DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 137 PS 020 908

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TITLE Individualizing Response to Child Stress in the Preschool Setting: Exploring Practitioner Beliefs Regarding Coaching Coping and Development of Self-Regulation.

PUB DATE Jul 92

NOTE 62p.; Master's field research report, National-Louis University.

PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; Administrators; Anxiety; Classroom Environment; Coping; Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Preschool Teachers; *Self Control; *Stress Management; *Student Behavior; Surveys; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Response; *Teacher Student Relationship

IDENTIFIERS *Coaching; Developmentally Appropriate Programs; National Association Educ of Young Children; *Self Regulation

ABSTRACT

In a study of the attitudes of early childhood professionals, 63 preschool teachers of children ages 3 through 5 and 20 preschool center directors in Naperville, Illinois were surveyed. Statements in the survey were developed using the guidelines from the National Association for the Education of Young Children concerning developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education. Statements recognized situations that cause stress in a child in the preschool setting, namely, lack of awareness of socially approved behaviors on the part of the child; ambiguity and inconsistency of adult communication; information processing overload; lack of perceived control; and individuality of response to stressors. Statements also involved adult recognition that self-control evolves and that young children can learn self-control with the help of a knowledgeable coach. Some statements in the survey concerned issues related to denying children a sense of personal control. Results showed that respondents appeared to agree with most NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate adult-child interactions. A reference list of about 70 items is included. Appendixes include a sample survey and cover letter. (MM)

INDIVIDUALIZING RESPONSE TO CHILD STRESS IN THE PRESCHOOL SETTING: EXPLORING PRACTITIONER BELIEFS REGARDING COACHING COPING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATION

By

Katherine S. Melsa

A field research report

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education,

Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy Program

National College of Education
NATIONAL-LOUIS UNIVERSITY

July, 1992

Acknowledgements

Now that I have reached the end of the process and have constructed all the knowledge necessary for doing this research project, I wish to thank Nancy Nordmann, Ph. D., my research advisor, for her part as my coach. Despite periodic stress when learning, I was supported and learned to cope. I am grateful for standards set by Nancy which have encouraged personal growth.

I also wish to acknowledge the wisdom of the following individuals. These individuals contributed to the groundwork for this thesis, long before the researcher ever thought of enrolling in this program.

Every kid can learn. Golly! You just have to know how to teach them.
Frances M. Smith, my aunt, an elementary teacher for 45 years,
who was very successful at teaching every child.

It doesn't matter how smart you are,
if you can't get along in the world.
G. William Smith, my father,
weekly newspaper publisher and editor

I used to feel that the students' performance on a test
told me whether I had been an effective teacher.
Myrtle Wiese Smith, my mother,
former high school math teacher, my father's partner at the West Liberty Index,
and my model for a lifetime of learning.

Carole Hillman, Ph. D., my core instructor, encouraged me when I needed encouragement. Carole provided another wording for the wisdom I had heard before:

Do you want to be a sage on the stage or a guide on the side?

Barbara Joniak, my employer, was also a source of encouragement. Barb allowed freedom to be a 'reflective practioner'. She was a collegial sounding board.

I am grateful to my husband, James L. Melsa, Ph.D., for his support, counsel, and personal example of the on-going process of learning. Dedication of this thesis is made to him, with love.

July, 1992
Lisle, Illinois

Katherine S. Melsa

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In February 1990, the United States governors and President George Bush adopted a set of education goals for the year 2000. Overall goals are "to ensure that all young Americans are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to be productive citizens and to maintain America's economic competitiveness" (Haycock, 1991). Early childhood professionals are part of this educational effort, because most American children receive preschool and kindergarten or day care services (Katz, 1988).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children was actively advocating quality early childhood programs, prior to 1990's call to action. According to NAEYC, high quality early childhood programs provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children. High quality early childhood programs also respond to the needs of families. A major determinant of program quality is the extent to which knowledge of child development is applied in program practices (Bredekamp, 1987). NAEYC advocates a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or child development for teachers and center directors to provide this knowledge base (Bredekamp, 1984). NAEYC also advocates acceptance of its Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment (Feeney & Kipnis, 1990).

Extremely important to the NAEYC position is the extent to which knowledge of child development is applied in program practices. This extent is the degree to which the program is 'developmentally appropriate'. Developmental appropriateness is best seen in the interactions between adults and children (Bredekamp, 1987).

According to the guidelines offered by NAEYC (Bredekamp, 1987), developmentally appropriate interactions occur when adults have knowledge and expectations of age-appropriate behavior in children. Adults must also recognize and accept individual differences among children. The NAEYC guidelines for adult-child interactions advocate

rapid and direct response to children's needs, desires, and messages; adaptation of adult responses to children's differing styles, abilities, and modes of communication; tolerance of trial and error learning and misconceptions as children's thoughts develop; and "respecting, accepting, and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 11). The guidelines also call for adult alertness to signs of undue child stress, revealed by child behavior; adult awareness of appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques; and adult facilitation of the development of self-control in children.

This researcher, in her years of working with young children, has come to believe that there are three bases of her classroom management techniques. The first involves preventing child stress overload whenever possible through applying knowledge of child development. The second involves working with children's perceptions of the situations that distress them. The third involves assisting children in the development of self-regulation. Coaching desired behavior, after helping reduce child stress to a level at which the child can learn, has been an effective way to assist children in dealing with the stresses of getting along in a group setting. Such coaching has been done as discretely as possible. The researcher has advocated these techniques to student teachers and has spoken of them with colleagues. Many have expressed concerns that negative behavior will be rewarded.

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of a sample of early childhood professionals. Four research questions were chosen: Do these early childhood professionals appear to agree or to disagree with the guidelines for adult-child interactions advocated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children? Do these early childhood professionals agree with practices which can reduce child stress in early childhood group settings? Are these early childhood professionals likely to encourage development of child self-control through coaching of desired child behavior or do they choose, instead, to maintain personal control? Will the survey data reveal the

appropriateness of advocacy for issues related to the NAEYC guidelines for adult-child interactions?

Rationale

Two psychological approaches have competed for educators' attention in the last half century. The behaviorist approach has been dominant over the interactionist approach. Behaviorism makes use of an environment's potential for influencing or controlling human behavior. Interactionists argue for using the reciprocal potential of interaction of environment and individual. This reciprocity may produce changes in both the individual and the environment.

Interactionist psychology facilitates humanist educational philosophy. Educators who are humanists propose that behavior should be governed by the individual. The individual must think of others as well as self and of the future as well as the present. The individual should accept personal responsibility for actions.

In 1987, the National Association for the Education of Young Children published its guidelines for adult-child interactions. Both NAEYC and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) have expressed concern that adult-child interactions should assist the child in developing self-control. The NAEYC guidelines advocate practices consistent with interactionist educational psychology and humanist educational philosophy. NAEYC also advocates this philosophy through its Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment. The stance of ACEI is similar.

The literature provides two complementary theories about interactive, humanist relationships. These are social learning theory and stress and coping theory. The literature includes findings pertinent to early childhood settings. The literature also contains techniques for developmentally-appropriate coaching of coping and adaptation.

Dynamics of Control, Stress, Coping, Adaptation

While social learning theorist Bandura did not deny the importance of the classical and operant conditioning of behaviorist psychology, he recognized a reciprocal relationship between behavior and the environment. The environment may stimulate behavior. Behavior may bring about changes in the environment (Ringness, 1975). Bandura and others have been particularly interested in how cognitive processes function to interpret environmental stimuli and determine choice of behavior, as well as whether the consequences of chosen behavior are reinforcing or not (Bandura, 1989, 1987, 1982; Langer, 1983; Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982; Hamilton, 1982). Among their findings is evidence that personal belief about capability to exercise control is central to behavior choice (Bandura, 1989; Langer, 1983).

Conflict, ambiguity, and overload in the environment make demands on human adaptability and evoke the stress phenomenon. The stress phenomenon includes stressors, individual perception of stress, available coping resources, and individual skill in making coping or adjusting responses when stressed (Honig, 1986a; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982; Selye, 1982). Ability or lack of ability to cope with stress influences well-being, social functioning, and somatic health (Lazarus, DeLongis, Folkman, & Gruen, 1985).

Responses to stress vary from individual to individual and from situation to situation (Honig, 1986a; Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982). Hamilton (1982) reports that stress is a source of information or cognitive data influencing personal decision-making. Having the ability to restructure the initial appraisal of the stressor is a fundamental approach to raising the threshold for vulnerability to stressors (Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982; Hamilton, 1982). Perseverant effort in mastering difficulties leads to the development of 'resilient self-efficacy' (Bandura, 1989).

Stress, Coping, and Adaptation in Early Childhood Settings

Most human stress occurs with learning to deal with recurring cognitive and social stressors (Bandura, 1989). Lifestyle changes in the United States have added to these stresses faced by children as well as adults (Honig, 1986a; Zimiles, 1986).

The way adults deal with the young child's behavior can have a lasting effect on the child's emerging personality (Soderman, 1985). Co-occurring factors may make these adult-child interactions challenging (LaVigna & Donnellan, 1986; Soderman, 1985). It is essential for adults to recognize situational limits of cognitive processing capacity, particularly because children's capacity is in general less than that of adults (Smith, Sera, & Gattuso, 1988).

Developmentally Appropriate Coaching of Coping and Adaptation

Self-control under stress represents a significant aspect of the socialization of children. Self-control demands awareness of socially approved behaviors. A sequence of developments first produces self-control and then self-regulation (Kopp, 1982). Caregivers can have a continuing and facilitating role in the overall progression to self-regulation (Hitz & Driscoll, 1988; Moore, 1986; Soderman, 1985; Kopp, 1982).

In the dynamic interactions of adult and child which can lead to self-regulation, both adult and child may need to alter their behaviors (Buchoff, 1990; Marshall, 1989; Pettit & Bates, 1989; Smith, Sera, & Gattuso, 1988; Honig, 1986a; LaVigna & Donnellan, 1986; Soderman, 1985; Fogel, 1980). Behavior changes can reveal the effectiveness of stress management interventions in learning situations (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982).

An epistemology of practice exists for facilitating adult adjustments when dealing with each child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive needs (Bandura, 1989; Schon, 1987, 1983; Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982; Hamilton, 1982). Schon says this involves reflection-

in-action and coaching. In the process, early childhood professionals are also called to respect the rights of each child equally and to work to promote each child's present and future well-being (Feeney & Kipnis, 1990; Edwards, 1986; Suchara, 1977).

Overview of the Study

This study explored the attitudes of early childhood professionals about adult-child interactions. The researcher developed a survey based on the NAEYC guidelines and on the review of the literature and distributed it to center directors and teachers working with 3-, 4-, and 5-year old children in Naperville, Illinois.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research study, developmentally appropriate practice refers to the age and individual appropriateness of specified adult-child interactions chosen from the NAEYC Guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987).

An early childhood professional in this study is a lead teacher or a preschool or day care center director. A child in this study is a child of three-, four-, or five-years of age enrolled in a preschool program or day care center.

Reciprocal behavior occurs when the adult's behavior changes the child's behavior and the child's behavior also changes the adult's behavior. Two models of adult-child interaction are under consideration in this study: interaction which is reciprocal, and interaction in which the adult might intend to control the child's behavior.

Conflict, ambiguity, and overload in the environment create stress in the individual. Stress produces subjective feelings and bio-chemical responses in the stressed individual. Stress is also a source of information or cognitive data. The stress phenomenon involves a stressor or stressors, individual perception of the stressor, and available coping resources.

Most human stress occurs with learning how to control recurring cognitive and social stressors.

Perception of control is personal belief about capability to exercise control over events that effect the person. Whether the person believes personal control is possible is a key organizing principle of the stress phenomenon.

Coping refers to the way a person responds to stressful events or situations. Coping resources are the repertoire of ways a person has to respond to stressful events or situations. Adaptability refers to how much behavior change is possible for the individual.

Cognitive appraisal interprets environmental stimuli and determines choice of behavior. Cognitive processing capacity sets limits on cognitive appraisal, on coping, and on learning. Children have less capacity than adults. Cognitive restructuring is a process which results in changing the cognitive appraisal.

Errors that occur while learning create the mental tension that motivates growth, change, and the construction of personal knowledge.

Communication by young children involves language and behavior.

Cognitive-behavioral intervention focuses on identifying patterns of thinking and behavior that aggravate and maintain stress responses.

Coaching of learning occurs when the coach frames (i.e. observes, evaluates, and names) problems as they arise, shapes the situation to fit the frame, frames the coach's role and makes the role-frame operational. The child learns mainly by doing, with the help of the coach. Coaching involves the application of conventions, constraints, language, appreciative systems, repertoire of exemplars, and systematic knowledge to the particular situation.

Self-regulation is a significant aspect of the socialization of children. For this study it means ability to comply with a request; to initiate, moderate, and cease activities

according to situational demands; to postpone acting; and to generate socially-approved behavior in the absence of external monitors.

Limitations

The sample size was small. The sample represented a particular geographical area. It may well have represented only one socio-economic group. The results may therefore not generalize for the larger population.

Control issues might have been reported differently at different times of the year. In April or May, an early childhood group will have been together for some months. In September or October, the group might have been newly formed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Two psychological approaches have competed for educators' attention in the last half century. One approach considers the child in isolation (Silin, 1985) and recommended goals of "sorting, grading, and straightening children out" (Ingleby, 1986, p. 299). Called behaviorism, the approach makes use of the characteristic ability of an environment to influence or control human behavior (Ringness, 1975).

The other approach studies the interaction of the individual and the environment and is reminiscent of the educational philosophies of John Dewey and Maria Montessori (Levin, 1991; Montessori, 1967). The cognitive approaches (psycholinguistics, cybernetics, and Piagetian theory) which supplanted behaviorism still did not provide a new theorization of the individual/society relationship (Ingleby, 1986). Researchers such as Bronfenbrenner, Lazarus, Raths, and Bandura researched interactional points of view (Wasserman, 1991; Ingleby, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Ringness, 1975). According to their transactional model, people not only respond to, but also create, their environments. They do this by means of their cognitive appraisals and their coping responses. (Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982).

In the view of educational historian Lagemann, the first group has been more influential within education and has helped shape public school practice and scholarship about education (Levin, 1991). Recent response to outcomes has been critical.

Gilstrap (1981) wrote:

> 'Lack of discipline' has been consistently identified by the general public as one of the major problems facing the public schools in each of the Gallup polls taken in the past eleven years for Phi Delta Kappa, an organization of professional educators (p. 5).

This critical trend has continued (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1991).

The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) not only expresses concern for the dimensions of discipline problems in American schools but with solutions for maintaining order within groups of children. The ACEI has a history of emphasis on the development of self-discipline (Gilstrap, 1981).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has responded by advocating "developmental appropriateness in early childhood programs." Based on application of knowledge of child development, developmental appropriateness is "most apparent in the interactions between adults and children" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 9). Guidelines for adult-child interactions are offered, including a goal of the development of self-control by the child.

The NAEYC's position, as well as that of the ACEI, echoes humanist attitudes toward education. Humanists propose that behavior should be governed by the individual. The individual must think of others as well as self and of the future as well as the present. The individual should accept personal responsibility for actions. Adaptation requires a flexible person who can adjust comfortably to a rapidly changing world (Ringness, 1975).

This review of literature surveys research on social learning theory and on stress, coping, and adaptation. Appropriate ways are sought to help young children develop self-regulation, consistent with the advocacy of NAEYC and ACEI.

Dynamics of Control, Stress, Coping, Adaptation

Social Learning Theory

Behaviorism and the cognitive approaches did not provide a new theorization of the individual/society relationship (Ingleby, 1986). The social learning theorist Bandura, in the behaviorist tradition, acknowledged the importance of classical and operant conditioning

and the role of cognitive processes. He also recognized a reciprocal relationship between behavior and the environment (Ringness, 1975).

According to Bandura's social learning theory, cognitive processes interpret the environmental stimuli and determine choice of behavior. Cognitive processes also help determine whether consequences of the chosen behavior are reinforcing or not. Symbolic processes may allow the individual to think through possible courses of action and anticipate consequences. Language can be used to convey ideas and to deal with events that are distant in time or space. Individuals may learn others' behaviors and feelings vicariously, when modeling and imitation occur. Self-reinforcement can be used to explain consistency of behavior. The environment may stimulate behavior. Behavior may bring about changes in the environment (Bandura, 1989, 1987, 1982; Ringness, 1975).

Issue of Control

In the last 20 years, socialization has come to be seen as reciprocal processes of sequential interplay which influence both adults and children (Bugetal, Blue, & Lewis, 1990). Physician William Glasser (1984) notes inevitable difficulty:

> Control. . .is the way we must function to fulfill our needs. But since we are all built in the same way, we are all engaged in a never-ending struggle with each other. . . .to gain control in a way that we satisfy our needs and not deprive those around us, especially those close to us, of satisfying theirs. (p. 43).

According to Langer (1983) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984), motivation to control the environment has been widely discussed by both therapists and social science researchers. Each individual has a perception of whether personal control is possible in a given situation and responds from this point of view (Langer, 1983). A sense of personal control can develop into an internal locus of control and an ability to self-regulate behavior. Perceiving that decision-making control in the hands of others or fate is a sense of an

external locus of control and may discourage attempts to regulate personal behavior (Marshall, 1989; Langer, 1983). Bandura (1989) says that no mechanism of personal agency is more central or pervasive than personal belief about capability to exercise control over events that effect the person. Possible positive outcomes include affects of competence, mastery, superiority, or personal causation (Marshall, 1989; Honig, 1986b; Langer, 1983).

A temporary loss of control is anxiety arousing (Langer, 1983). A chronic feeling of no control may be characterized by passivity and finally giving up (Thomas, 1989; Langer, 1983; Selye, 1982). The body's adaptability, or adaptation energy, is limited and should be used wisely and sparingly. All demands upon our adaptability evoke the stress phenomenon (Selye, 1982).

The Stress Phenomenon

Stress is now recognized as an inevitable aspect of the human condition (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Conflict, ambiguity, and overload are critical factors in creating stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress is a source of information or cognitive data (Hamilton, 1982).

Researchers have identified several components of stress. These include a stressor, individual perception of the stressor, available coping resources, available internal and external support systems, and individual skill in making coping or adjusting responses when stressed (Honig, 1986a; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982).

Researchers have identified several responses to stressors. Physiological and biochemical changes occur (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Selye, 1982; Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982). Affect is another response to stress. Affect is the subjective feelings a person experiences when attitudes, concepts, persons, or events are stressful (Breznitz &

Goldberger, 1982; Fogel, 1980). Harter, for example, found that an affect of personal control is particularly important in mainstream American culture and is related to self-esteem and feelings of competence (as cited in Marshall, 1989).

Stimulus definitions of stress assume that stressful circumstances take their toll on a passive individual (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982). Lazarus and his associates argue that even in extreme circumstances the consequences of stress are mediated by personal evaluation and judgment. They define stress relationally through reference to both the person and the environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982)

Coping With Stress

Since the 1960s, there has been growing recognition that "it is coping that makes the big difference in adaptational outcome" in response to stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 6). Coping refers to the different ways in which people respond to stressful events or situations (Rutter, 1983). The study of individual responses is a growing branch of stress research (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982).

Researchers have identified some successful coping behaviors. Haan, for example, has identified five properties of successful coping: flexible and inventive creation of response options; open consideration of options and choices; orientation to reality to the future implications of situations; rational, conscious consideration and purposeful thinking; governance and control over one's disturbing negative emotions (as cited in Honig, 1986a).

Breznitz and Goldberger (1982) see an optimistic bias that assumes that given the right tools, one can cope effectively with most sources of stress. Repeated exposure to a stressor may result in immunization against the stressor, habituation to the stressor, or breakdown (Garmezy, 1983; Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982). Resulting personal beliefs about ability to cope with threatening or taxing situations can result in stress, anxiety, and

depression or in motivation and mediating of anxiety (Bandura, 1989). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) report that it is now rare to find stress, coping, and adaptation discussed without such reference to the topic of personal control. Perceived internal locus of control can combat the potentially deleterious effects of stress (Bandura, 1989; Breznitz & Goldberger, 1982). A sense of self-efficacy involves confidence that the required coping behaviors can be produced and that when produced they will result in the desired outcome (Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982).

Cognitive Appraisal of Stressors

Human information processing capacity is limited. Input is stressful when it exceeds a subjective and individualized level of processing capacity (Hamilton, 1982; Mandler, 1982).

Cognitive appraisals of stressors can be placed in three categories: threat; harm-loss; and challenge. Threat and harm-loss produce negative affects. Challenge involves judgments that the potential for harm and the potential for mastery or gain are both present. Challenge also involves the judgment that the outcome can be influenced by the individual (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982).

Restructuring perception of a stressor so that it is regarded as a challenge is a fundamental approach to raising the threshold for vulnerability to stressors (Hamilton, 1982). Seeking opportunities rather than scanning the world for lurking threats is desirable (Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982). Rosenthal and Bandura suggest a goal of learning to amplify social cues which increase the probability of eliciting friendly, cooperative behavior in transactions and decrease the likelihood of evoking the sorts of hostile responses that generally characterize stressful, conflictual interactions (as cited in Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982).

Stress, Coping, and Adaptation in Early Childhood Settings

Stress and Young Children

Honig (1986a) has investigated stresses faced by today's children and reports that stressful situations have increased due to changes in family structure, living in a dangerous neighborhood, heavy doses of violent television, physical abuse, low socioeconomic status. It is important to be aware that much stress exists in the lives of young children. There are no super children who are impervious to all stresses of life (Honig, 1986b). Lazarus, DeLongis, Folkman, and Gruen (1985) state, "No issue in the psychology of health is of greater interest and importance than whether and how stress influences adaptational outcomes such as well-being, social functioning, and somatic health" (p. 770).

Stress Points

Most human stress occurs with learning how to control recurring cognitive and social stressors (Bandura, 1989). Cameron and Meichenbaum (1982) note that some behaviors are so universally required in our society that absence of adequate response skills is likely to be debilitating and to constitute a source of considerable stress, as defined in transactional terms. It is stressful for teachers to balance responsiveness to individual needs of autonomy and self-esteem with personal responsibility for maintaining a group ethos of norms of behavior, expected levels of achievement, and affect (Honig, 1985; Katz, 1980). In addition, life is full of ambiguities. Observed events and processes which involve individuals may be interpreted in more than one way (Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982).

The way adults deal with young children's difficult behavior can have a lasting effect on the child's emerging personality (Soderman, 1985). Bugental, Blue, and Lewis (1990) found that identical child-behavior patterns elicited different responses from different

caregivers. Differences in response were found to be due to the caregivers' perceptions of the implications of the behaviors. Bugental, Blue, and Cruzcosa (1989) found differences in response due to caregiver perceptions of lack of personal control when stressed by child behaviors. Frustration may lead to depressed affect (Bugental, Blue, & Lewis, 1990). Depressed affect has often been observed to escalate to subsequent anger and aggression.

Success or failure in peer interaction may also have lasting effects on the child's emerging personality. Some researchers have studied children having difficulty with peer interactions. Children rejected by their peers were found to display more negative behaviors in peer interaction, such as physical aggression, verbal aversiveness, and possessiveness (Selman & Demorest, 1984). Rejected children may expect different outcomes to result from behavior than nonrejected peers expect. (Crick & Ladd, 1990). When children have had inappropriate or ineffective models for coping, their particular strategies may result in increased stress (Honig, 1986a). Selman and Demorest (1984) found developmental aspects of interpersonal negotiation strategies for all children.

Psychologists have long been aware that it is impossible to separate cognition and affect. Learning is a situation in which feelings of uncertainty are generated (Fogel, 1980). Errors and uncertainties create the mental tension that motivates growth and change. Some teaching methods seek to correct children's errors and replace their ideas with isolated bits of adults wisdom. Kamii and DeVries believe such methods contribute to the development of attitudes that stifle the construction of personal knowledge (as cited in Edwards, 1986).

Entry into a group setting provides a new set of expectations, routines, and demands for behavior, including impulse control (Klein, Kantor & Fernie, 1988; Edwards, 1986; Zimiles, 1986). Adults do not treat all rule violations as equally serious; children need help understanding this hierarchy (Edwards, 1986). Possessing or lacking culturally valued

traits, such as helpfulness and honesty, may or may not generate feelings of self-esteem (Marshall, 1989; Edwards, 1986). Hipple (1981) says," What appears obvious or easy to an adult may be obscure or difficult to a child" (p. 26).

Control Issues and Techniques

Perception of controllability is a key organizing principle of the stress phenomenon (Bandura, 1989). Garmezy (1983) notes that children throughout history have been limited by a pervasive handicap: the stressor of powerless role and status assignments.

Marshall and Weinstein believe that teachers' control orientations influence children's self-concepts (Marshall, 1989). May (as cited in Soderman, 1985) speaks of "the fragile balance between power and powerlessness in altering interpersonal relationships" (p. 18). Coercing children to comply with adult expectations, shaming or comparing children, labeling children with derogatory words, and inflicting verbal or physical punishment can intensify children's difficulties and increase stress (Soderman, 1985). Bandura (1989) has found that psychological theories that rely exclusively on a negative feedback model have limited usefulness. These provide only a fractional view of self-regulation. Positive change comes from keeping children's self-esteem intact while they are learning the process of modifying their own behavior (Soderman, 1975). Wassermann (1991) believes that changing control orientation may challenge some teachers. Wasserman says, "If one looks at what is means to empower, one sees implicit in that term the freedom to choose. This is serious stuff for an educational establishment that is ruled by conformity and obedience. . ." (p. 237).

A few researchers have studied outcomes of adults' styles of interaction with children. Soderman (1985) says that adult responses to children may add rather than reduce stress for a child. Tight schedules, rigorous learning programs, and fast pace may

be stressful. Westerman (1990) found differences in mothers' use of directives between mothers and children who had compliance problems and those who didn't. Klimes-Dougan and Kistner (1990) found that children who had been abused exhibited fewer appropriate (e.g., concerned looks, attempts to comfort) and more inappropriate (e.g., negative or avoidant) responses to distressed peers in bystander situations.

The Preschool Child

The affective building blocks of the child's personal experience in learning situations are interest, satisfaction, self-confidence, distress, and fear. Responses to an experience will differ, from child to child (Fogel, 1980).

Researchers have searched for explanations for individualized responses to stresses of socialization and learning. Some studied temperament and described characteristics of difficult children. Thomas, Chess, and Birch state that difficult children are often negative in mood, adapt slowly to change, have unpredictable biological functions, and frequently exhibit intense reactions (as cited in Soderman, 1985). According to Soderman (1985), children described as aggressive may act without thinking, react quickly with anger, grieve too long after a loss, or become too excited when happy. Some children are extremely sensitive to or overstimulated by environmental conditions such as noise, touch, smell, temperature, light, color. Some children react similarly to nearly every situation, perhaps complaining, whining, crying frequently, or fussing.

Piagetian theory states that very young children do not have the sequential logical thinking skills nor the cognitive classification skills to permit optimal coping process in responding to stress (Honig, 1986a). Piagetian theory also posits that young children have difficulty disassociating the event from the context in which it occurs (Fogel, 1980). Neo-Piagetians argue that in many cases the nature of early thought is "can, but usually doesn't"

(Smith, Sera, & Gattuso, 1988, p. 374). Researchers cited by Smith, Sera, and Gattuso found many examples of early partial competence. In contrast, adults were found to have developed increased efficiency in the performance of specific mental tasks, increased capacity that allows a specific ability to be applied to a wider array of tasks, more conscious control of their knowledge, and increased awareness of how their own memory works.

Immaturity of children's cognitive abilities may provide some protection against stress. Lord believes the slowness, inefficiency, and reduced automaticity in information processing also preserve in the child the flexibility necessary for adult life (as cited in Bjorklund & Green, 1992). Cognitive immaturity accounts for young children's unrealistically high self-predictions of ability and fosters feelings of self-efficacy. Ignorance of limitations allows children to risk trying diverse and complex behaviors and to practice skills (Bjorklund & Green, 1992). Stipek concludes that learned helplessness is relatively rare among young children (as cited in Bjorklund & Green, 1992). Research into the cognitive immaturity of young children also provides some support for children's historical lack of control beyond the development of autonomy (Bjorklund & Green, 1992).

Linguistic immaturity plays an important part in a child's behavior (Ingleby, 1986). The child's behavior itself is communicative (LaVigna & Donnellan, 1986). Non-verbal interactions provide 'scaffolding' on which linguistic interactions are built, according to Bruner (as cited in Ingleby, 1986). Robinson (1986) reports that younger children's failure to understand that speech can be ambiguous is closely related to failure to distinguish between what is said and what is meant. In addition, younger children may not yet have a concept of *part-information.* According to Smith & Davis (1986), adults can confuse a child's thinking and feeling by intentionally distorting feedback to children. Distorted feedback is given by adults who ignore a child's needs and wishes; discount feelings and thoughts; give conditional acceptance; threaten bizarre or senseless consequences; act as though an

existing problem does not exist; make conflicting demands; or make unrealistic and unfounded interpretations or predictions about child behavior.

LaVigna and Donnellan (1986) suggest that paying attention to possible communications and tailoring responses to the individual child will benefit interaction with difficult children. According to Soderman (1985), it is also helpful to be aware that significant differences between the adult's personality or energy level and the child's can make it easy to misperceive the meaning of the child's behaviors.

Today's Preschool Children

Researchers have found that family priorities have changed. Parenting styles have also changed (Zimiles, 1986). Some parents expect academic progress which is inappropriate to the developmental needs of the young child (Elkind, 1987; Zimiles, 1986). Television may have lowered children's expectations of understanding something fully and of learning methodically (Zimiles, 1986).

Ladd and Coleman have also found that children are experiencing social interaction with peers at a younger age and for longer periods of time (as cited in Kemple, 1991). Group settings involve complicated and intricate webs of social patterns. The process of recognizing and reconciling such social patterns may be difficult (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Young children may have exposure to peers with significant behavior dysfunctions (Kemple, 1991; Buchoff, 1990).

Zimiles (1986) sees, as a result, an "emergence of a pattern of lessened responsiveness to adults, a diminished readiness to identify with adults and to learn from them" (pp. 12-13). According to Zimiles, teachers see today's children as more assertive, more comfortable with adults, more impulsive and more emotionally brittle. They are less stable and secure, less disciplined, less focused, less personally organized.

Many of today's classrooms also include more children from diverse cultures with differing values (Marshall, 1989). Schooling is often much less beneficial for minority students than for mainstream students from dominant or majority culture backgrounds (Au & Kawakami, 1991; Weikart, 1989). Minority children may feel alienated, rebellious and impatient. They may be unable to make meaningful connections/understandings (Au & Kawakami, 1991; Zimiles, 1986).

Developmentally Appropriate Coaching of Coping and Adaptation

Development of Self-Regulation

The development of self-regulation represents a significant aspect of the socialization of children. It is a complex construct. Self-regulation has been variously defined as the ability to: comply with a request; initiate and cease activities according to situational demands; modulate the intensity, frequency, and duration of verbal and motor acts in social and educational settings; postpone acting upon a desired object or goal; and generate socially approved behavior in the absence of external monitors. Self-regulation demands awareness of socially approved behaviors (Kopp, 1982).

Kopp (1982), in a review of the literature, reports evidence of a developmental sequence of antecedents in the development of self-regulation. Ideally, the child's growing sense of identity in the second year of life, coupled with ability to recall the dictates of caregivers, leads to the beginning of appraisal of the requirements of social and nonsocial situations. The child slowly begins to self-monitor behavior accordingly. With increasing age, emphasis shifts from external sources of control to internal child factors, particularly cognitive mediators that develop within the child.

According to Kopp, children are socialized by others, and the capacity for self-regulation emerges, in part, from this interactional process and, from the development of

language and cognition. A fundamental level of cognition must be obtained before the child can internalize caregiver expectations for self-initiated controls. Preschoolers will not attain maturity in self-regulatory processes, but they can become "capable of manifesting a set of recognizable behaviors encompassed by self-regulation constructs" which include "compliance, delay, and self-monitoring in the absence of adults" (p. 201). Flexibility of control processes will begin to meet changing situational demands. Kopp sees this "significant achievement" as a developmental end point for preschoolers (p. 201). Self-regulation, which involves greater ability to adapt to changes, will occur later.

There is a continuing and facilitating role for caregivers in the overall progression to self-control. Caregivers can closely assess each situation and work out a plan to help the child cope (Soderman, 1985). Cognitive-functional analysis can be used to pinpoint specific deficits, providing a sound basis for planning interventions tailored to individual needs (Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982). The role is "a facilitating rather than a causative one" (Kopp, 1982, p. 210).

Serious noncompliant behavior is the most frequent reason for the psychiatric referral of young children (Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990; Kuczynski, Kochanska, Radke-Yarrow, & Girnius-Brown, 1987). Katz (1980) studied the goals and roles of teachers and mothers and found that they were not the same. Forehand found that children in well-functioning families engage in noncompliance about 20% - 40% of the time (as cited in Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990). The research of Kuczynski and Kochanska suggests that "noncompliance occurs too frequently to be conceptualized exclusively in terms of childhood dysfunction" (p. 398).

Adults may need to change their own behaviors, to work effectively with a difficult child. The environment may need to be changed and/or more reasonable limits set, and/or more time given to give the child an adequate opportunity to reassess the situation and

figure out what should be done. Adults may need to recognize that a child's irritating behavior does not necessarily indicate that the child is intentionally being difficult or stubborn (Buchoff, 1990; Soderman, 1985).

Proactive involvement, involvement with positive affects, may provide an important social developmental context for the prevention of problem behavior in young children (Pettit & Bates, 1989). Successful techniques include anticipatory guidance of the child, monitoring of the child's activities, expression of affection toward the child, and caregiver-child teaching. Robins (1983) cautions that chosen interventions must effectively prevent the occurrence of the cause or reduce its impact without creating new problems worse than current problems. Ringness (1975) proposes that "it is better to prevent negative emotions than to try to deal with them after they have been established" (p. 51). Ayres (1989) provides studies of six caregiver exemplars.

LaVigna and Donnellan (1986) suggest that the value systems of the practitioner, the society, and the learner determine whether a behavior is unacceptable and which procedures may be used to reduce that behavior. Speed-of-effects is frequently the only aspect considered. Consideration should also be given to generalization of change across responses, stimuli, and time. Side effects must be considered. Marshall (1989) sees a need to be sensitive to others' values and to find ways of minimizing conflicts based on cultural differences.

Some adaptive coping techniques are suited to early childhood settings. These include abilities to ignore unpleasant situations, to find compromise solutions to social conflicts, and to find and accept substitute satisfactions and comforts when stressed (Honig, 1986a). Optimal human interaction involves empathy, being able to experience what another person is feeling. Cognitive evaluation is as essential to empathy as to emotional sensitivity. Individuals must be aware of their own feelings: how the other is affecting the

individual, how the individual feels about helping or ignoring the other person; how the individual happened to have been feeling before encountering the other (Fogel, 1980).

Because teachers and children are at different stages of emotional and intellectual maturity, there is marked asymmetry in the mutuality of empathic understanding. A very broad definition of adult empathy encompasses directly meeting children's needs and also setting limits for children through various kinds of disciplinary techniques. The best adult response to the child considers a host of factors: present feelings of those involved, past experience with this child, experience with children in general, and the current social ethos of the society or school (Fogel, 1980). Holroyd and Lazarus (1982) say that the fundamental relationships between coping and adaptation are revealed in behavior changes. They predict that naturalistic research evaluating the effectiveness of stress management interventions will provide additional opportunities to examine such relationships.

General Techniques Assisting Development of Self-Regulation

Schon (1983, 1987) investigates an epistemology of practice called reflection-in-action. According to Schon, the practioner has learned conventions, constraints, language, appreciative systems, repertoire of exemplars, and systematic knowledge in the process of becoming a professional. These will be used to tailor the practioner's responses to fit the unique, uncertain, and conflicted day-to-day situations which the practioner regularly faces. Kopp (1982) similarly describes the continuing and major role of caregivers and other social influences in the child's progression to self-regulation.

Cognitive-behavioral intervention, as it develops in the child and is practiced by the adult, focuses on identifying patterns of thinking and behavior that aggravate and maintain stress responses. Potentially useful strategies for coping with stress are practiced and

evaluated. Coping strategies are flexibly adapted to changing environmental demands and personal needs (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982). The exercise of personal agency is to be achieved through reflective and regulative thought and through the skills at one's command (Bandura, 1989). Kopp (1982) believes that self-regulation involves use of "reflection and strategies involving introspection, consciousness, or metacognition" (p. 207).

Coaching of Learning

Schon (1987) credits John Dewey (1974) with a notion of coaching of learning. The coach is in transaction with the child and the situation, framing (i.e. observing, evaluating, naming) problems as they arise, shaping the situation to fit the frame, framing her role and making her role-frames operational. The student learns mainly by doing, with the help of the coach.

Caregivers can encourage children by having faith, giving hope, reducing competition, eliminating unreasonably high standards and double standards (Hitz & Driscoll, 1988). Praise and manipulation may stifle the natural motivation to learn and replace it with blind conformity, a mechanical work style, or open defiance toward authority (Hitz & Driscoll, 1988). Moore (1987) notes that calling attention to a child's self-controlled behavior may help modify a child's self-image in the direction of social competence. However, such adult behavior involves considerable risk of failure, because the proffered attribute may be confounded by the child's investment in preserving what is self.

A positive sense of membership in a peer society depends on the morale of the classroom, the caring and civility displayed, the mutual support of teachers and students. Also important is the extent to which the group can establish cooperative goal structures that enhance individual self-esteem without causing social comparison (Moore, 1986).

Ethics of Early Childhood Practices

Morality is a necessary and universal part of human life: people everywhere face common problems such as dividing resources, controlling aggression, and organizing tasks. Despite diversity of cultural traditions in America, general moral values exist in a social contract which is founded on justice; on liberty limited only where where necessary to protect individual rights or the group welfare; and on avoidance of harm (Edwards, 1986).

Early childhood professionals are called upon to maintain these values. NAEYC and ACEI have specifically called on early childhood professionals to respect the rights of each child equally and to work to promote each child's present and future well-being (Feeney & Kipnis, 1990; Suchara, 1977). Goffin (1989) summarizes ways to show respect for children.

Need for Change

Educational approaches which are adaptations of traditional instructional strategies may be needed, if educators are to come to grips with the changing responsiveness of children to school (Spodek, 1986). Weikart (1989) calls for making the "hard choice. . .to discipline ourselves to employ developmental curricula responsive to children's needs and attuned to the entire range of child capacities" (pp. 27 - 29).

Conclusion

Two psychological approaches, behaviorism and interactionism, have competed for American educators' attention in the last half century. The less influential psychology sees a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the environment. The relationship of the early childhood professional and the child can be such a reciprocal relationship. Recent policy statements of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Association for Childhood Education International have advocated an interactionist

psychology based on humanist educational philosophy. Social learning theory, as developed by Bandura and his associates, and research on stress, coping, and adaptation by Lazarus and others support the psychology and philosophy of the policy statements.

The stress phenomenon is part of human existence. The sources of most human stress are cognitive development and socialization. There has been an increase in stress in the day-to-day lives of many preschool children, reflecting societal changes. Increased stress can also be brought about by contrasts in ethnic cultures or by adult practices inappropriate to the child's age and individual development. Cognitive appraisal of stressors and the perception of personal control when dealing with stressors have been found to be particularly important for dealing with stressors.

Both the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Association for Childhood Education International propose a goal of the development of self-control by the child. Development of self-control is a significant aspect of the socialization of children. Research by neo-Piagetians has provided better understanding of day-to-day variations in young children's self-control. Kopp's useful review of literature identifies developmental milestones in development toward self-regulation. Schon's research supports an epistemology of practice which involves helping the child learn self-regulation by doing, with the help of a knowledgeable coach.

Overall progression to self-regulation requires a continuing and facilitating role by caregivers. Researchers have found that adults may need to adapt their own behaviors, to assist the development of self-regulation by individual children. Adults must monitor their behavior so that it protects the rights of the child.

CHAPTER III

THE STUDY

Introduction

This study explored the attitudes of preschool teachers of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children and center directors regarding four research questions: Do these early childhood professionals appear to agree or to disagree with the guidelines for adult-child interactions advocated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children? Do these early childhood professionals agree with practices which can reduce child stress in early childhood group settings? Are these early childhood professionals likely to encourage development of child self-control through coaching of desired child behavior or do they choose, instead, to maintain personal control of child behavior? Will the survey data reveal the appropriateness of further advocacy for issues related to the NAEYC guidelines for adult-child interactions?

Methodology

Sample

A sample was located, using the yellow pages as a source list of preschools and early childhood care centers in Naperville, Illinois. Participation was invited from 20 preschools and early childhood care centers.

The sample included 20 center directors and 63 preschool teachers. The average age of participants was 36 years. Directors averaged 5.2 years of experience in their administrative role. Teachers averaged 6.9 years of teaching experience. The mean (6.9 years) of the teachers' experience exceeded the NAEYC minimum standards for experience for an early childhood specialist, whose work would involve supervision of others' work with young children. That standard is three years of teaching experience with young children (Bredekamp, 1984). More than 60% of the sample had taught five years or more.

Seventy-five percent of the sample held a bachelor's degree. Compared to the average education of 14.6 years reported by the Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children for 1989, these respondents were better educated.

Twenty-nine (35%) held degrees or credentials in early childhood education, ranging from an associate's degree to a master's degree. Thirteen had degrees in elementary education, while six held degrees in special education, nursing, psychology, or recreation. Although better-educated than the average worker in the field as reported by CAEYC (1990), many of the respondents would not meet the NAEYC accreditation criteria that a lead teacher should have a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or child development.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a survey concerning adult-child interactions (see Appendix A). Twenty-three survey statements were developed from the guidelines from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987) and from the review of the literature. Statements involved recognition of situations which may stress a child in the preschool setting: lack of awareness of socially-approved behaviors on the part of the child; ambiguity and inconsistency of adult communication; information-processing overload; lack of perceived control; and individuality of response to stressors. Statements also involved adult recognition that self-control evolves and that young children can learn self-control by doing, with the help of a knowledgeable coach. Some statements involved issues related to denying children a sense of personal control. The survey asked respondents to indicate a choice between four responses (Haven't Considered, Disagree, Agree, Haven't Experienced) that best described personal points of view for each survey statement. Demographic information was asked of respondents, including age range,

current position, education completed, education related to the early childhood field, and years of experience.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected in May 1992. The survey distribution procedure involved several steps. The researcher visited each location and asked to be allowed to explain the project to the center director. The center director was then invited to participate in the survey and was asked to allow the lead teachers of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds to participate.

Individual packets containing a cover letter (see Appendix B), the survey, and a researcher-addressed envelope marked Survey Response were left to be distributed to each potential participant identified by the center director. A total of 155 surveys were distributed to center directors. The return envelopes were included to provide privacy for responses and to help make the envelopes as obvious as possible, after they were returned to the center director's office. A date was set for the researcher to return to collect completed surveys from the center director.

Surveys were collected by the researcher at 18 of the 20 sites, for a return rate of 90%. At the request of the center directors, the researcher did not return again to these two sites but expected surveys from one site in the mail. Five surveys did arrive in the mail. If these surveys represented this site, 19 out of 20 sites participated, making the center response rate 95%.

Ninety-nine of the 155 early childhood professionals completed surveys for a response rate of 64%. Eighty-three of these surveys met the criteria that the respondents be lead teachers working with 3-, 4-, or 5-year-old children or center directors.

Data Analysis

Only completed surveys from professionals who indicated that they were currently working with 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children or were center directors were tallied and analyzed. Data analysis was conducted on these 83 surveys using the Excel program. Means, where appropriate, and ranges were calculated for specified demographic information. Comparisons were made to NAEYC accreditation standards and to information distributed by the Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children (1990) in a Child Care Index. Education related to the early childhood field was tallied as accurately as possible from self-reports. Percentages of each of the four possible responses were calculated for each of the 23 survey statements.

Findings and Interpretations

Table 1 summarizes percentages of responses received for each statement. As noted on this table, all four response categories were used by respondents.

Table 2 indicates the wording of each statement and the percentage of agree responses. It can be seen that 20 of the 23 statements had agree responses of 82% or higher. Respondents in this sample appear to agree with NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate adult-child interactions as presented in this survey. It can be seen that there was considerable uncertainty or disagreement involved with three survey statements (13, 14, and 9). These statements elicited greater percentages of "Haven't Considered" or Haven't Experienced" as well as disagreement. Responses to these statements suggest issues for advocacy with this sample.

Statement 13 was about the impossibility of separating thinking and feeling. The statement received almost as many disagree responses as agree responses (41% to 46%

Table 1
Percentage of Responses to Survey Statements

Statement Number	Number of Responses	% Haven't Considered	% Disagree	% Agree	% Haven't Experienced
1	83	1	5	94	
2	83			95	5
3	83			99	1
4	83			100	
5	82	1		99	
6	83			100	
7	83		1	98	1
8	83			100	
9	82	7	23	61	9
10	83	2	1	96	
11	83	1	6	88	5
12	82	2	2	95	
13	79	14	41	46	
14	81	10	21	58	11
15	79	4	11	82	3
16	83	7	8	82	2
17	81	10		83	7
18	83	8	4	84	4
19	83		1	99	
20	81	11	6	83	
21	82		5	95	
22	83	7	6	87	
23	83	2	1	96	

Table 2
Rank Order of Respondents' Agreement with Statements

#	Statement	%
4	It is important for the adult to explore the child's point of view, because the adult's and the child's perceptions of a situation may not be the same.	100
6	Feeling that the adult doesn't understand or isn't listening can be stressful for a child.	100
8	Expressions of anger and happiness vary from individual to individual.	100
3	Classroom stress can limit a child's cooperating capacity.	99
19	Letting children make choices helps them develop the ability to control their own behavior.	99
5	Many children need help understanding that there may be other ways of perceiving a given situation.	99
7	Helping a child relax or choose to withdraw may be necessary before conflict can be resolved.	98
10	A child can learn how to get along with others by being coached through successful behaviors.	96
23	Self-direction is a powerful determinant of self-esteem.	96
2	Classroom stress can limit a child's learning capacity.	95
12	A child who isn't cooperating may not understand what is being asked.	95
21	Behavior control should be shared by adults and children.	95
1	A child may not be able to cooperate consistently, day to day.	94
11	Public correction can add to child stress and may block cooperation.	88
22	Emotional management should involve shaping the person's inner feelings as well as their social expression in accordance with rules.	87
18	It is unethical to make children feel at the mercy of people and forces beyond their control.	84
20	Concern about amount of personal control often determines adult response to child behavior.	83
17	Adult jokes about behavior outcomes may confuse a child.	83
15	Regular use of rewards or punishments develops reliance on others for control of behavior.	82
16	Children whose voices are loud may have copied the voice level of shouting adults.	82
9	The stress of a time-out may be enough to block the learning being asked of the child.	61
14	Apparent lack of cooperation may be a result of ethnic diversity.	58
13	It is impossible to separate thinking and feeling.	46

agree). Another 14% indicated that they hadn't thought about the impossibility of separating thinking and feeling. The statement was based on the literature from Edwards (1986), Lazarus and Folkman (1984), and Fogel (1980). An adult who disagrees with this statement may expect a child to act in accord with what the adult thinks the child knows, not realizing that situational stress affects can limit the child's ability to cooperate, comply, or learn. NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) call for adult alertness to signs of undue child stress, revealed by child behavior.

A low agree response rate of 58% was noted for Statement 14: Apparent lack of cooperation may be a result of ethnic diversity. Some respondents (10%) said they had not previously considered this, while 11% of respondents said they hadn't experienced this. The rate of disagreement was 21%. Naperville is a community of professionals of many ethnicities. The sample may have become accustomed to working with children of various ethnicities. Perhaps the socio-economic status of the parents helps to eliminate ethnic contrasts. It is possible this sample was not aware of the powerful outcomes in affect and day-to-day stress which can be the result of ethnic diversity. The research of Au and Kawakami (1991), Weikart (1989), Bandura (1989; 1987; 1982), Marshall (1989), Zimiles (1986), Selye (1982), and of Lazarus and his various associates support agreement with this statement. The NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) call for recognizing and accepting individual differences among children and adaptation of adult responses to children's differing styles, abilities, and modes of communication.

Also receiving a low agree response (61%) was Statement 9: The stress of a time-out may be enough to block the learning being asked of the child. Some respondents said they had not previously considered this (7%) or hadn't experienced this (9%). The rate of disagreement was 23%. Time-out, a practice from the behaviorist psychology, substitutes adult control for child self-control and therefore acts as a stressor of the child. Time-out may

involve ambiguous communication, and this possibility may be confounded by various possibilities of the child's perceptions of what is happening. Such ambiguity may block compliance or learning. The resulting child affect may contribute to overload, also contributing to making compliance or learning impossible. With repeated use of time-out, the child may cease attempting self-control (Marshall, 1989; Langer, 1983). The NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) call for adult facilitation of the development of self-control in children. The response rate would appear to reflect effects of the half-century of wide-spread acceptance of the behaviorist psychology (Levin, 1991).

Based on Soderman (1985), there is cause for concern about these three lowest agree responses as a group. These situations may be stressful for a child, because they involve the potential for conflict, ambiguity, and/or overload, conditions which act as stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Cameron & Meichenbaum, 1982). The child's behavior, whatever it is, will be in response to the situation, as the child perceives it (Bjorklund & Green, 1991; Bandura, 1989, 1987, 1982; LaVigna & Donnellan, 1986; Langer, 1984; Fogel, 1980). The child's self-control will reflect individual awareness of socially approved behaviors as well as developmental progress toward self-regulation (Kopp, 1982). The adult will respond to the child's response behavior, as the adult perceives it (Bandura, 1989, 1987, 1982; Langer, 1984). Adult response may add to the child's stress (Soderman, 1985). Adults who did not agree with these statements may be unaware that by adding to child stress, they may have overloaded the child's processing capacity, limiting the child's ability to cooperate, comply, or learn at that time (Smith, Sera, & Gattuso, 1988).

Table 3 provides a rank-ordering of agree responses to those statements involved with stress and coping. It can be seen that the three statements (13, 14, and 9) which received the lowest percentages of agree responses (46%, 58% and 61%) involve issues of stress and coping. Agree response rates for all other statements on Table 3 were above

Table 3
Rank Order of Responses to Survey Statements Related to Stress and Coping~

#	Statement	% Haven't Considered	% Disagree	% Agree	% Haven't Experienced
4	It is important for the adult to explore the child's point of view, because the adult's and the child's perceptions of a situation may not be the same.			100	
6	Feeling that the adult doesn't understand or isn't listening can be stressful for a child.			100	
3	Classroom stress can limit a child's cooperating capacity.			99	1
5	Many children need help understanding that there may be other ways of perceiving a given situation.	1		99	
7	Helping a child relax or choose to withdraw may be necessary before conflict can be resolved.		1	98	1
23	Self-direction is a powerful determinant of self-esteem.	2	1	96	
2	Classroom stress can limit a child's learning capacity.			95	5
12	A child who isn't cooperating may not understand what is being asked.	2	2	95	
11	Public correction can add to child stress and may block cooperation.	1	6	88	5
22	Emotional management should involve shaping the person's inner feelings as well as their social expression in accordance with rules.		5	95	
18	It is unethical to make children feel at the mercy of people and forces beyond their control.	8	4	84	4
20	Concern about amount of personal control often determines adult response to child behavior.	11	6	83	
17	Adult jokes about behavior outcomes may confuse a child.	10		83	7
16	Children whose voices are loud may have copied the voice level of shouting adults.	7	8	82	2
9	The stress of a time-out may be enough to block the learning being asked of the child.	7	23	61	9
14	Apparent lack of cooperation may be a result of ethnic diversity.	10	21	58	11
13	It is impossible to separate thinking and feeling.	14	41	46	

~Percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

82%. The literature supported agree responses with all statements. Since children's lives are affected by all the attitudes and practices of the professionals in the sample, interpretations will also be offered for statements with response rates between 82% and 88%. Some of these issues could also be selected for advocacy with this sample. After the 88% agree response, there is a jump to the next agree percentage of 95%. Agree responses of 95% and above will not be interpreted.

Statement 11 said that public correction can add to child stress and may block cooperation. This statement offered another situation in which affect from the stressor might result in overload and inability to learn or to cooperate, particularly if it involved shaming, labelli g, and inflicting verbal punishment (Soderman, 1985). The agree response rate was 88%. Disagree responses were 6%, while 5% indicated they had not experienced this and 1% said they hadn't considered this. The NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) advocate practices, such as rapid and direct response to children's needs, desires, and messages, which would prevent the need for public correction.

Statement 16 and Statement 17 present other situations which may involve ambiguous messages to a young child and which may result in child behaviors perceived as unacceptable by the adult. Statement 16 involved children shouting when adults shout at them. Adults do not treat all rule violations as equally serious (Robinson, 1986). The adult may shout and at the same time not wish to have the child shout. Statement 17 was about adults who speak jokingly about child behavior.Edwards (1986), Robinson (1986), and Smith and Davis (1986) report that adult communication is already confusing to children, without confusing jokes or disregard for children's use of adults as models. NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) call for tolerance of trial and error learning and misconceptions as children's thoughts develop. Agree response rate for Statement 16 was 82%. Agree response rate for Statement 17 was 83%. Both statements received

responses of Haven't Considered (7% and 10%). Statement 17 also received 7% responses of Haven't Experienced. There was 8% disagreement with Statement 16, and no disagreement with Statement 17.

Statement 18 had to do with whether it is ethical to deny children a sense of personal control. Bandura (1989; 1987; 1982), Lazarus and Folkman (1984), and Langer (1983) report the importance of perceived control. Edwards (1986) reports a necessity of ethical adult behavior. ACEI calls for humane treatment of children (Suchara, 1977). NAEYC calls for ethical adult behavior and for adult facilitation of the development of self-control in children (Feeney & Kipnis, 1990; Bredekamp, 1987). Because of this literature, the agree response rate for this statement suggests considering it as an advocacy issue. Agree responses were 84%, while 8% had not previously considered the question and 4% said they have not had this experience. The disagreement rate was 4%.

Statement 20 explored attitudes about personal control from the adult's perspective, stating that concern about amount of personal control often determines adult response to child behavior. Again, the importance of ethical adult behavior and of perceived control are the issues. The agree response rate was 83%, with 11% not having considered this, and 6% disagreeing. The agree response rate of 95% to Statement 21 that behavior control should be shared by adults and children stood in contrast to the lower agree response rates to statements 18 and 20. This contrast supports advocacy dealing with the existence of confounding of adult need for perceived control, child need for perceived control, and ethics of adult behavior.

Statement 22 regarded working with a child's feelings while socializing the child's behavior. Compliance with rules set by the adult is not the only need. Agreement with the statement has a basis in the literature from Bandura (1989, 1987, 1982), Marshall (1989), Hitz and Driscoll (1988), LaVigna and Donnellan (1986), Moore (1986), Soderman (1985),

Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Langer (1983), Robins (1983), Cameron and Meichenbaum (1982), Kopp (1982), and Fogel (1980). The NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) call for respecting, accepting, and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior. The rate of agree responses was 87%, with 7% not having considered the topic, and 6% disagreeing. The importance of affect has also been discussed in regard to Statement 13.

Table 4 shows statements related to facilitating the development of child self-control through adult behaviors which would individually coach desired child behavior. Some of the statements in Table 4 also applied to stress and coping (see Table 3) and are indicated on Table 4 with asterisks. All of the statements in Table 3 had agree response rates above 82%, with 10 of the 12 statements having agree response rates above 94%. It appears that respondents in this sample agreed with coaching of desired child behavior. Two of the 12 statements had agree response rates of 83% to 87% and thus merit interpretation. One of these was Statement 22, which was interpreted previously. The other statement was Statement 15, which had an agree response rate of 82%. Statement 15 concerned possible reduction of child attempts at self-control, if rewards were used regularly. It was based on the literature from Marshall (1989), Hitz & Driscoll (1988), and Langer (1983). Hitz and Driscoll, for example, say that praise and manipulation stifle the natural motivation to learn and replace it with blind conformity, a mechanical work style, or open defiance toward authority. The NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) call for adult facilitation of the development of self-control in children. The agree response rate here, as with Statement 9 previously, appears to reflect effects of the half-century acceptance of behaviorist psychology (Levin, 1991) and the conflict of adults' and children's needs for perceived control (Bandura, 1989, 1987, 1982; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Langer, 1983).

Table 4
Rank Order of Responses to Survey Statements Related to Coaching of Child Behavior~

#	Statement	% Haven't Considered	% Disagree	% Agree	% Haven't Experienced
*4	It is important for the adult to explore the child's point of view, because the adult's and the child's perceptions of a situation may not be the same.			100	
8	Expressions of anger and happiness vary from individual to individual.			100	
19	Letting children make choices helps them develop the ability to control their own behavior.		1	99	
*5	Many children need help understanding that there may be other ways of perceiving a given situation.	1		99	
*7	Helping a child relax or choose to withdraw may be necessary before conflict can be resolved.		1	98	1
12	A child who isn't cooperating may not understand what is being asked.	2	2	95	
10	A child can learn how to get along with others by being coached through successful behaviors.	2	1	96	
23	Self-direction is a powerful determinant of self-esteem.	2	1	96	
21	Behavior control should be shared by adults and children.		5	95	
1	A child may not be able to cooperate consistently, day to day.	1	5	94	
*22	Emotional management should involve shaping the person's inner feelings as well as their social expression in accordance with rules.	7	6	87	
*18	It is unethical to make children feel at the mercy of people and forces beyond their control.	8	4	84	4
15	Regular use of rewards or punishments develops reliance on others for control of behavior.	4	11	83	3

~ Percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.
* Also listed on Table 3.

Respondents in this sample were not typical of the early childhood field The results of this survey do provide data related to a sample of early childhood professionals, who have begun to approach the education and experience profile advocated by NAEYC. Naperville, Illinois, is an affluent area with high-technology businesses and easily available education for the early childhood field. The results of this survey may not generalize to the wider population.

Respondents to this survey took exception to three statements but agreed at 82% to 100% with the other 20 statements. They appear to agree rather than disagree with most NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate adult-child interactions. They may well be acting to reduce child stress in early childhood settings. There was agreement with statements which favor a philosophy of coaching. Some remaining advocacy issues for this sample have been identified : the link between feeling and thinking, the effects of ethnic diversity, blocking of desired learning by various stressors, and ethical adult behavior.

Respondents were offered the choice of four points of view, and some respondents made use of all. It would appear that advocacy should take into consideration the possible existence of all four points of view.

Conclusion

Results of this survey could be applied in planning in-service training for these respondents. Survey data might contribute to a knowledge base about early childhood professionals' attitudes and educational outcomes.

The survey instrument appeared to function well and might be a useful instrument for future researchers. Replication and extension of this study appear feasible. Research might include use of the survey followed by observations of respondents at work, seeking correlations of early childhood educational attitudes and practice. Research might repeat

the survey with other samples and compare results. Use of the survey as a needs-assessment tool in the preparation of home-care providers or as a pre-test and post-test for in-service training might be investigated.

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APPENDICES

Dear Colleague:

Please tell me a little about yourself. Thank you!

Age	Job Title	Education
___ 18 - 22	___ lead teacher	___ high school plus
___ 23 - 29	___ center director	___ associate's degree
___ 30 - 39		___ bachelor's degree
___ 40 - 49		___ master's degree
___ 50 plus		

Education related to early childhood field __ _____

_____

Years of teaching experience _____ **center directing experience** _____
For teachers - age range of children in your class _____

Adult - Child Interaction Survey

Which of the four responses best describes your point of view for each statement? Please check one response for each statement.

	Haven't Considered	Disagree	Agree	Haven't Experienced
A child may not be able to cooperate consistently, day to day.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Classroom stress can limit a child's learning capacity.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Classroom stress can limit a child's cooperating capacity.	_____	_____	_____	_____
It is important for the adult to explore the child's point of view, because the adult's and the child's perceptions of a situation may not be the same.	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Haven't Considered	Disagree	Agree	Haven't Experienced
Many children need help understanding that there may be other ways of perceiving a given situation.	____	____	____	____
Feeling that the adult doesn't understand or isn't listening can be stressful for a child.	____	____	____	____
Helping a child relax or choose to withdraw may be necessary before conflict can be resolved.	____	____	____	____
Expressions of anger and happiness vary from individual to individual.	____	____	____	____
The stress of a time-out may be enough to block the learning being asked of the child.	____	____	____	____
A child can learn how to get along with others by being coached through successful behaviors.	____	____	____	____
Public correction can add to child stress and may block cooperation.	____	____	____	____
A child who isn't cooperating may not understand what is being asked.	____	____	____	____
It is impossible to separate thinking and feeling.	____	____	____	____
Apparent lack of cooperation may be a result of ethnic diversity.	____	____	____	____

	Haven't Considered	Disagree	Agree	Haven't Experienced
Regular use of rewards or punishments develops reliance on others for control of behavior.	____	____	____	____
Children whose voices are loud may have copied the voice level of shouting adults.	____	____	____	____
Adult jokes about behavior outcomes may confuse a child.	____	____	____	____
It is unethical to make children feel at the mercy of people and forces beyond their control.	____	____	____	____
Letting children make choices helps them develop the ability to control their own behavior.	____	____	____	____
Concern about amount of personal control often determines adult response to child behavior.	____	____	____	____
Behavior control should be shared by adults and children.	____	____	____	____
Emotional management should involve shaping the person's inner feelings as well as their social expression in accordance with rules.	____	____	____	____
Self-direction is a powerful determinant of self-esteem.	____	____	____	____

Thank you for your assistance!

2553 Alta Court
Lisle, Illinois 60532
May 1, 1992

Dear Colleague:

I am presently enrolled in a graduate program at National-Louis University. As part of my graduate research project, I am conducting a survey of early childhood lead teachers and center directors. This letter is to invite your participation in my research about adult - child interactions.

I have tried to ask as little of your time as possible. I will greatly appreciate your responses. Because the survey is short, I hope you will be able to complete it at once. I will return to collect it.

Should you have any questions about my research, please call me at (708) 420-1859. You may also call my research advisor, Dr. Nancy Nordmann, at National-Louis University, (312) 621-9650, extension 3304. I will be happy to share my findings with you, after my survey is completed.

The survey begins on the next page. Thank you for your interest and assistance!

Sincerely,

Katherine S. Melsa