

FAMILY SYSTEMS' INFLUENCE ON
CHILD BEHAVIOR

A Dissertation

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AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT

DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation work to my family and friends who supported me throughout the process. I will always be grateful for them cheering me on and believing in me.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate how parental stress is related to student behavior and the impact of the family system on student behavior. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model was used as the theoretical framework with a focus on relationships within the family and direct links to student behaviors. The sample size (n) was small equaling 10 parents and 10 students. The study investigated two groups of parents and children, one group consisted of five students identified as typically developing students with behaviors and numerous office referrals of more than five visits per year. The second group of five students received special educational services and had medically diagnosed behavior disorders. This study used the Parent Stress Index (PSI-4) survey to measure parental pressures and the direct influences on the parent to gain insight into four main domains: Total Stress, Life Stress, Child Domain, and Parent Domain. Interviews of both parents and children offered insight to the social occurrence of behaviors and the relationship between the parent and child. The study revealed themes describing a relationship between parenting stress and child behavior that were representative of a bi-directional relationship between a parent and child reflective in the influence of one's direct environment within the family unit. This research adds to the body of literature looking at parenting stress and the effect on child behavior.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Background	4
Significance of the Study	6
Theoretical Framework: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model.....	9
Research Question	10
Description of Terms	11
Overview of Research Methods.....	14
Chapter II: Literature Review	16
The Developing Child: Theoretical Framework.....	17
Parenting and Family Influences	23
Children Do Well If They Are Capable.....	28
Neuroscience Developments Related to Executive Functioning	32
The School Perspective.....	35
Conclusion	38
Chapter III: Design and Methodology	43
Research Design	43
Setting and Participants.....	47
The Parent Stress Index	50

Internal Reliability	52
Normative Information of the Parenting Stress Model	53
Parent Survey Distribution	54
Parent/Student Interview.....	55
Data Collection	59
Analytical Methods.....	62
Trustworthiness of the Data	64
Ethical Consideration.....	65
Assumptions.....	66
Limitations	66
Chapter IV: Results	69
Parent Stress Index.....	71
Quantitative Results	75
Qualitative Results	91
Research Question: How Does Parental Stress Influence Child Behavior?	98
Parent Themes.....	98
Child Themes	100
Summary of Results	103
Chapter V: Discussion	106
Summary of Study	106
Impact of Limitations.....	111
Conclusions.....	113
Recommendation for Further Research	114

Implications for Professional Practices.....	114
Final Reflection	116
References.....	118
Appendix A Figure Permissions	132
Appendix B Site Permissions.....	134
Appendix C Cover Letter and Parent Consent	137
Appendix D Student Assent	142
Appendix E PAR Site License	143
Appendix F Parent Stress Index.....	146
Appendix G Interview/Script for Parents	153
Appendix H Interview/Script for Students	154
Appendix I E-Mail Request for Content Validity of Parent Questionnaire.....	155
Appendix J Parent Interview CVI Results	156
Appendix K Debrief Statement for Participants	157
Appendix L Members Checking Letter	158
Appendix M Letter for Scheduling Interviews	161
Appendix N HRRC Approval Letter	162
Appendix O HRRC Certificate	163
Appendix P Confidentiality Agreement.....	164
Appendix Q Telephone Script for Scheduling Interviews.....	166

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 <i>Bronfenbrenner's Structure of the Environment</i>	20
Table 2 <i>Data Collection for Mixed Method Case Study Research</i>	44
Table 3 <i>Research Timeline.</i>	48
Table 4 <i>Participants</i>	49
Table 5 <i>Internal Consistency of PSI-4 & PSI-3</i>	52
Table 6 <i>Parenting Stress Indicator (PSI-4) Profile</i>	62
Table 7 <i>Analytical Methods</i>	63
Table 8 <i>Triangulation Matrix</i>	71
Table 9 <i>Overall Consent, Survey, and Interview Response Rate</i>	73
Table 10 <i>Percentage of Gender Participation</i>	74
Table 11 <i>Age Distribution of Parents</i>	74
Table 12 <i>Defense Response Scale</i>	77
Table 13 <i>Percentile Levels: Group A Office Referral Behaviors</i>	83
Table 14 <i>Percentile Levels: Group B Medically Diagnosed Behavior</i>	88
Table 15 <i>Mann-Whitney U Test Statistics (PSI-4 Scales)</i>	90
Table 16 <i>Life Stress Scale Responses by Parents</i>	91
Table 17 <i>Responses to Interview Questions: Parent and Child</i>	93
Table 18 <i>How Parents Reduce Stress</i>	102
Table 19 <i>Most Important Contributions as a Parent for Their Child</i>	102

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 <i>Categories of the Literature Review</i>	17
Figure 2 <i>Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory</i>	21
Figure 3 <i>Developmental Progression for Antisocial Behavior</i>	29
Figure 4 <i>The Brain</i>	34
Figure 5 <i>Model of Parenting Stress Index (PSI-4)</i>	45
Figure 6 <i>Pictorial Display of Parenting Status</i>	75
Figure 7 <i>Parental Stress Index Ratings: Group A Office Referral Behaviors</i>	80
Figure 8 <i>Parental Stress Index Ratings: Group B Medically Diagnosed Behavior</i>	86
Figure 9 <i>Emerging Themes from the Interviews</i>	97
Figure 10 <i>Nested Depiction of Total Stress and Life Stress on a Child</i>	108

Chapter I: Introduction

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Prevention (2015) reported 749,200 aggressive nonfatal acts at school with students ranging from 12 to 18 years old in 2015. Many teachers have at least one child in their classroom whose behaviors are disruptive to him- or herself and to other students. There are broad ranges of problems coupled with the emotions behind the behaviors, including being connected socially, biologically, environmentally, psychologically, and educationally (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010). In addition, educators often observe severe outburst of intense anger combined with aggression, placing students at high risk due to the outcomes of their actions (Bear & Rys, 1994). In a survey, 9% of educators indicated a student had threatened them, and 5% of educators reported a physical attack towards them by a student (NCIPC, 2015).

Snyder, Sullivan, Graham, and Purcell (2011) conducted a yearlong investigation of children, kindergarten to sixth grade, in the Philadelphia area. Snyder et al. reported more than one out of six students were involved in acts of violence in the elementary schools in Philadelphia. In October 2010, a documented record of school violence involved a kindergartener attacking a classroom aide. During this attack the kindergartener spit, punched, and kicked the assistant causing torn ligaments. Another incident included a ten-year-old who used his body to slam against the teacher, causing her to collapse and suffer a concussion. More violent attacks included a third-grade child who held a knife up to the neck of peer and threatened to chop the child's head off if he told the teacher. In December 2007, a fifth-grade boy forced a girl's head down to his groin. These acts of violence disrupt the learning process and produce negative outcomes for students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Statement of the Problem

Some schools are witnessing higher levels of aggressive behaviors and conduct problems that generate major problems within school environments and disturb a student's own learning situation as well as those of his or her classmates (Bear & Rys, 1994; Frick et al., 1991; Menesini, 2003; Morrison, Furlong, D'Incau, & Morrison, 2005; Powell et al., 2011; Tremblay, 2000; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). Aggression in terms of physical or verbal threats and attacks, insubordination to adults and authority, as well as defiance, cheating, stealing, and lying are on the rise in school settings, and each of these have the potential to cause damage to students' social and emotional well-being and mental steadiness (Tremblay, 2000). Students who exhibit aggression are at an increased risk for other damaging consequences such as dropping out, substance abuse, delinquency, and continuing the cycle of violence within their own families (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; McGuckin & Minton, 2014; Tremblay, 2000).

Students who have difficulty controlling anger, emotions, and aggression become emotionally charged, reacting with a range of emotions and leaving the victim feeling some of the same emotions (Menesini, 2003). Socrates and Aristotle claimed to know that good behavior automatically compelled one to do good. An increase in young students exhibiting extremely aggressive behaviors, therefore, is a concern for educators. Some students' motives—their moral reasoning and their lack of connection to moral understanding of rules—seem to affect behaviors that confuse actions of right and wrong as well as what is accepted and prohibited (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010).

This development of moral identity and moral self has been linked to the actions associated with children when they arrive at school (Hardy, Walker, Olsen, Woodbury, & Hickman, 2014). Children often learn moral rules and develop personalities based on family

dynamics, culture, environmental factors, with many other reasoning and problem solving skills modeled by friends and family (Hardy et al., 2014). How to resolve conflicts or moral dilemmas is molded in children prior to school entrance (Stover, Connell, Leve, Neiderhiser, & Straw, 2012). In aggressive, angry students one must look at the family dynamics. Aggressive behavior is a typical component of early childhood growth; however, most children move through stages continuing moral development into adulthood (Dawson, 2002). Dawson also suggested people are unsuccessful in developing more complex stages of moral understanding without building on prior stages. These levels and stages appear to be broken when looking at students who exhibit severe, intense outbursts of anger and aggression.

Manifestations of antisocial behavior can have negative impacts on academic achievement of students who exhibit aggression and violence by adversely affecting their ability to learn (Frick et al., 1991; Hinshaw, 1992). Nationally, and statewide, the educational system is struggling to close the achievement gap, but many reports neglect to emphasize the connections to behavior (Robers, Kemp, Rathbun, & Morgan, 2014). Educators are looking to reduce disruptive behavior, truancy, and absenteeism, while also increasing literacy scores (McGuckin & Minton, 2014; Scrimgeour, Blandon, Stifner, & Buss, 2013; Spilt, Hughes, Wu, & Kwok, 2012). Disruptive conduct does not exclusively associate with poor literacy, and poor literacy alone does not lead to problem behavior. However, research studies have documented that students who exhibit difficult behaviors are more prone to have academic deficits and more profound needs (Hinshaw, 1992; Robers et al., 2014).

Aggression and emotions attached to anger and violent behaviors are a suitable and imperative focal point of school and health systems (Frick et al., 1991; Greene, 2005; Morrison et al., 2005). Connecting research to the development or lack of development of one's own

morals, and examining emotional regulation and its connection to aggressive behaviors, can assist educators in understanding how to provide support and interventions with these at-risk students (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Educators are seeing more anger and aggression in the school environments (Robers et al., 2014). The actions are displayed with intense emotions and physical destruction, with intentional harm, and without consideration for moral relevance to the social conditions and their behaviors (Batson et al., 2007).

Background

The literature illustrates there are ample scientific theories explaining the behavior and stages of development in children. The literature has two gaps: successfully being able to assist students with interpersonal struggles and finding resolution to help those conflicts with a collective student population (Bear & Rys, 1994; Dawson, 2002; Frick et al., 1991; Nisan, 1987). Throughout the research, moral reasoning with behavioral outcome is related in some way to peer approval of the unacceptable behaviors and the denunciation of prosocial behaviors (Bear & Rys, 1994; Darling, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Investigating the function of emotional regulation and the role it plays in the connection with aggressive behaviors can inform educators on how to supply support and provide interventions with at risk students (Bennett, Brown, Racine, Boyle, & Offord, 1999; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Greene, 2014).

Lev Vygotsky influenced cognitive development through the theory of social learning (1978). The belief of the social learning theory was that children are naturally curious and will learn during the exchange of social experiences. The social learning theory proposed by Vygotsky had four assumptions (Stassen Berger, 2009):

1. Learning is built on collaboration as apprenticeship work.
2. Every child has a trajectory, and they build on previous learning.

3. Language structures cognitive skills.
4. Social interactions are key with the theory of influence of teacher, parent, coaches, and peers.

Using the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and integrating the social learning theory is supported within the school setting for teaching to a child's developmental range (Stassen Berger, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). There are two levels of development that are important to this principle of Vygotsky's work: actual development level and the potential development level. Vygotsky emphasized the influence of interaction with adults. In the actual development stage, the adult guides the child through problem solving, instilling cultural values of the home through the beliefs and traditions. As the child grows to understand the meaning of the language by social interaction, the child develops internal language to direct their behavior called internalizing. The potential development of the child weighs heavily on the progression of Vygotsky's stages of self-talk and thinking out loud for problem solving. The child's ZPD, combined with the social ability to use verbal thoughts to guide actions, defines the social learning theory.

Turiel (2008) and those who worked with him differentiated concerns of "moral rules" involving behavior and social fairness (such as striking out, lying, and breaking a promise) and "conventional rules" of traditional cultural norms (speaking to a teacher by their first name). Differences found between groups were not linked to the seriousness of the specific norm, but to the principles that served the cultural norms existing in varying cultures (Coohey, Renner, & Sabri, 2013; Nisan, 1987). The distinctions between moral rules and conventional rules were founded on the general cultural outlook with regard to the society and world. Batson et al. (2007) explored three types of anger: individual anger, prosocial anger, and empathic anger. Defining all three in connection with unfairness and wrongdoing relates to the individual's personal belief

systems, personal well-being, and well-being of caring for others.

Rosa and Tudge (2013) studied the transformation of Bronfenbrenner's theory, deepening the view of family dynamics as an institution. Key to Bronfenbrenner's theory was the process, person, context, and time emphasis. Few before him connected research with the innermost facet of the premise of proximal process. Proximal process is defined as connections in direct environments that influence a person in the framework over time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The expansion by Bronfenbrenner in his later work of proximal process occurred due to his view of the family dynamics (Weisner, 2010). The microsystem places the child in the prime position in the home, school, day care and other arenas for personal, direct interaction with others (McGuckin & Minton, 2014; Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Weisner, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's expansion takes into consideration the child's influence on a child that later produces disruptive behavior and "impulsiveness, explosiveness, distractibility, inability to defer gratification, or, in a more extreme form, and resort to aggression and violence" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 1009). Taking a closer look at two relationships that heavily influence a child (teacher and parent) are crucial in finding links to why students exhibit forms of extreme behavior.

Significance of the Study

Our schools should be a safe haven for instruction and learning free of violent behavior. The National Center of Education Statistics (NCES, 2013) reported 10% of primary educators and 9% of secondary educators indicated threatening behaviors towards them by students in 2012. Primary educators reported higher levels of physical attacks towards them by a student than their peers in the secondary levels. Statistics from the same study indicated that in 2009, public schools reported 23% of peer-to-peer harassment or bullying incidents took place daily or

weekly. Others indicated that the bullying extended into in the classroom. In 2012, 38% of teachers believed student misconduct interfered with teaching (Robers et al., 2014; NCES, 2013).

These threats of anger and aggression leave some perplexed by the morality and rightness in the actions of children and adolescents (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Batson et al., 2007; Cimbora & McIntosh, 2003; Zahn-Waxler, Cummings, & Lannotti, 1986). Today's educators and school psychologists are looking to make associations between events of intentional damage and the morally applicable social circumstances related to behavior (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Byrd, Loeber, & Perdini, 2012; Dawson, 2002). Schools confronted with direct physical aggression and anger requires evacuation of classrooms for others' personal safety. These threats of violence indirectly affect other factors related to social, cognitive, psychosocial, and emotional behaviors, including influencing learning disabilities and social adjustments factors (Eamon, 2001; Hinshaw, 1992). Today, educators and families are seeking answers for why we are seeing such an increase in children with characteristics such as dishonesty, stealing, and victimizing or harming others (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Bear & Rys, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Kinnier, 2000).

Outside factors contributing to rage and hostility in children include family systems, parenting stress, peer socialization, and cultural factors (Bennett et al., 1999; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Coohy et al., 2013; Derksen, 2010; Fiese, 2011; Matta Oshima, Huang, Honson-Reid, & Drake, 2010; Stoltz, 2013). Exposure to abuse, domestic violence, family patterns, and parenting practices all have been connected to aggression (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998). Parenting behaviors that weaken moral internalization and self-control include showing lack of affection and belonging, using power allegation to show dominance, disapproving remarks, and employing corporal punishment (Stover et al., 2012; Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986). Forceful control starts

the pattern of the destructive behaviors interconnected to the parent-child relationship. The relationship of forceful parenting has been shown to have an effect on the parent-child attachment. Positive and negative family and parental supports influence this attachment relationship (Lyons-Ruth, 1996; Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986). Parenting stress and parent-child interactions continue to be an important issue for educators (Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003).

Peer relationships also appear to influence aggressive children as they choose to hang around other aggressive children, supporting abnormal opinions and actions (Powers & Bierman, 2013; Lyons-Ruth, 1996; Rosenberg, 2013). The research of social mapping established developments of aggressive behavior when entering elementary school: high rates of aggressive or disruptive behavior resulted in rejections of peers, reducing the opportunities for exposure to positive peer modeling and reinforcing the formation of friendships with other peers who share antisocial, aggressive, disruptive behaviors (Powers & Bierman, 2013; Lyons-Ruth, 1996; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989).

It is necessary to investigate the development of ethical feeling and cognitive skills when looking at conduct disorders (CD) and emotional disturbances of children (Staub, 1991; Tremblay, 2000; Walker, Hennig, & Krettenauer, 2000; Watling & Neal, 2013). Greene (2005) found executive functioning and the capability to shift mindsets as a crucial part of processing for a rational, prosocial behavioral outcome. Children with emotional processing deficits have shown elevated negative peer encounters and are at higher risk of aggressive behavior due to the inability to perceive cues and empathize with others (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Batson et al., 2007; Cimborra & McIntosh, 2003; Greene, 2005).

For educators and the education system, providing safeguards for children through intervention is an important safety measure (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Clegg Smith,

2010; Dunlap et al., 1995; Frick et al., 1991; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2004). Understanding the connection between moral ways of thinking, rage, and violent behavior offers essential tools to support the mind, body, and soul of children and increase opportunities for success in their lives.

Theoretical Framework: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1994) was the father of early intervention and a co-founder of the federal Head Start program started in 1965 for children of low socioeconomic situations. His ecological models associated human development with the environmental influences surrounding them. Bronfenbrenner believed that, "the hectic pace of modern life poses a threat to our children second only to poverty and unemployment" (Lang, 2005, p. 1). Bronfenbrenner (1994) thought that children were being deprived of building emergent qualities of conscientiousness, honesty, and empathy due to the socioeconomic status they were born into, with the surrounding environment also making an impact. His later studies depicted a crumbling world producing children who lacked moral reasoning demonstrated by the signs of misbehavior, rising hostility, and aggression of our youth (Kail, 2014).

His theoretical structure was emphasized in Watling, Neal and Neal's (2013) nested and networked quantitative study. The study visually associated family relationships, parent/teacher relationship, direct experiences, and societal influences on children's moral way of thinking with actions. This was evidenced through family influences on the meaning of right and wrong, social growth, and ethical principles. The research of Watling, Neal and Neal supported Bronfenbrenner's exosystem and mesosystem. The nested influence within school environments and school's current policies and decisions is believed by Bronfenbrenner to place additional stress on the developing child. Larger classes mean less one-to-one interaction; less one-to-one interaction means less understanding and more homework. The networking brings the central

tendency back to the microsystem and the relationship of the family. Several studies established the networking and nesting importance of the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Damon & Lerner, 2006; Lerner, Brennen, Ree Noh, and Wilson, 2015; Watling Neal & Neal, 2013).

Based on Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model, theoretical structure represents the development of children nested in the interconnected networking of family, peer groups, school, and religious settings. This theoretical structure presented by Bronfenbrenner emphasized the importance for the healthy development of children. The interconnectedness of the environmental factors and how they impact each dimension of a child's development suggests how children thrive in daily life events (Ben-David & Nel, 2013; Dawson, 2002; Kail, 2014).

Bronfenbrenner (1994) includes the classroom, school, and school system as three of the spheres that influence a child's development (Bear & Rys, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Parenting is an important part of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) early influence of a child's growth and development. The parent-child relationship and social supports are connected to parenting beliefs. The theoretical framework represented in the nested ecological model provides a basis for answering the research question and extending prior research regarding parenting stress and child behavior.

Research Questions

Creswell (2015) states that the fundamental ideas addressed in the research project are intended to establish signposts to guide the study. These questions establish building blocks for the collection of the data that will speak to the questions. The central research question for this research study is "How does parental stress influence child behavior?"

Description of Terms

It is essential for educators and psychologists to provide guidance for concepts and terms throughout this discussion. Offering a description of terms guides the reader through definitions that give meaning and clarity to the research study (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). While exploring moral reasoning and the impact of family systems in the home and school environments, the depth of verbiage throughout the literature review uses vocabulary well-known to the educational or psychological fields. The following is a current, research-based list of terms used in this study.

Adolescence. The transitional period between childhood and puberty in human development, ranging largely over the teen years (Hardy et al., 2014).

Aggression. Any destructive action or act of violence (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998).

Attachment Theory. The provision of providing infants with security in order for them to feel safe for exploring as they develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills (Pleck, 2007).

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Behavior more common in adults and boys that manifests in characteristics such as forgetfulness, disorganization, inattentiveness and nonparticipation (Zabarenko, 2002).

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Persistent behaviors beginning in childhood and often continuing into adulthood marked by characteristics such as being distracted, impulsive, overactive, and inattentive (Frick et al., 1991).

Anger. The feeling of being distressed or aggravated because of something wrong or bad; the feeling that makes a person want to offend other people (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010).

Antisocial Behavior. Disruptive acts or intentional aggression shown toward others (Patterson et al., 1986).

Cognitive. Connecting and involving mindful psychological actions like thinking, understanding, learning, and remembering (Hinshaw, 1992).

Comorbidity. The existence of two or more unrelated characteristic conditions at the same time (Frick et al., 1991).

Conduct Disorder (CD). A severe behavioral and emotional disorder that occurs in children and teens. Some of the qualities for identification include defiance and rule breaking (Gasser, Malti, & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2012).

Delinquency. Misconducts or other morally wrong acts; dishonest or corrupt behavior particularly by young people (Matta Oshima, Huang, Honson-Reid, & Drake, 2010).

Ecological Model. Connections between the environment, social network, and basic principles of growth that influence a child's behavior and work bidirectionally throughout life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Hostility. Deep-rooted actions indicating a lack of self-control; conflict, resistance, or confrontation in thought or belief (Coohey et al., 2013).

Intellectual Quotient (IQ). A number representing one's intelligence that is based on scores on a particular given cognitive test by a certified psychologist or doctor (Frick et al., 1991).

Morality. Thought to be by most what is right and wrong behavior, involving the acceptable righteousness (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010).

Moral Identity. An idea considered by social scientists that maintains the use of moral issues such as compassion, kindness, and fairness (Hardy et al., 2014).

Moral Judgment. Opinions shaped through actions, motive, character traits, and intention within a person and represents good or bad when measured with a standard of good (Kinnier, 2000).

Moral Reasoning. The process in which a person tries to establish the difference between what is right and what is wrong in individual circumstances by thinking through the consequences. An important, daily process that people implement to do the right thing (Bear & Rys, 1994).

Moral Rules. Traditionally accepted principles of behavior related to right and wrong attached to one's actions (Jenson, 2009).

Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD). A state of being hostile, unfriendly and uncooperative; a disorder that is negative, insubordinate, noncompliant and often manifests in adverse behavior shown to adults and authority figures (Jones & Schwartz, 2009).

Parental Stress. Mental and psychological reactions to the demands of being a parent (Duis, Summers, & Summers, 1997).

Proximal Process. The connections in the direct environments that influence a person in the framework over time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Prosocial Behavior. Positive behavior that promotes social approval and friendship, described by a concern of others (DeVries & Zan, 1994).

Scaffolding. An academic technique of changing support based on current performance (Stassen Berger, 2009).

Socioeconomic Status (SES). Society determined status by income, occupation, wealth, education, residence, and other factors (Stover et al., 2012).

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The range of learning that a child can do independently or with little support (Stassen Berger, 2009).

Overview of Research Methods

Creswell (2015) described research as a process of engaging in steps for a logical outcome. The design of the study scaffolds the research both in function and in intention of the plan. This study will explore one central research question: How does parental stress influence child behavior? Mixed methods study participants were from an elementary school district located in the Northwestern United States representing second, third, and fourth grade levels. The sample size (n) was 10 parents and 10 students. A purposeful sampling of five students was used to identify typically developing students that had numerous office referrals of more than five visits to the principal a year. Another sample of five students were randomly sampled, where special educational services and medically diagnosed behavior were utilized for comparative purposes. Homogeneous sampling defining the groups looked at possible shared characteristics:

1. Conduct disorder with comorbidities of ADHD diagnosis
2. Autism with ADHD/CD/emotional disturbance eligibility

The diagnoses and special education services were already determined. No new testing for educational determination was performed. Some participants had active functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention plans in place for behaviors. Some participants were released from consideration, but met qualification due to the inability to participate in an interview (nonverbal), or that had received therapy services from the researcher.

The school district, two elementary schools, and parents of all subjects participating in the study provided permissions. Assent was gained from the students after parents gave consent for participation of themselves and their child in the research. The qualitative component of this

study involved independent interviews with parents and student participants. The quantitative component involved distribution and scoring the Parent Stress Index questionnaire. Parent and student data was disaggregated and coded to determine patterns within groups of three subscales: parental distress (PD), parent-child dysfunction interaction (P-CDI), and difficult child (DC). Strengths and weaknesses identified family factors, influences, and strategies for de-escalation and self-regulating behaviors. The data identified emerging relationships connected with Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model for connections with family dynamics, aggression, and social and ethical development with children.

Chapter II: Literature Review

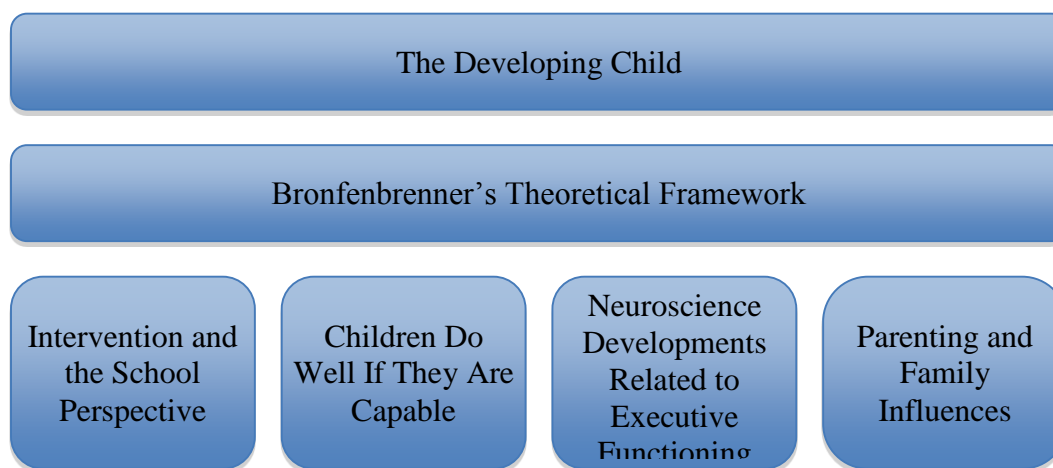
Morality involves children learning how to make distinctions between right and wrong. Main beliefs help children make appropriate decisions when faced with challenging choices as well as develop the capacity to do the right thing (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Batson et al., 2007; 2010; Dawson, 2002; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Hardy et al., 2014). Educators, families, and communities are looking to comprehend how and why a small percentage of children select certain trajectories that lead to increased aggressive behaviors and others do not (Batson et al., 2007; Dawson, 2002; Robers et al., 2014; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1986).

The history of literature for review provides a plethora of detailed investigations of theory and discipline relevant to children's emotions exhibited within the school setting (Bear & Rys, 1994; Stassen Berger, 2009; Dawson, 2002; Hinshaw, 1992). The formation of five- to ten-year-old children, and the psychosocial significance are vital to look at due to the connections children make as they proceed into adulthood (Stassen Berger, 2009). Bear and Rys (1994) provided distinctions between needs-orientated and empathy-oriented reasoning to explain the considerable discrepancy found in children who appear stuck in a stage of self centeredness, in which right behavior is defined by whatever the child believes to be in their best interest. Dawson's work (2002), considered the growth of children and adolescence, sometimes skipping stages and continued moral growth. Cognitive development of children has been interrelated with educational underachievement connected to boys exhibiting conduct problems as well as attention deficit disorder (Frick et al., 1991). Research confirms that parents, peers, and family are highly linked with intellectual progress, continuing social connections, and social regulation of children (Bennett et al., 1999; Eisenberg et al., 1988; Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998). Historical findings discovered that cognitive processes influence children's self-regulation and

are interconnected with ethical gaps in decisions made by parents and peers. Bridging the gap and building links with dysfunctional actions will help further develop children who exhibit violent, disruptive behaviors (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Bennett et al., 1999; Lyons-Ruth, 1996; Patterson et al., 1989).

Figure 1

Categories of the Literature Review



The Developing Child: Theoretical Framework

Behaviorists thought that every action came from a chain of learned responses. Behavior was also thought to be the product of classical and operant conditioning (Stassen Berger, 2009). The distribution of stages indicated that learning was not a smooth progression, but suggested it was a transformative one. When children do not progress through the stages, they may get “stuck” and develop other behaviors that may be less desirable (Dawson, 2002). The levels and stages appear to be broken when looking at students who exhibit severe intense outbursts of anger and aggression (Ben-David & Nel, 2013; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Kail, 2014; Stassen Berger, 2009).

Numerous theories explored social and psychological development, establishing building

blocks for stages of development (Kail, 2014; Stassen Berger, 2009). It was the Contextual Perspective developed by Bronfenbrenner (1986) that embedded child development in the complex context of different, multifaceted phenomena contributing to the developing child (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Kail, 2014; Stassen Berger, 2009). Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theory evolved into the bio-ecological theory of development by Damon and Lerner (2006), who investigated the social constructs that externally influence children. The nested structure theorized that the immediate systems of family, parenting practices, parent-child relations, peers, and school influence developments were due to the essential nature of time spent with the models within this system (Ben-David & Nel, 2013).

Bronfenbrenner (1994) proposed that the development of children happens with the modeling of shared interactions. His theory incorporated interactions from all settings a child is exposed to. All layers from home, school, parents, neighbors, politics, religion, and work place touch the development of the child and show sensitivity to change (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Stassen Berger, 2009). Both indirect and direct influences are considered within the bioecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994). The microsystem described by Bronfenbrenner (1994) included interpersonal relations in the direct settings of family and school. Factors of parenting practices, parent-child relations, and parental stress, according to Algood, Harris, and Sung Hong (2013), are significant factors influenced by child behavior within the microsystem.

Earlier theorists took complex approaches to the cognitive development of temperament and principles, but the most encompassing model is that of theorists Urie Bronfenbrenner (1994). His work emphasized that, for children, growth is subjective to the entire ecological (biological and environmental) structure. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) system affirms the lifetime path of

human growth is linked to the exposure to multiple influences, including the actual environments in which we live.

Dawson (2002) reviewed the literature that connected the social traditions with stages of growth, but concluded that the missing link appeared to be in the unambiguous correlation to the way children make choices without regard for moral conventions. The research discussed the emotional, aggressive actions in connection with conduct disorders, but it lacks the emphasis on one's cognitive capabilities and the role they may play on the social development of children (Dawson, 2002). Through the theoretical structure, it can be concluded that family systems impact development, but this structure lacks an understanding of what influences students' development of moral reasoning.

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological Systems Theory later added the interaction of historical time to depict a person's involvement and to consider the factors occurring during a person's life that become influential.

1. Microsystems: Family, classroom, peers, and religious setting
2. Mesosystems: The interactions of the family, school, peers, and religion
3. Exosystems: The community, school system, medical institutions, and mass media
4. Macrosystems: Economic patterns, political philosophy, national customs, cultural values, social conditions.
5. Chronosystem: The importance of historical time

The theoretical framework developed by Bronfenbrenner (1994) provides a system with multiple influences affecting the development of a child. These influences within Bronfenbrenner's (1994) presumption consist of four components or layers: process, person, context, and time (Krishnan, 2010). The process refers to the surroundings that have influence on

the child. Krishnan (2010) used two terms to describe process: proximal and distal influence. In Bronfenbrenner's (1994) model, proximal drives the lessons of the development of prosocial behaviors. The type of parenting, the provision of safety, and the influence of culture and religious practices engage lessons believed to link development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Krishnan, 2010). Distal process includes the family support and the exposure to others who interact with the child (Krishnan, 2010). All four layers of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) framework are beyond the scope of this research; however, a concentration on the microsystem and the mesosystem will provide associations regarding environmental influences such as parental stress and child behavior. Table 1 provides an explanation of the ecological model.

Table 1

Bronfenbrenner's Structure of the Environment

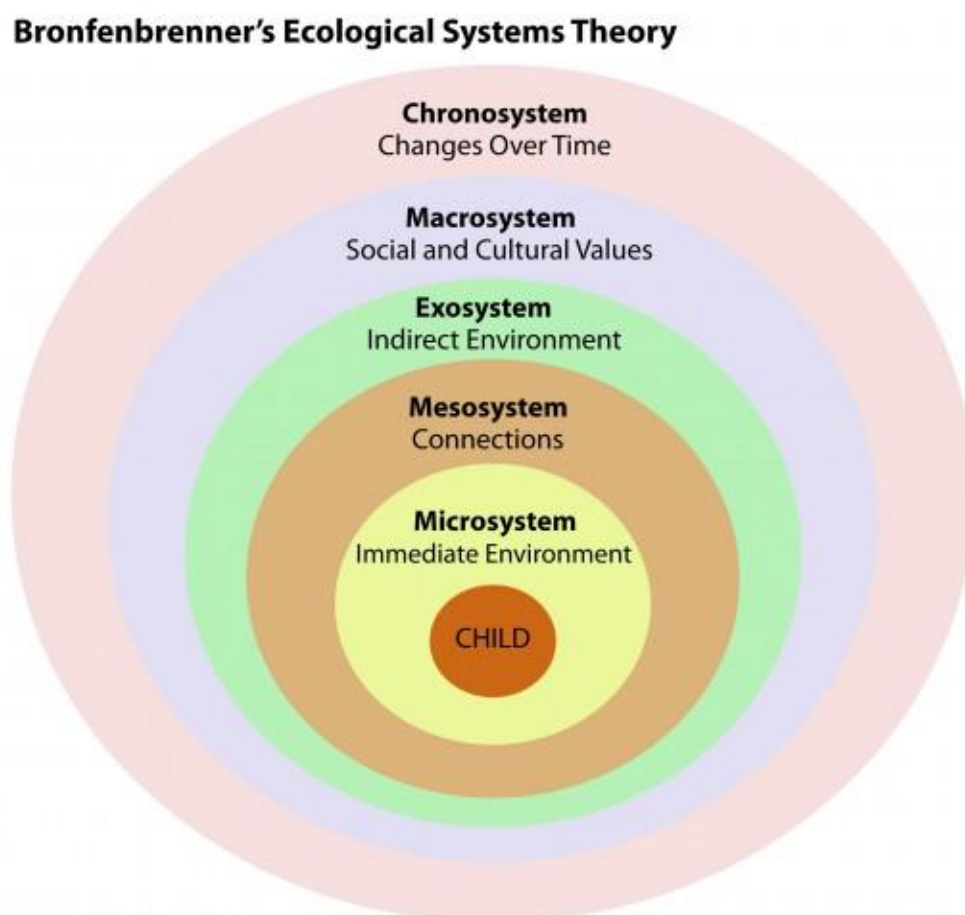
Microsystem	Closest working with the child and contains the structures that directly impact the associations and relations with the child's immediate environment.	Can work both directions and have bi-directional influence.
Mesosystem	Connects the structures of the microsystem with the mesosystem.	Family, school, religion, community
Exosystem	A larger social arrangement that does not have a specific role directly with the child but will have an effect on the mesosystem and microsystem.	The workplace of the parents and the resources provided in the community. Possibly work schedule, pay scale, etc.
Macrosystem	Outer layer that contains structural influences like cultural values and laws.	These influences will flow through the other systems
Chronosystem	Influences related to the child's development externally (a death in the family) or internally (moving through stages of puberty).	Represents the dimension of time and how one grows from birth to death. How the child reacts affects how they are influenced.

Note. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model represents the interactions that can influence a child's development.

In figure 2, the ecological model represents the system constructs that are working together in the development of the individual.

Figure 2

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



Note. The visual depicts the interactions among a number of overlapping systems, which provide the context of development. <http://www.psychologynoteshq.com>. Copyright (2015) Psychology Notes HQ. Reprinted with permission. See Appendix A.

The model provides five socially well-thought-out subsystems, overlapping the contexts that expand individual actions. Microsystems include schools, peer groups, classrooms, neighborhoods, church affiliations, and families that closely profile human development. Macrosystems refer to institutional patterns of societal ideals or social settings that influence the exchanges between the systems and growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Exosystems include all the

outside networks like the mass media, communities, school systems, and health institutions.

These networks influence the microsystems and all three of systems within the macrosystem.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) felt that there was one more piece to the system, the chronosystem, which represents the importance of historical time. This part of the system considers not only the person involved but also the environmental factors that are occurring during the person's life.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) believed the natural science of human development was centered on the intersecting point among the three disciplines of the biological, psychological, and social fields, with an emphasis on the progression and influence on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Derksen, 2010). Bronfenbrenner (1994) also accentuated the idea that a child's development was predisposed by the surroundings he or she was exposed to. He further stressed the importance of those surroundings as a way of conceptualizing the emergent individual (Derksen, 2010). The review of literature showed the Bronfenbrenner (1994) model implemented a nested arrangement or system that highlighted the influence of the environment on a child, as it is "perceived" by the emergent child and the maturity of actions (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Derksen, 2010; Stassen Berger, 2009).

Bronfenbrenner (1994) implied that there is a pertinent purpose fundamental in the phenomenological character of individual growth. Bronfenbrenner also highlighted the importance of a faith system of individuals, as the community acts together, deals with change, and undertakes events in their day-to-day lives (Derksen, 2010). However, a key pattern in his later work clearly embedded the family as an institution that plays a key role in the emerging development of a child's character through the connections to the direct environments that influence a person over time or by proximal process. (McGuckin & Minton, 2014; Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Spilt et al., 2012; Scrimgeour et al., 2013). This influence occurs in the circles

surrounding the development of the child and, for the purpose of this research, concerns the circles closest to the child—the microsystem and the mesosystem. The two systems propose that the socialization occurring with the parents and family connects to the influence of schools and daycares in a powerful way, complimenting one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Erath & Bierman, 2006; Guhn & Goelman, 2011; McGuckin & Minton, 2014; Spilt et al., 2012; Weisner, 2010).

Parenting and Family Influences

Parenting and family influences developed into a key piece of the impact family systems have on the emergent child (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Ely, Gleason, MacGibbon, & Zaretsky, 2001; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989; Stassen Berger 2009). Historically, parents play a key role in raising a healthy child, providing love, safety, and security (Erath & Bierman, 2006; Lerner et al., 2015; Pleck, 2007; Scrimgeour et al., 2013). Many individuals encounter parenting stress at various levels while fulfilling parenting duties in their daily routines (Duis et al., 1997; Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003). Parenting stresses can have factors relating to the temperament of a child, such as child behavior problems or low levels of social support (Duis et al., 1997; Respler-Herman, Yaskik, & Shamah, 2012). The concept of stress having a negative influence on parenting strategies supports the impact of parenting stress on the young child's development, which can have a potentially unfavorable outcome on children's behaviors and actions (Algood, Harris, & Sung Hong, 2013; Duis et al., 1997; Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003).

Parenting behaviors and parenting styles have been predictors of stress on the family system (Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003). Past studies have looked at the effects of parenting stress on middle school-aged children. These studies linked parenting stress to the negative impact on children, resulting in attention problems, disobedient behavior, and aggression as well as low

levels of social competence (Abidin, 2012; Bennett et al., 1999; Erath & Bierman, 2006). Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model serves as the framework for investigating the influence of parental stress on the developing child.

Parenting itself can be a stressful process (Algood et al., 2013; Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003). According to Abidin (2012) three main stressors for parents are (1) child characteristics, (2) parent characteristics, and (3) situational or life stress. Environmental factors, family dynamics, and parenting methods are important to investigate to gain an understanding of parent-child relations within Bronfenbrenner's (1994) microsystem level (Algood et al., 2013).

The parenting style develops the social system Bronfenbrenner refers to as the person-context association (Lerner et al., 2015). Huesmann & Guerra's (1997) research highlighted the modeling of social interactions that provide a schema for self-regulation to occur later. The socialization progression and functions of literacy applied to verbal communication has also been a focal point of development on prosocial contact (Ely et al., 2001; Lyons-Ruth, 1996). Researchers made important connections to the role of dinner conversations specifically (Ely et al., 2001; Lyons-Ruth, 1996). The importance of social communication provided by parents at the dinner table was optimistically interconnected to the potentially important information about the communicative functions of verbal communication and problem solving strategies of their children (Ely et al., 2001). These scripts of communicative behavior at the table, and in other social interactions, play a crucial part in the normative belief system that filters out inappropriate behaviors and regulates actions as moral rules (Darling, 2007; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lerner et al., 2015; Paat, 2013).

The family system theory associates parenting and marriage within the structure of families in a hierarchically group with parent-child and sibling dealings (Stassen Berger 2009;

Stover et al., 2012). A cultural practice in family unit conversations that included spoken disagreement involving parents and an adolescent was also considered in past studies (Bennett et al., 1999; Patterson et al., 1989). Arcidiacono and Pontecorvo (2009) studied Italian families at dinnertime and focused on the relationship among parents and preadolescents. The study showed that clashing opinions, conflict, and concern are emergent in social phenomena and that family rules and accepted practices based on belief systems are learned through a socio-enlightening position and outlook (Arcidiacono & Pontecorvo, 2009; Stoltz, 2013).

The literature also looks at the role of adopted and biologically related families to separate environmental and hereditary variables contributing to aggression in very early childhood (Nisan, 1987; Patterson et al., 1989; Stover et al., 2012). Stover, Connell, Leve, Neiderhiser, & Shaw (2012), Nisan (1987), and Patterson, DeBaryshe, and Ramsey, 1989 (1989) linked aggressive, authoritative, laissez-faire, and commanding parenting to the nervous tension placed on children living in those homes and to aggressive behaviors. Financial strain was also a contributing factor linking social economic status (SES) to marital aggression, which was then associated to damaging parenting and child aggression (Stover et al., 2012). Stover et al. associated parents' unfriendly character traits with marital conflict and found that parent behavior was more influential than genetics for children who were adopted. Outcomes of this study gave backing to the hypothesis that both social cognitive functioning and parenting are indicators of possible risk factors associated with aggressive behaviors. A positive parent-child relation equals a smaller amount of aggression. Negative parenting correlated to less positive self-worth and created gaps in social-cognitive functioning associated to violent behavior (Erath & Bierman, 2006; Lee, Altschul, & Gershoff, 2013; Lyons-Ruth, 1996; Stover et al., 2012).

Ethical norms and honest values in the family system were also related to the moral rules based on the studies conducted by Turiel (Jenson, 2009; Kinnier, 2000; Nisan, 1987). Turiel believed conventional and personal rules, unlike moral ones, could be changed (Jenson, 2009). For example, conventional reasoning focuses on the spiritual and shared norms, such as family interests. Personal reasoning centers on the well-being of self. Turiel's (2008) study based on these definitions implied that moral intent can go beyond self and society and would be connected merely in the highest levels of Kohlberg's approaches (Jenson, 2009).

A parent lying might be an example of moral intent. Jenson (2009) made the connection with family characteristics. He suggested that in families where parents exerted an elevated degree of power and set stringent regulations for personal control, the adolescent may lie more than in a family that had open communication and was supportive of the adolescent's thoughts. Stassen Berger (2009) also reported that children in any society would blossom when parents recognized the value of the children, as well as positively interacted with prosocial character skills in predictable thoughts and actions.

Coohey, Renner, and Sabri (2013) explored unfair treatment, parenting, and destructive externalizing actions in children from diverse cultural societies. Diverse groups including Latino and Caucasian adolescents were sampled. Parental physical assault was related to more externalizing behaviors in Latino males and females. Parental inconsistency and criticism were interrelated with decreased externalizing behaviors for Latino females but not for Latino males (Coohey et al., 2013). In research of Caucasian adolescents, Coohey et al. (2013) indicated all forms of unfair treatment and increased parental conflicts were linked to the externalizing behaviors for both genders. Victimized adolescents used maladaptive behaviors, such as aggression, to cope with stressors connected to personal victimization. The literature review also

confirmed in the study of Coohy et al. (2013) that, when a parent physically assaulted children or children had witnessed violence, there was association with increased externalizing behaviors among adolescents. The studies supported that victimization of children in homes affects family dynamics and helps predict externalizing behaviors (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Derksen, 2010; Stassen Berger, 2009).

Lee, Altschul, and Gershoff (2013) and Patterson et al. (1989) both supported children's development coupled with the influence of parenting. Data indicated that when a child is reprimanded with physical punishment like spanking, the child increased physical acts and other effects in the externalized behavior pattern he or she projected in turn (Lee et al., 2013). The social-interactional perspective proved, additionally, to have a big influence on a child who is still developing. Patterson et al. (1989) correlated the interrupted bonding of children's development to harsh discipline, poor supervision, and lack of parental involvement. Patterson et al.'s (1998) perspective is that family members directly influence one another and teach antisocial behavioral patterns as a result of not using positive parenting practices. Hence, the poor parenting influence creates a domino effect concerning poor academic attainment, rejection of peers, and acceptance of nonstandard group membership, which ends in the misbehavior of the young person (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Derksen, 2010; Lee et al., 2013; Patterson et al., 1989; Stassen Berger, 2009).

Walker and Henning (1999) contended that parents do play a noteworthy role in moral development. Their research findings indicated that parent interaction styles, egos, and moral ways of thinking used in discussions and exchange of ideas are predictive of the child's moral development. McGuckin and Minton (2014) used an analogy to describe the importance of the parent-child relationship to that of a bird's egg: the child is protected by the shell for a short time

prior to realizing that he or she is a functioning participant in the surrounding world. This bidirectional influence of passive and active engagement begins with the child interpreting the world around and then building a belief system of social behaviors (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

The culminating findings provided comprehensible data that the nature of parents' relations either hinders or nurtures children's opportunities to move toward a more mature moral understanding (Walker & Henning, 1999). Parents who connect with their child in challenging, harsh, defensive, insensitive, and rigid conduct delayed a child's development. Effective parents focused on the child and established a thoughtful method scaffolding by eliciting the child's opinions, helping the child reason with probing questions, and providing emotional support in the form of more advanced moral reasoning (Walker & Henning, 1999).

Children Do Well If They Are Capable

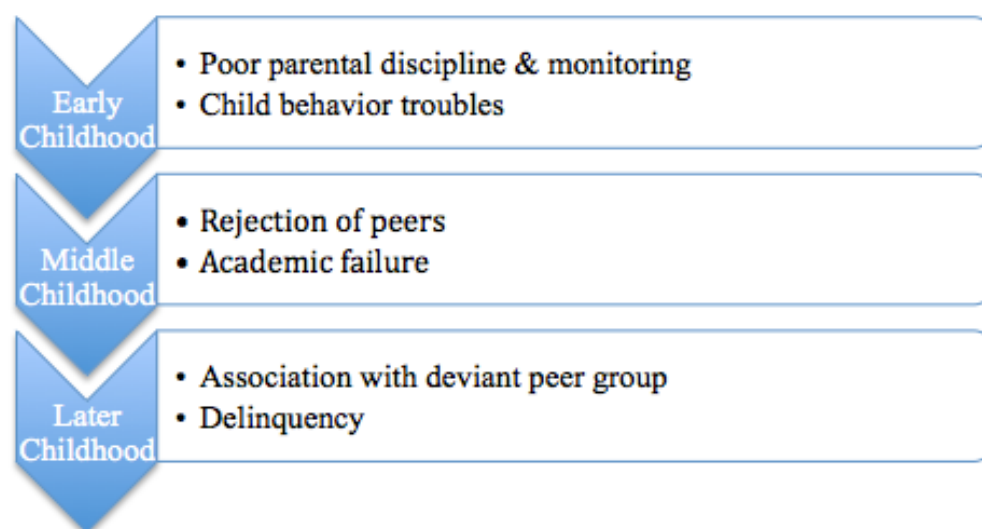
Greene (2005) shared the viewpoint that, "If children could do well, they would do well" (p. 16). Adults may not give much thought to this idea; however, when dealing with explosive behavior in a school setting, one must differentiate between children improving because they desire to and children doing better if they are capable of doing so (Green, 2005; 2014). The assumption of children thriving if they want to guides us to think parenting techniques are associated with the children's options and capabilities (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Greene, 2014; Stover et al., 2012). Doing well is preferable, but a child must have the ability to do well in the first place (Bear & Rys, 1994; Frick et al., 1991; Greene, 2014; Jones & Schwartz, 2009; Patterson et al., 1989; Sherrard, Tonge, & Ozanne-Smith, 2002).

Patterson et al. (1989) connected the development of antisocial behavioral traits early in a child's years, as early as elementary school. Traits such as temper, outbursts, and academic

trouble worked within a continuum of later chronic behavior problems including peer relationships, group acceptability, and school failure (Frick et al., 1991; Greene, 2005; Patterson et al., 1989). Historical studies identified variables within the family that form child behaviors early on and include harsh parental models, little parental participation (including poor monitoring and modeling in a positive role), and inconsistency in discipline practices. The figure below shows the relationship and development for antisocial behavior by mapping out a progression of development due to direct influence of family members who are models for childhood behavior throughout early development (Patterson et al., 1989).

Figure 3

Developmental Progression for Antisocial Behavior



Note. The social-interactional viewpoint explained by Patterson et al. (1989).

Frick et al. (1991) and Patterson et al. (1989) made the connection involving behavior and academic achievement, investigating children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Conduct Disorder (CD). Bear and Rys (1994) showed relationships between social cognition and classroom behavior as well as maladaptive behaviors due to peer dismissal and sociometric status. Sherrard, Tonge, and Ozanne-Smith (2002) related patterns of maladaptive

behaviors to harm and a child's academic disability. Greene (2005) studied the skill set or lack of skills to volatile outbursts happening because of the demands placed on the child outweighs their competence to comprehend.

Other literature (Hinshaw, 1992) focused on low IQ, socioeconomic status (SES), family adversity, language deficits, and neurodevelopmental delays as underlying factors related to behavior. This research focused on variables and investigations between links associated with achievement and behavior. The connection between inattention and hyperactivity is a consistent correlation that emphasizes the importance of this factor in students with severe aggressive behaviors. This domain seems to share comorbidity in a crucial way and can be another factor attributing to behavior and low achievement in school settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Jones & Schwartz, 2009; Hinshaw, 1992; Patterson et al., 1989). Jones and Schwartz (2009) investigated the family dynamics and interaction patterns of high performing children with autism, looking for patterns that are crucial in social communication deficits. The patterns in these studies provided support for Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model and developmental impact of the microsystem on the mesosystems and two-way communication.

The effects of poverty and a child's socioemotional development is connected with Bronfenbrenner's (1994) process-person-context-time (PPCT) model, serving as an explanation of adverse effects of economic deficiency on socioemotional development (Eamon, 2001). About one in five children in the United States were considered underprivileged in 2001 (Eamon, 2001). The National Center for Education Statistics (2013) reported that 21% of school-age children in the United States were from families living in poverty or fell into the category of being disadvantaged by lacking the same opportunities as other children in their community. Eamon (2001) compared children who resided in families with more monetary resources and

concluded that underprivileged children face elevated vulnerability in developing socioemotional problems: depression, externalizing and internalizing behaviors, lower social skills, trouble communicating with peers, and disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

The nested arrangement of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological environment connects all factors of the home environment (stress, coping, marital problems), peer group influences (fewer recourses, rejection from mainstream groups), school difficulties (low-achieving, increased behavior problems), and health concerns (improper eating habits, older housing, parent working relationships) with effects of poverty on children (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Eamon, 2001; Matta Oshima et al., 2010). The research conducted by Huesmann and Guerra (1997) associated cognition and environmental experiences with factors impacting children. Huesmann and Guerra (1997) considered the influence of the "schema concept" meaning how children receive information to understand not only the accepted behavior, but to act on the normative acceptance of such behavior. Relating this study to Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theory indicates that children's normative beliefs are directly developed by the observed relationship of others as well as the experienced behaviors they have witnessed either directly or indirectly from others. This begins the process of developing the schema or script for behaviors (aggressive and nonaggressive forms), which in turn influences one's normative belief system (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Eamon, 2001; Matta Oshima et al., 2010).

Much of the research linked specific diagnoses with lagging skills, communication gaps or development, challenging home environments, and parent modeling (Bear & Rys, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Eamon, 2001; Frick et al., 1991; Greene, 2014; Hinshaw, 1992; Jones & Schwartz, 2009; Sherrard et al., 2002). Challenging behaviors also occur when the demands placed on children are beyond their cognitive and adaptive skills (Greene, 2014). School failure,

vulnerability, is associated with metacognitive deficits (Matta Oshima et al., 2010). The many-sided nature of social cognitions, antisocial behavior, and sociometric status is shared, and it manipulates moral development and needs to be linked to the triggers and pathways that enhance these associations (Bear & Rys, 1994).

Neuroscience Developments Related to Executive Functioning

Important developments in understanding the brain and the behavior of children have been conducted over the past years (Hudziak, Achenback, Althoff, & Pine, 2007; Levin & Trevarthen, 2000; Reiss, 2009; Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008). Functions of the brain through imaging have brought new attention to disorders and the reactions they cause in the brain (Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008). Using cognitive neuroscience to examine the workings of the brain in children who exhibit symptoms such as hyperactivity, impulsivity, distractibility, emotional control, and other executive functioning skills or aggressive behaviors gives insight into child development (Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008). Past studies indicated children with ADHD, CD, and ODD or ED disorders share comorbidities (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Hinshaw, 1992; Jones & Schwartz, 2009).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) establishes the categorical and clinical description of disorders or psychopathology diagnosis. Developmental understandings of the differing dimensions are important for the discussion of what influences each area (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Hinshaw, 1992). Hudziak, Achenback, Althoff, & Pine (2007) took a dimensional approach to understanding the variances in childhood diagnoses. The combination of neuroscience and gene-based approaches helps encompass the diverse variables when looking into human behavior. Age, gender, genetics, cultural influences, and differing environments are sensitive to

determinations in cognitive ability, achievement, and behavior. For brain and developmental disorders, it is very important for a team to work together in the neurology and developmental disciplines (Reiss, 2009).

Use of the dimensional approach suggested by Hudziak et al. (2007) provides a means to look at cutoff points, bring in multiple informants, reduce random criteria, and assess the collection of data in determinations or diagnosis of the manifestation of comorbid criteria for multiple determinations. For example, using the dimensional approach would be useful when looking at a child who has distinct conditions and characteristics of ADHD, depression and ODD, which are very common in the school setting. This child may have conditions directly linked to genetics; however, using only the DSM-V (APA, 2013) may indicate that this child may meet the criteria for CD, but he or she may also meet a severe mood disorder. Using only one dimension of the DSM-V (APA, 2013) is not as supportive as also adding the quantitative profiles and the categorical to build the child's genetic and neural instruments in identifying interventions and treatment programs for the child's success (Hudziak et al., 2007).

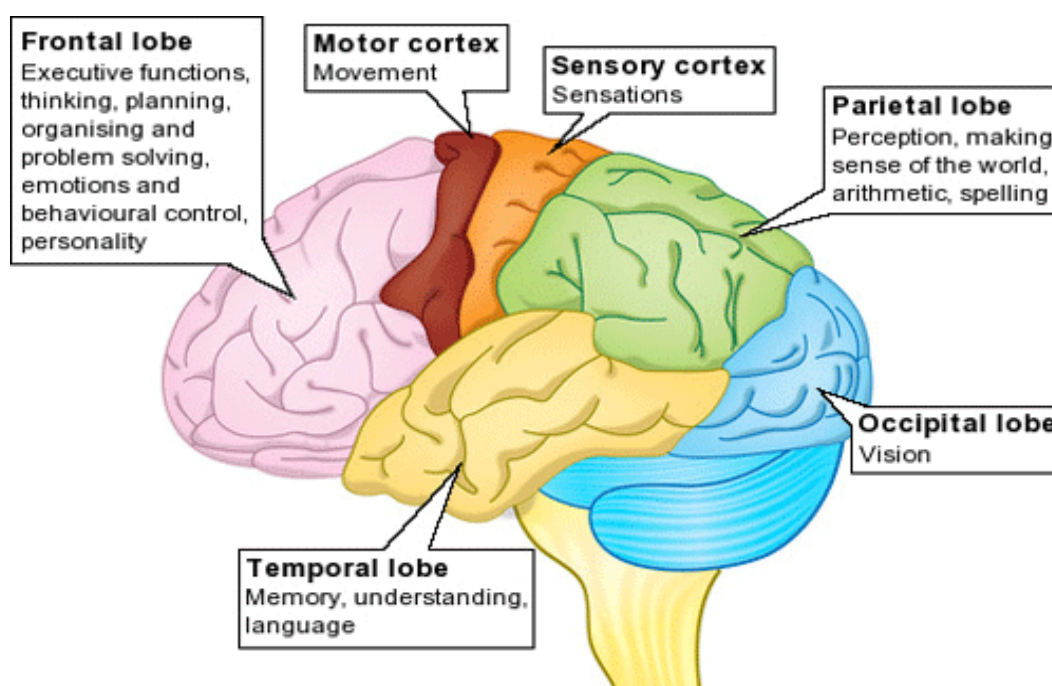
A common comorbidity found in brain imaging is that of ADHD connected to behavior (Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008). When looking at a picture of the brain of a child who has ADHD, characteristics will show multiple pathways that are connected to the executive functions (emotional control, self-monitoring ability, working memory, flexibility, impulse control, and planning and prioritizing ability). The neurological pathways within the brain influence high commands of cognitive abilities connected to Bloom's Taxonomy, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008).

There has been an abundance of neuroscientific studies connecting the relevance of ADHD to the significance it bears on learning, memory, and neural plasticity (Frick et al., 1991;

Reiss, 2009; Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008; Zabarenko, 2002). Zabarenko (2002) explored the neuroscience work of others such as Levin and Trevarthen (2000). Figure 4 is a medial picture of the human brain. Each part of the brain serves a purpose for cognitive functioning. The frontal lobes of the brain connect with many other important brain areas that help synchronize executive functions and other activities important to the higher order cognition tasks.

Figure 4

The Brain



Note. <http://boundless.com>. Copyright (2015) Creative Commons Share-Alike License. Reprinted with permission see Appendix A.

The executive control system is crucial to the ability to shift in thought for general attention, feeling as part of the group (National Center of Learning Disabilities [NCLD], 2013). This control system is located in the cingulate cortex, and damage to the section affects a child's ability to make associations, deal with conflicts, and make error corrections. The cerebellum is another important part in the brain that influences many functions of behavior including motor, sensory, cognitive skills, and attentional behaviors. Because the executive control system is in

charge of switching between low level and high level processes and can interfere with working memory, it cannot be singled out as the primary cause of learning difficulties and disruptive behaviors (Zabarenko, 2002). Vaidya and Stollstorff (2008) looked at the brain along with the functions of ADHD through brain imaging.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD, 2013) explained the executive functions of the brain could have overarching effects on organization, working memory (flexibility, holding and storing information), and self-monitoring (impulse control, organization, emotional control). When the executive functions in the brain are not working the way they should, dysfunction can occur in peer relationships, social interactions, and understanding social cues (NCLD, 2013). This can be referred to as social capability and cognitive ability (Frick et al., 1991; Reiss, 2009; Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008). Research conducted for the NCLD (2013) indicated that children with underdeveloped executive processing systems are more likely to behave in unacceptable ways in our society. Children's inability to solve interpersonal problems interferes with the capacity to adjust to social encounters and to be tolerant of successes and failures. Children do not think of the consequences of their behavior as being wrong due to their inability to read any body language or social cues in the communication domain (Frick et al., 1991; NCLD, 2013; Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008).

The School Perspective

Over 13 years ago, data suggested that violence in schools was a problem (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). Incidents of daily upsets in classrooms, violent eruptions of physical behavior towards teachers and students, interruption of planned teaching activities and learning experiences have been noted in the work of Bear and Rys (1994), Frick et al. (1991), and Greene (2014). A national survey conducted by Webster-Stratton and Reid (2003) suggested that there

have been incidences of challenging destructive behaviors in the elementary school years.

Webster-Stratton and Reid (2003) targeted interventions with both parent and child with conduct problems and the related problems associated with ADHD and ODD diagnoses. The results noted improvement within the home environment in social skills and conduct problems interacting with the crossover from school to home in skills.

Management of difficult behaviors has roots in behaviorist approaches such as Bandura's social cognitive perspective (1963). Behaviorists like Bandura approach behavior modification with a difficult child the same way they would with a child displaying normal problems. They would develop moral independence encompassing self-regulation through goal specific targets (Derksen, 2010). Ownership of goals helps produce personal satisfaction and higher achievement (Devries & Zan, 1994). For assessment and intervention purposes, educators handling maladaptive behaviors need to be asking the question why the behaviors are happening and what is driving the behaviors? Behavior change relies on the evaluation of the belief system, leading to the misconduct (DeVries & Zan, 1994; Powell et al., 2011). A child's belief system would be nested in the microsystem of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Walting, Neal, & Neal, 2013). The process of developing a belief system comes from the idea that family models and influences thoughts (Nisan, 1987; Stover et al., 2012). Children in the early years could be thought of as realists because they think only of black and white; judgments of right or wrong are based on what is real to them at that time (DeVries & Zan, 1994). DeVries and Zan (1994) speak to prosocial behavior being taught and expected by teachers and parents by modeling genuine feelings appropriate for each situation. A child accidentally running into a block house that another child has built on the carpet can be used as an example. One child may want punishment and retribution for the one who wrecked the house; however, a story of empathy might build

forgiveness and be more easily accepted without harm to either child. Finding ways to build individual motivation speaks to developing interventions for building the child's belief system (Dunlap et al., 1995; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2004).

Conduct problems in school are the source of emotional problems and further mental health issues for both the initiator and victim (Powell et al., 2011). The theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model provided the necessary structure for understanding the Process, Person, Context, and Time model for Krishnan's (2010) study of early childhood development for intervention purposes. Krishnan (2010) emphasized the collaboration of school and community within the multi-directional environment of nature verses nurture (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Many studies encourage supportive programs for parents of children with and without special needs that enhances parent-child relationships by reducing parenting stress to facilitate child development (Algood et al., 2013; Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003). Universal prevention programs have been developed specifically for the use in schools and outside agencies that address prevention of aggression (Larson & Lochman, 2002). The programs focus on the proactive goal instead of the reactive method of dealing with the severe disruptive behavior that anger and aggression causes. Elementary schools have noted the need to adopt curricula that teaches prevention of impulsivity and aggressive behavior by employing anger management strategies and teaching social skills (Larson & Lochman, 2002; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2004). Lessons on empathy, problem solving, and conflict resolution to influence children's prosocial skills have proven to decrease physical aggression after the programs were used (Dunlap et al., 1995; Krishnan, 2010; Larson & Lochman, 2002; Rosenberg, 2013; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003).

Research conducted by Duis, Summers, and Summers (1997) linked differing levels and severity of family stress across families with disabilities, two-parent families, and single-parent families. Parenting children is challenging and a regularly stressful experience for parents, even when their children are typically developing children (Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003). For the educator and psychologist, measuring parenting stress and parenting behaviors during assessments would provide an extensive comprehensive assessment providing data to better understand holistically the parent-child relationship. This could lead to a better understanding of the embedded layers of influences on child development and behaviors.

Conclusion

The review of the literature supports children's theoretical foundations of emotion in the early development, empathetic trends, and fairness, which emerges from the interactions between children and their parents as well as children and their peers (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Eisenberg et al., 1988; Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998). Research confirms that parents, peers, and family are highly linked with intellectual progress, continuing social connections, and social regulation (Eisenberg et al., 1988; Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998). Cognitive processes influence self-regulations contained by related disorders and are interconnected with ethical gaps in decisions influenced by parents and peers (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998). Bridging the gap and building links with dysfunctions of actions will help further development for children who exhibit violent, disruptive behaviors (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010).

Important components surfaced in relation to the moral actions of children through the theoretical lens of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model:

1. Parenting and family influences have an impact on prosocial interactions in children as they develop,

2. Developing capacity or cognitive ability influences the developing child,
3. Neuroscience is relevant in the developing child's brain and the ability to develop normally,
4. The school's perspective for interventions in children's behavior to build and support relationships as a secondary role to that of parenting.

The theoretical scaffold connects to the human development theory of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory and encompasses the life long process of development.

The development of the child has been studied at various stages of growth in children. Kohlberg's stages looked at studies of moral reasoning and classroom behavior. Relationships were made between Kohlberg's Stage 1 and 3 and between Stage 2 verbalization and reasoning (Bear & Rys, 1994). The study elaborated on a system for moral reasoning fusing the hedonistic perspective (more empathy- or needs-based perspective), viewing sociometric status and the influence of social behavior mediated largely by moral reasoning. Cognitive structure (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988), including prosocial moral reasoning, was considered. It was predicted that cognitive structure would provide a stronger estimate and rationalization of classroom social adjustment. Sequences of moral judgment stages are important in prerequisite moral development, but it appears that today's children are skipping stages and continuing moral development into adulthood, giving a need to update Kohlberg's study (Bear & Rys, 1994). These theories flowed into Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theoretical framework and the development of the child from a nested understanding of influences and from the convergence of psychological, biological, and social sciences as they bear on the person. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theory supports the whole child development into adulthood.

The impact on parenting, parental stress, and family influences plays a role in the

developing child's framework (Bear & Rys, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Frick et al., 1991; Greene, 2014; Hinshaw, 1992; Jones & Schwartz, 2009; Eamon, 2001; Sherrard et al., 2002). Stoltz (2013) looked at a cross-sectional study examining child social information processing, parenting, and self-perception in association with threat factors related to aggression. Results supported harsh parenting methods were linked with violent behaviors in children. Emphasis was on proactive aggression fostered through negative parenting. For the purpose of this study, it is important to connect this testing by Stoltz (2013) with parenting and to connect behavior to the modeling and level of parental stress. This study connects child's social cognitive functioning and the influences of parenting together as risk factors associated with aggressive behaviors. A positive parent-child relation equals a reduced amount of aggression. Negative parenting relates to a lesser amount of positive self-worth and more gaps in social-cognitive functioning linked to aggression.

The connection between inattention and hyperactivity is a consistent correlation that emphasizes the importance of this factor in students with severe aggressive behaviors. This domain seems to share comorbidity in a crucial way and can be another factor attributing to the behavior and low achievement in the school setting (Hinshaw, 1992; Megargee, 1996; Menesini, 2003). Frick et al. (1991) investigated the educational deficit related the lack of success in boys who have been diagnosed with ADHD or CD and show both qualities. The study determined that CD was accompanied by low achievement due to the comorbidity of ADHD.

Neuroscience was also an area of importance in the developing child. A common comorbidity found in brain imaging is that of ADHD (Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008). A picture of the brain of a child who has ADHD characteristics showed multiple pathways that connected to the executive functions and neurological pathways that influence high commands of cognitive

abilities connected to Bloom's Taxonomy such as analyzing (Hudziak et al., 2007; Vaidya & Stollstorff, 2008). Executive functioning has a strong link to the cognitive abilities and behaviors in children and will be an important focus in the research (NCLD, 2013).

The neurological connections made by Frick et al. (1991), Reiss (2009), and Vaidya and Stollstorff (2008) brought together environmental factors that prove to be variables (parent stress, child rearing practices, culture), which also influences prosocial and antisocial behaviors. These things, along with affective feelings, empathy, and cognitive processes may also influence the selfish or kind behavior, and shows importance when connected to the ecological aspects of Bronfenbrenner's system (1994).

The last connection of the literature review placed an emphasis on intervention and the school perspective (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Powell et al. 2011; Watling, Neal, & Neal, 2013). Treating conduct problems with early intervention for teachers and parents to act proactively instead of reactively is important. Many of the researchers indicated in the summary of their programs that it is difficult to focus on a child's behavior without involvement and buy in from the parent and family systems (Dunlap et al., 1995; Krishnan, 2010; Rosenberg, 2013; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). For the purpose of the research, the literature review will provide the baseline study for a focus on how stress in the family influences students' behavior (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2010; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Dunlap et al., 1995).

In conclusion, we are complex human beings (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Students who exhibit severe emotional, social, or cognitive challenges in school environments are at risk to the environmental influences of their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Krishnam, 2010). The holistic approach of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological

model allows multilevel exchanges from numerous pathways. The prevalence of behavioral difficulties within the educational setting emphasizes the significance of identifying the risk factors that are attached to the many negative characteristics associated with ADHD, ODD, and CD (van Lier, Muthen, van der Sar, & Crijnen, 2004). The ongoing process of collecting data through research is building connections that impact family systems, cognitive capabilities, and self-control in the development of children (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2004). The result of this study will have implications for bridging gaps of disrupting behaviors, pursuing links with risk factors of parental stress, and identifying parenting-family-child attributions and environmental fields of influences in order to promote desired behaviors in school and at home.

Chapter III: Design and Methodology

Research is demanding and is a journey that utilizes a systematic approach in exploring phenomena within the confines of the scientific method (Creswell, 2015). The purpose of research is multifaceted and can bridge gaps in data. It can also improve the habits of professionals seeking to become better practitioners, and can inform political direction in the field of education. Adopting the appropriate framework when designing research is important. This chapter outlines that framework and provides details into the data collection and analysis methods used in the course of this study.

Creswell (2015) described setting up the experimental design in a traditional method as like having a blueprint to follow. Creswell continued, saying that the fundamental ideas addressed in the research project are intended to establish signposts to guide the study. These questions establish building blocks for the collection of data that will speak to the question “How does parental stress influence child behavior?” Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory is the framework from which this study is viewed, with a focus on relationships within the family and direct links to student behaviors.

Research Design

A research design establishes the procedure and path for completion of data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This study investigated how parental stress is related with student behavior and the impact of parental stress on child behavior. The use of a mixed methods research design provided the researcher a process of data collection that used both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2015; Creswell et al., 2010; Petocz & Reid, 2010). The mixed methods design helped in defining and understanding real life influences. Quantitative exploration of the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) provided input from the parent on home

influences and stress-related factors. The qualitative examination of phenomenological method was defined through personal connections with parents and students in interviews.

Table 2

Data Collection for Mixed Method Case Study Research

Data Collection	Research Method	Participants	Research Site
Identify Student	Quantitative	Principal	School 1, 2
Parent Stress Index	Quantitative	Parent (n=10)	School 1, 2
Pilot Interview	Qualitative	Parent (n=2)	School 1, 2
Pilot Interview	Qualitative	Student (n=2)	School 1, 2
Interview	Qualitative	Parent (n=10)	School 1, 2
Interview	Qualitative	Student (n=10)	School 1, 2

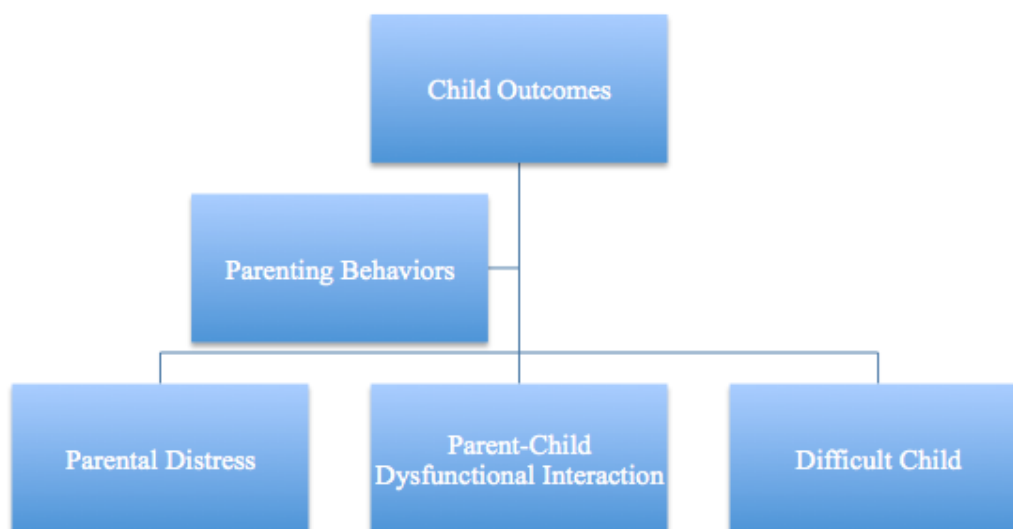
The use of a mixed methods approach is a design that Creswell (2015) defines as transformative. The transformative method encompasses both qualitative and quantitative designs of gathering information, and it also provides a framework for analyzing data through a theoretical lens, which is defined as Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Bronfenbrenner (1994) points to an isolated, pertinent purpose that is fundamental in the phenomenological character of individual growth. It was the contextual perspective developed by Bronfenbrenner (1986) that embedded child development in the complex phenomena and factors contributing to the developing child (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Kail, 2014; Stassen Berger, 2009) that provided the framework for this study.

The quantitative research methods used within this study connected child development over time to home influences, which was important to Bronfenbrenner's model. Exploring parenting stress factors attempted to distinguish patterns within the data that would either support or refute students' motives related to behavior. The PSI (Abidin, 2012) visually displays the interactions believed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as parent stress influences in the relationships

developed between parent and children. The process, person, and context related to proximal process are key to the actions of students due to parent's influence in the school setting as shown in Figure 5 below (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Darling, 2007; Guhn & Goelman, 2011; Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Figure 5

Model of Parenting Stress Index (PSI-4)



The use of qualitative research in interviews with students and parents allowed details to be shared about home settings related to parent and child behaviors (Creswell et al., 2010). This allowed the opportunity to explore Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and relate family influences bi-directionally. Bronfenbrenner's microsystem is the closest layer affecting a child's development. The interaction between core family members guides children's ability to regulate and respond to future interactions in the school, community, and society as they mature (Creswell et al., 2010). The use of phenomenological research (Creswell, 2015) identified essential experiences described by children and parents.

In developing the design of this study, a mixed methods approach provided a deep inquiry into the impact of family systems on student behavior and the influence environment has

on the social development of students. Using descriptive analysis, the study considered one variable at a time, and then established themes related to the parent/child relationship. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) and conduct disorders (CD) were factors that required identification of cluster or single characteristics in relation to family influences and antisocial behaviors. The flexible approach of qualitative research methods allowed the expressed information and developed comparatives to guide the process of developing themes generated by the data (Boeije, 2010).

Quantitative data analysis was conducted. Data using raw scores were transformed into percentiles as well as mean, median, mode for specific findings, looking for the connections between the domains of parent and student associations to stress as they impact the family. Two domains, parent and student, combined to form a Total Stress scale. The Life Stress scale provided information about the amount of parental stress caused by factors outside of the parent-student relationship. The quantitative data gained in the survey identified comparative clusters of behavior patterns in the PSI (Abidin, 2012). The PSI established patterns of parenting skills or attributes that influence children during the early years of development. This survey provided strength to the qualitative research associated with student and parent experiences within the home environment. It recognized at-risk factors as a diagnostic assessment measuring the magnitude of stress within the family relationship. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed these factors defined the bond between parent and child and were significant supports for raising a child in the frenzied pace of the world today (Brendtro, 2010).

Setting and Participants

When considering sampling and access, one must look toward the setting and the participants that are accessible with the main characteristics within the research question (Boeije, 2010). The setting must entail the place where the behaviors manifest themselves in the most severe state (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 2015). The school setting best presents situations that foster contemplation regarding the relationship of behaviors associated with cognitive abilities and executive functioning within decision making. The school setting maximizes the location where the subjects of study manifest the target on the whole. For the purpose of this study, two rural elementary schools in the Northwestern United States were chosen for the research to be conducted, representing second, third and fourth grade levels.

Creswell (2015), Boeije (2010), and the Office of Human Research Protections (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014) state that informed consent provides the opportunity to ask questions and gain valuable information from participants. The students, parents, and teachers are protected by the informed consent policy of the American Psychologist Association (APA, 2010) guidelines. These guidelines provide the provisions for all elements of ethical process. After meeting with each principal from selected schools in Highmark School District (pseudonym), and providing the data set of students and parents necessary for the research idea, both principals and the school district superintendent gave their full support and acceptance by signing the research proposal for site access, dated October 16, 2015 (See Appendix B). Table 3 outlines the research timeline.

Table 3

Research Timeline

Activity	Dates
Validations of Questions	June 24, 2016 – August 26, 2016
Data Organization	September 1, 2016
Pilot Interviews	September 1, 2016
PSI Approval/Distribution of Surveys	September 1, 2016
Interviews Parent/Student	September 8, 2016 – Oct. 15, 2016
Transcribing of Interview Data	October 15, 2016 – Nov. 30, 2016
Members Checking Interview Data	November 30, 2016 – Dec. 15, 2016
Analysis of Data	December 2016 – January 2017
Review and Analysis of Comparative Data	January - February 2017

Pertinent information regarding the research study was conveyed to research participants, including the intention, measures, and benefits of the study by phone contact and detailed letter of consent and student assent (Appendix C & D). The protection of subjects' rights in participating in research was adhered to, following the guidelines of the National Institute of Health (NIH, 2008). Participants were given the liberty to turn down participation without any jeopardy. Gaining the participants consent allowed the participants the access to the study's outcomes and information, as well as secured the privacy of the information and data gained from their input.

Participants consisted of 10 second, third, and fourth grade students, along with their parents, from two different public elementary schools. The researcher did not discriminate between two-parent, mother-only, and father-only families. The students were divided into two groups. The first was a group of students with medically diagnosed behavior eligibility determinations of possible ODD, CD, ED, or autism, which all share comorbidities of ADHD symptoms within their diagnosis. The second group, for comparative purpose, was randomly

sampled with no determined special educational services, but consisted of five students identified as typically developing with numerous office referrals to the principal of more than five visits a year. These participants were purposefully sampled due to their specific characteristics related the research, specifically behavior incidents in school (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 2015, Creswell et al., 2010).

Table 4

Participants

Highmark School District	School A	School B
Principals	1	1
Parents	7	3
2nd, 3rd & 4th Graders	7	3
Behaviors Present	3	2
Behaviors Not Present	4	1
N= 10		

The sample was small but helped identify patterns of characteristics related to family dynamic influences connected to parental stress and behavioral outcomes exhibited within both environments. Using a small sample size and a single measure of stress (Abidin, 2012), the data yielded valuable results on a topic of interest for professionals that work with children and parents within specialized populations (Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003). Because participants fulfilled requirements of suitability and were willing to take part in the study, this study provided merit without having met the conventional requirements for statistical power. The small sample size was adequate for data gathering under the time constraints necessary when structuring and arranging interviews, as well as conducting and transcribing those interviews. And since the research question posed represents a vulnerable, underrepresented population, a small sample is important (Etz & Arroyo, 2015). The driving force behind the sample group was the theoretical

framework of Bronfenbrenner's premise of parenting stress and family influences as a key piece of the impact family systems have on the emergent child and behavior (1994). Drawing from the environmental influence of the data, the ecological structures of Bronfenbrenner's path of human growth, both biological and environmental, looked to connect the environment we live in with how we grow with exposure to multiple influences. Etz and Arroyo (2015) noted that while working with a small sample size presents challenges, it is also important for research to expand the horizons by addressing new challenges. Small sample research has the potential to be highly valuable to help inform practices for those in need of support (Abidin, 2012; Esdaile & Greenwood, 2003; Etz & Arroyo, 2015).

The Parent Stress Index

Early detection of the family system under stress caused by environmental influences is key to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. The instrument used in assessment establishes the framework of the data (American Educational Research Association, 2008). The context of a scientifically sound instrument provides research validity (Abidin, 2012; Achenbach, 2015; American Educational Research Association, 2008; Creswell, 2015; Halperin & McKay, 2008). When choosing an instrument fitting the research question, a well thought-out process involved three considerations. First, data-based context was explored in order to understand how the measure was developed. Second, the measures had to be supported by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2013). And last, the measures had to show multiple facets surrounding Bronfenbrenner's (1994) multiple influences of stressors within the parent and child domains.

The first instrument of preference for this study, Parent Stress Index (Abidin, 2012) required professional training in psychology as well as licensure from the publisher of the

psychological survey in order to maintain the standards for educational and psychological testing (American Educational Research Association, 2008). Guidelines of each survey ensured that scoring occurred with accuracy and reliability. The PSI (Abidin, 2012) established standards produced around norms that were validated for use with parents. Participants in the norming population also came from a wide-range of socioeconomic and ethnic demographics (Abidin, 2012; Achenbach, 2015; Halperin & McKay, 2008).

Validity and reliability are important factors when considering the PSI (2012). Repeated assessments remained constant in the original norming group, with all measures in the test-retest stability demonstrated through parents, teachers, and student scales. Internal consistency (see Table 5) was assessed using Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha in all correlated studies conducted. The test-retest reliability assessment utilized 30 mothers who were receiving counseling for behaviors their children were exhibiting. The Child Domain, Parent Domain, and Total Domain set of scores indicated the stability of scores. Validity of the index resulted from 250 studies, 40 languages (translated), and proved longevity in studies for parents of children ages one month to 12 years old. The readability of the scale was validated and proven to be understandable for parents who have at least a fifth grade education.

Table 5

Internal Consistency of PSI-4 and PSI-3

Domain/Subscale	No. of Items	Coefficient Alpha	
		PSI-4	PSI-3
Child Domain	47	.96	.90
Distractibility/Hyperactivity (DI)	9	.78	.82
Adaptability (AD)	11	.83	.76
Reinforces Parent (RE)	6	.80	.83
Demandingness (DE)	9	.84	.73
Mood (MO)	5	.79	.70
Acceptability (AC)	7	.88	.79
Parent Domain	54	.96	.93
Competence (CO)	13	.86	.83
Isolation (IS)	6	.79	.86
Attachment (AT)	7	.86	.75
Health (HE)	5	.75	.70
Role Restriction (RO)	7	.81	.79
Depression (DP)	9	.87	.84
Spouse/Parenting Partner Relationship (SP)	7	.86	.81
Total Stress	101	.98	.95

Note. Data reflects the internal consistency of the *Parenting Stress Index, Third Edition*, to the updated *Parenting Stress Index, Fourth Edition*, from the *Professional Manual* (p. 49), by R. R. Abidin, 2012, Lutz, FL: PAR. Adapted with permissions to Site License see Appendix E.

Internal Reliability

Tanner (2012) referred to Cronbach's alpha as a frequently used statistical method for analyzing reliability when a scale is administered once. Abidin (2012) calculated internal reliability for each subscale, domain, and Total Stress score within Table 5 above. The coefficients for the subscales noted in the Child Domain ranged from .78 to .88; the subscales of the Parent Domain reported .75 to .87; and the Total Stress scale internal consistency was .96 or higher. Cronbach's alpha lies between 0 and 1 (Cronbach, 1951), which means that the

coefficients are high enough to signify an acceptable internal consistency.

The selection of the PSI was important in establishing validity and reliability for this study (Creswell, 2015; Tanner, 2012). The use of internal reliability provided the consistency of responses in the survey. Internal validity was built into the protocol through coefficient alpha reliability coefficients (Abidin, 2012, Creswell, 2015, which ensured the instrument was validated to a high degree due to the Total Stress coefficient and both domains falling at .96 or greater.

Normative Information of the Parenting Stress Model

The literature and clinical experiences of Abidin (2012) associated child characteristics as stressors with parenting. The four temperaments related child characteristics measured within the PSI include:

1. Distractibility/Hyperactivity subscale: Drain on the parents' energy, requires active parental management and high vigilance.
2. Adaptability subscale: How well a child manages transitions and change. Includes problematic characteristics consisting of stubbornness, passive noncompliance, and difficulty transitioning or giving up activities.
3. Demandingness subscale: Direct pressures the child puts on the parent. Parents often experience defiance, acts of aggression, demands for attention, and multiple interruptions.
4. Mood subscale: Related to withdrawal, depression, excessive crying. Behaviors associated with anxiety or anger provoking action.

Two other subscales related to child temperament are considered stable characteristics that affect the parents' personality and reflection of themselves:

1. Acceptability subscale: How closely does the child meet the expectations of the parents.

This scale is associated with the characteristic of social desirability.

2. Reinforces Parent subscale: Parent-child interaction. A parent's ability to respond to cues from the child. Parent reinforcement is vital in motivating a mother or father when servicing the child's needs, and is related to the bonding process.

There also is a parent personality component that is also used for comparative purposes of the three variables measured in this domain:

1. Competence subscale: Measures the parent's feelings about his or her role as a parent. Competence includes knowledge of how to manage behavior, decision making, and discipline.
2. Parental Attachment subscale: Measures the parent's intrinsic investment to the role of being a parent.
3. Depression subscale: Measures the parent's level of being emotionally and physically available for his or her child.

Additionally, the PSI includes four situational subscales that describe characteristics of parental stress. These subscales include isolation, health, role restriction, and spouse/parenting relationships (p. 38). There is an optional scale, Life Stress, on the PSI-4 (Abidin, 2012) that this research also used when assessing global situational stresses that might exacerbate parent stress. High levels of overall life stress make life tasks like parenting more difficult, and they also increase the risk potential for positive family dynamics.

Parent Survey Distribution

The first phase of data collection involved the distribution of the PSI to the parents. A total population in the school district was 868 students, 22 of which qualified and met the conditions of the study. The researcher personally called all 22 parents and sent letters of consent

home for consideration to participate to each parent referred by the principal for the study allowing for the researcher to explain the research. Once consent was returned the survey was sent home with the child who hand delivered the survey to their parent. Of the 22 letters of consent to participate, a total of 10 (n) responses were positive for both parent and student participation. The survey window was open for one week before parents scheduled interviews with the researcher (Appendix F). The study window was open from September 3, 2016, through September 22, 2016. The researcher made reminder phone calls to participants a day before the interview to confirm the appointment time. The phone call also provided participants with an opportunity to clarify with the researcher any questions they may have had about the survey. The survey was returned at the time of the interview allowing for personal elaboration and clarity on any of the responses within the PSI.

Parent/Student Interview

The second form of data collection selected for the study was the open-ended interview of parent and students (Appendix G and H) The questions were created by the researcher and validated by a board of experts invited to complete the questionnaire. The experts received the survey questions via email and provided ratings from one to four for each question, as well as provided detailed feedback to consider. An email was sent July 18, 2016, requesting feedback, with the last expert returning the feedback on August 1, 2016. (Appendix I). Polit and Tatano Beck (2010) suggest content validity is important in measuring the quality of the information within the instrument. The CVI is the most utilized index for measuring content validity (Polit & Tatano Beck, 2010).

Using the comments, the content validity index (CVI, Appendix J) was gained using item-level content validity (I-CVI), and scale-level content validity (S-CVI). Some questions were eliminated due to input and others rearranged for continuity of interview process.

With the 13 questions focused on family dynamics, an acceptable S-CVI for validation of the survey was 90% or above (Polit & Tatano Beck, 2010). All input was considered, and any question that received a rating of four or below was edited. For four questions, experts' recommendations on individual wording were used, as well as thoughts of relevance to the research question. The 13 questions were reduced to 10, removing three questions not found to hold pertinence to the overall research question. The S-CVI mean for the questionnaire fell at 92%, above the acceptable S-CVI of 90%. The rating scale suggested by Polit and Tatano Beck (2010) to measure the strength of the questions is as follows:

1 = Not Relevant

2 = Somewhat Relevant

3 = Quite Relevant

4 = Very Relevant

Appendix J presents the content validity table correlations of the data returned from the expert panel. The return rate from the panel was not 100%. One expert did not participate in the ratings of the questionnaire.

Research using a smaller population for the interview questions for the first phase of the process as a pilot study was an important element for ensuring the quality of the study (van Teijlingern & Hundley, 2002). Pilot interviews are utilized to provide a validation of assessment tools by giving face value and necessary feedback for changes before the actual assessment tool is used in a study. The pilot interview was given to two parents and their child, and it increased

the likelihood of success and provided support for the researcher in directing the other interviews. The process of conducting a pilot interview established the validity of the questions by identifying logistical issues as well as assessing the practicality and suitability of the questions for the study (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). These interviews gave confidence to the researcher that the questions were pertinent to the research question and no changes were made.

The strategy of the interview allowed participants to go in depth in a supportive environment created by the researcher (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The guided interview process allowed the parents and students to express their views and responses as the researcher uncovered perspectives related to the phenomenon of family dynamics and behavior. A debriefing Statement for the participants was sent home with the child (Appendix K) The interview went through the respondent validation process known as member checking (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Members checking occurred while conducting the interview through paraphrasing back to the respondents clarifying what was being reported and also through written correspondence via a letter sharing the common themes and quotes that were used within the research. Letters were mailed to all parents. Opportunity to provide input or corrections to the narrative accounts was offered (See Appendix L). There were no corrections to the common themes reported by any of the parents from both groups. Parents from each group personally offered thanks for sharing the information. Two parents from the group of children with medical determinations of behavior were happy to receive the feedback, and 3 parents from the group with office referrals for behavior were in agreement with the data they were provided. The next section details the survey response, participation rate, and other demographic information of the participants.

The first phase of collecting data from parents took place by dispensing the PSI-4 to each parent for completion after scheduling an interview time (Appendix M). A week survey window was open for each parent during September 1, 2016, through September 8, 2016. If permission was given upon consent, parents and students were audiotaped during the interview process. Three subjects did not grant audiotape permission, and detailed notes were taken at the time of the interview. Interviews were conducted with 9 parents independently, taking approximately 30 minutes in length. One interview was conducted with the parent with the child in attendance. This added to the dynamics of the parent responses as the child also participated and gave input to the interview questions.

The interviews were then transcribed per the qualitative method of collecting data in preparation for the second phase of qualitative coding (Creswell et al., 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The process of coding the interviews of both parent and student required establishing patterns and themes related to the parent-child relationship (Boeije, 2010; Creswell et al., 2010).

The school setting provided the environment for focus on students' actions reported by teachers, connecting the framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model. The school falls within the mesosystem, the second closest working structure that contains direct associations with the child in Bronfenbrenner's (1994) model. It is the layer that connects the family with school, community, and religion to the child in the center. The PSI and interviews connected the circle of influence on the child and brought to light underlying environmental factors as they emerged.

Maintaining an objective perspective while conducting the research is important due to dealing with human subjects (APA, 2010). For this study, it was crucial to maintain a

professional relationship by maintaining the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) regulations of confidentiality, integrity, promotion of accuracy, and respecting the worth of all involved in the research. Adhering to ethical procedures, permission was gained for site licenses from PAR to use the PSI survey. The researcher completed the Human Research Review Committee certification and also received HRRC approval for conducting research (Appendix N & O). Confidentiality Agreements were signed by the research assistants to maintain confidentiality while working with the researcher in the roles of transcriber and proofreader (Appendix P).

Data Collection

The process of collecting data for the purpose of this study took place between September 1, 2016, and November 30, 2016. Using the mixed methods for assembling data focused the study on the social and behavioral aspects within this research (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Typically, quantitative research is directed at verification of a theory or generates a theory, but by using mixed methods in this study, the researcher is integrating both forms of data to make the most of the strengths and diminish the weaknesses in each form of data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Quantitative data was gathered by demographic information collected for verification using Powerschool, the district's adopted method of record keeping. An initial pilot interview was conducted with two parents not affiliated with the parent-student sets that volunteered. Phone calls were made to 22 eligible parents explaining the research. A telephone script was used (Appendix Q) to maintain reliability and consistency. Letters were sent home to explain the study and solicit volunteers for participation as a parent-student set. The qualitative data

included scheduling interviews one week after the PSI (Abidin, 2012) was sent home with the child to the parent.

The integration included surveys that gathered information for the first data set (i.e. quantitative survey). The student selection was generated from a review of office referrals and student registration of second, third, and fourth grades, incorporating support from the principals of two elementary schools located in the northwestern United States (Appendix I Site Permissions). This review provided student names, grade levels, and teacher placements for the upcoming year. A sampling of five students was used in identifying typically developing students that have numerous office referrals equaling more than five visits a year. Another sampling of five students utilizing special education services with medically diagnosed behavior was used for comparative purposes.

Homogeneous sampling of participants considered possible shared characteristics related to the range of behaviors and comorbidities that may be associated with ADHD. The selection established a dataset of behaviors to investigate common characteristics or circumstances related to the behaviors exhibited at school. The student sampling provided the parent sampling group at each school. The assent/consent forms provided basic information about the research, including that participation was voluntary and that participants were free to decline participation for any reason. This information was stated again on the interview script. To maintain confidentiality, parents and students were given pseudonyms to protect their identities and codes for data analysis. The list of the pseudonyms and codes used for each participant were kept in a locked file cabinet separate from the data to keep data confidential.

Care was taken to minimize undue influence while working with students because of the inherent power differential among the researcher and family members, teachers and students.

Adhering to the code of ethics regarding confidentiality minimized and protected the student's and parent's participation in the selection process and research. Care was given to remove any personal bias as the selection of participants with the administration's assistance prevented any direct recruiting.

The second part of the research called upon the use of quantitative data, originating from the use of a Likert scale survey using the PSI (Abidin, 2012). The PSI is an inventory calculated to assess the degree of the stress on the parent-child relationship as well as the dynamics of the relationship. The PSI has three subscales: Parental Distress (PD), Parent-Child Dysfunction Interaction (P-DCI), and Difficult Child (DC) that denote levels of distress from personal factors from life happenings of being a parent (Abidin, 2012). It is a valid and reliable measure of parenting behavior and parent child interaction that has been tested over time with a variety of populations. The Likert scale used five fixed choice agreement responses (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree) designed to measure the opinions of the parent's perception that fell into two domains—Child Domain and Parent Domain—in addition to a total stress indicator (McLeod, 2008). A total score is obtained, with high scores indicating high parenting stress and low scores indicating low parenting stress. Raw scores were converted to percentile ranks and used to interpret each parent's response.

Summarization of data used a median and mode for interpretation. The interpretation process was divided into the Child Domain and Parent Domain in order to look at each score independently and in relation to each other. The domains specified in Table 6 below highlight the areas that link to home influence and factors relating to the influences suggested in Bronfenbrenner's model. Example statements from the role restrictions category include "my child's need control my life" and "never able to do things that I like to do" (Abidin, 2012, p. 5).

Example statements from the child demandingness category include “my child does things that bother me” and “my child seems to be much harder to care for than most” (p. 4).

Table 6

Parenting Stress Indicator (PSI-4) Profile

Child Domain	Parent Domain
Distractibility/Hyperactivity	Competence
Adaptability	Isolation
Reinforces Parent	Attachment
Demandingness	Health
Mood	Role Restriction
Acceptability	Depression
	Spouse

Analytical Methods

Data needs to be analyzed in a systematic method (Creswell, 2015; Punch, 2009). Table 7 indicates the analytical methods incorporated by the mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Coding was used to analyze the interview with parent and child. This allowed patterns in the data to be identified confidentially. Descriptive statistics were used to identify unique attributes, including level of education and stressful events that occurred within the past 12 months. Analytical coding was implemented to disaggregate the information in the parents’ responses. The level of data analysis began general in purpose and became more specific and concrete as qualitative and quantitative methods were compared.

The data, when open coded, quickly formed identifiers from even small amounts of data (Punch, 2009). Deeper analysis of the data surrounding three formal questions:

1. Is there a central tendency evident from the data?
2. What does the data show specifically when comparatives are made?

3. What is the general problem, and what connection, if any, are manifesting?

Table 7

Analytical Methods

Quantitative Methods	Qualitative Methods
Descriptive Analysis	Descriptive Analysis
Raw Score to Percentiles	Analytical Coding/Transcribing
Inferential Statistical Data	Descriptive Coding
	Members Checking
	Color-coding Analysis

Qualitative data was used to outline relationships of the attitudes to the phenomena of the influences in the family and school. The interview contained volumes of data to sort and categorize. The recordings of the interviews were transcribed in their entirety to hold the original responses for closer study. This data analysis required data reduction. Important phrases and statements related to the phenomenon of family dynamics were taken from individual transcripts. Interpretations were then formulated into noteworthy statements and finally into themes. The use of narrative research took place during the data interpretation of text analysis through the transcription of the student interview responses (Creswell, 2015). This identified themes and patterns of information that described responses on the parents' surveys. Conducting the narrative research integrated the data collection with the context gained from the families participating in their home, family, peer, and school relationships, allowing the researcher to link the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

The sample size of parents and children in this research was small and could be considered a challenge to the current standards of analysis. However, the use of descriptive and inferential statistics yielded the distribution of the data, and the variation and shape of the data

helped make generalizations for the larger population. This research provided an opportunity to make associations to the larger understanding of parent stress and its influence on child behavior.

The Mann-Whitney U test was implemented to analyze the data gathered from the Parent Stress Index. It is the most common nonparametric statistic used to test for differences in ranking of chosen variables between two independent groups. The Mann-Whitney U does not make any assumptions about the distribution of the small sample size, only that the two groups compared are the same under the null hypothesis. The small sample size was drawn from differences in two conditions: behavior and non-behavior. Comparative data in the forms of median and mean was gathered from the small set of data using the direct method of counting the number of times the parent responded to the Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree. A computation of data was completed to report any results or significant difference between the two independent groups.

Trustworthiness of the Data

The various procedures used in the mixed methods approach allowed the researcher to triangulate the data and develop the fidelity and dependability of the information (Zohrabi, 2013). As part of the qualitative collection, the surveys were coded by letter and number and confidentially disseminated by the researcher at each school, with scripted written directions attached to the survey questions. These procedures allowed all participants to elaborate on any of the questions posed, and knowing that the data was confidential allowed for honest data collection without fear of being judged due to responses. The parent information was crucial to connect to home influences and relationship links (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This allowed the researcher the opportunity to identify any phenomenon reflective of human behavior, as well as predict ethnographic methods relating to the culture of influence.

Keeping to the conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner, gathering data from the home and school provided another layer that linked the influences of the parent and student while both continue to develop through each of their lifetimes (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1996; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The parent and student were interviewed separately. During the interview session, the researcher provided feedback to the interviewees through the use of paraphrasing (Harper & Cole, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). Appendix L illustrates the member-checking document sent to participants in this study. Harper and Cole (2012) refer to the member-checking method as a way of reporting the data in a reliable, valid, and credible way.

Ethical Considerations

The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects (1979) referred to three ethical considerations when working with human subjects. This research identifies methods and guidelines devoted to respecting and maintaining individuals' autonomy, to treating participants with kind actions that neither harm nor expose them to possible harm, and lastly, to considering all participants equally. This research study encompassed methods of identifying patterns surrounding the healthy development of children with severe aggressive behaviors. By placing value in the dignity of all the participants equally, adherence to the moral rights of those participants was protected and respected. By acknowledging the participants, this researcher took multiple procedures to avoid ethical dilemmas. Practicing strict privacy was at the root of all data collection, and methods used throughout the study avoided any harm and protected the privacy of the participants (American Psychological Association, 2010; Creswell, 2015).

Assumptions

What we know from past literature allows general assumptions to be made regarding this current research study. Bronfenbrenner's model (1979) encompasses the whole ecological system of a child's domain. The center of Bronfenbrenner's theory (1986) is the individual young person. The communication domain is heavily influenced through questioning and the explanations that follow (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Jones & Schwartz, 2009; Kail, 2014). A child's development heavily relies on the kind of interactions with parents (Abidin, 2012; Ben-David & Nel, 2013; Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1994; Erath & Bierman, 2006; Hinshaw, 1992; Lyons-Ruth, 1996; McLeod, 2008). This interaction is two-fold: the exchange of positive interactions on a daily basis can produce a warm response to how they learn to communicate and adjust to other situations and influences, just as the influence of negative exchanges and interactions can produce emotionless responses. Both are learned behaviors (Powers & Bierman, 2013; Robers et al., 2014).

Limitations

The challenge of mixed method research, according to Creswell (2015), is developing the common phenomenon of the study. The advantage of the mixed methods is the practicality of solving the problem using both words and numbers to describe the results. A possible barrier to the research falls in the external validity. In analyzing the data collections, the explanation of the study might be skewed. Four factors threatening this research are:

1. Working with people (students with and without disabilities)
2. Setting (a school). Response rate and correspondence within schools often lags depending on the reliability of the child in delivering information back and forth.

3. Time (beginning/middle/end of the year) Building trust, maintaining rapport and communication throughout the year.
4. The size of the sample (n)
5. Gender of participation

The researcher improved the external validity by proximal similarity. This included describing the similarities and differences concerning the trial group and the control group, limiting the variables involved in the time, place, sample, and other demographics of the students.

Communicating the importance of research while asking them to participate in a 20 minute survey and scheduling an additional 30 minutes for an interview was difficult and took diligence on the researcher's part and commitment for the parent. Honesty during reporting on family relationships requires building respect, trust and rapport with parents and children. Time and honesty in reporting methods were also limitations. Additionally the scope of study (school) limited the environmental view and structured environment different from the home environment.

Dealing with behavior was a limitation in that the behaviors of one individual might not reflect the behavior of similar individuals. Creswell (2015) warned that conducting research of studies around humans can limit or cause a barrier due to predicting variables of one behavior and the influence it has on the associated variable under similar settings or circumstances, which may cause uncertainty in other situations. Harper and Cole (2012) defined limitations in interviewing due to possible painful recall of events from both child and parent related to a question. Specifying the directions and the reason for the collection of data was important to respect the human feelings and emotions connected to the research study (American Educational Research Association, 2008). Chapter 4 will provide results from data collection as well as

identify common themes between parents of children who exhibit behaviors and those who do not.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between parental stress and child behavior. This study investigated how parental stress is related to students' behavior and how the family system impacts child behavior. Previous studies that have laid a foundation for this work have examined risk factors of negative parenting and early attachment relationships, which have an influence on parental stress (Algood et al., 2013, Duis et al., 1997, Respler et al., 2012). In the last 10 years, studies have examined the positive relationship of parenting and family systems (Lee et al., 2013, Lerner et al., 2015, Respler-Herman et al., 2012, Scrimgeour et al., 2013). Studies have shown the review of past and present literature lacked specific connections to parental stress and child behavior in the home and school environments. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1986) of the developing person depicts the child as the center of development. The overlapping structures represented in the microsystem (the family) and the mesosystem (parent-school) represents the influence of the direct role the home setting has on the developing child. (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Specifically, proximal processes are the center and are the driving force of Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development. Proximal process is defined as connections in direct environments that influence a person in the framework over time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Weisner, 2010).

This research study utilized the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) (Abidin, 2012) to examine relationships of parental stress to parenting beliefs and behaviors in a sample of parents of elementary age students. Researching the lowest level of Bronfenbrenner's nested hierarchy in the direct role parental stress holds considers a bidirectional relationship. Does parent stress contribute to child behavior or does child behavior contribute to parenting stress? By gathering data from parents and their children, on levels of stress and family interactions, this study sought

to make connections to the child's natural relationships under natural conditions to child behavior and parent stress levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The question guiding this research study included was "How does parental stress influence child behavior?" Much has been discovered about parenting stress and child behavior in the classroom. However, continued research examining the family's influences on child behavior is important. This research examined if stress levels of parents were higher in families of children who exhibited behaviors in school with numerous office referrals more than five a year to those parents with children how have medially diagnosed behavior. As discussed in Chapter III, the methods for data collection included:

1. PSI survey distributed to parents of elementary students, which focused on the role of parental stress and child behavior.
2. Interviews conducted with both parents and children to gain a deeper understanding of the role family dynamics plays in influencing the developmental power of proximal process.

The mixed methods design helped define real life influences. Quantitative exploration of the PSI provided input from the parent on home influences and stress related factors. The qualitative analyses considered the personal connection between parents and students in an interview. The ten student participants consisted of male and female second, third and fourth graders and their parents from two different public elementary schools. Two sample groups were obtained. The first group included five parents whose children had been identified with medically diagnosed behaviors. The second group included five parents with children who were typically developing students with numerous office referrals for behavior of more than five visits per year. These

participants were purposefully sampled due to characteristics related to the importance of the research, specifically their behavior incidents in school.

Table 8

Triangulation Matrix

Research Question	Data Source	
	Source 1	Source 2
How does parental stress influence child behavior?	Parent Stress Index (Quantitative)	Parent Interview/Student Interview (Qualitative)

Parent Stress Index

Although the literature supports the significance of parental stress in the area of parent/child interaction, research appears to have gaps in the area specific to the connection of factors (total parenting stress, child domain, and parent domain). First, the Total Stress score was analyzed and then the Child Domain and Parent Domain scores were examined and compared in each subscale. Although each was interpreted separately, a clear picture emerged when the scores were considered in relationship to one another (Abidin, 2012; Respler-Herman et al., 2012). The research question introduced in the study asked:

How does parental stress influence child behavior?

This research question is the premise for the use of the PSI, a Likert scale survey developed for professional use with parenting and children's emotional and behavioral problems. Four factors within the PSI-4 (Abidin, 2012) involved family development: parental personality, family function and structure, and child temperament. In the PSI-4, the scales target parents' perceptions of child characteristics using a five-item Likert scale. The PSI-4 was dispersed to 10 parents identified in two elementary schools, those whose children had previously been diagnosed with a behavior medically, and those typically developing children who were reported to have multiple

office referrals for exhibited behavior. Data was collected using the computer scoring software program provided by PSI. Participants were asked to respond with a level of agreement for each question using the following five-point scale:

1 = Strongly Agree (SA)

2 = Agree (A)

3 = Not Sure (NS)

4 = Disagree (D)

5 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Survey response and participation rate. The comprehensive examination of the survey began with determining the participation rates, response completion, followed by graphic displays of the data. A total population size of students in the school district was 868 students, 22 of which qualified and met the conditions of the study. A phone call to all 22 parents using a phone script was conducted for approval to send home the letter of consent. Twenty-two letters of consent to participate were sent home within the two elementary schools. Of the 22 letters of consent to participate, a total of 10 (n) responses were positive for both parent and student participation. This represents an overall response rate of 45%. With the 10 participants, three parents revoked permission for audio taping the interviews, but gave consent for their child to participate. Of the 10 participants, a total of 10 interviews were held with parents, and 10 interviews with the student. This represents an overall completion rate of 100% for those who completed the entire survey and interview process and represents a very small overall population of both schools equaling 1.1%. This is a purposeful small sample of the general population, that represents a convenience sample that reflects the chosen participants who met the statistical properties of the population (Tanner, 2012), and is nonetheless important for educators needing

to discover associations of distinct populations to expand the intervention and prevention solutions for all populations (Etz & Arroyo, 2015; Tanner, 2012). Table 9 describes the overall response rate and participation by parent and child within both elementary schools.

Table 9

Overall Consent, Survey, and Interview Response Rate

Response and Participation	Total	Response Rate (%)
Parent Consent Invitation	22	45%
Consent Responses Received (n)	10	100%
Surveys Completed of Those Consenting	10	100%
Interview Completion: Parent	10	100%
Interview Completion: Student	10	100%

Demographic section. Demographic data for the gender of the parents completing the survey reported that all 10 were female taking the survey and completing the interview. The gender demographic was not a consideration in the selection process for data collection for the PSI survey. It was by chance that only mothers of all students were chosen based upon the specified criteria for the two-sample groups completed the PSI and interview. The distribution of the children being interviewed comprised 80% male and 20% female student participants. This provides gender as a perspective within the research question and enhances the relevance of the research (Zohrabi, 2013). The researcher tried to recruit a male parent, but after multiple attempts to gain the return of the PSI (Abidin, 2012) was informed by a family member that he was unable to complete the survey due to the difficulty in reading the survey.

Table 10

Percentage of Gender Participation

Gender	Completion Number (n)	Completion Percentage
Male Parent	0	0
Female Parent	10	100%
Male Student	8	80%
Female Student	2	20%

The age distribution of the parents taking the survey and completing the interview is presented in Table 11. The completion rate in the table revealed that the majority of parents taking the survey were in the age group of 26 to 35. This age group made up 60 % of the study group, 6 respondents, and the remaining 40% consisted of those parents that fell in the 46 – 55 age group, four respondents.

Table 11

Age Distribution of Parents

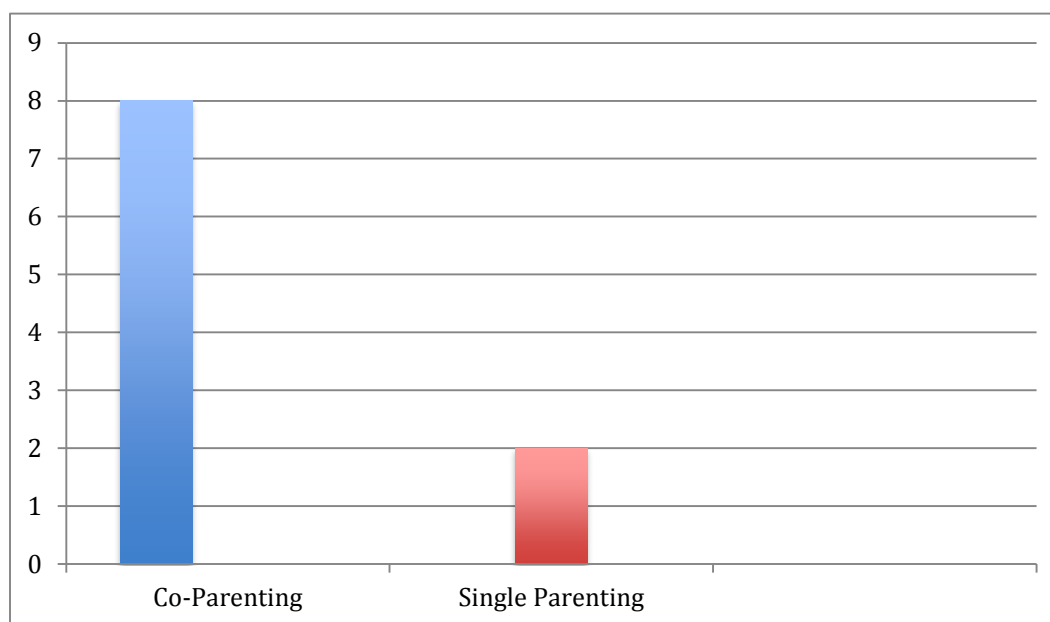
Age (Years)	Completion Number (n)	Percent
18 – 25	0	0%
26 – 35	6	60%
36 – 45	0	0%
46 – 55	4	40%
56 – 65	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Trends in children growing up in single-family homes have been documented (Bronfenbrenner, McClelland, Wethington, Moen, & Ceci, 1996). Bronfenbrenner, McClelland, Wethington, Moen, and Ceci (1996) reported the percent of children under six being raised by a single parent in 1970 was 10%. This doubled to 20% in the middle 1990s. Figure 6 represents a pictorial display of parenting status of participants completing this study. Eighty percent of the

parents involved in this study consisted of a co-parenting partnership and 20 percent were single parents. Drawing on the demographic data by age and parenting status helps lay the foundation for understanding the participants in this study. The study group for the purpose of this research represents participants characterized by similar trends found historically

Figure 6

Pictorial Display of Parenting Status



Note. Parenting status of research participants n= 10.

Quantitative Results

Bronfenbrenner et al. (1996) connected the role of parenting as a primary engine that drives the development of their child. The primary focus of this study was to investigate the relationship between parental stress and child behavior. With this in mind, the PSI-4 was distributed to answer the following question:

How does parental stress influence child behavior?

The primary purpose of the PSI-4 rating survey was to look at the mutual parent-child feelings that exist in parenting relationships. Bronfenbrenner (1986) defined the connection of direct

environments as what influences the child and is a direct influence through proximal process. A key to the proximal process in the bioecological model is consistency and quality of mutual influence of parental responsiveness (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1996). The PSI-4 provided insight into relationship connections and to a goodness-of-fit established in the temperaments of both parent and child. Table 12 reflects the scored responses of all 10 parents. The *Defensive Responding* score helped to interpret PSI-4 scores as valid. A defensiveness responsive score of 24 or fewer may be representing a parent response in a defensive manner and caution should be exercised when interpreting the scores reported by this parent. Three parent surveys reported scores below 24 but above 10. Because three scores of (15, 17, and 22) are above 10, the researcher examined these responses in relation to the interview information obtained.

One respondent whose Defensive Responding score was 0 represented missing data due to not completing every item. During the interview, the participant indicated that they skipped 5 questions, all referencing not feeling capable as a single parent or relationship issues with a parenting partner. With the interview follow-up, the PSI-4 was validated, and according to Abidin's (2012) scale, this parent's responses, in fact, suggest a favorable impression of an individual who handles the responsibilities of parenting well and has a focus on the child as well as comfort in the role of being a parent.

The other three scores indicate the parent was responding in a defensive manner and was attempting to look competent and stress-free. This, according to Abidin (2012), happens occasionally by competent parents who are rearing normal children in a non-stressful family context. Inspection of the overall stress of the parents was reported to be in the normal range. This could be interpreted to be parents who are very competent and or do not experience much parenting stress, or they may be detached or uninvolved in the parenting responsibilities. Follow-

up via interviews demonstrated parents who were confident in their parenting relationship with their child, and the data was considered valid. Indicators during the interview connected that these parents were attempting to look confident and stress free reducing the detrimental effects of parent stress on their child's behavior.

Table 12

Defensive Response Scale

Scale	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B
Defensive Responding	45	17	22	27	0	**	15	30	48	33

A = Parents of Students with Numerous Office Referrals

B = Parents of Students with Behaviors Medically Diagnosed

**Defensive Responding score could not be computed due to missing item responses.

The PSI ratings display responses in percentiles to a 120-question Likert survey. The data gathered from the 10 PSI surveys represented a theoretical model of determinants of total stress indicators related to certain child characteristics, parent characteristics, and situational variables related to the role of parenting. Four scale domains were analyzed for this research in the tables below depicting both groups of parents: Total Stress, Life Stress, Parent Domain, and Child Domain. Total Stress scores assess the parents' overall experiences of stress and risk for dysfunctional parenting and child behavior problems and is composed of the two domains: Child and Parent. The Life Stress scale is composed of 19 items that measure experiences parents find themselves in but have no control over the stressor (i.e., death, loss of a job, marriage, divorce). The Life Stress on the PSI-4 assesses global situational stresses that might exacerbate parent stress. High levels of overall life stress make life tasks including parenting more difficult and increase the risk potential for positive family dynamics.

The Child Domain (Abidin, 2012) has six subscales rated by the parent to include child characteristics:

1. Distractibility/Hyperactivity subscale: Drain on the parents' energy, require active parental management and high vigilance.
2. Adaptability subscale: How well a child manages transitions and change. To include problematic characteristics to consist of stubbornness, passive noncompliance, and difficulty in transitioning or giving up activities.
3. Reinforces Parent subscale: Parent-child interaction. Related to the bonding process, parent's ability to respond to cues from the child. Parent reinforcement is vital in motivating a mother or father when servicing their needs.
4. Demandingness subscale: Direct pressures the child puts on the parent. Parents are often experiencing defiance, acts of aggression, demands for attention, and multiple interruptions on the parent.
5. Mood subscale: Related to withdrawal, depression, excessive crying behaviors associated with anxiety or anger provoking action.
6. Acceptability subscale: How closely does the child meet expectations of the parent. This scale is associated with the characteristic of social desirability.

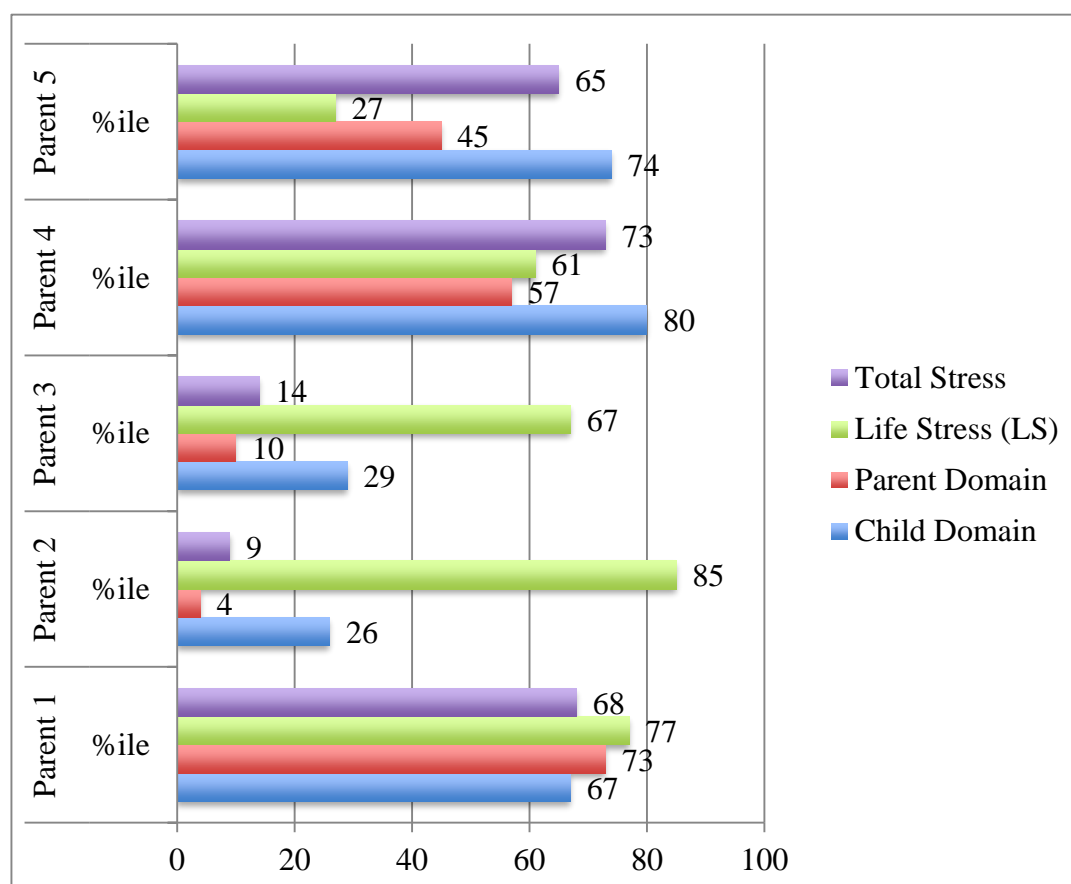
The Parent Domain (Abidin, 2012) includes seven subscales that measure sources of parent characteristics related to parenting stress.

1. Competence subscale: Measures the parent's feelings about their role as a parent. Competence includes knowledge of how to manage behavior, comfort in making decisions, and discipline matters.
2. Isolation: Measures the parent's amount of social support.
3. Attachment: Parents sense of closeness with the child and the ability to effectively respond to their child's needs.

4. Health: Parents health contributing to overall parenting stress.
5. Role Restriction: Parent's sense of freedom and limited identity in the parenting role.
6. Depression subscale: Measures the parent's level of being emotionally and physically available for their child.
7. Spouse/Parenting Partner Relationship: Parent emotional and physical support from a parenting partner.

Parent Stress Index ratings were disaggregated for comparison by the student characteristic of Group A: students with office referral visits within the past year equally over 5 visits to the principal and Group B: students with medically diagnosed behavior. The data was gathered via a raw score, T-score and then converted into a percentile rank for both groups. Percentile scores range from the 1st through 99th percentile. The PSI-4 scores with the 1st – 15th percentile suggests an Extremely Low range representing a false negative or dishonest reporting, 16th – 84th percentile represent the Normal Range, 85th - 89th percentile representing a High Range, and 90th percentile and above to fall within the Clinically Significant Range. Figure 5 represents the Parents with children who had office referral visits. The bar graph visually represents the 4 main scales evaluated for this research. A descriptive analysis is provided interpreting and comparing the results.

Figure 7

Parental Stress Index Ratings: Group A Office Referral Behaviors

Total Stress. Three parents reported ranges within the normal range in Total Stress.

Parent 1 (68th %ile), Parent 4 (73rd %ile), and Parent 5 (65th %ile) reported a higher overall parental experience of stress and child behavior problems and also indicated that as parents they are experiencing factors of stress such as when their child misbehaves they feel responsible, as if they didn't do something right, that most of their life is spent doing things for their child or that when they run into a problem taking care of their child, they feel as if they do not have a lot of people to whom they could talk to or get help or advice from. Parent 2 (9th %ile) and Parent 3 (14th %ile) reported extremely low parental experience of stress. Scores this low required looking at the Parent Domain for interpretation. The Parent Domain score is also extremely low. Parent 2

and 3's scores represent a profile that suggests the parents are presenting themselves in an overly positive manner.

Life Stress. Life Stress scores for 4 parents of children without behaviors present fell within the Normal Range, below 84%. One parent's score was an 85%, which placed them in at the high level. These are life events that they have no control over such as pregnancy, entering a new school, trouble with a superior at work, alcohol or drug problems.

Parent Domain: Parent domain identifies qualities of the parent that may contribute to overall stress related to the parent functioning. Three parents reported normal range levels. One parent with higher levels reported within this area indicated often feeling overwhelmed or inadequate in the task of parenting in their responses but contradicted this score in a defensive response rating making this an outlier. Three of the five parents reported feeling capable of taking care of their child needs, and enjoy parenting.

Child Domain. Child domain identifies behaviors that are associated with qualities within their child that make parenting difficult. When the Child Domain score is elevated, even though within the Normal Range in comparison to the Parent Domain and Life Stress scores, child characteristics may be a factor in contributing to the overall stress in the parent child relationship. Parent 4 (80th % ile) and Parent 5 (74%ile) show a profile that intervention may be needed to focus on the child's behavior verses aspects of the parent-child relationship. Examples noted within this domain fell in the acceptability subscale. Responses included compared to the average child, my child has a great deal of difficulty in getting used to changes in schedules or changes around the house, my child is not able to do as much as I expected, and it bothers me that my child does not like to be cuddled or touched very much.

Defensive Responding. It is important to note outliers within two profiles. Parent 2 and Parent 3 reported normal ranges in Life Stress, and Child Domain but extremely low ranges below the 16th percentile in Total Stress and Parent Domain. The Defensive Responding score reported a defensive manner representing a less candid response to their own parenting or situational stressors. Abidin (2012) found that mothers were able to respond to their child's characteristics, but not their own. This is noted within the profile of these two raters.

Table 12 reports percentiles in all areas and subscales within the Parent and Child Domain that were rated in the parent survey that helped define each domain. These domains are important for interpretations when the Life Stress or Total Stress falls above or below the normal range or when a profile is off set with single outlier. These subscales can further assist in identifying specific sources of stress within a given domain.

Parent 1 represents an overall picture of a parent that recognized all areas in the average range, acknowledging some areas might be problems at times but feels all right with how to handle them as a parent. Parent 2 and Parent 3 represent the false negative in Total Stress and Parent Domain score below the 15th percentile, representing possible disengagement or fear of reporting honestly. Parent 4 and Parent 5 report a Child Domain percentile elevated higher in comparison to the Parent Domain and Life Stress scores. This represents a profile that the child characteristics may be a factor contributing to the overall stress in the parent-child relationship.

Table 13

Percentile Levels: Group A Office Referral Behaviors

Group A Scale: Parents of Children with Office Referrals for Behavior	Percentile				
	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5
Child Domain	67	26	29	80	74
Distractibility/Hyperactivity (DI)	62	48	49	≥99	67
Adaptability (AD)	71	19	33	76	66
Reinforces Parent (RE)	30	54	39	59	56
Demandingness (DE)	72	3	12	57	74
Mood (MO)	70	73	72	66	77
Acceptability (AC)	73	14	13	76	85
Parent Domain	73	4	10	57	45
Competence (CO)	48	8	20	48	54
Isolation (IS)	84	8	14	23	46
Attachment (AT)	39	14	10	78	51
Health (HE)	79	69	10	61	52
Role Restriction (RO)	72	1	12	67	32
Depression (DP)	79	9	24	51	74
Spouse/Parenting Partner Relationship (SP)	82	25	58	63	39
Life Stress (LS)	77	85	67	61	27
Total Stress	68	9	14	73	65

Key: 1st – 15th percentile = Extremely Low Range, 16th – 84th percentile = Normal Range; 85th – 89th percentile = High Range; 90th percentile and higher = Clinically Significant Range

Analysis of Group B, Parents with children who have medically diagnosed behavior disorders was then conducted. Table 13 represents the 4 main scales: Total Stress, Life Stress, Child Domain, and Parent Domain in percentile scores for analysis. Parent 1 score summary only reports Life Stress and the Child Domain due to missing item responses. Parent 1 scores in the Health subscale were also prorated due to the missing items. Follow-up with this parent was conducted during the interview process. The represented health score was high due to the personal health issues the parent was experiencing. The Parent Domain was not scored due to

missing response data in the sub scores of Competence and Spouse/Parenting Partner Relationship. The parent did not feel the questions within the PSI-4 pertained due to being a single mom and raising her son independently since birth. This was noted within the interview and scores were prorated.

Total Stress. Three parents reported ranges within the normal range relating to the total stress in their lives: Parent 3 (80th %ile), Parent 4 (80th %ile), and Parent 5 (70th %ile). Total Stress relates to the overall parental experience of stress and child behavior problems and indicates that parents are experiencing some factors of stress.

Life Stress. The scores for the parents of children who have been medically diagnosed with a behavioral disorder presented notable higher levels of Life Stress than children parents of children with office referrals for behavior. Parent 1 (89%ile) fell in the High Range, Parent 4 (91%ile) and Parent 5 (92%ile) fell in the Clinically Significant Range. Parents 2 and 3 had reported a Life Stress level in the Normal range. Life stress can be bi-directionally influenced by child behavior causing parents to be experiencing additional stress on the parent/child relationship due to the medical diagnosis of a behavior disorder.

Parent Domain. Parent Domain identifies qualities of the parent that may contribute to overall stress related to the parent functioning. Of the four parents who scored a percentile within this domain, two parents reported normal range levels (72%, 73%) and one parent reported a score significantly low (7th%ile) and is depicted as an outlier in the data. One parent, who is a single parent, did not gain a score in this domain due to the prorated index to missing items pertaining to spousal help. The overall profile of this parent represents a profile that appears to be responding in a manner to look stress-free. This was identified within the validity of the protocol with a Defensive Responding score of 15.

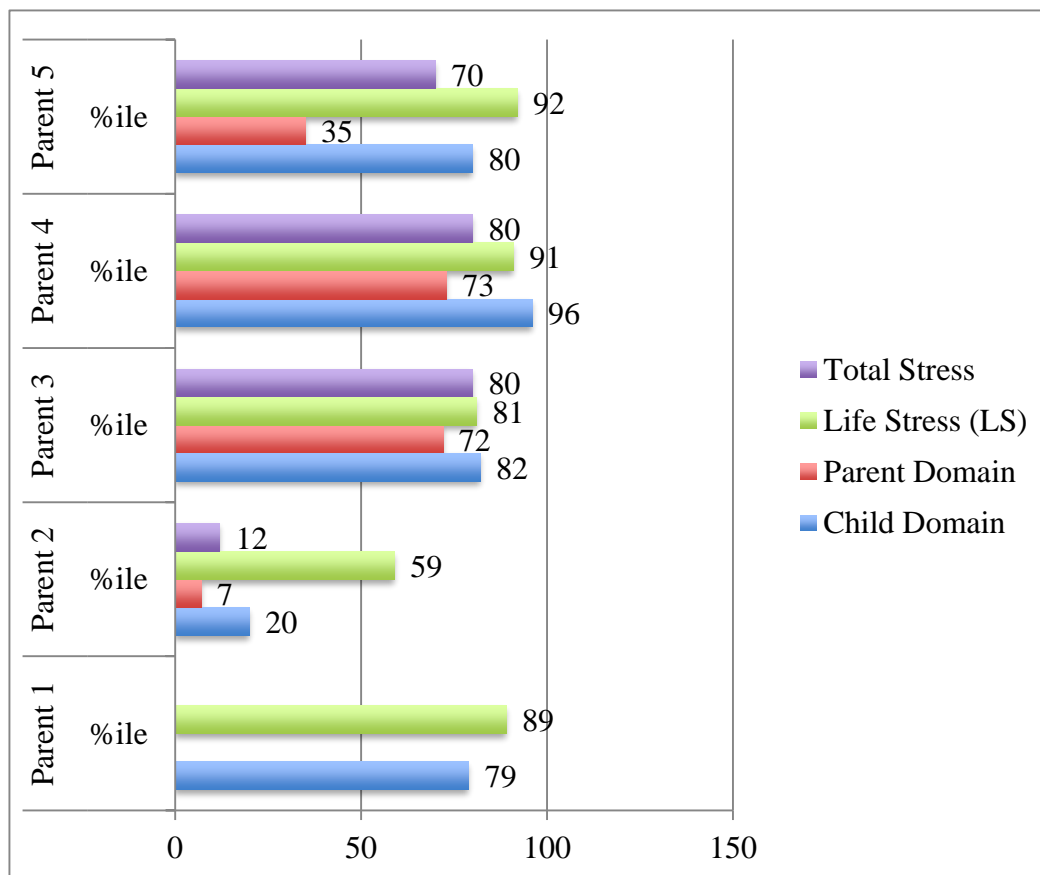
Child Domain. Child domain identifies behaviors that are associated with qualities within their child that make parenting difficult. Three parents reported levels falling in the Normal range (79% ile, 82% ile, and 80% ile). Parent 4 reported a Clinically Significant level (96% ile). This parent identified five areas within the subscale to fall in the Clinically Significant level: Distractibility/Hyperactivity, Adaptability, Reinforces Parent, and Demandingness. Acceptability was also rated within the High Range. In three of the ten parents of the responses within subscales under the Child Domains connected higher levels in distractibility/hyperactivity. Responses within the subscales included, my child is so active that it exhausts me, when my child is upset my child is very difficult to calm down, when I do things with my child I get the feeling that my efforts are not appreciated very much, there are things my child does that really bother me a lot, and my child seems to cry or fuss much more than I expected. These types of behavioral actions are noted by Abidin (2012) to be commonly elevated in 5 out of the 6 child domain scales with parents of children with behavior disorders. Parent 2 reported scores falling in the extremely low range in Reinforces Parent, and Demandingness. The absence of reinforcement from the child threatens the parent/child bond according to Abidin (2012). Abidin (2012) would call for rapid intervention and rapport building to produce good feelings in the parent.

Also noteworthy is when the Child Domain score is elevated more than the Parent Domain. The child characteristics according to Abidin (2012) may be factors in contributing to the overall stress in the parent/child relationship. Four out of the five parents of children with medically diagnosed behaviors indicated differing characteristics to include distractibility/hyperactivity, adaptability, reinforces parent, demandingness, mood, and acceptability to be contributing factors on parent stress.

Defensive Responding. It is important to note outliers within the one profile. Parent 2 had a defensive responding score placing which indicates caution necessary with honest reporting.

Figure 8

Parental Stress Index Ratings: Group B Medically Diagnosed Behavior



Parent 3 represents an overall picture of a parent that recognized all areas in the average range, acknowledging some areas might be problems at times but feels all right with how to handle them as a parent. Parent 1 presents a profile typical of a parent of a child with hyperactivity or another conduct disorder. The high score of the prorated >99++ can be interpreted in a straightforward manner. Parental health may be the result of parenting stress in the parent-child relationship. Parent 2 suggests, with scores extremely low in Total Stress, Parent

Domain, and Child Domain, that false negatives are represented due to defensive rating and child domain higher than the parent domain levels. Parent 4 and Parent 5 report a Child Domain percentile elevated higher in comparison to the Parent Domain and also indicated that Life Stress to be in the clinically significant range. This represents a profile that the child characteristics may be a factor contributing to the overall stress in the parent-child relationship as well as stressful circumstances that are beyond their control. The outside stress usually intensify the Total Stress, but in the case of Parent 4 and Parent 5, Total Stress is reported in the average range, suggesting that the parent is competent in their abilities as a parent. Parent 3 reports three areas in the average range, Distractibility/Hyperactivity in the high range, and Child Adaptability and Acceptability scores that fell in the clinically significant range. These areas are associated with child characteristics that make parenting difficult due to the child's inability to adjust to changes in the physical or social environments. For parents, this is an indication of a weak but positive relationship between the parent and child.

Table 14

Percentile Levels: Group B Medically Diagnosed Behavior

Group B Scale: Medically Diagnosed Behavior	Percentile				
	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5
Child Domain	79	20	82	96	80
Distractibility/Hyperactivity (DI)	85	38	88	93	90
Adaptability (AD)	66	23	90	90	81
Reinforces Parent (RE)	87	10	59	91	39
Demandingness (DE)	92	7	80	98	86
Mood (MO)	95	24	72	96	95
Acceptability (AC)	82	73	94	85	57
Parent Domain	***	7	72	73	35
Competence (CO)	***	35	73	74	37
Isolation (IS)	15	9	63	89	92
Attachment (AT)	72	10	37	39	37
Health (HE)	>99++	67	67	67	19
Role Restriction (RO)	65	12	76	90	12
Depression (DP)	54	5	80	70	58
Spouse/Parenting Partner Relationship (SP)	***	4	58	54	66
Life Stress (LS)	89	59	81	91	92
Total Stress	***	12	80	80	70

Key: 1st – 15th percentile = Extremely Low Range, 16th – 84th percentile = Normal Range; 85th – 89th percentile = High Range; 90th percentile and higher = Clinically Significant Range; ++ Due to missing items data was prorated; *** Not computed due to missing item response data

When comparing both groups of parents, each group reported three of the five parents to be successfully handling the demands of life and parenting. Six out of 10 parents reported average ranges of Total Stress and Life Stress in their profiles. There was evidence in three out of 10 parents to indicate extremely low levels of stress in both Parent and Child Domain representing profiles to be defensive, dishonest, and or to be disengaged parents but wanted to portray they are competent in the parenting role. Two of those parents were represented in the Group A with numerous office referral behaviors, where one parent was in the group with

medically diagnosed behaviors. This suggests that parents of children without identified behaviors want to present a picture of greater competence in their parenting role. When combining profiles overall, seven out of the 10 parents represented were able to respond candidly to stress factors associated with their children's characteristics or situational stressors.

Inferential statistics. Inferential statistics allowed the researcher to work with quantitative data to consider inferences about a larger group by studying a smaller group's characteristic (Tanner, 2012). The statistical test of the Mann-Whitney U was used in this study to examine two groups of parents comprising of the parent and their child with medically diagnosed behaviors and numerous office referral behaviors reported more than five times a year at school. The purpose of the Mann-Whitney U was to determine if two sets of interval scores from the Parent Stress Index (PSI-4) showed significant differences between their responses to parent/child relationships that are under stress. Bronfenbrenner (1986) believed that studying relationship connections helped identify at-risk behaviors for both parents and their child.

The Mann-Whitney U was used to compare the means from each group of parents in the 4 main scales: Total Stress, Child Domain, Parent Domain, and Life Stress. This non-parametric test is used in every field, and frequently used in psychology to compare attitudes or behaviors without making an assumption that the values are normally distributed. It allowed the researcher to investigate parental stress and child behavior between two groups of parents with different levels of behavioral challenges. Our sample was small, equaling only 1.1% of the population in the two schools included in the study; however, the specialized population of children with disabilities and or behavioral problems is generally a small population of 5% and no more than 10% represented within the school environment. The comparison of group statistical differences determined if both groups of parents represent the same distribution of scores.

Table 15 displays the Mann-Whitney U data results. Statistical significance is shown, when there is a *z-value* +/- 1.96 with a *p-value* equal to or less than 0.05 (Tanner, 2012). Interpretations and comparisons were calculated for the specific domains of the Life Stress Scale, which are the number of stresses indicated outside the parent-child relationship, Total Stress Scale (global considerations) related to the Child Domain and Parent Domain scores. The findings, as presented in Table 15, indicate no significance difference in the compared two groups within the 4 main scales represented by the PSI-4 (Abidin, 2012).

Table 15

Mann-Whitney U Test Statistics (PSI-4 Scales)

Scale	Group A: Office Referrals for Behavior	Group B: Behaviors Medically Identified	p-value
Total Stress	14	11	.83366
Life Stress	21	4	.09492
Child Domain	20.5	4.5	.11642
Parent Domain	11.5	13.5	.92034

Note. If the critical value have a U value $p < .05$ then the result is *not* significant.

Rejecting or accepting the null hypothesis is based on what is probable in relation to the *p-value* (Tanner, 2012). The research hypothesis is that the level of stress experienced by the two groups is different. The Mann-Whitney U indicated that there was not a significant difference within the two sample groups. Therefore, we must conclude that there is no significant difference in the level of stress experienced in the two groups; i.e., the stress levels of parents with children with numerous office referrals for behavior are not statistically different than the stress levels of parents of children with medically diagnosed behavior. We can't conclude that it does not impact stress. It does, there is just not a significant difference between the two groups.

Descriptive statistics. Tanner (2012) defines descriptive statistics as a means to allow the researcher to study the characteristics of a data set to describe the findings. For this study, the descriptive statistical data was completed by determining the frequency of response to the questions within the Life Stress scale on the PSI-4. The Life Stress scale is composed of 19 items that measure experiences parents find themselves in but have no control over the stressor (death, loss of a job, marriage, divorce). The Life Stress on the PSI-4 assesses global situational stresses that might exacerbate parent stress. High levels of overall life stress make life tasks like parenting more difficult and increase the risk potential for negative family dynamics. Table 19 disaggregates the results for the percentage of yes/no response ratings identified in the 19 Life Stress scale questions.

Table 16

Life Stress Scale Responses by Parents

19 Life Stress Questions	Yes Response	Percentage	No Response	Percentage
Group A: Office Referral Behaviors	14/95	14%	81/95	86%
Group B: Medically Diagnosed Behaviors	28/95	30%	67/95	70%

Note. n=10 Parents

The roles of life stress parents find themselves in are often out of their control. The Life Stress Scale on the PSI-4 takes into account the stress outside the parent-child relationship that the parent is experiencing. Parents in Group B reported events within the past six months that place them at a higher risk to the intensification of stressors on their ability to parent.

Qualitative Results

There are four components involved in gathering qualitative research: involvement in the setting, observing, interviewing, and analyzing the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The interview questions were developed and tested through an expert panel. Refinements of the

questions were based upon input from the panel, and the interview questions were reduced to nine questions on the parent interview and eight questions on the child interview. The Content Validity Index (CVI) reported values representing excellent content validity and met the criteria of I-CVI of .80 or higher in 10 out of 13 of the experts. The SCIV of .9220 met criteria for validity of the overall scale. The interview yielded data quickly, allowed for clarification of all parties, and gave meaningful insight into family interactions between parent and child. The 20 interviews were held face to face. Ten of those interviews were with parents only, and 10 were with children. Ten parent interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for data analysis. Seven child interviews were audiotaped, and 3 child interviews were conducted taking detailed notes because the parent did not give consent for their child to be audiotaped. The purposes behind the questions were to allow the participants to expand on the meaning of day-to-day interactions between the parent and child and identify some characteristics within the two sample groups. From the data, the coding process began with sorting responses per question, grouping responses similarly, allowing the researcher to develop emerging themes relating to both groups and reflect about the connections between the parent and child. Table 17 represents the responses given over 50% of the time by parents and children during the interview process.

Table 17

Responses to Interview Questions: Parent and Child

Question	Group A: Numerous Office Referral for Behavior		Group B: With Medically Diagnosed Behavior	
	Parent n = 5	Child n = 5	Parent n = 5	Child n = 5
Routine at the house	Yes: 5	Yes: 3	Yes: 5	Yes: 4
Relationship	Close: 5 Alright: 0	Close: 3 Alright: 2	Close: 4 Alright: 1	Close: 3 Alright: 1
	Don't get along: 0	Don't get along: 0	Don't get along: 0	Don't get along: 1
Characteristics that make a good parent/son or daughter	Supportive Loving Understanding Good Listener Passionate Putting them first Polite Kind Good Friend Trustworthy Love what they love Responsible Teach them	Care about family Loving Good Listener Passionate Obedient Pay Attention	Understanding Putting their needs before your own Patient Loving Kind Good Listener Good Example	Helping others Good helper Do Chores Follow Rules
	Parent: How to handle pressures of parenting	Talk to family Rely on help w/family and friends	Support me Take me places Do things for me Buys me things	Learn something new everyday Decompress/quiet space Do things with me Feed me Keep me company Help with homework Talk with me
Child: Important things parent does for you?	Talk with spouse Play games/enjoy their company		Talk with spouse Try to be happy Play with them	
Parent: Style of parenting	Simple and easy Supportive Respectful	Stop and focus on happy things Go to my room Hit, kick things Hold it in, shaking in my body and making a fist	Fly by the seat of my pants Consistent Respectful Establish Rules Open communication	Yell, hit, take it out on other people's things Fist my hands Kick my wall/mess up my bed Hold it in Withdraw to room
Child: How do you handle being angry or upset?	Go with it/no rule book Establish Rules Fair and Consistent			
What do you like and dislike about parenting?	Like: Everything Responsibility Watching them grow Rewarding		Like: A lot! Communication Child is my world Dislike: Discipline Arguing	

	Dislike: Responsibility Good w/Bad Watching them struggle Talking back Attitude			
Parent: If child came home and told you they had been harmed or bullied how would you respond?	Talk to them Contact the school Listen/Support	Yes: 5 No: 0	Talk to them Contact the school Work through scenarios	Yes: 5 No: 0
Child: Is it O.K. to hit someone who has hit you?				
#6 on Child #8 on Parent: How Family Solves Problems	Give Permission to defend self Talk About things Use Examples Call School Be Supportive Problem Solve Communicate	Defend Self	Give Permission to defend self Talk About things Use Examples Call School Communicate	Defend Self
Child: Have you had a favorite teacher? Describe what they were like.		Yes: 5 No: 0 Nice Talks to me Supportive Encourages you Look after you		Yes: 5 No: 0 Talks to me Supportive Helps you
Parent: Reflecting on your family, what have you done that is the most important for your child?	Consistency Structure Secure place Let them learn at their own pace Stop what you are doing and have fun with them Listen/be supportive Be there for them Loving them		Being there for them Talking to them Allow for uniqueness Put them first Is my world Teach respect and manners Love them	

The interviews provided insight into the parent-child relationship within families of children with and without diagnosed behaviors. Both groups reported having routines in the household. Ninety percent of the parents felt their relationship was close with their child. One parent described their relationship as alright and explained, “We are it, she is an only child” and then spoke to the closeness of the relationship, describing both good and bad times. The relationship described by the children reported 60% felt their relationship was close, 30% reported it was alright, and 10% reported that they do not get along.

There was one question within the child interview that was about describing characteristics of their favorite teachers. All children in both groups with medically diagnosed behaviors and those with numerous office referrals described their favorite teachers to hold similar characteristics they valued within the parent/child relationship. Characteristics which included being supportive and talking to them showed a connection to the bi-directional influence extended into the school.

The follow-up question asked to help define the relationship was to describe characteristics that make a good parent/daughter/son. Both groups of parents reported the characteristics of being kind, understanding, loving, listening, and putting the child first as important traits. The child characteristics differed in that they added how their character should act. Examples included children should follow rules, pay attention, be obedient, and help others.

The parent’s third question investigated what they did to deal with the stress of parenting. The children’s question differed and centered on the important things their parents do for them. Parents of both groups relied on communication with family, consistency, and playing with their child as important things that help them de-stress. The children paralleled parent responses by indicating that doing things with them and for them was important.

The fourth set of interview questions looked at the style of parenting preferred and how children handled themselves when angry. This set of questions focused on the connections to parenting and child behavior. Results indicated that within both groups of parents, styles differed widely, and children exhibited internal and external forms of behavior.

When parents were asked what they specifically liked and disliked about parenting, their responses were broad but showed similarities. Parents in both groups enjoyed being parents, listing rewards and communication as examples. They also reported disliking watching their children struggle and dealing with attitudes.

In order to look at how the family interacted in times of stress, a question was asked to focus on family dynamics linked to how the family handled if the children came home stating that they had been bullying or was harmed by someone. All parents in both groups reported they would talk to their child and contact the school. The parents also all gave permission to their children to defend themselves if they were hit first. The children also verified the approval to hit someone who has hit you 100%, also verifying that they would be given permission to defend themselves. For strategies used by parents for problem solving, both groups of parents also reported they would contact the school and talk about situations if they ever arose.

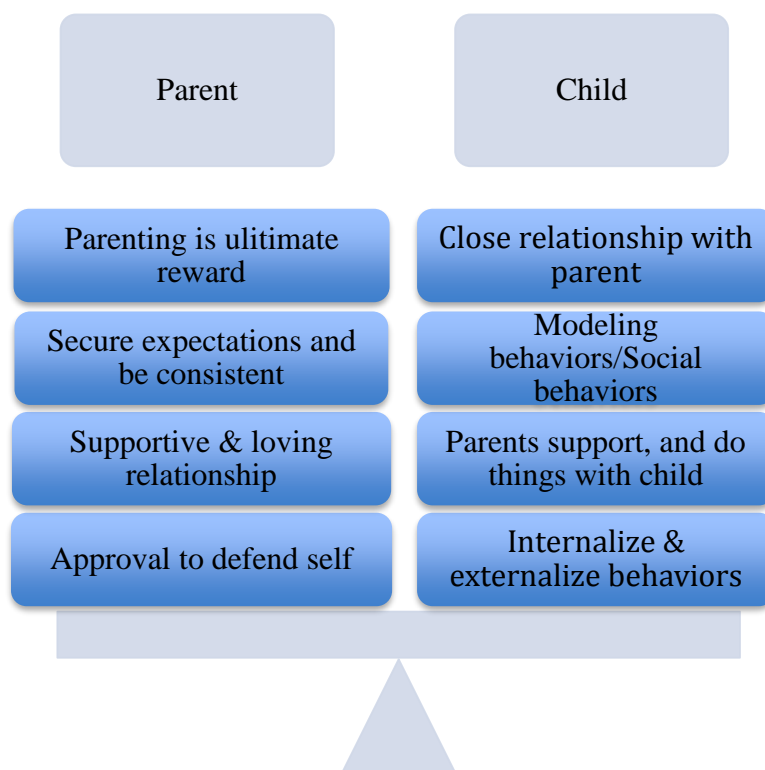
Lastly, reflecting on the family, parents were asked to talk about the most important thing they believe they have done for their child. This again brought diverse responses, but all centered on their children's safety, support, and ability to interact with and provide structure to their world. Both sets of parent responses acknowledge loving the children for who they were.

The descriptive data collected from the interviews required downsizing the information through coding, providing likely themes from both parent and child. From the interviews emerged themes represented by all 10 parents. There were parallel representations between

parent and child themes provided in Figure 9 below. In summary, the relationship between parents feeling a sense of reward in the role of parenting resulted in the child reporting a close relationship with their parent. Parents who secured or made sure they were consistent and had set expectations equated to the child understanding the importance of following rules, helping others, and working together within the parent-child relationship. Additionally, the theme of doing things together with each other was an important piece woven into a loving, supportive relationship developed between the parent and child. Lastly, connecting parent approval for the children to defending themselves corresponded with the child feeling and exhibiting behaviors both internally and externally when confronted with being angry at something or someone.

Figure 9

Emerging Themes from the Interviews



Research Question: How Does Parental Stress Influence Child Behavior?

The parent and child interview questions were established to provide insight into the relationship between elementary school children and their parents. Much of the research on family dynamics conducted using Bronfenbrenner's (1986) theoretical framework has been focused on the infant to preschool age development. However, Bronfenbrenner expanded his framework to consider the parental influences required for the positive interrelationship within the ecological systems model as people grow up over time and are exposed to multiple settings (Darling, 2007; Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Four common themes emerged during the analysis of both group interviews. Excerpts or examples were chosen within each theme emphasizing the focus on the understanding directly linked to the subject matter.

Parent Themes

1. *Parenting is the ultimate reward.* Parents in both groups responded with key words or phrases such as, "My child is my world"; "Put them first"; "I love him, love spending time with him, and he's super sensitive and funny"; and "I love being a parent because I spent so long not getting to do that".
2. *Secure expectations and be consistent.* Parents reported many expectations as characteristics of consistency. One parent in Group A explained securing as making sure expectations were established and modeled through these words, "In growing up, trying to be respectful, responsible, teaching them, you know... sitting beside them and being interested in what they are interested in or just, you know, being part of their life." Another parent in Group B shared that they believed it was very important that a parent did not make promises he or she could not keep. She added, "follow through with what

they say they're going to do, whether it be, when possible, whether that be consequences or fun things that you're doing.”

3. *Be supportive and loving in your relationship.* Supportive relationships were emphasized in many differing ways through the interviews. One parent in Group A described her relationship with her son as, “I love him to death. If he cries, I cry. If I cry, he cries.” Additionally, a parent in Group A reported putting the child’s goals first adding, “there is always good and bad with parenting,” and “accept their uniqueness,” or “talk to them no matter what the problem is, if it’s good, bad, whatever.” A Group B parent answered similarly, “We’re co-workers in the house since she does not have any brothers or sisters”.
4. *Give parent approval to defend oneself.* All ten parents gave the approval for children to defend themselves from bullies, but wouldn’t want them to start it. For example, a mother explained what she shared when her child was being bullied:

“You know what? There comes a point when you can only give so much,” I said. “And you have to understand what that point is and be able to stand up for yourself. Because people aren’t going to respect you and they’re not going to stop unless you can draw the line.”

Another parent reported that she believed children should always be able to stick up for themselves. She added, “That’s what we’ve taught him to do. We don’t want him to start a fight or do anything like that, but we totally support him in defending himself and standing up for himself or others.” There were no significant differences between the two groups in parent and child responses when their child needed to defend themselves.

Child Themes

1. *Children value a close relationship with their parent.* One child explained his relationship with his parents as being “really tight” and “we will always stick up for each other and be we’ll always be there for each other even if it’s hard for us...we will always love each other, and we will always look out for each other.” Another child reported, “my relationship with my step-mom is a little bit rocky, but my relationship with my mom is like being on vacation.”
2. *Children value parents modeling expected behaviors and social behaviors.* One child in Group A reported, “As the son, I will always pay attention, always love my mom and do everything she asks of me.” Another child in Group B reported, “Be passionate, listen, do what your parents tells and shows you to do.” Additionally, a child in Group B said it this way: “I’m actually a very, very good son to her. I help her out when she needs me because she has listened to me.”
3. *Children feel that parents were supportive and participated in activities with them.* Seven out of 10 children from the groups reported watching television together or playing games as part of being supportive, along with participating with the daily chores as supportive. Communication, talking, and listening to what the child had to say were noted characteristics. “My mom does my laundry, feeds me, does dishes, helps me when I get sad sometimes...and my dad, he, he’ll always make me happy, and both my mom and dad support me”.
4. *Children both internalize and externalize behaviors.* Four of the five students in Group A without behaviors replied with internalizing their anger. This type of actions was described as making a fist, shaking in their bodies, thinking of happy thoughts as themes.

Four of the five students in Group B described the actions of externalized behavior to include hitting things, kicking the wall, yelling, messing up the things in their bedroom. Only one student reflected to deal with anger by withdrawing to his or her room to take his or her mind off the anger. The difference between the groups and how they handled their behaviors was opposite of each other. Children in Group B with medically diagnosed behaviors externalized behaviors while children in Group A acted out at school and had been referred to the office internalized behaviors within the home.

The parents were interviewed with similar questions that mirrored their children's questions with a few exceptions. Parents were asked, "What things do you do to help with the pressures of being a parent and raising your child?" and "In reflecting on your family, what do you think you have done that has been the most important?" These two questions, gave insight into the world of being a parent related to the proximal process, which refers to the connection of direct influences that persuade a child's behavior over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Parents shared how they relieve some of the pressures of parenting, which is represented in Table 18. All parents experience stress, but how they deal with reducing or relieving that stress is an important piece to the understanding of family influences. Parents listed multiple methods of strategies they have utilized while raising their child. They reported the value of decompressing in a quiet space, talking with spouses, taking time to spend with your child doing activities with them, and relying on social support through family and friends to have a constructive effect on promoting healthier family functioning. All five of the parents with children who had numerous office referrals of more than five visits per year for their behavior relied on help from family or friends, where only two out of five parents who had children with identified

medical behavior disorders relied on family and friends. All of the parents from both groups valued decompressing in a quiet space or taking time to play with their child as a method of reducing stress.

Table 18

How Parents Reduce Stress

Group A: Parent/child with numerous office referrals	Group B: Parent/child with medically diagnosed behavior
Decompress in a quiet space	Decompress in a quiet space
Talk with spouse	Talk with spouse
Rely on help from family and friends	
Take time to play with and enjoy child's company	Taking time to play with and enjoy child's company

Table 19 below displays what parent's perception of was the most important thing they have done as a parent. Eighty percent of the responses indicated that being consistent and structured was very important. Additionally, 90% of all parents stated that stopping what they are doing with the responsibilities of parenting and giving time to children while having fun was most valued. Other items related to spending time with their children included being an active, available listener and allowing children to be themselves within the structure of the family unit.

Table 19

Most Important Contributions as a Parent for their Child

Group A: Parent/child with numerous office referrals	Group B: Parent/child with medically diagnosed behavior
Be consistent and structured	Be consistent and structured
Stop what you are doing and give them/time have fun	Stop what you are doing and give them/time have fun
Listen and be present with them	Listen and be present with them
Model manners and respect of others	Model manners and respect of others

Part two of the last question on the parent interview connected what the parents felt was the most important contribution and tied it into child behavioral output: “How can you tell?” This generalized in the parent responses toward behavior modeled outside the home. This describes the proximal process engine of Bronfenbrenner’s model. The behaviors developed by a nested influence of interpersonal relationships in the home setting are part of a complex system (Brendtro, 2010; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Watling Neal & Neal, 2013). The interview process in combination with the PSI-4 establishes connections or emerging themes between two groups of parents and children with and without behaviors. Examples of the proximal processes each parent-child are exposed to helped identify areas of strength and vulnerability in the small population sample within this research.

Summary of Results

The triangulation matrix, Table 8, guided the research to answer the one question in this study. The use of both quantitative and qualitative measures involved in collecting and analyzing data from numerous sources provided strength to the research (Creswell, 2015). The PSI and interviews were used to investigate the research question. While studying the social phenomenon of parental stress and child behavior, a mixed method design provided the power of numbers in the domains of the PSI and the power of words during the interview data.

Qualitative research and small sample size typically requires a sample size to be adequate to gain feedback. The research of Sidebotham (2001) used semi-structured interviews with parents to explore factors of culture in today’s world that influences their parenting and the important impact on their child. His small sample of 16 parents suggested key areas that culture imposes on stresses of parenting and helped further develop parenting stress and family dynamics. The aim of small research is not to be a total representation of the population, but to

gain meaningful, rich insight to the participants within the interview process to make connections within the context of the research question (Creswell, 2015; Creswell et al., 2010). There are no rules for sample size in qualitative research. It depends on what you want to know, and the purpose of the study. Terry (2016) conducted research with a small group of parents who were seeking support groups for their elementary age children. Small sample size was pertinent to the parents' lived experiences, with an underrepresented group of related to children with autism. The small group sample size within this research met the need for investigation of the influence of parental stress on child behavior because like other small sample size research the participants fulfill requirements of suitability and were willing to take part in the study. Small sample size research has the potential to be highly valuable to help inform practices for those in need of support.

The focus of this chapter was to summarize the findings of both data collection methods concentrated on the relationship between parental stress and child behavior, specifically looking at the role of stress as a direct connection to the parent-child system. By gathering data from parents and their children, this study sought to make connections to the child's natural relationships under natural conditions (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

In the next chapter, the researcher explains the role of parental stress and child behavior, expanding upon the themes that emerged in the PSI. The use of interviews merged the results for comparison and identified common themes between parents of children who exhibit behaviors and those who do not (Creswell, 2015). This research supported previous inquiries connecting the effects of stress on parents to the developing child. Although this study is limited by its small sample size and used a single measure of stress combined with an interview, it explored life stress and total stress with parent and family dynamics. The results are valuable to professionals

who are working with parents and children as well as can further research into a sensitive topic of parenting stress (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Chapter V: Discussion

Parental stress while performing parental responsibilities is a daily experience for many parents. The relationship of parenting stress and child behavior is a complex one, linked to numerous direct and indirect variables within each family unit (Duis et al., 1997; Magill-Evans & Harrison, 2001). Higher levels of parental stress have been linked to effective parenting strategies affecting the psychological and physical well-being of both parent and child. Stressful circumstances for children can result in distress in the role of the parent and can have harmful effects. The present study was designed to examine how parental stress influences student behavior. Using the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems theory, the purpose of this research was to examine the characteristics of parenting stress on the child related to behavior in second, third, and fourth graders.

Summary of Study

The results highlight the validity of the positive responses given by parents within the PSI-4 (Abidin, 2012) falling in the standard range of responding tendencies and contained by the extremely low defensive responding. These results signified candid responses throughout the survey process and may be viewed as valid.

Overall, analysis of the four domains of Total Stress, Life Stress, Child Domain, and Parent Domain comparing Group A (numerous office referrals for behavior) with Group B (medically diagnosed behavior present) resulted in a no significant difference in the level of stress experienced in the two groups. Life Stress and Total Stress are different types of stress, representing varying perspectives of stress within the parent-child relationship. The difference between the two stressors was that Total Stress encapsulated stress as a normal part of the parenting experience that considers child and parent characteristics. Life Stress represented the

parenting experiences that have been found to influence parenting. These stressors were often ones out of the parent's control, such as a change of job or divorce. This form of stress takes place outside of the parent-child relationship and is an important factor in this research. When parents are exposed to higher forms of life stress, it intensifies parenting behaviors or reactions to the role and poses a risk factor professionals consider when providing intervention. Two of the parents who had identified children with medically diagnosed behavior disorders reported clinically significant levels of Life Stress factors when completing the PSI-4. Group A identified as parents with children who had behaviors present in numerous office referrals of more than five visits per year all reported life stressors to fall within the normal range. This can be interpreted to indicate that there was a difference in the area of Life Stress between the two groups of parents, and it begins to differentiate between types of stressors that influences parents and the relationship with their child.

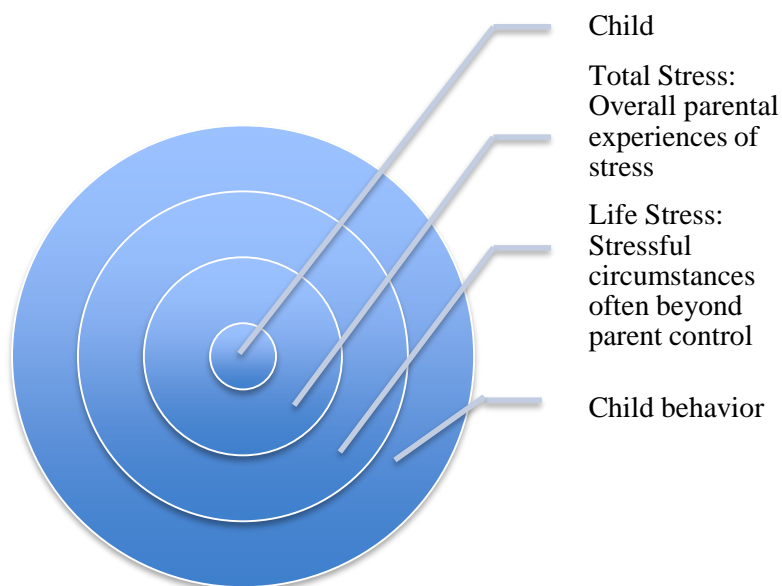
The Total Stress scale was also compared between the two sample groups. This scale did not show a significant difference. The data revealed an acceptable level in the formation of the relationship between the parent and child. The Total Stress scale, when looked at independently, accepts the null hypothesis that there is not a difference in the stress level of parents with children who exhibit behaviors to those who do not. The PSI carefully considered the parenting stress that leads to reactions of the demands of parenthood. The sample group of all 10 parents reported individual differences in the levels of influence within their relationship with their child. The normal range of all Total Stress scales identified only one parent of a child with identified behaviors who rated the Child Domain in the clinically significant range. This parent was in Group B with medically identified behaviors and would be considered a referral candidate for services to help with characteristics the child holds that may be contributing to the overall parent

stress.

The results between both groups of parent and child relationships yielded relevant data for consideration. Figure 10 represents a nested influence resembling Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework of the developing child. The parenting influences and stress are related and have influence the child.

Figure 10

Nested Depiction of Total Stress and Life Stress on a Child



This data emphasizes the bidirectional relationship between parenting stress and child behavior. The theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner (1986) suggests that there are three intersecting points—biological, psychological, and social fields—that accentuate the idea that a child's development is predisposed by the surroundings he or she is exposed to. Simply stated, proximal process is the interaction between the child and environment, and is considered the primary schema for the development of a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Bronfenbrenner's model described in Chapter II highlighted the significance of understanding a child's

development within the setting they are living in. It helps explain how the person and environment shape one another and influence behavior within a family unit.

The research makes the connection that Life Stress of the parent has influence on the Child Domain scale. The bar graphs of both groups of parents represented 50% of those surveyed reported elevated ranges in the Child Domain than in the Parent Domain. Child characteristics defined in the PSI-4 may be factors contributing to the overall stress reported by parents in both groups. The study suggests that elevated levels of parenting stress residing in the Child Domain scale may directly contribute to child behavior problems. In three of the ten parents, further results from the analysis of the responses within subscales under the Child Domains connected higher levels in distractibility/hyperactivity. Two parents were represented within the group with diagnosed behaviors and one parent reported the highest level (greater than 99th percentile) in the group with office referrals. The characteristic of distractibility/hyperactivity considers higher stress factors in parents who are dealing with the daily child behaviors of restlessness, distractibility, failure to finish things, and other characteristics that make parenting more difficult. This was one child characteristic that was noted by three out of 10 parents. The bi-directional relationship that emphasizes parent-child relationships associates risks with children who represent behaviors associated with ADHD (Abidin, 2012).

Direct environments that influence the child are controlled through proximal process. When asking about personal characteristics such as, “What makes a good parent or child” in the interview, the researcher explored proximal process. The parent and child interview established insight into the perspective of the child in the parent-child relationship. Three main themes emerged in the analysis of responses:

1. Children valued a close relationship with their parent;

2. Children believed that they should follow rules, help others, and do things together;
3. Children felt that parents were supportive and participated in activities with them.

A last theme in the coding of data looked at how the child dealt with aggressive behaviors and being angry. Internalizing and externalizing behavior was expressed by both groups of children. The data revealed that children in Group A (office referral behaviors) internalized feelings, and children in Group B (with behaviors) reported externalized behaviors. This parallels past research that externalizing symptomatology is characterized by disorders that share the comorbidity of ADHD, which is represented in Group B. Both forms of behaviors are problematic for educators and parents. Although the findings within this research do not establish a causal link between why the behavior is being exhibited, we understand that behavior of either type can be problematic for learning and places the child at increased risk for having poor interpersonal relationship skills (Eisenberg et al., 1988, Frick et al., 1991, Greene 2014). Thus, this research adds to the current study in that students with any level of behavior are at risk to learn and develop positive interpersonal relationships.

Parenting stress is a product of life experiences (Abidin, 2012). Too much stress can be overwhelming. Reflecting on how individuals deal with the pressures of parenting and the contributions a parent makes for their child became important when considering proximal process and the interaction of parent and child. Parents in the study reported decompressing in quiet spaces, spending time with their children, and relying on social support through family and friends as having constructive effects, promoting healthier functioning in the family dynamics. These are positive strategies when modeled and provide a representation for their children to copy. Parents also reported communication with their children as a way of dealing with

pressures. This strategy allows for the parent and child to explore feelings and express emotions in a way that encourages positive family dynamics.

Additionally, deeper consideration of the influence of the parent within the nested structure was key to the proximal process in the bioecological model reflecting consistency and quality of mutual influence of parental responsiveness (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1996). Eighty percent of the parents interviewed responded that consistency and structure in parenting were very important. Additionally, 90% of the parents reported that they have stopped parenting and simply devoted time to their child, being an active listener to show their child that they are important.

Lastly, Life Stress for parents was often out of their control according to the PSI-4 and the interview. The parents in Group B (with behaviors) reported events within the past six months that place them at a higher risk of the intensification of stressors on their ability to parent. Applying Bronfenbrenner's theory of proximal process within the microsystem and mesosystem supported the notion that life stressors experienced by a parent had a potential to cause stress for the child.

Impact of Limitations

After concluding the data collection and analysis, the impact of limitations was apparent. The research for how stress in the family influences child behavior was sensitive. It took many forms of communication to ensure the development of a positive rapport and ensure confidentiality for the parent so that he or she would feel comfortable honestly answering the interview and survey questions. Home phone calls were made speaking personally to parents, and sending letters and notes through the child were part of this important process.

The age of a parent might have impacted the parent willingness to self-reflect on parenting. The demographic of those who accepted participation in the study were older parents. Being older in the parenting role lends one to believe that those who agreed to participate are comfortable in their marital status, parenting support, and access to role models, which reduces the detrimental effects of parenting stress on a child's behavior. Due to the rejection of participation in child-parent sets with differing age demographics, the scores within the research may represent parents who truly are under lower levels of stress; or conversely, middle-of-the-road responses or attempted prosocial responses can be interpreted as indicating a fearful and mildly paranoid responses. Consideration of the reaction might be, "If I admit a problem in this area, I will look overwhelmed or on the verge of falling apart." Honesty in reporting due to the sensitive subject of the study proved to be a limitation and a consideration in the methodology.

Gender is also considered as a limitation to the research. All consenting parents were female. Gaining a father perspective of parenting stress would have added to differing perspectives of roles within the family dynamics and influence on the child.

Acting with transparency during the interviews provided parent and child an opportunity to elaborate or ask questions (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This gave support and validation for the process, even with small sample size and sensitive topic limitations. The defensiveness scale built into the PSI-4 (Abidin, 2012) allowed analysis of the content scores and identified 3 parent scores to be considered with caution and 1 parent scale that was followed up on during the interview process.

The small sample size has been noted throughout the research and could be considered a limitation. The use of small sample research challenges the current standards of design; however,

the importance of research on sensitive topics with parents and children allows opportunities for further research to expand the key components of this study to larger sample sizes.

Conclusions

The question investigated in this study was “How does parental stress influence child behavior?”

In this mixed methods study the conclusion made subtle connections to higher risk of parenting responsibilities due to events outside of the parent-child relationship like moving, getting married or divorced, gaining a promotion or changing jobs, which all have potential to cause stress for the child. The influence of child behavior reported in the Child Domain subscale of distractibility/hyperactivity added to parent stress and parenting practices that may be affected when additional factors of health, adaptability, and demandingness are placed on the already uncontrollable life stressors.

Emerging themes from interviewing both the parent and child connected similar positive interrelationships per parent-child in groups with and without behaviors. All participants valued a close relationship, feeling as if parenting is the ultimate reward. Parents and children in both groups appreciated sharing reciprocal communication through problem solving or working through scenarios when talking about daily happenings. Both groups of parents and children emphasized the importance of doing things together and helping each other in all forms of daily exchanges. Parents in both groups enjoyed being parents but also reported the good and bad that is connected to parenting as well as dealing with the difficult role of parenting when following through with consequences.

The differing perspective within groups was with internalizing or externalizing behaviors when angered. All parents and student supported externalizing behavior if bullied, but

communicated it to be the wrong action per prosocial acceptability. This association yielded inconsistency in the communication but adds to the complex challenges parents feel with the demands of raising their children. The limitation concern with the sensitivity of the subject was considered, but in light of that limitation, the study serves to add to the small body of literature looking at parenting stress and the effect on child behavior.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings from this mixed methods study lead to recommendations for future research that adds to the body of literature on the topic of stress in the family and the influence on child behavior. Conducting research with a larger sample group could provide to the body of literature regarding sensitive topics of that human nature naturally places guards up against for honest reporting. Although this research investigated these relationships, more studies are needed to enrich the body of literature. Conducting longitudinal studies to gather data into middle school would shed light on outcomes of the possible causations between parenting stress and child behavior over time. Following a parent and child throughout their school years in a longitudinal study has potential to make deeper connections to the influence of stress over time on the family dynamic. Additional research examining the effects of family stress on child behavior into the school environment is warranted to complete the circle of influence within connected environments. The study included three important pieces to Bronfenbrenner's (1986) work including process, person, and context, but lacked the time component.

Implications for Professional Practices

The daily demands of parenting can leave parents feeling happy and competent as well as irritated and frustrated. The cycle of stress in parents can have implications connected with negative reactions in school by the child. The negative actions in school can then heighten stress

with the parent. This cycle of stress experienced by many families takes a toll on the parent/child relationship. Understanding how this cycle of stress in the family influences child behavior is valuable for educators and psychologists. Schools and social service providers have a calling to work together to support the family unit. In the past schools have provided singular therapies and hoped the parent and child can contextually bring things together when needed.

Administrators and teachers are the front line in the communication to parents regarding their child's behavior while at school. In this study, parent and child shared important themes that both valued in a parent/child relationship. For school personnel the conversation regarding child behavior can be intentional and supportive with parents. Support for parents could be simply suggesting to a parent the themes that emerged from this research like, decompressing in a quiet space prior, take time to play with and enjoy your child's company or seek out family and friends for support. Other positive suggestions for administration, teachers, or school professions that emerged from this research as important contributions for maintaining the parent/child relationship were supportive actions of parents in practicing consistency and offering structure, listening and being present with their child or to stop what you are doing and give their children time.

Strengthening the impact of interventions and focusing on strategies to increase parent and child self-efficacy through coping skills is important. Due to stressful situations and circumstances drawing heavily on parent resources, expanding self-efficacy into the child domain would have a positive impact in the dimension of parenting and empowering the family dynamic. For schools recognizing how to begin conversations with the parents in reducing parental stress and how they can offer strategies can support how a parent can positively contribute to the parent/child relationship for children with office referrals and medically

diagnosed behaviors.

Final Reflection

Connecting parenting stress to child behavior challenged this researcher. Exploring the work through Bronfenbrenner's model supported the reciprocal interactions between the microsystem and mesosystem. The nested system was explored finding the Life Stress parents experience and the characteristics of the child do add to the Total Stress of parents. The researcher sought to include a component of behavior as a biological component to the influence of stress on the parent. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between parental stress and child behavior specifically for parents with children who have medically diagnosed behavior disorders and parents of children with numerous office referrals of more than five visits per year for behaviors exhibited at school. The Mann-Whiney U indicated that there were not significant differences within the two sample groups. Therefore, we conclude that there is no significant difference in the level of stress experienced in the two groups. The findings add to the literature but left the researcher with a number of questions that emerge as a result of the outcomes within the data.

First, this research focused on a single point in time and was a small sample size in a small district, so it was difficult to gather evidence that the stress parents are under has a direct influence on exhibited child behavior. Secondly, parents reported experiencing their children as a source of stress with elevated Child Domain scores in comparison to the Parent Domain and Life Stress scale. Children are experiencing a source of stress reciprocally from parents and school. Is our society and educators experiencing stress through the demands and pressures placed within the school for educational outcomes—also impacting the stress cycle of the parent? How can schools better understand the way parents react to the exhibited characteristics of their children

to better support the parent? As research on stress and the way it touches the many facets of family dynamics continues, educators and psychologists will seek to provide strategies that increase parent and child coping skills.

In sum, parental stress is acknowledged as a risk factor for child behavior. The bidirectional relationship has implications for compounding effects on the family dynamics. The addition of life stress influences has the potential to intensify the total stress of the parent and would be considered a risk factor for negative parental influence within the parent/child relationship. This research highlighted that parents of students with medically diagnosed behavior report higher levels of characteristics in the child domain linked to the temperaments of their child. This makes parenting harder. The research also highlighted the honesty in reporting on a sensitive subject. People know what they are supposed to say to imply all is well within a guarded topic of what happens within the home. When consenting to participate in research dealing with a topic such as parental stress and the influence on child behavior, parents want to report honestly, but lean towards minimizing problems due to what is acceptable within society.

Despite challenges of having sensitive conversations with parents regarding their child who is experiencing behavior issues the conversation an important one. It holds significance in how to support the relationship the schools have with parents and their children. Working to overcome the barriers that society places on families opens up opportunities for honest conversation and acceptance. Stress is normal in lives. For schools this conversation can be constructive and can help harness the power of schools and parents working together.

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Appendix A
Figure Permissions

From: James Forte <JAFORTE@salisbury.edu>
Subject: RE: Permission Request
Date: September 25, 2015 at 4:07:59 AM PDT
To: Jim Sexauer <jsexauer1@mindspring.com>

Good morning Doctoral Student Kathy Sexauer,

I am very pleased that you find my work useful and I give you permission to use my "social theory metaphors" figure from my Models, Metaphors and Maps book.

When you complete the chapter using the figure, please share it with me - if you can - so I can read your extension of my ideas on root metaphors and theory explication.

Best wishes for an educational and smooth dissertation process,

Professor James A. Forte (Jim)

James Forte
jamesforte@[mac.com](mailto:jamesforte@mac.com)
<http://jamesaforte.com>

From: "Alexandra C." <alexandra@psychologynoteshq.com>
Subject: Re: A comment from Kathy Sexauer
Date: September 25, 2015 at 12:41:07 AM PDT
To: jsexauer1@mindspring.com

Hello Kathy,

You have our permission to use the diagram in your dissertation.

Regards,
Alex

On Thu, Sep 24, 2015 at 7:17 PM alexandra@psychologynoteshq.com
<alexandra@psychologynoteshq.com> wrote:

a form has been submitted on September 24, 2015, via:
<http://www.psychologynoteshq.com/contact/> [IP 168.103.139.136]

Figure Permission (continued)

Figure Permissions (continued)

From: Boundless Support <support@boundless.com>
Subject: Re: permission request
Date: September 25, 2015 at 11:24:28 AM PDT
To: Kathy Sexauer <jsexauer1@mindspring.com>

Eva replied

Sep 25, 2:24pm

Hi Kathy,

We publish under the Creative Commons Share-Alike License, which means that anyone can use or adapt our content, so long as:

1. We are given attribution (your Appendix should accomplish this)
2. Your use or adaptation of our content is also considered to be under this license

Based on this, you should be fine. Let me know if anything is unclear. Best of luck on your thesis!

Eva

Appendix B
Site Permission

October 16, 2015

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st floor
623 S. University Boulevard
Nampa, ID 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Mrs. Kathy Sexauer

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that Administration at [REDACTED] has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, intervention, assessment procedures, proposed data and collection procedures, data analysis, and purpose of the study. Mrs. Sexauer has permission to conduct her research in the district of and with students and staff of the [REDACTED]. The authorization dates for this research are July 2016 to April 2017.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Appendix B
Site Permission (continued)

October 16, 2015

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st floor
623 S. University Boulevard
Nampa, ID 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Mrs. Kathy Sexauer

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Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Appendix B
Site Permission (continued)

October 16, 2015

Northwest Nazarene University
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Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Appendix C Cover Letter and Parent Consent

COVER LETTER

September 26, 2016

Dear Parent and Teacher:

My name is Kathy Sexauer and I am a Doctoral Student at Northwest Nazarene University, studying the family systems and child behavior. You are receiving this survey because you currently have a child enrolled in the [REDACTED] at either North or East Elementary.

I am looking for a sample of parents and their child to participate in an interview and survey this fall. The questions will focus around the family and have associations to situational life stress as well as rating behaviors observed of the child. The survey will take 20 – 25 minutes. An interview will be scheduled for the parent after the survey allowing more depth answer to questions, estimating to take 15 – 20 minutes with the parent and 10 – 15 minutes for the child.

All aspects of the data collection will be gathered and analyzed confidentially via a coding system attached on this letter (See top right corner, i.e. A1, B1).

I believe that your responses will provide valuable information for psychologists and educators in the field to better understand how to intervene with support to help students succeed.

Please consider being part of my study. Thank you!

The Research Purpose

For educators providing safeguards for children through intervention is an influential safety measure that depends on understanding the nested and networked influences of the family, parent relationship connected to the child. Direct experiences mold children's way of thinking connecting actions, social growth, and family influences with the meaning of right and wrong. These influences are essential tools in supporting the whole child mind, body, and soul for success in their lives.

The crucial research question for this research study embrace the following:

1. How does parental stress influence child behavior?

Cover Letter and Parent Consent (continued)

The procedures are as follows:

- The research project will take place over a period of three months. During that time, a survey window will be open in which participants will be required to complete. Follow-up interviews will be scheduled from the pool of participants after survey data has been collected and analyzed.
- Data will be collected in the form of a survey and interviews from September 2016 – September 22, 2016.
- Participation will involve parent interviews taking 10 – 15 minutes.
- Your child's participation in this project is completely voluntary. In addition to your permission, your child will also be asked if he or she would like to take part in this project. Any child may stop taking part at any time. The choice to participate or not will not impact your child's grades or status at school.
- All information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly secure and will not become a part of your child's school record. The results of this study may be used for a research paper and presentation. Pseudonyms or codes will be substituted for the names of children and the school. This helps protect confidentiality.

The next pages indicate whether you do or do not want you and your child to participate in this project. Please complete the form and return it to the school office. The second copy is to keep for your records. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me by email or telephone. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Kathy Sexauer
(208) 599 – 0817
ksexauer@nnu.edu

Cover Letter and Parent Consent (continued)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

My name is Kathy Sexauer and I am a doctoral student at Northwest Nazarene University (NNU), Nampa, Idaho. I am conducting a research study of family systems and child behavior. The study has been reviewed by the Research Review Committee at Northwest Nazarene University and has been successfully approved.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a parent of a child attending an Elementary school and or a teacher of the child.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:

1. You will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form, volunteering to participate in the study for you and your child.
2. Your child will be asked for Assent volunteering to participate in the interview. Interviews will take place during the school day September 3, 2016 – September 22, 2016. The interview is expected to take 10 – 15 minutes.
3. You will be surveyed once. The survey window will open September 3, 2016 – September 22, 2016. The survey is expected to take 15 – 20 minutes.
4. Bring the completed survey at your selected interview time. This will provide follow up with questions about your experiences with parenting and the family. This interview will be audio taped and it will last 10 to 15 minutes.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

1. Some of the survey questions may make you uncomfortable or upset, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
2. Confidentiality: Participation in research may involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study. All data collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet and the key to the cabinet will be kept in a separate location. In compliance with the Federal Wide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).
3. Only the primary researcher and the research supervisor will be privy to data from this study. As researchers, both parties are bound to keep data as secure and confidential as possible.

Cover Letter and Parent Consent (continued)

D. BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information you provide may help counselors and psychologists to better understand in supporting the whole child mind, body, and soul for success in the school and home.

E. PAYMENTS

There are no payments for participating in this study.

F. QUESTIONS

If you have questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the investigator. Kathy Sexauer can be contacted via email at ksexauer@nnu.edu, via telephone at

██████████ or you may contact Dr. Paula Kellerer, at pkellerer@nnu.edu.

G. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY

I understand that I may withdraw from this study, at any time, without consequences. In the event I withdraw from the study, all information I provided will be destroyed and omitted from the final paper.

By signing this consent form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information.

I give my consent to participate in this study:

Signature of Study Participant

Date

I give my consent for the interviews to be audio taped in this study:

Signature of Study Participant

Date

I give my consent for direct quotes to be used in this study. No personal identifying information will be used in the report from this study:

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Cover Letter and Parent Consent (continued)

.....

I have read and understand the information provided on this form. I understand that there are no negative consequences if I do not wish to participate. I know that I can stop participation at any time without consequence. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study as follows:

YES _____

NO _____

Parent Name printed _____

Parent Signature _____

Date: _____

I have read this form. I understand that nothing negative will happen if I do not let my child participate. I know that I can stop his/her participation at any time. I voluntarily agree to let my child participate in this study as follows:

YES My student may participate in this study.

NO My student may NOT participate in this study.

Child's printed name: _____

Parent/Guardian printed name: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Date: _____

The results of my research will be available after August 1, 2017. If you would like to have a copy of the results of the research or have any questions, feel free to contact me at (208) 599 – 0817 or ksexauer@nnu.edu.

Sincerely,
 Kathy Sexauer
 NNU Doctoral Student
 ksexauer@nnu.edu
 (208) 599 – 0817

THE NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE HAS REVIEWED THIS PROJECT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH.

Appendix D Student Assent

Researcher: I am doing a study to learn about family and child development connected to behavior.

I am asking you to help because we don't know very much about whether kids your age understand why sometimes we show actions of anger or being mad.

If you agree to be in the study, I am going to ask you some questions about types of feelings and behaviors. I want to know if you think they are true and give you time to explain your answers.

We will be audio taping the interview.

Check the line that best matches your choice:

_____ It is OK to make a recording of me during the study

_____ It is not OK to make a recording of me during the study

You can ask questions about this study at any time. If you decide at any time not to finish, you can ask us to stop.

The questions I will ask are only about what you think. There are no right or wrong answers because this is not a test. I hope to find ways to help students in the future.

Your name will not be in any report of the results of this study.

You will receive your choice of a prize from the prize bucket for being in this study.

If you sign this paper, it means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign this paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you don't sign this paper or if you change your mind later.

Sign your name here if you want to be in the study

Date

Print your name here if you want to be in the study

I have explained this study and answered questions of the child whose name is at the top of this form. I informed the child that he or she could stop being in the study and can ask questions at any time. From my observations, the child seemed to agree to take part in the study.

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Assent

Date

Appendix E PAR Site License



16204 North Florida Avenue
Lutz, Florida 33549
Tel: (813) 968-3003
Fax: (813) 968-2598
<http://www.par.nc.com>

Dear Customer:

Thank you for your inquiry related to PAR's position on whether our test materials *might* be disclosed to patients in order to comply with the Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The wide spread dissemination of test materials (which may disclose test items and answers) would violate restrictions on health care providers' use of PAR's test materials, and would render test instruments invalid and therefore useless to the professional community and the general public. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which is responsible for HIPAA, recently provided clarification related to this matter and stated in a letter that:

"Any requirement for disclosure of protected health information pursuant to the Privacy Rule is subject to section 172(e) of HIPAA 'protection of trade secrets'. As such, we confirm that it would not be a violation of the Privacy Rule for a covered entity to refrain from providing access to an individual's protected health information, to the extent that doing so would result in a disclosure of trade secrets."

Consequently, as we have done for many years, we will continue to advise our Customers that PAR's test instruments are trade secrets and protected by intellectual property laws including copyright and trade secret laws, and their usefulness and value would be greatly compromised if they were generally available to the public. This position is also consistent with our long-standing practice of ensuring through our terms and conditions of purchase and use that all test purchasers have the appropriate qualifications to administer and interpret the instruments being purchased, and that such purchasers agree to maintain the confidentiality of the instruments.

As the HHS has now confirmed, as long as test items (which may be included in record forms) are trade secrets, such information is not required to be disclosed under HIPAA. Thus, PAR's position, given the guidance from HHS, is that Customers may not disseminate copies of test record forms or protocols that disclose items to persons who request copies under HIPAA's Privacy Rule since it is our position that the test materials are copyrighted and constitute trade secrets.

Sincerely,

Gt.

R. Bob Smith III, Ph.D.
Chairman and CEO

PAR Site License (continued)

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING

Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. ("PAR") Software License Agreement ("Agreement")

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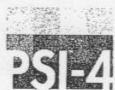
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Appendix F Parent Stress Index (PSI-4)



Item Booklet

Richard R. Abidin, EdD

Instructions:

On the top of the PSI-4 Answer Sheet, write your name, gender, date of birth, ethnic group, and marital status; today's date; and your child's name, gender, and date of birth. Please mark all your responses on the answer sheet. **Do not write on this booklet.**

This questionnaire contains 120 statements. Read each statement carefully. For each statement, please focus on the child you are most concerned about and circle the response that best represents your opinion. **Answer all questions about the same child.**

Circle SA if you strongly agree with the statement.

Circle A if you agree with the statement.

Circle NS if you are not sure.

Circle D if you disagree with the statement.

Circle SD if you strongly disagree with the statement.

For example, if you sometimes enjoy going to the movies, you would circle A in response to the following statement:

I enjoy going to the movies. SA (A) NS D SD

While you may not find a response that exactly states your feelings, please circle the response that comes closest to describing how you feel. **Your first reaction to each question should be your answer.**

Circle only one response for each statement, and respond to all statements. **Do not erase!** If you need to change an answer, mark an "X" through the incorrect answer and circle the correct response. For example:

I enjoy going to the movies. SA A NS (X) (SD)

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Parent Stress Index (PSI-4 continued)

1. When my child wants something, my child usually keeps trying to get it.
2. My child is so active that it exhausts me.
3. My child appears disorganized and is easily distracted.
4. Compared to most, my child has more difficulty concentrating and paying attention.
5. My child will often stay occupied with a toy for more than 10 minutes.
6. My child wanders away much more than I expected.
7. My child is much more active than I expected.
8. My child squirms and kicks a great deal when being dressed or bathed.
9. My child is easily distracted, and it is a problem for me.
10. My child rarely does things for me that make me feel good.
11. Most times I feel that my child likes me and wants to be close to me.
12. When I do things for my child, I get the feeling that my efforts are not appreciated very much.
13. My child smiles at me much less than I expected.
14. Sometimes I feel my child doesn't like me and doesn't want to be close to me.
15. Which statement best describes your child? (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. almost always likes to play with me.
 2. sometimes likes to play with me.
 3. usually doesn't like to play with me.
 4. almost never likes to play with me.
16. My child cries and fusses: (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. much less than I had expected.
 2. less than I expected.
 3. about as much as I expected.
 4. much more than I expected.
 5. it seems almost constant.
17. My child seems to cry or fuss more often than most children.
18. My child is very emotional and gets upset easily.
19. My child generally wakes up in a bad mood.
20. I feel that my child is very moody and easily upset.
21. My child looks a little different than I expected, and it bothers me at times.
22. In some areas, my child seems to have forgotten past learnings and has gone back to doing things characteristic of younger children.
23. My child doesn't seem to learn as quickly as most children.

PSI-4 (continued)

-
24. My child doesn't seem to smile as much as most children.
 25. Compared to the average child, my child has a great deal of difficulty in getting used to changes in schedules or changes around the house.
 26. My child is not able to do as much as I expected.
 27. It bothers me that my child does not like to be cuddled or touched very much.
 28. I often have doubts about my ability to handle being a parent.
 29. Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be.
 30. I feel capable and on top of things when I am caring for my child.
 31. My child is always hanging on me.
 32. My child reacts very strongly when something happens that my child doesn't like.
 33. Leaving my child with a babysitter is usually a problem.
 34. When playing, my child doesn't often giggle or laugh.
 35. My child easily notices and overreacts to loud sounds and bright lights.
 36. My child's sleeping or eating schedule was much harder to establish than I expected.
 37. My child usually avoids a new toy for a while before beginning to play with it.
 38. It takes a long time and it is very hard for my child to get used to new things.
 39. My child doesn't seem comfortable when meeting strangers.
 40. When upset, my child is: (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. easy to calm down.
 2. harder to calm down than I expected.
 3. very difficult to calm down.
 4. nothing I do helps to calm my child.
 41. I have found that getting my child to do something or stop doing something is: (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. much harder than I expected.
 2. somewhat harder than I expected.
 3. about as hard as I expected.
 4. somewhat easier than I expected.
 5. much easier than I expected.
 42. Think carefully and count the number of things which your child does that bothers you. For example, dawdles, refuses to listen, overactive, cries, interrupts, fights, whines, etc. (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. 1-3
 2. 4-5
 3. 6-7
 4. 8-9
 5. 10+
-

PSI-4 (continued)

43. My child cries often, and it bothers me.
44. There are some things my child does that really bother me a lot.
45. My child has had more health problems than I expected.
46. As my child has grown older and become more independent, I find myself more worried that my child will get hurt or into trouble.
47. My child's behavior is more of a problem than I expected.
48. My child seems to be much harder to care for than most.
49. My child does a few things which bother me a great deal.
50. My child makes more demands on me than most children.
51. I can't make decisions without help.
52. I have had many more problems raising children than I expected.
53. How easy is it for you to understand your child's wants or needs? (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. very easy.
 2. easy.
 3. somewhat difficult.
 4. it is very hard.
 5. I usually can't figure out what the problem is.
54. I feel that I am successful most of the time when I try to get my child to do or not do something.
55. Since I brought my last child home from the hospital, I find that I am not able to take care of this child as well as I thought I could. I need help.
56. I often have the feeling that I cannot handle things very well.
57. When I think about myself as a parent, I believe: (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. I can handle anything that happens.
 2. I can handle most things pretty well.
 3. sometimes I have doubts, but find that I handle most things without any problems.
 4. I have some doubts about being able to handle things.
 5. I don't think I handle things very well at all.
58. I feel that I am: (Choose a response from the choices below.)
 1. a very good parent.
 2. a better-than-average parent.
 3. an average parent.
 4. a person who has some trouble being a parent.
 5. not very good at being a parent.

PSI-4 (continued)

What are the highest levels in school or college you and the child's father/mother have completed?
(Choose a response from the choices below.)

59. Mother:

1. 1st to 8th grade
2. 9th to 12th grade
3. vocational or some college
4. college graduate
5. graduate or professional school

60. Father:

1. 1st to 8th grade
2. 9th to 12th grade
3. vocational or some college
4. college graduate
5. graduate or professional school

- 61.** I enjoy being a parent.
- 62.** It takes a long time for parents to develop close, warm feelings for their children.
- 63.** I expected to have closer and warmer feelings for my child than I do, and this bothers me.
- 64.** Sometimes my child does things that bother me just to be mean.
- 65.** I often feel guilty about the way I feel toward my child.
- 66.** My child and I are not as close as I would like.
- 67.** The number of children that I have now is too many.
- 68.** Most of my life is spent doing things for my child.
- 69.** I find myself giving up more of my life to meet my children's needs than I ever expected.
- 70.** I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent.
- 71.** I often feel that my child's needs control my life.
- 72.** Since having this child, I have been unable to do new and different things.
- 73.** Since having a child, I feel that I am almost never able to do things that I like to do.
- 74.** It is hard to find a place in our home where I can go to be by myself.
- 75.** When I think about the kind of parent I am, I often feel guilty or bad about myself.
- 76.** I am unhappy with the last purchase of clothing I made for myself.
- 77.** When my child misbehaves or fusses too much, I feel responsible, as if I didn't do something right.
- 78.** I feel every time my child does something wrong, it is really my fault.
- 79.** I often feel depressed and do not have the energy to handle my parenting responsibilities.

PSI-4 (continued)

80. There are quite a few things that bother me about my life.
81. I felt sadder and more depressed than I expected after leaving the hospital with my baby.
82. I wind up feeling guilty when I get angry at my child, and this bothers me.
83. After my child had been home from the hospital for about a month, I noticed that I was feeling more sad and depressed than I had expected.
84. Since having my child, my spouse/parenting partner has not given me as much help and support as I expected.
85. Having a child has caused more problems than I expected in my relationship with my spouse/parenting partner.
86. Since having a child, my spouse/parenting partner and I don't do as many things together.
87. Since having a child, my spouse/parenting partner and I don't spend as much time together as a family as I had expected.
88. Since having my last child, I have less interest in sex with my spouse/parenting partner.
89. My spouse/parenting partner and I have a lot of conflict over how to raise our child.
90. The financial cost of having our child has created problems between me and my spouse/parenting partner.
91. I feel alone and without friends.
92. When I go to a party, I usually expect not to enjoy myself.
93. I am not as interested in people as I used to be.
94. I often have the feeling that other people my own age don't particularly like my company.
95. When I run into a problem taking care of my children, I have a lot of people to whom I can talk to get help or advice.
96. Since having children, I have a lot fewer chances to see my friends and to make new friends.
97. During the past six months, I have been sicker than usual or have had more aches and pains than I normally do.
98. Physically, I feel good most of the time.
99. I have problems sleeping, and I often feel tired during the day.
100. I don't enjoy things as I used to.
101. Since I had my child, I have often been sick.

PSI-4 (continued)

During the last 12 months, have any of the following events occurred in your immediate family?
Choose "Y" for "Yes" and "N" for "No."

- 102.** Divorce
- 103.** Marital reconciliation
- 104.** Marriage
- 105.** Separation
- 106.** Pregnancy
- 107.** Other relative moved into household
- 108.** Income increased substantially (20% or more)
- 109.** Went deeply into debt
- 110.** Moved to new location
- 111.** Promotion at work
- 112.** Income decreased substantially
- 113.** Alcohol or drug problem
- 114.** Death of close family friend
- 115.** Began new job
- 116.** Entered new school
- 117.** Trouble with superiors at work
- 118.** Lost job
- 119.** Legal problems
- 120.** Death of immediate family member

Appendix G Interview Questions/Script for Parent

Interviewer: Hello [Greeting] Thank you for meeting with me today! Is this still a good time for the interview? If yes: then continue, if they mention anything interfering then set a new time up. If they agree and are good, then continue.

Interviewer: Do you mind if I tape-record our conversation? [Permission to use a tape recorder]
Interviewee: Go ahead, by all means. Then proceed, if they are reluctant then do not use the audiotape and note it within the notes for transcription.

Interviewer: I have a set of questions to ask you. I am going to be taking notes, but am able to answer any questions or address any concerns you have at any time. If you feel uncomfortable or would like to skip or stop the interview questions, please let me know and we will do so. Are you good with that? **Yes**, continue

No, address questions and if participant would like to opt out.

*1). Can you walk me through a typical day at your home?

*2). Describe your relationship with your child.

*3). Describe what a good parent is like? (A few examples might be: patient, loving, good listener).

*4). What things do you do to help with the pressures of being a parent and raising your child?

5). Raising children/being a parent is not easy. Sometimes we go off instinct other times we parent the way our parents did or plan it out. Describe your style of parenting?

6). What do you like about parenting? Dislike?

*7). If your child came home and told you they were being bullied or were harmed how would you respond?

*8). Describe how your family solves problems. (Give an example: if your child comes home complaining he/she is being bullied at school or hit or harmed by another student).

9). In reflecting on your family, what do you think you have done that has been the most important for your child? How can you tell?

*Question connected with student questionnaire.

Appendix H

Interview Questions/Script for Student

Interviewer: Good morning. [Greeting] Your teacher said this was a good time for us to meet. Are you good with that?

If yes: then continue, if they mention anything interviewing with the schedule such as “specials” like P.E., Music, Computers or Library then set a new time up. If they agree and are good, then continue.

Interviewer: Do you mind if I tape-record our conversation? [Permission to use a tape recorder]

Interviewee: Go ahead, by all means. Then proceed, if they are reluctant then do not use the audiotape and note it within the notes for transcription.

Interviewer: I have a set of questions to ask you. I am going to be taking notes, but am able to answer any questions or address any concerns you have at any time. If you feel uncomfortable or would like to skip or stop the interview questions, please let me know and we will do so.

Are you good with that? **Yes**, continue

No, address questions and if participant would like to opt out then walk them back to class.

If “Yes” continue with the questions below:

- *1). Can you walk me through a typical day at your home?
- *2). Describe your relationship with your parent/s, family.
- *3). Describe what a good son/daughter looks like? (Examples to give: polite, patient, kind).
- 4). Describe a few important things your parent does for you? (Talk to me, discipline me, watch a show together).
- 5). Describe how you handle when you feel angry or upset about something happening.
- *6). Describe how your family might solve a problem? (Give an example: if you came home complaining you had been bullied at school or hit or harmed by another student).
- 7). Is it O.K to hit someone who has hit you? Why? What would happen when you got home and told your parent/or if the principal had to call your parent?
- 8). Have you had a favorite teacher? Describe what they were like?

*Question connected with parent questionnaire.

Appendix I
E-mail Request for Content Validity Parent Questionnaire

I hope you all are having a wonderful summer break!

As you all know I am in the middle of my PhD pursuit. This summer, I have received Full Approval from NNU and am going full bore to get everything in order to begin collecting data in August.

I have chosen you as part of an Expert Panel of over 10 people to help validate my Interview Questions. I would be honored if you would help me with this process.

I have attached the Directions/Questions for you to complete if you are able to do so. I would like to get all ratings back by Aug. 3rd (earlier if you have a moment).
If you cannot participate will you please let me know.

Many thanks as my journey would not be possible without your support and help.

Kathy Sexauer
NNU Doctoral Student

(
[REDACTED]

ksexauer@nnu.edu

Please rate each question with a 4, 3, 2, or 1 rating (4 being the highest rating and 1 the lowest).

You may use the comment section if you have a suggestion to alter a question.

Return Date for ratings and comments: August 3, 2016.

ksexauer@nnu.edu

[REDACTED]

Thank you and if you have any questions do not hesitate to give me a call or email me at any time.

Kathy Sexauer
NNU Doctoral Student

(
[REDACTED]

**THE NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW
COMMITTEE HAS REVIEWED THIS PROJECT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN
PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH.**

Appendix J

Content Validity Index: Expert Panel Results on Parent Interview Questionnaire

11 Returned

1 Not Returned

**Items Rated 3 or 4 on a 4-Point Relevance Scale

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	# in Agreement rating 3 or 4	I-CVI
1	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	4	10	.909
2	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	11	1.00
3	4	4	2	4	3	2	4	4	4	4	3	9	.818
4	4	4	2	2	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	8	.727
5	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	11	1.00
6	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	11	1.00
7	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	2	10	.909
8	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	11	1.00
9	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	11	1.00
10	4	4	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	10	.727
11	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	2	10	.727
12	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	11	1.00
13	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	3	9	.818
												132/143	Mean I-CVI = .895
Proportion	13	13	8	12	12	12	13	12	13	13	11	S-CVI = .9230	
Relevant	1.00	1.00	.615	.923	.923	.923	1.000	.923	.923	1.000	.846	Mean Expert Proportion = .916	
												S-CVI/UA = .6	

Appendix K
Debrief Statement for Participant

Thank you for your participation in this study.

After I have the opportunity to analyze the data, I will mail you the results and ask for feedback. I want to ensure that I captured the essence of your interview, accurately portraying our discussion and your thoughts. This study will conclude by March 31, 2016.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, contact Kathy Sexauer via the phone number or email below.

Thank you for your participation.

Kathy Sexauer
Doctoral Student
Northwest Nazarene University
HRRRC Application # TBA
ksexauer@nnu.edu
[REDACTED]

Appendix L Members Checking Letter

Date: January 29, 2017

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your participation in the study this past semester. I wanted to let you know some of the themes/patterns that resulted from the interviews of all participants.

Four common themes emerged during the analysis of both group interviews. Excerpts or examples were chosen within each theme emphasizing the focus on the understanding directly linked to the subject matter.

Parent Themes:

1). *Parenting is the ultimate reward.* Parents in both groups responded with key words or phrases such as, “My child is my world”, “Put them first”, “I love him, love spending time with him and he’s super sensitive and funny” and “I love being a parent because I spent so long not getting to do that”.

2). *Secure expectations and be consistent.* Parents reported many expectations as characteristics of consistency. One parent in Group A explained securing expectations through these words, “In growing up, trying to be respectful, responsible, teaching them, you know..sitting beside them and being interested in what they are interested in or just, you know, being part of their life. Another parent in Group B shared they believed it was very important that a parent doesn’t make promises they could not keep. She added, “follow through with what they say they’re going to do, whether it be, when possible, whether that be consequences or fun things that you’re doing.”

3). *Be supportive and loving in your relationship.* Supportive relationships were emphasized in many differing ways through the interviews. One parent in Group A described her relationship with her son as, “I love him to death. If he cries, I cry. If I cry, he cries”. Additionally, a parent in Group A reported putting their goals first adding, “there is always good and bad with parenting”, and “accept their uniqueness”, or “talk to them no matter what the problem is, if it’s good, bad, whatever”. A Group B parent answered respectfully similar, “We’re co-workers in the house since she does not have any brothers or sisters”.

4). *Give parent approval to defend ones’ self.* Most parents gave the response to defend themselves from bullies and backed it up with approval to defend one’s self, but wouldn’t want them to start it. For example, a mother explained what she shared when her child was being bullied. “You know what? There comes a point when you can only give so much.” I said, “And you have to understand what that point is and be able to stand up for yourself. Because people aren’t going to respect you and they’re not going to stop unless you can draw the line.” Another parent reported, that they believed kids should always be able to stick up for themselves. They added, “That’s what we’ve taught him to do. We don’t want him to start a fight or do anything like that but we totally support him in defending himself and standing up for himself or others.”

Child Themes:

1). *Children value a close relationship with their parent.* One child explained his relationship with his parents as being “really tight”, and “we will always stick up for each other and be we’ll always be there for each other even if it’s hard for us, time to time, we will always love each other and we will always look out for each other. While another child reported, “my

Members Checking (continued)

relationship with my step-mom is a little bit rocky, but my relationship with my mom is like being on vacation”.

2). *Children believe that they should hold the characteristics of following rules, helping others, and doing things together.* One child in Group A reported, “He will always pay attention. He’ll always, love you and do everything the parent asks for you”. Another child in Group B reported to believe, “Be passionate, listen, do what his parents tell him to do”. Additionally, a child in Group B said it this way, “I’m actually a very, very good son to her. I help her out when she needs me”.

3). *Children feel that parents were to be supportive and active in participating in activities with them.* All children mentioned a variety of activities. The majority in both groups reported watching television together or playing a game as part of being supportive along with the daily chores done in the home by the parent. A characteristic noted was to communicate, talk, and or listen to what the child had to say. “My mom, does my laundry, feeds me, does dishes, helps me when I get sad sometimes...and my dad, he, he’ll always make me happy and both my mom and dad support me”.

4). *Children both internalize and externalize behaviors.* Four of the five students in Group A without behaviors replied with internalizing their anger. This type of actions was described as making a fist, shaking in their bodies, thinking of happy thoughts as themes. Group B described the actions of externalized behavior to include hitting things, kicking the wall, yelling, messing up the things in their bedroom. Only one student reflected to deal with anger by withdrawing to their room to take their mind off their anger.

The parents were interviewed with similar questions that mirrored their child’s questions with a few exceptions. Parents were asked, “What things do you do to help with the pressures of being a parent and raising your child?” and “In reflecting on your family, what do you think you have done that has been the most important?” These two questions, gave insight into the world of being a parent related to the proximal process, which refers to the connection of direct influences that persuade a child’s behavior over time. Parent responded to the how they relieve some of the pressures of parenting is represented in the table below. All parents experience stress, but how they deal with reducing or relieving that stress is an important piece to the understanding of family influences. Parents listed multiple methods of strategies they have utilized while raising their child. They reported the value of decompressing in a quiet space, talking with your spouse, emphasized taking time to spend with your child doing activities with them and relying on social support through family and friends to have a constructive effect on promoting healthier family functioning.

How Parents Reduce Stress

Decompress in a quiet space
 Talk with spouse
 Rely on help with family and friends
 Take time to play with and enjoy your child’s company

The table below displays what parent’s perception of was the most important thing they have done as a parent. 80% of the responses indicated that being consistent and structured very important. Additionally, 90% of all parents stated that stopping what they are doing with the

Members Checking (continued)

responsibilities of parenting and giving time to them while having fun was most valued. Other items related to spending time with their children included being an active listener and available to listen as well as allowing them to be themselves within the structure of the family unit.

Most Important Contributions as a Parent for their Child

Be consistent and structured
 Stop what you are doing and give them time/ have fun
 Listen and be present when with them
 Allow uniqueness
 Model manners and respect of others

Part two of the last question on the parent interview connected what the parents felt was the most important contribution and tied it into child behavioral output. How can you tell? This generalized in the parent responses toward equal modeled behavior outside the home linked to reciprocating behaviors within the other settings. This describes the proximal process engine of Bronfenbrenner's model (1986). The behaviors that are developed by a nested influence of interpersonal relationships in the home setting that are part of a complex system. The interview process in combination with the Parent Stress Index 4 (Abidin, 2012) establishes connections or emerging themes between 2 groups of parents and children with and without behaviors. Examples of the proximal processes each parent-child are exposed to helped identify areas of strength and vulnerability in the small population sample within this research.

If these ideas do not reflect your experiences or you would like to comment further, please respond to this letter back to school or at the number below.

Your participation was appreciated and this study would not have been possible without you.

Kathy Sexauer
 Doctoral Student
 Northwest Nazarene University
 ksexauer@nnu.edu
 Telephone: [REDACTED]

Appendix M

Letter for Scheduling an Interview

Date: August 26, 2016

Dear _____,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in the research study. The next step is for you to complete a survey and schedule an interview day and time for us to meet. I am available to meet at your convenience and will do my very best to make the time you choose work for your busy schedule.

I am looking to begin interviews the week of September 1 through September 22. Choose a time after 9:00 a.m. M-F. I can be available on Saturdays if we need to look at a weekend time as well. Please give me 2 options just in case another parent overlaps times with your availability. Also, identify your choice of meeting options of my offices: North, East, or the District Office Building.

Once you return a date, I will call and confirm our time with you. The PSI-4 survey is included in this envelope for you to complete and return either at the interview time, or send it back with your child to school.

Thank You!!!!!! Looking forward to meeting. It should only take 15 – 20 minutes for the interview. I realize your time is precious and appreciate you volunteering to help me in the pursuit of my PhD research.

Sincerely,

Kathy Sexauer

Doctoral Student, NNU

_____ cell phone

Option 1: _____
 Date Time Place: _____

Option 2: _____
 Date Time Place: _____

Appendix N HRRC Approval Letter

Northwest Nazarene University Mail - Protocol #39032016 - The Family Systems Influen... Page 1 of 1



Kathy Sexauer <ksexauer@nnu.edu>

Protocol #39032016 - The Family Systems Influence on Child Behavior

1 message

Northwest Nazarene University <jabankard@nnu.edu>
Reply-To: jabankard@nnu.edu
To: Kathy Sexauer <KSexauer@nnu.edu>

Fri, May 13, 2016 at 2:36 PM

Dear Kathy,

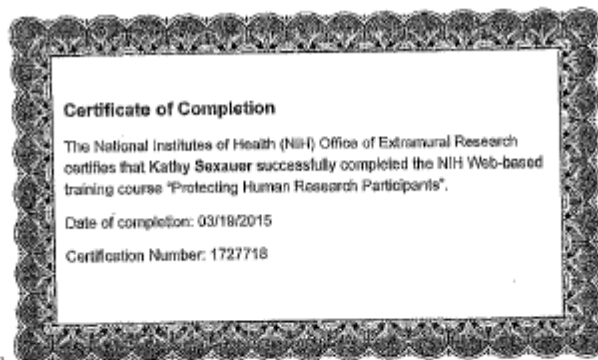
The HRRC has reviewed your protocol: Protocol #39032016 - The Family Systems Influence on Child Behavior. You received "Full Approval". Congratulations, you may begin your research. If you have any questions, let me know.

Joseph Bankard
Northwest Nazarene University
HRRC Member
623 S University Blvd
Nampa, ID 83686

Appendix O HRRC Certificate

Protecting Human Subject Research Participants

Page 1 of 1




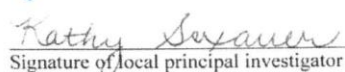
Appendix P Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

Title of Research Project: The Family Systems Influence on Child Behavior
Local Principal Investigator: Kathy Sexauer

As an assistant to the research team I understand that I may have access to confidential information about study sites and participants. By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.
- I agree not to divulge, publish, or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons or to the public any information obtained in the course of this research project that could identify the persons who participated in the study.
- I understand that all information about study sites or participants obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons any of this information, unless specifically authorized to do so by approved protocol or by the local principal investigator acting in response to applicable law or court order, or public health or clinical need.
- I understand that I am not to read information about study sites or participants, or any other confidential documents, nor ask questions of study participants for my own personal information but only to the extent and for the purpose of performing my assigned duties on this research project.
- I agree to notify the local principal investigator immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation, which could potentially result in a breach, whether this be on my part or on the part of another person.

 Signature	9/8/16 Date	Stephanie Thomas Printed name
 Signature of local principal investigator	09/08/16 Date	Kathy Sexauer Printed name


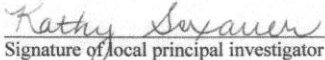
Confidentiality Agreement (continued)

Confidentiality Agreement

Title of Research Project: The Family Systems Influence on Child Behavior
Local Principal Investigator: Kathy Sexauer

As an assistant to the research team I understand that I may have access to confidential information about study sites and participants. By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.
- I agree not to divulge, publish, or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons or to the public any information obtained in the course of this research project that could identify the persons who participated in the study.
- I understand that all information about study sites or participants obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons any of this information, unless specifically authorized to do so by approved protocol or by the local principal investigator acting in response to applicable law or court order, or public health or clinical need.
- I understand that I am not to read information about study sites or participants, or any other confidential documents, nor ask questions of study participants for my own personal information but only to the extent and for the purpose of performing my assigned duties on this research project.
- I agree to notify the local principal investigator immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation, which could potentially result in a breach, whether this be on my part or on the part of another person.

 Signature	09/23/16 Date	SKYLER MEEKS Printed name
 Signature of local principal investigator	09/08/16 Date	Kathy Sexauer Printed name

Appendix Q Telephone Script for Scheduling an Interview

“Hello, my name is Kathy Sexauer a Doctoral Student at NNU. Thank you for volunteering to participate in the research I am conducting: The Family Systems Influence on Child Behavior. I am calling to schedule a day and time to meet for an interview. Is this a good time to do that with you?”

(IF NO) “Alright, so when would work better for me to call you back and schedule?”

(IF YES) “ Great, the questions you will be asked will be open-ended allowing you to share your opinions and thoughts. Examples of a few of the questions would be, “ Can you walk me through a typical day at your home” or “What characteristics do you see that make a good parent”.

“The interview will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes of your time and can be flexible to meet with you at the school or if you prefer at the Library.”

“I am looking at the week of _____, to begin interviews. Do you have a day and time in that week that works with your schedule?” (Offer days and or times until one is found that is mutually convenient). I will send home the Parent Survey today with your child for you to complete. Please bring it completed to the interview.

“Thank you for your time, I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board of Northwest Nazarene University and emphasize the importance of your participation in the research. If for some reason, you cannot make the scheduled time, please give me a call at 599 – 0817 and let me know.”

“I look forward to meeting you on (Insert day and time again). Thank you again for helping with my research.