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Title: Parents' Social Expectations As Correlates of Children's Peer Relations

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Recent peer relations studies that have included parents as subjects have pointed to supporting behaviors performed by parents and their role in the development of children's peer relations. Findings from these studies have been similar to explanations of expectation effects. That is, expectation holders support their expectations by behaving in ways favorable to expected outcomes. Two models developed to explain parent and teacher educational expectation effects were used in this study to help explain parents' social expectations. A questionnaire was developed assessing parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations and parents' expressed levels of importance regarding children's peer relations. These measures were correlated with three sociometric meaures of children's peer relations and children's and teacher's perceptions of children's peer relations. The sample consisted of 76 families whose children were enrolled in two university-based child development preschool programs.

Findings from this study indicated that mothers' and fathers' perception scores of their children's peer relations were significantly and positively correlated with children's acceptance rating scores but inversely correlated with children's rejection scores. The level of importance expressed by fathers, but not mothers, regarding their children's peer relations was significantly correlated with all three sociometric measures. There were no significant differences in parents' scores as a function of parent or child gender, but the accuracy of mothers' perception scores appeared influential in determining mothers' level of importance scores. Less accurate mothers had significantly higher importance scores than more accurate mothers. Parents' perception scores did not correlate significantly with either children's or teacher's perception scores.

These findings suggest that a relationship exists between parents' social expectations and children's peer relations. Continued research in the area of children's peer relations which includes parents as subjects is needed.

Parents' Social Expectations As Correlates of Children's Peer Relations

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I'd like to thank Joy for her patience.

I'd like to thank my parents for their support throughout my educational adventures.

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INTRODUCTION

Research on the long-term consequences of early social isolation indicates that children who fail to acquire social skills and knowledge early in their development are likely to experience a variety of negative social consequences in adolescence and adulthood (Cowen, Pederson, Babigan, Izzo & Trost, 1973; Roff, Sells & Golden, 1972). These findings have prompted efforts to uncover relationships between social competence, peer relations, and the impact of parents on the development of children's social skills.

Two questions parents often ask their children's preschool teachers are: "Does my child do the preschool activities?" and "Does my child have friends?" These questions address two major areas of early childhood development; pre-academic skills and peer relations. Since these questions are frequently asked by parents it appears likely that some parents are intuitively aware of the impact both areas can have on their children's future development.

Research on educational achievement suggests that high achieving children tend to come from families who

have high expectations for them and who consequently are more likely to "set standards" and to make greater demands of their children at earlier ages (Boocock, 1972). The influence of educational expectations and children's academic achievement has been well established. According to Seginer (1983), studies have empirically supported the relationship between parents' educational expectations and their children's academic performance despite variations in definitions related to parents' expectations, academic achievement, respondents' characteristics, and data collection methods. The relationship between parents' social expectations and their children's peer relations has not received similar attention and is the primary focus of this study.

A number of theoretical models are available to explain the effects of parental and teacher expectations on children's development (Brophy & Good, 1974; Cooper, 1979; Cooper & Good, 1983; Seginer, 1983). While these models were constructed to help explain the process of educational achievement expectations, they may also be valuable in explaining the process of social expectations. Two models relevant to this project will be reviewed in the following chapter. One model (Seginer, 1983) describes a feedback loop between the child's performance and the expectation holder. According to Seginer (1983) feedback information is combined with existing knowledge to

reinforce or alter expectations. In the research which follows parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations are considered an influential element in the feedback process, and an important aspect of parents' social expectations.

Parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations, however, are not the only expectation variable considered in this study. Co-existing with parents' perceptions are the parents' concern for or level of importance they place on children's peer relations. It has been suggested that both variables are significant contributors to parents' expectations.

Although findings have suggested a relationship between parents supporting behaviors (such as modeling satisfying social interaction, Krantz, Webb & Andrews, 1984) and children's peer relations, the majority of these studies have focused on the identification and promotion of social skills necessary for successful peer interaction. The literature recognizes that children's interaction with their parents may provide opportunities to learn, rehearse and refine social skills common to social interaction in peer settings (Asher, Renshaw & Hymel, 1982). The same literature has also suggested that such interactions may be influenced by the gender of both parent and child (MacDonald & Parke, 1984). However, the peer relations literature lacks data assessing the

importance parents place on their children's social interactions and the relationship of this expressed importance with their children's actual peer relations.

The Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance For Young Children recently developed by Harter and Pike (1984) was designed to assess children's perceptions of peer acceptance and general competence. Prior to the development of this instrument, this aspect of children's peer relations was unavailable to researchers. Noticeably missing from the literature is a comparison of parental and child perceptions of children's peer relations. Parents, like children, may or may not be accurate judges of their children's peer relations. It is the nature of these judgments that are of empirical interest to this study. In addition, the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance For Young Children includes a parallel assessment of teacher's perceptions of children's peer relations. The nature of teacher perceptions and their relationship with children's and parents' perceptions are also of interest to this study.

Statement of the Problem

The research which follows attempts to study the relationship between parents' social expectations and children's peer relations. It does so by assessing

parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations, and the level of importance parents place on these relations, and correlates these assessments with assessments of childrens' actual and perceived peer relations. Borrowing from established expectation models (Seginer, 1983; Brophy & Good, 1974), parental expectations are suggested to be mediated through parents' supporting behaviors and children's own social aspirations. In this light, expectation effects can be rendered inconsequential. Nevertheless, the study of children's peer relations is incomplete without an exploration of parents' social expectations as an important contributing factor.

Research Objectives

This study has four major research objectives.

1. To assess parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations and to determine the relationships between parents' perceptions and children's peer relations.
2. To assess the level of importance parents place on children's peer relations and to determine the relationship between this expressed level of importance and children's peer relations.
3. To determine differences between parents' perceptions of children's peer relations and levels of importance placed on children's peer relations as a function of

parents' or children's gender.

4. To determine the relationships between parents' perceptions and children's and teacher's perceptions of children's peer relations. A secondary concern of this objective involves children's and teacher's perceptions and the relationship of these variables with children's peer relations.

Definitions of Terms

Peer Relations- refers to the general likability of a child when considered from the perspective of the child's peers. Peer relations are operationalized as sociometric status on three sociometric measures: sociometric ratings, a measure of peer acceptance; positive nominations, a measure of popularity; and, negative nominations, a measure of rejection.

Parents' Perceptions (Parents' Perception Scores)- refers to parents' personal assessment of their children's peer relations. For example, a particular parent may perceive their child as one who shares easily with peers. Parents perceptions are operationalized as scores derived from the questionnaire developed for this project (see Appendix).

Parents' Level of Importance (Parents' Importance Scores)-

refers to the concern a parent expresses (in degrees of importance) about certain social behaviors common to preschool children in peer settings (e.g. sharing behavior), parents' level of importance are also operationalized as scores derived from the questionnaire developed for this project (see Appendix).

Children's Perceptions- refers to children's assessments of their own peer relations and are operationalized as scores derived from the social acceptance sub-scale of the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance For Young Children (Harter & Pike, 1984).

Teacher Perceptions- refers to preschool teacher's assessments of children's peer relations and are derived from the parallel instrument, Teacher's Rating Scale, of the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance For Young Children (Harter & Pike, 1984).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the relationship between parental social expectations and children's peer relations. According to Miller and Turnbull (1986) most research on expectation effects can be organized in terms of four categories of social interaction: (1) experimenter-subject interactions; (2) teacher-student interactions; (3) casual interactions; and (4) bargaining and negotiation. The majority of teacher-student interaction studies have looked at the relationship between teacher educational expectations and their students' academic achievement. Within the teacher-student interaction category a moderate number of research studies have focused on parental educational expectations and their children's academic achievement. It was from these bodies of knowledge that literature and theory for this study were derived.

For this chapter a sequential model of teachers' educational expectations and a model depicting the course of parents' educational expectations are reviewed. In addition, peer relations research that has included parents as subjects is presented. Hypotheses pertaining to this study will also be described.

Expectation Models

The area of teacher expectations has received greater research and theory building attention than parent expectations. However, a significant difference between research in the area of teacher expectations and parent expectations has been that most of the research on teacher expectations has dealt with experimenter-induced expectations (Brophy & Good, 1974; Rosenthal, 1974; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Parental expectation research, on the other hand, has focused on the more naturally evolving expectations of parents. However, there is one model from the teacher expectation literature (Brophy & Good, 1974) which appears potentially useful in explaining the relationships between parental expectations and children's peer acceptance.

The Brophy and Good (1974) model is a sequential model and involves four steps. These steps consist of: (1) the teacher develops an expectation predicting specific behaviors and achievements for the child; (2) because of these expectations, the teacher behaves differently toward the child; (3) this treatment informs the child about the behaviors and achievements expected and affects the child's self-concept, achievement motivation, and level of aspiration; and, finally, (4) if the teacher's treatment is consistent over time and if the child is behaviorally compliant, the child's achievement will come to correspond

or remain consistent with the teacher's belief. The fourth step of the model suggests that children's aspirations toward achievement can mediate the effects of teacher's expectations.

A model depicting the course of parental educational expectations and their children's academic achievement has been developed by Seginer (1983). Differing from the teacher expectation model, this model includes a discussion of the antecedents to parents' expectations.

Seginer's (1983) model (figure 1) consists of three antecedents to parental expectations and three mediating variables. The antecedents include: (a) school feedback, which pertains to the evaluations schools send to parents concerning their childrens' academic performance; (b) parents' aspirations, which refers to the academic goals parents set for themselves and academic goals unfulfilled; and (c) parental knowledge, which refers to parents' understanding of developmental and educational processes. The three mediating variables include: (a) achievement supporting behavior, such as the involvement parents exhibit toward their children's learning; (b) differential reinforcement, which pertains to the parents' reinforcement of desired achievement behavior; and, (c) children's aspirations toward their own academic achievement.

Research suggests that the variables in Seginer's

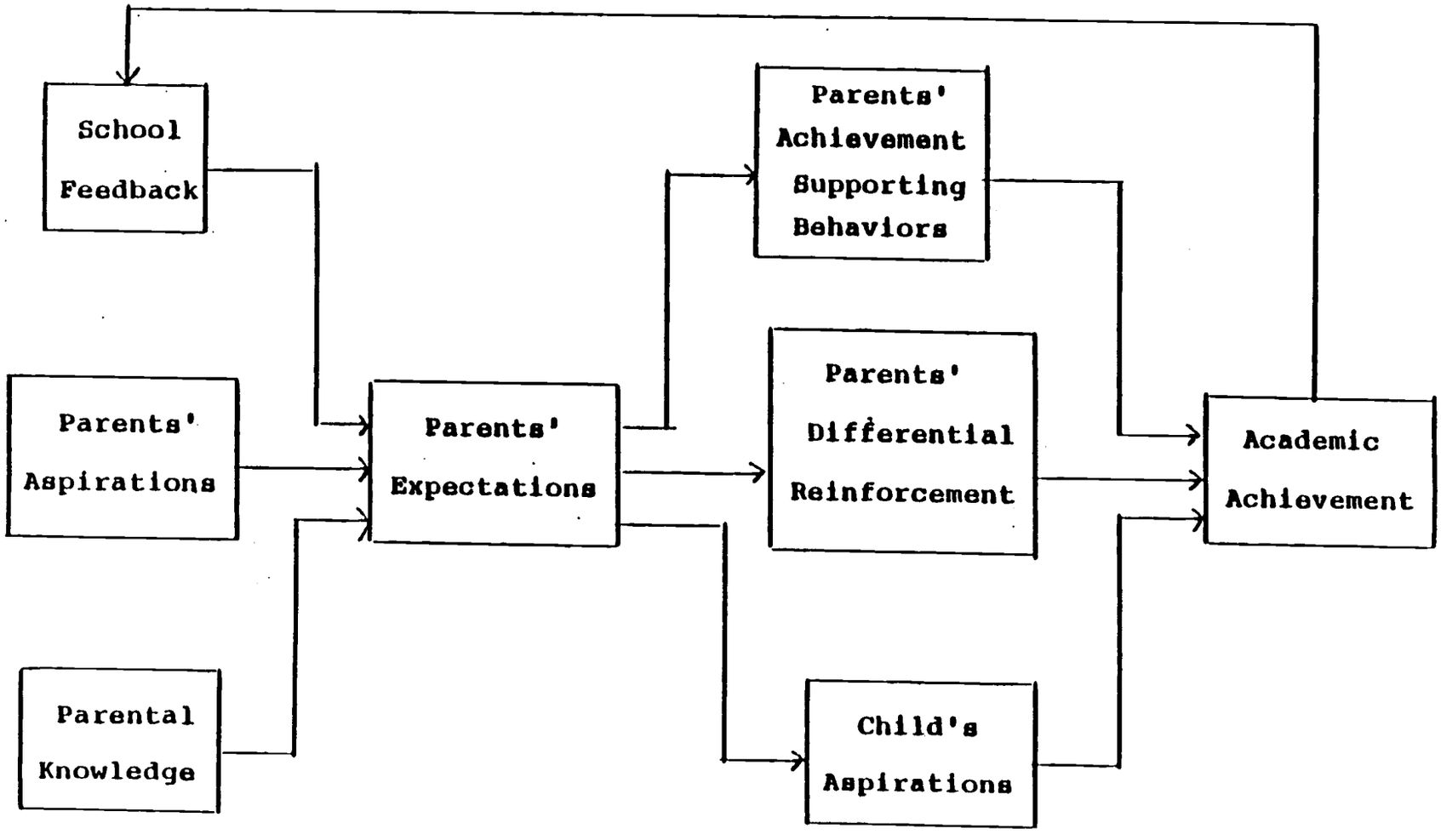

Figure 1. The course of parents' educational expectations (from Seginer, 1983).

(1983) model are relevant and that the steps suggested by Brophy and Good (1974) are consistent with teacher's behaviors (Brophy & Good, 1974; Seginer, 1983). The usefulness of these models, however, is in how they might contribute to an understanding of parents' social expectations. The process is thought to be similar.

In many areas the models resemble each other. For example, the second step of Brophy and Good's model (1974) suggests that because of their expectations, teachers behave differently toward children. This aspect of Brophy and Good's model corresponds with two mediating variables suggested by Seginer (1983), including parents' supporting behavior and parent's differential reinforcement. In this area both models suggest that behavior on the part of the expectation holder will have an effect on the child.

Peer Relations Research

Two research studies add credibility to a similar potential mediating variable in the area of children's peer relations. One such study focused on the relationship between the social participation behaviors of parents and the development of socially competent behavior in their five-year-old children (Krantz, Webb & Andrews, 1984). Forty-two kindergartners were assessed on five measures of social competence. These measures included popularity nominations, social acceptance ratings, social sensitivity

(determined through a structured interview assessing the child's ability to interpret social interactions), positive social behavior (determined through ten one minute videotaped samples), and teacher ratings of social competence. The parent measures included each parent listing the number of 20 minute or longer social meetings with "friends" in the two weeks prior to the interview. The parents were also asked to rate the degree of satisfaction for each interaction on a five point scale. In addition, the parents listed the frequency of their participation in community activities in the month prior to the interview. These too were rated for satisfaction. Results indicated a consistent positive relationship between the extent of social participation and the ratings of satisfaction, with satisfaction significant for mothers with friends ($r = .41$, $p<.01$) and in the community ($r = .42$, $p<.01$) and for fathers with friends ($r = .54$, $p<.01$) and in the community ($r = .54$, $p<.01$). Thus, parents who participated more often with friends and in the community reported greater satisfaction with that participation. Further, there was a significant positive relationship between contact with friends and participation in community activities for mothers ($r = .36$, $p<.01$). This relationship was not significant for fathers.

Of greater importance, however, was the relationship between the social participation of parents and the social

competence of their children. Twenty of the 24 correlations between the child and maternal variables were significant in the predicted direction. Four of the paternal variables were significant.

Based on the consistent pattern of correlations among the maternal measures of participation and satisfaction, the authors concluded that mothers displayed an integrated pattern of social involvement to their children. Both mothers and fathers consistently supported the relationship between social participation with friends and the social competencies of their children. The children of more socially active parents were more popular and socially accepted by their peers, and more prosocial in their behaviors. The battery of child assessment measures which included the perspectives of peers and teachers and objective behavioral observations, added support to the validity of these findings.

Further research regarding parents' behavior supportive of their children's peer relations comes from MacDonald and Parke (1984). These researchers have found differential patterns of maternal and paternal behavior associated with the social interactions of boys and girls. Paternal physical play (wrestling, tickling, etc.), paternal and maternal engagement (in which the parent is actively participating in the child's activity as opposed to merely observing it) and maternal verbal behavior (the

number of times the parent spoke to the child) were positively related to children's peer relations, especially for boys. Maternal directiveness (instances in which a parent issues a command) was positively linked with popularity for girls, but paternal directiveness was negatively related to popularity for boys. These findings indicate that stylistic differences of mother's and father's supporting behavior are differentially related to popularity and peer interaction patterns of boys and girls. Correspondingly, differences in supporting behavior between mothers and fathers suggests potentially different social expectations for their children.

A very concrete example of parental supporting behavior is in their roles as social planners (Asher, Renshaw & Hymel, 1982). Parents can arrange the social and physical environment in ways that promote or undermine the development of children's social competence. Parents perform this function when arranging for their children to have playmates in their home and when enrolling them in child development programs or in preschool settings.

According to the model developed by Brophy and Good (1974), the interaction children have with their parents inform them of their expected behaviors. This information affects children's self-concept, achievement motivation, and level of aspiration. In the Seginer (1983) model, children's aspirations, although affected by parents'

expectations, may also be attributed to their own desires to be socially accepted by peers. Both models emphasize the children's aspirations as a mediating factor.

Without adequate methodological tools children's social aspirations remain unknown. In young children, cognitive abilities may hamper adequate assessment. The recently developed Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance (Harter & Pike, 1984), however, does provide access to children's perceptions of their peer relations. Although the authors of this scale warn that young children may not be very accurate judges of their peer relations, and may blur the distinction between their abilities with their desires to be socially competent, it is in their desires that these aspirations may be revealed. Harter and Pike (1984) suggest that the scale is "useful in predicting behaviors, motivations and/or emotional reactions of interest" (p. 1981). Absent from the literature, however, is any indication of the scale's use in conjunction with measures of parental perceptions or expectations.

A teacher rating scale of the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance parallels the child instrument. The inclusion of this measure into this study outlines a number of issues relevant to the nature of the research problem. Obviously teacher ratings are based on teacher perceptions of childrens' abilities and

many studies use similar teacher measures as indices of social competence. Questions are raised regarding the accuracy of these perceptions in relation to parents' perceptions, children's perceptions and children's actual peer relations.

Relation of Peer Research With Expectation Models

To this point potential mediators of parental social expectations and the effect these mediators might have on children's peer acceptance have been discussed. To recapitulate, the research reviewed suggests that parents' social supporting behaviors are related to children's peer relations. Studies have shown a positive relationship between parents who model satisfying social behavior and their children's peer relations (Krantz, Webb & Andrews, 1984) and stylistic differences were shown between maternal and paternal interaction patterns and their children's popularity (MacDonald & Parke, 1984). In addition, as social planners, parents may expose their children to a variety of social situations that could help or hinder the development of social skills and aspirations (Asher et al., 1982).

The mediators of parents' social expectations as described above follow steps 2 through 4 of the teacher expectation model developed by Brophy and Good (1974). In step 1 of this model, "the (parent) develops an

expectation predicting specific behavior." The origins of these expectations are not specified. According to Seginer's (1983) model the antecedents to parents' educational expectations come from the feedback the school sends home, the parent's own educational aspirations and the parent's understanding of developmental and educational processes. In this study it is suggested that parents develop their social expectations based on their perceptions of their children's peer relations and the importance they place on these relations.

To be useful, the feedback parents receive regarding academic achievement or peer relations must be integrated with the parents' existing attitudes and knowledge structures. However, successful peer interaction is a behavior less understood and operationally defined than successful academic achievement and may be considerably more open to the parent's perceptions. Consider, for example, the responses to the questions: "Does my child do the activities?" and, "Does my child have friends?" In the first question a teacher may respond, "Yes, your child plays with the blocks, the puzzles, and sometimes paints." In this example the parent is provided with information that their child interacts with a variety of materials generally considered pre-academic and beneficial to future academic achievement. In responding to the second question a teacher may say; "Yes, your child plays with James and

Daniel and sometimes Mick." In this case the parent is provided with similar information but is left to interpret if James, Daniel and Mick are friends, and if these associations are beneficial to their child's social development. It is not the feedback per se that parents receive regarding their children's peer relations, but the parents' perceptions of this feedback that may form and regulate their expectations. Because perceptions are very individualized, a certain amount of error in interpretation may be present.

In addition, although parents may have social aspirations and an understanding of childhood friendships similar to the educational aspirations and understandings suggested by Seginer (1983), ultimately it is the importance parents place on these dimensions that will affect their expectations for their children.

One study (DeAenlle) illustrates how the level of importance parents place on social interactions might affect parents' expectations and in turn their supporting behaviors (cited in Asher et al., 1982). Parents of popular and unpopular fourth graders differed in how effectively they responded to hypothetical social situations (e.g., the child being invited to a party where she knew few of the other children; the child being bossy to his playmates; etc.). Parents of unpopular children were more likely to give vague responses (e.g., "Be

yourself." or "Do what you feel is right."), or to sidestep the issue (e.g. saying they would "let the problem take care of itself". Parents of popular children appeared to have more specific and detailed ideas, and were more concerned with the feelings of other children. These findings suggest that parents of unpopular children, compared to their more popular counterparts, may place less importance on their children's social interactions (e.g., by letting problems take care of themselves), perceive their children's abilities to be adequate for the situation (e.g., "Be yourself"), and/or perhaps overestimate their children's abilities (e.g., "Do what you feel is right").

Measurement of Children's Peer Relations

While the peer relations construct as it relates to the behavior of young children continues to come under question, sociometric measures are among the most commonly used methods of identifying socially accepted children within a group of peers (Foster & Ritchey, 1979). In addition, sociometrics have demonstrated sensitivity to a number of social subtleties. It is suggested that each sociometric measure provides a somewhat different index of children's social status (Asher & Hymel, 1981). Hymel and Asher (1977) suggest that positive nominations may indicate how many peers regard a child as a popular friend

or high priority playmate, whereas the rating scale measure may provide an index of a child's overall level of acceptability or likability among peers. In addition, peer nominations permit the identification of two different types of low-accepted children; those who are neglected or isolated by peers (i.e., receive few or no positive nominations and few or no negative nominations) and those who are rejected by peers (i.e., receive few or no positive nominations and several negative nominations).

In the area of children's peer relations, the literature is generally lacking in research regarding the etiology of children's social status. A few studies have considered parents' supporting behaviors as correlates of their children's peer relations. Only recently have children's perceptions of their own peer relations been available as a potential mediating variable. In an attempt to establish parents's social expectations as an important factor in the development of children's peer relations, this study suggests that parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations, and the importance parents' place on these relations are antecedents to the parents' social expectations. From the literature reviewed the following hypotheses are drawn.

Hypotheses

1. There are significant positive [1] correlations between

[1] Negative correlations are expected for negative nominations.

parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations and their children's sociometric status.

2. There are significant positive correlations between the level of importance parents' place on children's peer relations and their children's sociometric status.

3. There are significant differences in parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations and the level of importance parents' place on these relations as a function of parents' and children's gender.

4. There are significant positive correlations between parents' perceptions and children's perceptions of children's peer relations and significant positive correlations between parents' perceptions and teacher's perceptions of children's peer relations.

5. There are significant positive correlations between children's perceptions and teacher's perceptions of children's peer relations and teacher's perecetions and children's sociometric status.

6. There are significant positive correlations between children's perceptions and children's sociometric status.

METHOD

This study assessed parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations and the level of importance parents place on children's peer relations, and correlated these measures with measures of their children's sociometric status. The data for this study were collected as part of a larger research project focusing on the influence of parents on children's social competence. The larger research project was funded by the Oregon State Agricultural Experiment Station.

Sample

Seventy-six 3- to 5-year-old children enrolled in two university-based child development preschool programs and their families were available for this project. The programs were located in Corvallis, Oregon (pop. 45,000) and Bozeman, Montana (pop. 23,000). The Corvallis sub-sample consisted of 16 boys and 18 girls. The age range for this group was 34 to 63 months, with a mean age of 49.8 months. The Bozeman sub-sample consisted of 23 boys and 19 girls. The age range for this group was 40 to 65 months, with a mean age of 50.2 months. Sixty-five percent of the fathers of the Corvallis sub-sample reported working on or having a graduate degree, while 32% of this group reported working on or having a bachelor's

degree. Only one father from this group reported no college education. Forty percent of mothers of the Corvallis sub-sample reported working on or having a graduate degree, 60% reported working on or having a bachelor's degree. For the Bozeman sub-sample, 48% of the fathers reported working on or having a graduate degree, 38% reported working on or having a bachelor's degree, and 14% reported no college education. For the Bozeman mothers, 27% reported working on or having a graduate degree, while 60% reported working on or having a bachelor's degree. Thirteen percent of these mothers indicated no college education. For the Corvallis fathers, 45% were employed as professors and 12% were students. Other occupations listed included: engineer, accountant, firefighter, manager, cabinet-maker, supervisor, writer, and machine operator. Fifty-five percent of the Corvallis mothers' listed their occupation as homemaker. Other Corvallis mothers' occupations included: instructor, tax preparer, writer, student, restaurant worker, and medical technician. For the Bozeman sub-sample, 18.5% of the fathers reported sales as their occupation, and 18.5% reported their occupation as manager. Other occupations listed included: professor, engineer, attorney, student, physician, rancher, waiter, artist, and house-husband. Bozeman mothers' occupations included: Homemaker (35%), student (16%), professor (16%), clerk, secretary, bank

teller, nurse, and artist. Sixty-five percent of the Corvallis families reported annual incomes greater than $25,000, 17.5% reported annual income between $16,000 and $25,000, and 17.5% reported annual income less than $16,000. For the Bozeman families, 56% reported incomes greater than $25,000, 24% reported between $16,000 and $25,000, and 20% reported less than $16,000. Not all families reported this information and not all mothers and fathers were in agreement regarding their spouses' occupation or their annual income.

Parent Measures

The parents' questionnaire developed for this project consisted of 50 items. The first 20 items asked parents to indicate on a 9 point Likert type scale the importance of an item to them. The semantic anchor points were "very important" and "not at all important". For example, one item read:

How important is it to you that your child is accepted by other children?

very important__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__not at all important

Ten of the items related to social abilities, while 10 items related to pre-academic development. For example, "How important is it to you that your child is interested in learning?" was one pre-academic item. The inclusion of

pre-academic items was in conjunction with the larger research project and was used in this study only to help validate the parents' instrument.

The second 20 items of the parent's questionnaire asked parents to respond to the items based on their observations. This section of the questionnaire was used to assess the parent's perceptions of their children's peer relations. The same items used in the previous section of the questionnaire were presented as the anchor points of a similar 9 point Likert type scale. For example, the item "How important is it to you that your child is accepted by other children?" became:

My Child

is readily accepted by other children__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__/__by other children is not at all accepted

These items were presented in a different order than in the previous section.

The final 10 items asked parents to rank items chosen from the questionnaire that represented both social and pre-academic skills. This section of the questionnaire was part of the larger study and will be used to further determine which set of skills (social or pre-academic) parents consider most important. With the addition of the pre-academic items the questionnaire consisted of four subscales, two measuring the importance parents place on peer relations and pre-academic abilities and two tapping

the parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations and pre-academic performances.

The reliability and validity of this instrument was assessed during pilot-testing. The initial reliability check involved a small sample. Sixteen usable questionnaires were returned from a possible 60 distributed. The pilot-testing sample consisted of all the families of children enrolled in a community-based preschool program for normal and mildly delayed preschoolers. Cronbach's alphas, an indication of internal consistency, were computed for each of the instrument's sub-scales and are reported in Table 1. Reliability was rechecked after formal data collection and is also reported in Table 1. Coefficients obtained were relatively high ranging from .76 to .90 for the pilot testing sample, and .81 to .93 for the formal data collection sample.

The corrected item-to-total coefficients for the formal data collection sample ranged from .39 to .66 for the social items in the importance sub-scale and from .30 to .75 for the social items in the perception sub-scale.

Content validity was assessed by three Human Development and Family Studies faculty members familiar with the research problem. To determine if each sub-scale was producing valid and discriminating information, a factor analysis was computed after formal data collections.

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients*

scale	pilot testing data collection	formal data collection
Importance (both sub-scales)		.89
social items	.90	.85
pre-academic items	.83	.81
Perception (both sub-scales)		.93
social items	.86	.93
pre-academic	.76	.84
	(n=16)	(n=124)

*Cronbach's Alpha

The principal components factor analysis using an orthogonal varimax rotation for the importance scale produced the factor pattern presented in Table 2. Factor loadings less than .15 are not reported. Because all of the scale items load highly on the first factor the scale was judged to be unidimensional. This finding is not totally unexpected. The scale asks parents to rate the items in terms of how important the items are to them regarding their preschool children. As one parent was overheard saying, "everything is important", and all the items show a high degree of commonality. The fact that the scale does not discriminate between the social and pre-academic items does not preclude that the social sub-scale is not a valid instrument itself. The social items on the average loaded higher than the pre-academic items (e.g., social items M = .62 with a range of .44 to .72, pre-academic items M = .54 with a range of .40 to .66), and with the exception of items 4 and 7 do not load on any other factor. Five of the ten pre-academic items loaded moderately high on two other factors.

The principle components factor loadings for the perception sub-scale produced the factor pattern presented in Table 3. Factor loadings less than .15 are not reported. Three factors are indicated with all items loading moderately to highly on the first factor. Similar to the importance sub-scale unidimensionality is evident.

Table 2

Factor Loadings Importance Sub-scale

	factor 1	2	3	4	5
social items					
#2 popular	.48				
4 accepted	.62	-.16		.37	-.39
5 sociable	.56				-.39
7 satisfying	.70	-.24	.27		-.18
9 initiate	.69		-.33	-.17	
11 open	.65		-.47	-.53	
13 shares	.64	-.21	-.19		
15 cooperates	.56				
17 helpful	.72				
19 considerate	.63	-.33			
pre-academic items					
#1 likes preschool	.48				.16
3 curious	.54		.20	-.19	
6 learning	.63		.39	-.20	
8 books	.49		.38		.19
10 writing	.40	.51			
12 schoolwork	.57	.55		.20	
14 intelligent	.49	.26	-.20	.23	
16 activities	.66	.22		.17	
18 problem solve	.59		.17		
20 group activities	.58	-.27			

<.15 not reported

Table 3

Factor Loadings Perception Sub-scale

	Factor 1	2	3
social items			
#2 popular	.78		
4 accepted	.79		.15
5 sociable	.83		-.20
7 satisfying	.72	-.21	
9 initiate	.73		-.16
11 open	.74		
13 shares	.64	-.15	-.24
15 cooperates	.79	-.15	-.17
17 helpful	.75		-.28
19 considerate	.77	.15	-.21
pre-academic items			
#1 likes preschool	.60		
3 curious	.69	.21	
6 learning	.70	.58	
8 books	.39	.50	
10 writing	.30	.22	.42
12 schoolwork	.55		.48
14 intelligent	.49		
16 activities	.68	-.24	.28
18 problem solve	.71	.26	
20 group activities	.72	-.27	.17

<.15 not reported

Six of the ten pre-academic items loaded positively on different factors and loaded lower on the first factor than the social items. On the first factor the pre-academic items range from .30 to .72 (M = .58), the social items range from .64 to .79 (M = .75).

Although the single dimension prominent in both scales presents some challenges to the larger research project, for this study the social sub-scales are considered adequate indicators of the construct in question.

Child Measures

Sociometric Nominations

Sociometric measures are among the most commonly used methods of identifying the socially accepted child, and of attempting to establish a child's social status relative to other children (Foster & Ritchey, 1979). The peer nomination technique developed by Moreno (1934) is perhaps the most familiar. McCandless and Marshall (1957) developed a picture format more applicable to younger children.

Positive nominations have demonstrated moderate (.32 to .78) test-retest reliability coefficients (Hartup, Glazer & Charlesworth, 1967; McCandless & Marshall, 1957; Moore & Updegraff, 1964); and concurrent validity

coefficients with teacher judgments (McCandless & Marshall, 1957). Construct validity has been indicated in correlations with academic achievement (Green, Forehand, Beck & Vosk, 1980; Kohn, 1977), and in discriminating adults referred for psychiatric treatment (Cowen et al, 1973). Negative nominations have shown lower (.34 to .38) test-retest reliability coefficients (Roff et al., 1972).

In this technique each child is presented with standardized pictures of his or her same sex peers and is asked to "Point to the picture of the person you would like to play with most." The picture chosen is removed from the child's veiw and the child is asked to repeat the task twice more. All the pictures are then returned to the child's view and the child is asked to "Point to the picture of the person you do not like to play with." This picture is then removed and the task is repeated twice more. Popularity scores are based on the total number of positive nominations. Rejection scores are based on the total number of negative nominations.

Sociometric Peer Ratings

Similiar to nominations, in the sociometric peer ratings technique, each child is presented with pictures of their same sex peers. However, rather than the subject nominating with whom they would like to play, the experimenter asks the child how much they would like to

play with a particular child. The subject indicates the degree of desire by pointing to one of five faces (one face frowning, one slightly frowning, one neutral, one slightly smiling, and one face smiling). The subject rates all of his or her same sex peers. After each child in the group has rated his or her peers, the scores are totaled and averaged.

The rating scale technique has several advantages over the positive nomination technique (Asher & Hymel, 1981). First, each child rates all classmates, providing an indication of the child's attitude toward each of the group members. Another advantage is that the test-retest reliability of rating scale scores is higher than for nomination scores. Asher, Singleton, Tinsley, and Hymel (1979) have shown peer ratings to produce a median test-retest reliability coefficient of .82 and were found significantly more reliable than positive and negative nominations. The greater reliability of rating scale scores is most likely due to the fact that a child's score is an average received from a larger number of peers, and as such, a change in the rating given by one or two peers would have relatively little effect. In contrast, with nomination measures, wherein children typically receive a few positive or negative nominations, a gain or loss of a single nomination per child could have a dramatic effect on the distribution of scores (Asher & Hymel, 1981).

The Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance For Young Children.

Developed by Harter and Pike (1984), this scale contains four separate subscales: cognitive competence, physical competence, social acceptance, and maternal acceptance. Each subscale has six items that are presented in pictorial fashion. One item, for example is "good at puzzles." In the testing booklet on the left side of the page is a drawing of a child who has almost completed a puzzle, on the right side of the page is a drawing of a child who has many puzzle pieces unfitted. Below the drawings are large and small circles. The experimenter reads a brief statement about the child in the pictures: "This girl is very good at puzzles, but this girl is not so good at puzzles." While reading, the experimenter points from left to right at the pictures. The child is asked which of the two girls she is most like. Making this decision, the child is then asked to think only about the picture on the side she has chosen and to indicate if she is a lot like the girl in the picture (the experimenter points to the big circle) or just a little bit like the girl in the picture (pointing to the small circle). Each item is scored on a four point scale, where "4" is considered the most competent or accepted and "1" the least competent or accepted. Summing the items and

dividing by six produces the subscale totals. There are separate versions of the scale for boys and girls. The items are identical but the drawings differ. The boys' scale depicts boys, while the girls' scale depicts girls.

The reliability and validity of the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance has been established (Harter & Pike, 1984). Alpha coeffecients reported ranged from .50 to .85. Internal consistency was reported with factor loadings from .23 to .70. Evidence of convergent and discriminant validity was also reported.

Teacher Rating Scale

A teacher rating of the Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance Scale parallels the child instrument. Teachers rate the children on three of the four areas tapped on the child version. (Teachers do not rate the maternal items.) On this instrument teachers are given a brief description of each item and then are asked to rate how true that statement is on a 4 point scale. The intercorrelations between children's and teacher's judgments reported by Harter and Pike (1984) are: $r = .37$ ($p<.001$) for cognitive competence, $r = .30$ ($p<.005$) for physical competence, and $r = .06$ (non-significant) for social acceptance.

Procedure

The three child measures were collected throughout spring term 1986 by four female research assistants. In the case of the Bozeman sample a single female graduate student collected the data. The measures were collected individually, in a research room familar to the children. During the middle of spring term the teacher rating section of the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance was completed by the head teachers of each preschool program.

For the Corvallis sample, the parents' questionnaires were collected in conjuction with three other parent measures. In this group, parents made reservations during the third week in Feburary (approximately the middle of the term) in which they came to the child development program and completed the measures. Those not completing the questionnaires in the scheduled time were allowed to take them home. In cases where a spouse was unable to schedule an appointment the other parent was allowed to deliver the questionnaire to them. This happened in four or five cases. All parents were reminded to work independently of each other. In most instances those questionnaires that went home were returned the next day. A handful of reminder calls were neccessary. Fifty-five of the 68 Corvallis parents returned their questionnaires for a response rate of 81%.

In the Bozeman sample, the parents' questionnaires

along with its cover letter explaining the study were delivered to the parent through the preschool child's "cubby." The parents were given two weeks to return their completed questionnaires. After this time a note was placed on the preschool classroom door reminding parents to return their questionnaires. After another two weeks, calls were made to those few parents who had not responded. Seventy-three of the 84 Bozeman parents returned their questionnaires for a response rate of 87%.

RESULTS

The findings from this study suggest a relationship between parents' social expectations and children's peer relations. Each hypothesis will be addressed separately. However, to first determine if significant differences existed between the Corvallis and Bozeman sub-samples t-tests were computed on each measure collected. Table 4 reports these findings. There were no significant differences found between mothers' importance scores, children's perception scores or any of the sociometric measures. Significant differences were indicated between fathers' level of importance scores, fathers' perception scores, mothers' perception scores, and teacher's perception scores. The pattern presented was consistent. The Bozeman sub-sample consistently reported higher scores on most of the measures, (the exceptions being teacher's perception scores and negative nomination scores). While these differences certainly present a limitation, the samples were combined and data analyses continued.

Table 5 summarizes correlation coefficients obtained describing the relationships between the variables used in this study. These correlation coefficients were used to test the hypotheses.

Hypothesis #1 suggesting significant correlations between parents' perceptions of children's peer relations

Table 4

Differences Between Sub-samples

	Corvallis, OR		Bozeman, MT		
Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.	Prob.
Father					
Importance	6.937	.742	7.500	.749	.005
Perception	6.618	1.052	7.231	1.069	.028
Mother					
Importance	7.132	.805	7.365	.854	.265
Perception	6.650	1.111	7.410	.934	.005
Child					
Perception	2.712	.615	2.851	.576	.354
Teacher					
Perception	3.251	.664	2.797	.534	.004
Sociometric					
Ratings	2.940	.724	3.091	.620	.380
Positive					
Nominations	1.857	1.044	1.9189	1.233	.828
Negative					
Nominations	2.071	1.184	1.756	1.234	.302

Table 5

Correlation Matrix of Parent, Child,

Teacher, and Sociometric Measures

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Fathers'								
1. importance								
2. perception	.52***							
Mothers'								
3. importance	.37***	.28***						
4. perception	.38***	.54***	.45***					
Children's								
5. perception	.09	.10	.08	.06				
Teacher's								
6. perception	-.03	.03	-.05	-.13	.29**			
Sociometric								
7. ratings	.21*	.34**	.16	.25*	.11	.41***		
Positive								
8. nominations	.21*	.07	.08	.08	.16	.39***	.53***	
Negative								
9. nominations	-.23*	-.22*	.04	-.23*	-.05	-.12	-.58***	-.41***

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

and their children's sociometric status was supported for both mothers and fathers on two sociometric measures. Father's perception scores and their children's acceptance ratings were significantly and positively correlated ($r = .31$, $p<.01$), while fathers' perception scores and their children's rejection scores were significantly and negatively correlated ($r = .-22$, $p<.05$). Fathers' perception scores were not significantly correlated with children's popularity scores. The same pattern of significant correlations was found for mothers. Acceptance ratings and rejection scores were significantly correlated with mothers' perception scores in positive and negative directions, respectively, ($r = .25$ and $r = .-23$, $p<.05$), while children's popularity scores did not correlate significantly with mothers' perception scores.

Hypothesis #2, suggesting significant relationships between parents' level of importance scores and children's sociometric status was supported for fathers. Fathers' level of importance scores correlated significantly and positively with their children's acceptance ratings ($r = .21$, $p<.05$) and with their children's popularity scores ($r = .21$, $p.<05$). In addition, father's level of importance scores correlated significantly and negatively with their children's rejection scores ($r = .-23$, $p.<05$). Mothers' level of importance scores did not correlate with children's sociometric measures, although all of the

coefficients were in the predicted directions. Of these correlation coefficients the relationship between mothers' importance scores and children's acceptance ratings approached significance ($r = .16$, $p<.09$).

Hypothesis #3, suggesting there are significant differences between parents' perception scores and level of importance scores as a function of parents' or children's gender, was not confirmed. A repeated measures MANOVA indicated no significant main or interaction effects of parents' or children's gender on parents' perception or importance scores. A series of univariate ANOVAs reported the same non-significant findings.

To further investigate parents' perception and importance scores additional analyses were performed. A new variable was computed by transforming parents' perception scores into the same unit of measure as children's acceptance ratings. Children's acceptance ratings were then subtracted from their parents' transformed perception scores, creating a variable which indicated the accuracy of the parents' perceptions. Differences in parents' importance scores were then considered among high and low accuracy groups. (A median split determined these groupings.) T-tests were run for both mothers and fathers. For fathers, there was no significant difference in importance scores between those who had accurate perceptions of their children's

acceptance ratings and those who were less accurate. For mothers, a significant difference was found $t(60) = -2.67$, ($p<.01$). Mothers with less accurate perceptions had significantly higher importance scores than mothers with more accurate perceptions.

Hypothesis #4, indicating significant positive correlations between parents' perception scores and children's perception scores and significant positive correlations between parents' perception scores and teacher's perception scores, was not supported. Parents' perception scores did not correlate significantly with their children's perception scores or their children's teacher's perception scores.

Hypothesis #5, indicating significant positive correlations between children's perception scores and teacher's perception scores was confirmed ($r = .29$, $p<.01$). In addition, teacher perception scores were found significantly correlated with children's acceptance ratings and popularity scores ($r = .41$, $p<.001$, and $r = .39$, $p<.001$ respectively).

Hypothesis #6, suggesting significant correlations between children's perception scores and children's sociometric measures was not confirmed. Children's perception scores did not correlate significantly with their acceptance rating scores, popularity scores, or rejection scores.

Although not hypothesized, the data in Table 5 also suggest that the sociometric measures were all significantly correlated with each other. Acceptance ratings correlated positively with popularity scores ($r = .53$, $p<.001$) and negatively with rejection scores ($r = .-58$, $p<.001$). Popularity and rejection scores were found to be significantly and negatively correlated ($r = -.41$, $p<.001$). Table 5 also suggests that the parent measures used in this study were significantly and positively correlated. Fathers' importance scores correlated with fathers' perception scores, mothers' importance scores, and mothers' perception scores ($r = .52$, $.37$, $.38$, respectively, all $ps<.001$). Fathers' perception scores correlated with mothers' importance scores and mothers' perception scores ($r = .28$; $p<.01$, $r = .54$; $p<.001$). Mothers' importance scores correlated with mothers' perception scores ($r = .45$, $p<.001$). Because the perception and importance sub-scales use very similar questionnaire items, these findings are not unexpected.

DISCUSSION

A number of recent studies of children's peer relations which have included parents as subjects have pointed to parental supporting behaviors as influential in children's social behavior and status (Krantz, Webb & Andrews, 1984; MacDonald & Parke, 1984). The findings from these studies have shown themselves congruent with theoretical explanations of how expectations are fulfilled. That is, expectation holders will behave in ways supportive of their expectations and thus increase the chances of their expectations being fulfilled. The major purpose of this study focused not on parental behavior but rather on: (1) parents' perceptions of children's peer relations; (2) the level of importance parents place on children's peer relations; (3) differences in perceptions and levels of importance as a function of parents' and children's gender; and, (4) relationships between parents' perceptions and children's and teacher's perceptions of children's peer relations. Using measures related to these concepts as indices of social expectations, the relationship between parents' social expectations and their children's actual peer relations was supported. The implications of these findings and their relation to theory and past peer relations research will be elaborated on in this chapter.

In addition, findings associated with children's and teacher's perceptions and their relationship to children's peer relations, will be discussed. The limitations of this study and suggestions for future research will also be addressed.

The initial hypothesis, indicating that parents' perceptions of children's peer relations are significantly correlated with children's peer relations was supported. Mother's and father's perception scores were found to be significantly correlated in the predicted directions with children's acceptance ratings and rejection scores, but not with children's popularity scores. Earlier researchers have suggested that each sociometric measure utilized is an indication of a particular aspect of children's peer relations (Hymel & Asher, 1982). Acceptance ratings are considered children's overall acceptance or likability within a group, whereas popularity scores are indicators of best friends or high priority playmates. Rejection scores suggest rejection by playmates. The pattern presented in these findings indicates that parents' perceptions significantly correlated positively with generally accepted children and negatively with rejected children, but did not correlate significantly with high-priority playmates.

The second hypothesis, suggesting that the level of

importance parents place on children's peer relations are significantly related to their children's peer relations was supported for fathers. Father's level of importance scores correlated significantly and in the predicted directions with all three of their children's sociometric measures. Fathers who rated such social items as "has satisfying friendships" and "is willing to share" as very important were parents of children having higher acceptance ratings, higher popularity scores, and lower rejection scores. The data suggest that children who were generally well-accepted, who were considered high priority playmates, and who were not rejected by their peers had fathers who considered the social items of the scale to be of greater importance than fathers of less socially accepted children. Mother's level of importance scores did not correlate significantly with any of the children's sociometric measures. Although the magnitude of the father's correlations and the difference between those correlations and the mother's was not great, these findings point to the potential salience of father's social expectations on children's peer relations.

One previous study (DeAenlle) reported parental attitudes toward children's peer relations (cited in Asher et al, 1982). Significant differences were found between parents of popular and unpopular children regarding hypothetical situations involving children's

interactions. It was suggested that parents of unpopular children may place less importance on children's peer relations than parents of popular children. In this study, this assertion was supported for fathers but not for mothers.

The third hypothesis, suggesting that significant differences exist between parents' level of importance and parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations as a function of parents' or children's gender was not supported. Fathers of boys or girls did not have significantly higher or lower importance or perception scores than did mothers of boys or girls. The fact that the repeated measures MANOVA found no significant differences in parent scores as a function of gender does suggest parents' scores are similar. However, a significant difference in parent scores was found. By transforming the perception scores into a measure of accuracy significant variation in maternal importance scores was evident. Mothers who less accurately perceived their children's peer relations were found to have significantly higher importance scores. No significant difference was found on importance scores between fathers with accurate perceptions of their children's peer relations and those who were less accurate.

These findings point to the influence erroneous perceptions may have on levels of importance. The level

of importance fathers placed on their children's peer relations was found relatively independent of their perception scores. That is, regardless of the accuracy of fathers' perception scores, the level of importance fathers' placed on their children's peer relations was still significantly correlated with their children's actual peer relations. For mothers, the opposite was true. The level of importance mothers placed on their children's peer relations was influenced by their perception scores and was not found significantly correlated with their children's actual peer relations. The data suggest mothers with inaccurate perceptions may "overemphasize" the importance of peer relations.

The final hypothesis involving parents suggested a significant positive correlation between parents' perceptions of children's peer relations and children's perceptions of children's peer relations and a significant positive correlation between parents' perceptions of children's peer relations and teacher's perceptions of children's peer relations. This hypothesis was not supported. The data suggest parents' perception scores, although significantly correlated with children's actual peer relations, were not significantly correlated with children's or teacher's perceptions.

A secondary concern of this study involved children's and teacher's perceptions of children's peer

relations and the relationships between these variables and children's actual peer relations. The fifth hypothesis, suggesting significant positive correlations between children's perceptions and teacher's perceptions was supported. This finding contradicts the non-significant relationship reported by Harter and Pike (1984). In addition, teacher perceptions were found significantly correlated with children's sociometric ratings and positive nominations. Methodological problems may account for these findings. The graduate research assistant that collected the data in the Bozeman sub-sample also completed the parallel teacher ratings instrument. The sixth hypothesis, indicating a significant positive correlation between children's perceptions of their own peer relations and their actual peer relations, was not supported. As was suggested by Harter and Pike (1984), young children may blur the distinction between their actual abilites with their desires to be well accepted.

The data on perceptions indicate that although parent's and children's perceptions were not found significantly correlated, the perceptions of both related to other indicators of peer acceptance. Parent's perceptions were significantly correlated with acceptance ratings and rejection scores, while children's perceptions were significantly correlated to teacher's

perceptions. In other studies, similar teacher measures are often used as an indication of peer acceptance and social competence.

Limitations of this study.

This study, like most social science research, is limited both methodologically and substantively. Problems with the design and in the findings will be discussed.

The correlational design of this study does not establish causation. Certainly the impact of parents is implied and has a long history of research and theoretical backing, but the data, as analyzed, do not permit the declaration that parent's social expectations are directly or indirectly causing children's peer relations. The opposite may be true. However, this study does indicate that the variables measured are related.

Similarly, the magnitude of the correlations found are a limitation. Although significant, parent social expectation scores were found to be (at best) only moderately correlated with children's peer relations. In addition, mothers' scores on the importance variable did not correlate with any of the children's measures.

Relatively low correlations could also be attributed to limitations of the parent instrument. The instrument used in this study was essentially untested. Although the factor analysis and reliability checks showed the

instrument adequate for the research question, a superior instrument could have been fashioned by revising some of the items. A quick review of Tables 2 and 3 suggest how such an instrument could be devised.

Another area of limitation connected with the parent instrument could be accounted for in the collection methods. As was shown, differences were discovered between sub-sample scores. These differences might be attributed to the lack of standardization and control in assessment techniques regarding such influential variables as time of assessment, the environment in which the questionnaire was completed, the number of questionnaires completed at one setting, and other family characteristics such as parents' age, family size, position of child in birth order, and other information about siblings. In addition, the size and homogeneity of the total sample limits the generalizability of this study to other university-based settings.

Suggestions for future research.

Perhaps the greatest contribution this study makes to the peer relations literature is the opportunities it provides for future research and theoretical development. These opportunities can be directed in two areas. These include expanding the knowledge of parent's social expectations through further inspection of antecedents

associated with social expectations, and through research directed at how social expectations and supporting behaviors may covary.

In the area of antecedents associated with parents' social expectations a major unanswered question involves the relationship of parents' own social aspirations with social expectations for their children. Seginer (1983) suggests parents' academic achievement expectations are influenced not only by the feedback they receive and the knowledge they have about educational processes but also by the parents' own aspirations, particularly those that are unfulfilled. This variable seems especially suited for research on social expectations as many parents look on lost social opportunities and embarrassing social interactions as teachable moments for their children.

Future research directed at the relationship between parent social expectations and supporting behaviors also seems appropriate. As the Brophy and Good (1974) model suggests, once an expectation has developed, expectation holders will behave differently toward different children. Future research could borrow not only educational expectation theory in this area but also methodology, as many research studies have focused on this aspect of the Brophy and Good model (see Cooper & Good, 1983). Although more difficult but certainly not out of the range of being testable, the direction of

causation regarding parents' social expectations and parents' supporting behaviors and children's peer relations could also be investigated.

Future research could also be directed at differences in perceptions among individuals. The correlations found in this study involving parents, children, and teachers suggest perceptions are based on different criteria for each category of subjects. Parents' perceptions correlated with measures of general acceptance and inversely with measures of rejection. Children's perceptions correlated with teachers' perceptions and teacher perceptions correlated with measures of general acceptance and popularity. Future research answering why these relationships exist would be worthwhile.

Summary and Conclusion

Although the theoretical models used in this study were borrowed from education expectation literature, their usefulness was apparent. In particular, the Seginer (1983) model with its discussion on the antecedents to parents' expectations pointed to social expectation variables that were used successfully in this study. Indices of parents' social expectations were developed that were found both valid and reliable and significantly correlated with children's peer relations. Not directly

related to the development of expectations, the Brophy and Good (1974) model appears particularly useful in describing how expectations are fulfilled. This model could best be used to guide future research connecting social expectations with supporting behaviors. In the area of children's peer relations research, only a few studies have focused on parents as subjects and the relationship between parent behaviors and attitudes with children's social acceptance. The study reported here contributes to the literature in this area with the following findings:

(1) Parents' perceptions of their children's peer relations are significantly correlated with their children's peer relations.

(2) The levels of importance fathers place on children's peer relations are significantly correlated with their children's peer relations.

(3) There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions or levels of importance as a function of parents' or children's gender.

(4) There is some evidence to indicate that erroneous perceptions may contribute to inflated importance scores for mothers.

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APPENDIX

What follows is a questionnaire regarding how important certain aspects of your child's preschool experiences are to you.

Here's how the questionnaire needs to be completed: the question might read:

How important is it to you that your child:

behaves well

very important ____/____/____/__X__/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

If it is very important to you that your child behaves well, place an "x" in the space under the "very important". If it is not at all important to you that your child behaves well place an "x" in the space under the "not at all important". If you believe the level of importance is somewhere between the two dimensions, place an "x" in the space that best represents the importance of the item to you. In the example above the "x" is placed in the middle section of the scale indicating moderate or neutral importance.

If the question reads:

My child

is very well behaved ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all well behaved

place an "x" in the space on the line where you believe your child to be based on your observations.

Please respond to the following items. Remember, respond to these items in terms of how important they are to you now, while your child is preschool age.

How important is it to you that your child:

like preschool

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is popular with peers

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is curious

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is accepted by other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is sociable

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is interested in learning

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

has satisfying friendships

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is interested in books and reading

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is willing to initiate social contacts with other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is interested in writing

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is open to the social contacts initiated by other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

do well in preschool schoolwork

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is willing to share with other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is as intelligent as other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is willing to cooperate with other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

does the activities at preschool

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is willing to help other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is good at problem solving

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is considerate of other children

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

is willing to participate in group activities

very important ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ not at all important

Please respond to the following items based on your observations of your child.

My child:

shares easily with other children ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ does not share with other children

is very intelligent ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all intelligent

likes preschool very much ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ does not like preschool

is very popular ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all popular

cooperates very easily with other children ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ does not at all cooperate with other children

readily does the activities at preschool ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ does not do the activities at preschool

is very curious ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all curious

is readily accepted by other children ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all accepted by other children

is very helpful ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all helpful

is very good at problem solving ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all good at problem solving

is very sociable ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all sociable

is very interested in learning ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all interested in learning

is very considerate ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all considerate

participates easily in group activities ____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ does not participate in group activities

My child

has very satisfying friendships /____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ has no satisfying friendships

is very interested in books and reading /____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all interested in books and reading

is very willing to initiate social contacts /____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all willing to initiate social contacts

is very interested in writing /____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all interested in writing

is very open to the social contacts initiated by others /____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ is not at all open to the social contacts initiated by others

does preschool schoolwork easily /____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/____/ does not do preshool schoolwork

Please rank the following items. Place a "1" by what you consider the most important, a "2" by the next important, a "3" by the next important, etc. Number "10" should represent what you consider the least important.

It is most important that my child:

____ is interested in learning

____ is popular with peers

____ do well in preschool schoolwork

____ has satisfying friendships

____ is intelligent

____ is considerate of others

____ is interested in books and reading

____ participates in group activities

____ is willing to initiate social contacts

____ is interested in writing

Please circle your sex M F
Please circle your preschool age child's sex M F

Thank You!