expected, the unidimensional father series were more heavily pro-social with almost three-fourths of the coded behaviors being pro-social, compared to less than three-fifths in the multi-dimensional father series.

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Table 1 about here

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In terms of the major categories of social behaviors coded on each of these shows, three categories dominate, accounting for about 90 percent of the behaviors performed in the series. Almost half of the behaviors depicted involved showing concern for others in one way or another, and one-seventh were altruistic behaviors--helping, sharing, or cooperating. On the other hand

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\*In the survey, we asked children to repond to two series, one of which was chosen from the Group I father-series and one from the second group of father series. Our intention in doing this was to insure that children would be responding to characters--fathers--who differed considerably in their social behavior.



one-fourth of the behaviors were anti-social, aggressive behaviors of which 75 percent are verbal aggressive behaviors including verbal attacks (insulting, jeering, threatening, etc.) and demands (insistent demands for actions, commands involving yelling or hostility, etc.). The relatively low incidence of physical aggression (14 percent) is to be expected given the family nature of these programs. (Data not shown; reported in Wackman, Collins and Wartella, 1976).

The major behavioral focus of these series, then, involves two pro-social behaviors--helping behaviors and explanations of feelings, intentions, and actions--and one anti-social behavior--verbal aggression. These three behaviors account for over 54 percent of all the coded behaviors.

A second major interest in the analysis is the character performing the behavior. As we indicated previously, we expected major differences in the behavior of fathers in the two groups of series. But we were also interested in examining possible differences in the behavior of mother and child characters.

In all but two series involving both parent families--Waltons and Happy Days--the father was a dominant character in terms of the number of behaviors coded, but in only three series was the mother a dominant character--Brady Bunch, Good Times, and, of course, Partridge Family, which had no father character. In three series, one of the child characters played an equally dominant role with one or both parents--Little House, Partridge Family, and Good Times--and in two series, adolescent characters played the dominant role--John-Boy in Waltons, and Fonzie and Richie in Hippy Days. Thus, in most series the father character was a dominant character, either standing alone in his domination of the series--All in the Family, Jeffersons, and Swiss Family Robinson--or sharing domination with his wife or one of his children.

What is the portrayal of the various characters? As Table 2 indicates our expectations about the portrayal of unidimensional and multidimensional fathers is solidly confirmed. Group I fathers' behavior is heavily positive by a ratio of four to one pro- to anti-social behavior, whereas Group II fathers are portrayed relatively more negatively with a 60/40 ratio of anti-social to pro-social behaviors. Only one of the latter group fathers performed more pro- than anti-social behaviors. On the other hand, mothers are uniformly portrayed in a positive manner with all but two mothers performing at least 70 percent pro-social behaviors. Similarly, child characters are portrayed in a positive manner, although generally they are not as pro-social in their behavior as positive fathers or mothers. Interestingly, male and female child characters both exhibit two-thirds pro-social and one-third anti-social behaviors, indicating little difference between the portrayal of child characters of the opposite sexes in these series. Only two of the child characters exhibited more anti-social behavior than pro-social behavior--Fonzie in Happy Days, and Peter in Brady Bunch--and two other exhibited about equal anti- and pro-social behavior--Mary Ellen in Waltons and Thelma in Good Times.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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Four shows have been selected for further analysis based on the number of children who discussed characters on each of the original ten programs possible for them to discuss. Children were only questioned about characters on two television series, one from each Group of programs. From Group I shows Partridge Family and Little House on the Prairie were selected for further analysis and were discussed by 195 and 54 children respectively. From Group II shows,

further analysis will be conducted on All in the Family and Happy Days discussed by 54 and 244 children respectively.

Table 3 presents data on the percentage of pro-social and anti-social behaviors coded in each of the eight major behavior categories for fathers, mothers, and child characters on the four selected programs. These data suggest that nearly all of the characters who appear regularly in these series are presented in a relatively positive light, performing substantially more pro-social than anti-social behaviors. For instance, for both Little House on the Prairie and Partridge Family showing concern for others prerepresents the majority of behaviors coded. This is overwhelmingly the case for Little House where clearly three-quarters of the behaviors coded for the father and mother character and over half of the behaviors coded for the child character, Laura, fall in this category. Thus, one would expect that these characters present a relatively uniformly positive role model for child viewers.

On the other hand, several family characters portrayed on All in the Family and Happy Days are more differentiated in terms of their pro-social and anti-social behaviors. For instance, over half of the codable behaviors for Archie Bunker are aggressive behaviors as are two-third of the behaviors for Howard Cunningham. Similarly, Fonzie represents a highly mixed character type in that most of the codable behaviors for this character are accounted for by the two categories of aggression (42 percent) and showing concern for others (31 percent). These characters, thus, present mixed types and afford an opportunity to examine children's abilities to integrate mixed behavioral patterns of a character in developing an impression. Additionally, it should be noted that these characters are frequently portrayed in humorous contexts; therefore, it may be that the humor modifies the impact of these more anti-social

behavior portrayals on children's interpretations of the characters. To determine the kinds of interpretations children do make of these television characters, we turn our attention to the data collected in the survey.

### Children's Impressions of Family Characters

Children were asked to discuss three characters on each of two television shows of interest. The procedure began by asking the children which character on the show was his/her favorite character. Children chose a child character 85 percent of the time, and when this was the case, the respondent was asked a series of questions about the child character first. Next he/she was asked the same questions about the father character, followed by identical questions about the mother character.

Children's free descriptions of the characters were subsequently content analyzed into three major categories: identity/appearance characteristics, behaviors and personality traits/motivations. Up to five assertions about each character were coded for analysis.

In general children's free descriptions of television characters confirmed age-related findings of previous research on children's impressions of others. Children in the two youngest age groups, second and fifth grades, are more likely to describe characters in terms of appearance/identity characteristics or surface attributes than are eighth graders. Similarly, children in these two age groups are less likely than eighth graders to use trait/motivation assertions in their descriptions, although this relationship holds most strongly for the mother and child characters discussed. Fifth and eighth graders are more likely to describe characters in terms of behavioral actions than are children in the youngest age group.

Overall analysis of the children's impressions of all television characters

do support previous research findings, that as children grow older they tend to mention more internally based attributes (such as personality traits) of the described person. It is interesting to note, however, that unlike descriptions children give for real people (e.g., Livesley and Bromley) TV characters' actions form the preponderance of children's impressions at each grade, with 85 percent of all children mentioning at least one behavior for each character discussed. In this sense, descriptions of TV characters do diverge from descriptions of real life people. (Data not presented; see Wartella and Alexander, 1978).

Children's impressions of each character were also examined for assertions of anti-social, pro-social and neutral characteristics. Each behavior or trait/motivation assertion about a character was classified into each of these three categories based on the general conceptual framework used in the content analysis. Most of the assertions about characters were neutral statements, e.g., "He talks to Fonzie a lot," "She's trying to find a job," "They got married," "He's different," "He has troubles," etc. Children also gave many pro and anti-social assertions. The mean number of pro-social, neutral and anti-social assertions (each with a possible range of 1 to 5) for each of the characters on the four family shows are presented in Table 4.

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Table 4 about here

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Examination of this table indicates that the characters on Little House and Partridge Family are generally perceived by all children in pro-social terms. This is consistent with the content analysis of these shows. Indeed, almost no anti-social assertions were made for the mother and father on Little House. The children, Laura and Danny Partridge, by contrast, are seen and described with mixed assertions, neither strongly pro-social nor anti-social. Further, where age differences in the use of the three types of assertions do occur (such

as for the mothers on both shows and the father on Little House), older children, particularly eighth graders are more likely to describe these characters in pro-social terms.

By contrast, children's descriptions of the family characters on Happy Days and All in the Family do include more anti-social assertions than do descriptions of characters in the previous two programs. While both fathers were shown to be similarly mixed in terms of their performance of pro and anti-social behaviors in the content analysis, child viewers describe these two fathers somewhat differently. A higher mean number of anti-social assertions are made at each grade level about Archie Bunker than about Howard Cunningham. Moreover, older fifth and eighth grade children made more pro-social assertions about this latter character than did the younger children. In contrast to the fathers on these shows, neither mother is described in strongly pro-social or anti-social terms although eighth graders did make slightly more anti-social assertions about Marion Cunningham than did younger children. Lastly, the two child characters on these shows are described with more neutral and positive assertions than anti-social assertions. Surprisingly, this is the case for Fonzie even though his behavior was shown to be relatively mixed in the content analysis, with high amounts of pro-social and anti-social behavior.

Might children's assertions about these characters be modified by their liking for each character? Table 5 presents age group means of the children's liking for these TV family characters based on the question: "How much do you like (character)?" Responses were obtained on a four point scale: not at all (1), not too much, a little and a lot (4).

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Table 5 about here

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These data indicate almost no age-related differences in children's liking of each of the television characters discussed. Rather, there do seem to be strong differences by character type, with mothers consistently less well liked than either father or child characters (this held for both males and females). Also, while the father on Little House is perceived by the children as more pro-social than either father on Happy Days or All in the Family, there is relatively small difference in liking of this father over the latter two fathers. As might be expected, Fonzie is almost uniformly liked a lot by children in each age group (overall mean of 3.95).

Lastly, children's perceptions of the realism of the characters was assessed by a single question: "Do you think (Child/Father/Mother Character) acts like kids/mothers/fathers in real life?" Three response alternatives were provided—yes, sometimes, and no. These data are presented in Table 6.

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Table 6 about here

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Children in the oldest age group perceive all of the characters on the unidimensional, pro-social programs as less realistic than do children in the younger two age groups. However, in judging the reality of characters on the multidimensional shows, Happy Days and All in the Family, there are relatively minor differences among the three age groups. Moreover, second and fifth graders judge mothers and fathers on these latter two shows to be less realistic than their counterparts on the unidimensional, pro-social programs, but eighth graders do not make this distinction for mother and father characters.

All children do distinguish between child characters on the two types of shows, with the children on the multidimensional shows being viewed as more realistic. Also, Fonzie of Happy Days is viewed as most realistic, with over 50% of all children reporting him as "real." On the other hand, over 40% of all

children view Laura and Danny Partridge as "not real."

### Summary

Social role depictions of families on television present fairly pro-social portrayals of family characters. Mothers particularly were found to be the most uniformly and consistently pro-social in their behavior. On the other hand, fathers on television programs, typically the most dominant character in the program, fell into one of two categories: strongly unidimensional, pro-social fathers, such as Charles Ingalls of Little House on the Prairie; or more mixed, multidimensional fathers such as Howard Cunningham of Happy Days who present both pro-social and aggressive behaviors. Child characters similarly portray mixed behavior patterns on most family oriented programs. The major categories of pro-social behaviors depicted on the programs are showing concern for others and altruistic behaviors; verbal aggression, such as yelling and jeering account for the preponderance of anti-social behaviors. It would appear then, that children are presented with a fairly limited range of family models from television, with mothers on TV presenting the most restricted range of behaviors followed by child and father characters.

Examination of children's assertions of pro-social, neutral and anti-social characteristics to several selected families on television, indicates that at all three age groups, children fairly accurately perceive characters' behavior patterns. However, when describing mixed behavior pattern characters, eighth graders are more likely than the younger children to note the character's anti-social tendencies. Both father and child characters are uniformly well liked by the children regardless of their behavior patterns, while mother characters are less well liked overall. Seemingly, "liking" of characters does not modify children's perceptions of their behavior nor vice versa. However, perceptions of realism of the characters does seem to be affected by the character's behavior



portrayals for at least two character types: younger children report that the unidimensional, pro-social mothers and fathers are more realistic than the multidimensional fathers and mothers. Similarly, the child characters on the multidimensional shows are viewed as more realistic than the other child characters. Perhaps the children's abilities to identify with child characters increases this perception of realism.

A fairly benign interpretation of these results can be offered: both types of behaviors depicted on family-centered television programs and children's interpretations of these characters is of a pro-social nature. Perhaps the only jarring finding in the research is the relatively stereotyped portrayals of mother characters in television. They are accurately perceived in pro-social terms by the children and are uniformly less well liked by all age groups than are father or child characters. This latter finding may primarily reflect the less dominant role of television mothers on the various series discussed here.

If it is the case that the range of characters depicted on television is restricted, what impact may this have on the child viewer? It seems likely that television may have an impact on children's expectations of how people should behave in real-life. Consequently, where the range of character portrayals is limited, subsequent expectations of real-life roles for child viewers may also be limited. This would seem to be at the center of the issue of diversity in program portrayals. Future research should address the issue of how television character portrayals might build expectations of how people should behave for the child viewer.

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TABLE 1

## Percentage of Pro-social and Anti-social Behaviors by TV Series

	<u>GROUP I</u>					<u>GROUP II</u>				
	<u>Little House</u>	<u>The Waltons</u>	<u>Swiss Family</u>	<u>Brady Bunch</u>	<u>Partridge Family</u>	<u>All in Family</u>	<u>Happy Days</u>	<u>Good Times</u>	<u>Jeffer-sons</u>	<u>Total Total</u>
PRO-SOCIAL	79% (1807)	76% (1716)	66% (1168)	66% (922)	62% (677)	57% (1084)	60% (907)	60% (1194)	54% (974)	65% (10449)
ANTI-SOCIAL	21% (481)	24% (545)	34% (608)	34% (484)	38% (421)	43% (803)	40% (597)	40% (781)	46% (815)	35% (5535)
TOTAL	100% (2288)	100% (2261)	100% (1776)	100% (1406)	100% (1098)	100% (1887)	100% (1504)	100% (1975)	100% (1789)	100% (15984)

TABLE 2

## Percentage of Pro-social and Anti-social Character Behaviors Across TV Series

	<u>Group I Father</u>	<u>Group II Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Male Child</u>	<u>Female Child</u>	<u>Total</u>
PRO-SOCIAL	79% (1026)	40% (762)	75% (2249)	65% (1845)	68% (1041)	65% (6923)
ANTI-SOCIAL	21% (270)	60% (1146)	25% (738)	35% (1109)	32% (498)	35% (3761)
TOTAL BEHAVIORS CODED FOR EACH CHARACTER	12% (1296)	18% (1908)	28% (2987)	28% (2954)	28% (1539)	100% (10684)

TABLE 3

Percentage of Pro-social and Anti-social Category Behaviors Coded for Father, Mother, and Child Characters on Four Series

I. Little House on the Prairie

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Laura</u>
Altruism	46.1%	17.9%	13.4%
Anti-altruism	1.7	1.4	1.8
Apology	1.0	1.0	1.8
Anti-apology	0	0	0
Concern	74.3	71.5	57.9
Anti-concern	.2	0	2.6
Control of Agression	.5	.5	.8
Agression	4.8	4.3	18.7
	(N = 411)	(N = 200)	(N = 369)

II. Partridge Family

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Keith</u>	<u>Laurie</u>
Altruism	11.9%	13.8%	15.5%
Anti-altruism	5.6	3.2	4.7
Apology	1.6	1.1	3.1
Anti-apology	.4	.5	0
Concern	48.8	41.0	48.1
Anti-concern	.8	2.7	0
Control of Agression	2.0	3.7	2.3
Agression	29.0	34.0	26.4
	(N = 252)	(N = 188)	(N = 129)

(TABLE 3 Contd.)

III.A. Happy Days

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Richie</u>	<u>Fonzie</u>
Altruism	15.5%	23.9%	31.5%	8.6%
Anti-altruism	3.1	.9	2.2	3.9
Apology	1.9	2.7	1.4	2.0
Anti-apology	0	0	0	.5
Concern	33.5	61.1	36.9	31.3
Anti-concern	3.9	.9	2.9	5.1
Control of Agression	3.1	0	1.8	1.6
Agression	36.0	8.0	11.5	42.2
	(N = 156)	(N = 110)	(N = 246)	(N = 410)

IV. All in the Family

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Michael</u>	<u>Gloria</u>
Altruism	5.0%	18.8%	13.9%	12.0%
Anti-altruism	1.7	25.0	.3	1.4
Apology	.9	.8	3.6	2.5
Anti-apology	.3	.3	.6	.4
Concern	26.9	55.6	43.3	42.6
Anti-concern	3.2	3.0	2.7	3.5
Control of Agression	.3	5.7	2.7	1.4
Agression	57.2	12.8	28.8	34.5
	(N = 635)	(N = 363)	(N = 323)	(N = 279)

TABLE 4

Mean Frequencies of Pro-social, Neutral and Anti-social Assertions  
About Each Character by Grade Level

I. Little House on the Prairie

MOTHER:

	<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade (n=15)	.91 *	.43	0
Fifth Grade (n=19)	1.48	.62	.10
Eighth Grade (n=8)	2.4	.80	0

FATHER:

	<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade (n=23)	1.30 *	.43	0
Fifth Grade (n=21)	2.05	.33	.10
Eighth Grade (n=10)	3.10	.40	0

LAURA:

	<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade (n=23)	.73	.73 *	.40
Fifth Grade (n=21)	1.00	1.00	.21
Eighth Grade (n=10)	1.38	1.88	.38

II. Partridge Family

MOTHER:

	<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade (n=61)	.90 **	.48	.15 **
Fifth Grade (n=74)	1.62	.43	.03
Eighth Grade (n=60)	1.73	.48	.03

DANNY:

	<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade (n=31)	.16	1.39	.29
Fifth Grade (n=44)	.27	1.61	.34
Eighth Grade (n=39)	.26	1.51	.41

TABLE 4 contd.

III. Happy Days

<u>MOTHER:</u>		<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade	(n=66)	.74	.65	.03 **
Fifth Grade	(n=92)	.97	.96	.09
Eighth Grade	(n=86)	1.02	.77	.24
<u>FATHER:</u>		<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade	(n=66)	.83.**	.48	.32
Fifth Grade	(n=92)	1.00	.67	.29
Eighth Grade	(n=86)	1.45	.81	.14
<u>PONZIE:</u> <sup>1</sup>		<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade	(n=62)	.89	1.16	.02 **
Fifth Grade	(n=92)	.96	1.35	.06
Eighth Grade	(n=68)	.99	1.27	.19

IV. All in the Family

<u>MOTHER:</u>		<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade	(n=23)	.87	.74	.17
Fifth Grade	(n=17)	.72	1.12	.24
Eighth Grade	(n=14)	.71	.71	.57
<u>FATHER:</u>		<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade	(n=23)	.17	.70	1.48
Fifth Grade	(n=17)	.18	.65	1.71
Eighth Grade	(n=14)	.07	.71	1.92
<u>GLORIA:</u>		<u>Pro-social</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Neutral</u> $\bar{X}$	<u>Anti-social</u> $\bar{X}$
Second Grade	(n=21)	.67	.71 *	.19
Fifth Grade	(n=11)	.91	.46	.09
Eighth Grade	(n=10)	.50	1.50	.10

<sup>1</sup> Too few children chose to describe Richie to make any analysis of this character meaningful

TABLE 5

## Liking of TV Program Characters by Grade Level

I. Little House on the Prairie

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Laura</u>
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$
Second Grade	3.64	2.58	3.53
Fifth Grade	3.74	3.73	3.70
Eighth Grade	3.60	2.50	3.88

II. Partridge Family

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Danny</u>
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$
Second Grade	2.60	3.83
Fifth Grade	2.58	3.84
Eighth Grade	2.28	3.67

III. Happy Days

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Fonzie</u>
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$
Second Grade	3.23	2.32	3.94
Fifth Grade	3.36	2.38	3.96
Eighth Grade	3.60	2.47	3.93

IV. All in the Family

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Gloria</u>
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$
Second Grade	3.30	2.81	3.65
Fifth Grade	3.37	2.56	3.46
Eighth Grade	3.40	2.43	3.55



TABLE 6

## Perceived Realism of TV Characters by Grade Level

I. Little House on the Prairie

	<u>Father</u>			<u>Mother</u>			<u>Child</u>		
	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>
Not Real	0%	22%	10%	5%	14%	10%	46%	39%	50%
Sometimes Real	37	13	80	21	23	70	15	28	38
Real	63	65	10	74	63	20	39	33	12
N =	(22)	(23)	(10)	(19)	(22)	(10)	(13)	(18)	(8)

II. Partridge Family

	<u>Mother</u>			<u>Child</u>		
	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>
Not Real	9%	14%	16%	41%	50%	45%
Sometimes Real	32	20	40	24	25	24
Real	59	65	44	35	25	31
N =	(57)	(75)	(57)	(29)	(44)	(38)

III. Maddy Days

	<u>Father</u>			<u>Mother</u>			<u>Child</u>		
	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>
Not Real	15%	17%	17%	16%	25%	16%	15%	11%	9%
Sometimes Real	42	36	44	17	37	51	22	38	49
Real	42	39	38	30	38	33	62	51	42
N =	(59)	(90)	(82)	(56)	(89)	(80)	(62)	(81)	(64)

IV. All in the Family

	<u>Father</u>			<u>Mother</u>			<u>Child</u>		
	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>5<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>8<sup>th</sup></u>
Not Real	50%	53%	57%	33%	47%	36%	20%	46%	20%
Sometimes Real	27	31	36	33	21	28	35	9	50
Real	23	16	7	33	32	36	45	45	30
N =	(22)	(19)	(14)	(21)	(19)	(14)	(20)	(11)	(10)