

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Beth Alyne Hilberg for the degree of Master of Science in Human Development and Family Studies presented on June 25, 2003

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Abstract approved

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The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between frequent childhood mobility and perceived social support, education level, and economic well-being in a sample of former Even Start parents. Theoretically the mechanisms for the disruption of frequent mobility are studied through both social capital theory and an ecological model. As individuals are uprooted and moved from one environment to the next they are faced with the developmental challenge of continuous adaptation. With each move losses of social capital at the individual, family, and community level are experienced.

The most striking factor about the results of the qualitative analysis is the parallel it finds to previous quantitative studies on the outcomes and risk factors of frequent mobility. The participants who experienced frequent mobility in childhood described lives that were chaotic and uncertain. Frequent childhood mobility was directly mentioned by several of the participants as a factor increasing hardship in their lives.

associated with participants' retrospective accounts of their poverty status in childhood and their economic status at the time of the interviews. A lack of significant parental social support in the group experiencing high childhood mobility, and its presence in the low childhood mobility group suggests the disruption frequent childhood mobility may cause in the ability of this group to obtain needed parental social support. In a population where risk factors are already present frequent childhood mobility seems to be a key factor in further reducing life chances.

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Moving On: The Effects of Frequent Childhood Mobility on a Low-Income
Population

By
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Beth Alyne Hilberg, Author

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The process and product of making human beings clearly varied by place and time ... this diversity suggested the possibility of ecologies as yet untried that held a potential for human natures yet unseen, perhaps possessed of a wiser blend of power and compassion that has thus far been manifest.

Bronfenbrenner, 1979

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to every person who touched my life since I first stepped into Milam Hall; to you all I offer my deep gratitude. You helped me soar when I only knew how to creep.

Moving On: The Effects of Frequent Childhood Mobility on a Low-Income

Population

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background

Americans are movers. Frequent residential mobility is one aspect of modern life that is affecting large portions of the U.S. population, including the low-income sector. The 2000 population survey reported that between March 1999 and March 2000, 43.4 million Americans moved (U.S Census Bureau, 2001), roughly 15 to 20% of the population (United States Department of Congress, 1998). Some sectors of the population are more mobile than others. Mobility rates reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2001) found that those with income levels under \$25,000 had a mobility rate of 21% compared to 12% for those with incomes over \$100,000. Rates also differed by poverty status. Households with income levels below the poverty line had a mobility rate of 28% whereas the mobility rate of those at 150% of poverty or higher was only 14%. Those below the poverty level were also more likely to have made a short distance move (61%) as opposed to 54% in the higher income group. These moves all have the potential of significantly affecting the life course of the individuals involved.

Purpose of Study

In this study I explore the relationship between frequent mobility in childhood and outcomes in adulthood in a high-risk population. Secondary analysis of interview and survey data collected as part of a follow-up study of former participants in Even

Start Family Literacy Programs formed the basis of this study. Even Start is a federally funded program mandated to serve the most needy in a community, measured by poverty status as well as a need for literacy services.

Child Outcomes in Low-Income Mobile Families

In order to understand the long-term adult outcomes of frequent childhood mobility it is essential that we also have a thorough understand of the short-term outcomes of frequent mobility during childhood. Throughout the literature, studies investigating frequent childhood mobility have focused on four main areas: the relationship between mobility and educational attainment, mobility and its effects on perceived social support and social capital, and mobility and its association with low-economic status. Frequent mobility has also been included as a key component in studies on the outcomes of children who experience chaotic family lives. These families are characterized as experiencing family instability or turbulence. In addition to these areas, there is a literature revolving around the types of moves that are most common and the reasons for these moves. The largest area of inquiry on frequent childhood mobility focuses on effects related to educational accomplishments and its association with lowered academic outcomes (Coleman, 1988; Davey, Penuel, Allison-Tant, & Rosner, 2000; Mantzicopoulos & Knutson, 2000; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996; Wright, 1999). Several studies have also related mobility to lowered social support and adjustment ability of both individuals and families (Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002; Brown & Ortner, 1990; Eamon, 2001; Moore, Vandivere, & Ehrle, 2000; Wethington & Kessler, 1986).

Closely related to the major themes in the literature are studies that combine frequent mobility with other indicators to explore the idea of family instability or turbulence (Ackerman, Kogos, Youngstrom, Schoff, & Izard, 1999; Moore et al., 2000). The relationship between problematic mobility outcomes and the low-income population is also explored in the literature. Researchers have found that at times it becomes difficult to separate the relationship between poverty and frequent mobility. (Haveman, Wolfe, & Spaulding, 1991; More et al., 2000). Explorations of these various literature themes helped form the research question for this study.

Theoretical Influences

The ecological framework developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) and James Coleman's (1988, 1990) work on social capital theory anchor this study. In structuring his ideas on human development Bronfenbrenner began to think of individual development as taking place in a framework of nested environments. Not only are the interactions of individuals in their near environments important, but it becomes critical to examine how these environments shape each other. Coleman's work on social capital furthers our knowledge of how relations inside one environment influence those in others. His idea of the disruption of social capital formation can easily be seen in families and individuals experiencing frequent mobility.

Research Question

I addressed the question: How do former participants in the Even Start Family Literacy program describe the effects of frequent childhood mobility on their lives? Although many quantitative studies have explored different aspects of the effects of mobility, through qualitative research I add to these data by providing a more intimate

picture of how individuals describe the effects of frequent mobility during childhood.

In this study I explore the childhood memories of both those who experienced frequent childhood mobility and those who did not in order to look at differences in adult outcomes at the time of the interviews.

CHAPTER 2

Literature and Theory Review

Introduction

Frequent childhood residential mobility disturbs the environment of the developing individual. In extreme cases of mobility, individuals may not have time to resettle before they are again uprooted from their surroundings. The development of new relationships and resources often is problematic. Environmental influences are key in establishing new relationships. Theoretically I analyze the significance of the environmental setting's influence using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) work on the ecological perspective. In addition I use Coleman's (1988, 1990) theory on the development of social capital to investigate the dynamics of relationships within and between environmental settings. After describing my theoretical approach in more detail, I explore the related literature on frequent childhood mobility. This includes literature on why people move; on poverty and its relationship to other environmental factors present in the lives of frequently mobile children; the outcomes of childhood mobility including, academic risk, and loss of perceived social support and social capital; and mobility as a factor contributing to general family turbulence.

Theoretical Considerations

Ecological perspective. Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective recognizes that human development occurs in context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Bronfenbrenner & Crouter 1983, 1986). Not only does the environment affect individual development but people's actions are critical in forming their own environment. The environment is seen as consisting of four interconnected levels or

systems. The first level is the microsystem. Microsystem settings are environments that the developing person inhabits. Within a given microsystem, the developing person engages in interrelations with both the environment and the people encountered in that setting. Microsystems are composed of the dyadic relationships, say between parent and child, and also of relationships beyond the dyad. Examples of a child's microsystem include the child-teacher-parent relationship in the school setting, the child-sibling relationship in the home, and the child-peer interactions on the playground or in the day care center (Lerner, 2002). The interactions between these microsystems can be as important for development as the relations taking place inside a given system.

The interrelation of microsystems forms the next layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model, the mesosystem. The mesosystem encompasses the linkages between all of the principal microsystem settings in which the individual participates. The degree of compatibility between these settings is particularly relevant when discussing residential mobility. The degree to which the different linkages contained in the mesosystem conflict with or complement each other in terms of the demands they place on that individual's development influences the ability of the individual to adapt to the present environment (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983). Bronfenbrenner and Crouter also raise the issue of the consequences of using existing linkages between microsystem settings to ease the transition to other settings. For example, entering a new school when a sibling already attends as opposed to having no knowledge of the setting fosters different psychological development in the individual.

The third nested environment in the ecological model consists of the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1986). Not only is individual development influenced by immediate position in place and time, and the linkages between settings, but also it is influenced by the settings around but not entered by the developing person. These influences exist even though the developing individual is external to the system. In the instance of a child, the exosystem is generally composed of settings in which only the parent participates, such as the working world or the parent's social network. Understanding these exosystem linkages is an important issue in understanding how frequent moves affect subsequent development. For instance a disruption in the social network of the parents will also affect the child. Access will be lost to the resources that parents had, such as knowledge of the school system from other parents in their network, and this loss may put the child at a disadvantage in not knowing how to navigate that system. The strength or lack of these exosystem linkages becomes pertinent when discussing families and their ability to adapt to new situations.

The final level of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model is the macrosystem. This encompasses the cultural or subcultural system as well as beliefs or ideologies that can influence any of the lower level systems. The macrosystem also includes the historical influences of a particular place and time (Lerner, 2002). In addition, it includes the macro institutions such as the federal government that influence policies that affect daily life. Low-income individuals may be even more influenced by government policy than other segments of society due to the lack of buffers between social programs they depend on and their daily lives.

Bronfenbrenner has spent the last decade incorporating the features of the developing person into his ecological framework. The integration of earlier thought is presented in the process-person-context-time model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). This model includes four linked components. The first stage of the model is the developmental *process* as it is influenced by the dynamic relationship of the individual and her environment. The *person* comes next with all her individual biological, psychological, and behavioral characteristics. The third component is the *context* of development, the nested systems in which development takes place. And lastly the model includes *time*, which incorporates the multiple dimensions of temporality, the context and person placed in time with its many dimensions. Bronfenbrenner and Morris label the dynamic interaction between the individual and the environment the proximal processes. The proximal processes are what allow for individual development. It is these proximal processes that seem key to understanding the effects frequent mobility may have on the individual.

Social capital theory. Coleman (1988, 1990) explicated work on the theory of social capital development and its effects on various populations, including the frequently mobile. Castle (2002) further explained the interdisciplinary nature of social capital. Social capital concerns aspects of the social structure and the individuals or institutions that act within it. Its significance for the mobile population comes with their inability to maintain social capital through many moves. Social capital is defined by its function. Social capital is the capital that is built up in the social environment of the individual, much like financial capital is built up in a bank. Although it is possible to function without either social or financial capital, the road is

much smoother with both. Increasing social capital leads to expanded resources, which evolve to more successful outcomes for family members (Hogan, 2001). Investment in a particular area of social capital entails extracting from various forms of social organization what is valuable for individuals and their families, in order to improve life chances (Furstenberg, & Hughes, 1995). Social capital makes possible the achievement of certain goals that would not otherwise be possible. Social capital exists in relations among persons. Creation of social capital through informal relationships is a powerful influence on the abilities of children and adolescents (Croninger & Lee, 2001). It is important to note that an aspect of social capital that is particularly useful in one instance may not be in another. Coleman defines three areas in which social capital operates: (a) obligations and expectations, (b) information channels, and (c) social norms.

A system of obligations and expectations for repayment is set up within an individual's social circle as well as within the community. This system must be based on a high level of trust. In his work Coleman uses the diamond industry as an example of implicit trust. In the process of negotiating a sale one wholesale merchant will hand over a bag full of stones to another to examine at his leisure, thus trusting that all the stones will be returned and no substitutions made. This works because these merchants come from a community that is very close and that has an extensive system of obligations and expectations for reciprocation. The ties between family, community, and religious affiliation provide the insurance to transact business in this fashion. If a merchant did substitute or steal a stone, not only would he harm his business, but also he would be faced with the loss of family, religious, and community ties. The strength

of these ties make transactions between the merchants possible because trustworthiness is taken for granted (Coleman, 1988).

This aspect of social capital plays an important role in both social and psychological development. This concept of implicit trust moves beyond the scope of individuals and can be extended to trustworthiness of the social environment, where obligations that are created by one action will be reciprocated by another action (Coleman, 1988). Individuals invested in a community give to the community knowing that at some future time they will be repaid by others' contributions to the community.

The availability of information to an individual is another important aspect of social capital. The ability to draw from a pre-existing system when action is needed is of benefit to the individual, family, or group. Relationships between individuals may be maintained for variety of reasons, such as enjoyment of a joint activity, mentoring of a student, or a profitable business relationship. These relationships are additionally used for information gathering by the individual preparing for action (Coleman, 1988). For instance a teen may maintain a friendship for companionship, but in addition this friend may be a trendsetter in the school. The teen may not wish to be a trendsetter, but needs the information provided by her friend about what is fashionable and what the latest word is around school to maintain her own daily interactions with her classmates. If this relationship is disrupted, not only will she lose a friend, but she will also lose an important source of information. As Coleman explains, social relations define a form of social capital that provides information and facilitates action.

Social norms are also vital in the establishment of social capital. A particularly important norm in the creation of social capital in most communities is the norm that one should overlook personal gain and act for the good of the order. This type of norm is essential in strengthening families by leading members to act in the best interest of the collective. Establishment of social norms both facilitates and limits social action (Coleman, 1988). Coleman uses an example of a boy who is a good athlete being encouraged to go out for football. Although this is encouraging a norm of society, it also directs his energy away from other activities. Unlike physical and human capital, in social capital the person who invests the effort is not necessarily the primary beneficiary. Social capital benefits all those who are a part of an involved structure.

What Coleman (1988) calls closure of social networks is also important in facilitating some forms of social capital. Norms arise as efforts to limit negative external effects or encourage positive ones. In many social structures where external effects are imposed on others however, norms do not arise. As Coleman explains in order for social norms to be imposed, a system must be closed. Each member of a system must have a direct link or influence on every other member of the system. If this direct link is not available, members of the system cannot combine forces in order to sanction the behaviors of another member. Unless a member of the system alone is sufficiently harmed and sufficiently powerful to sanction the offender alone his actions can continue unabated. Without a closed system there is no ability to combine to create a collective sanction or reward. A closed system exists for instance within a school where peers see each other daily and have set expectations of each other, and where parents are friends of the parents of their children's friends and develop norms

about each other's behaviors. Children are not only pressured into acting in accord with the system's norms by their own parents but also by the parents of their friends. These additional sources of external pressure do not exist in an open system. Coleman also credits system closure with the creation of trustworthiness. In an open system, conditions that create reputations cannot occur. In a closed system however the entire system can respond to a default on an obligation.

In social capital theory we acknowledge the fact that individual trustworthiness or lack thereof, will eventually facilitate or hinder others' actions as well as their own. When the individuals make plans for action however, they seldom take into account the effects their decision will have on others. This same idea carries over to other aspects of social capital. Individuals generally gather information for themselves and not for the use that others may make of it. This same aspect of social capital, one person's social capital being crucial in another's, may be played out in the community as well. For instance, in the case of a parent-teacher organization that provides many services to a school, the main body of this group is often made up of mothers who do not work outside the home. Through membership in the group they are meeting their own needs for socialization, as well as providing the educational and social benefits that come to their children from the activities of the group. Not only do their activities increase the social capital of involved individuals but the activities benefit the community as a whole, as all the children in the school benefit from their work. Social capital is unique, then, in the fact that although it may belong to one individual or group in the system, ultimately that individual captures only a small part of the benefit of the social capital. In terms of frequent mobility, we can see that not

only do frequent moves disrupt the child's accumulated social capital, but also, perhaps more importantly, the social capital of the parents that is available to the child.

Summary

Integrating social capital theory with the basic concepts of ecological theory helps give us a broader understanding of how the environment influences individual development in the case of the frequently mobile child. Through social capital theory we see that social capital provides resources to the developing child that may vary depending on both the physical and social environment. Included in the social capital available to the child is information. This information is needed for children to maneuver in their environment, at home, or in the community, and among friends. In addition, information is provided to the parents from friends and acquaintances that help them utilize the resources of the community to the advantage of their children. Another source of social capital available to developing children and their families is a system of obligation and reciprocity.

Obligation and reciprocity provide security for individuals, allowing them to know that they have outside resources upon which to draw. They are able to develop trust that obligations will be returned. These can be as straightforward as obligations within a family, to more complex obligations to the community as a whole. This expanse of obligations to the community is particularly true for parents, who can then pass their social capital along to the child. This web of information and obligation that forms through the interaction of parent and child is not necessarily equal. One party, usually the adult, may derive much more power from the relationship. A child, who trusts an adult for care, has little power in comparison to the adult. Thus the child

assumes a vulnerable position in relationship to the adult. A child who experiences multiple moves must rely on adults for the establishment of social capital.

Furthermore, social norms that are well established in one community may not be transferable to another. This may be particularly true in a school or neighborhood setting where relearning each new community's social norms would involve re-establishing a closed system. This may or may not be possible depending on both family circumstances and the setting itself.

Ecological and social capital theory are brought together as we realize that relationships in the microsystems and the relationships that are formed at the point of mesosystem linkages are sources of social capital that increase the capabilities of children (Hagan, MacMillan, & Wheaton, 1996). It follows, then, that disruption in these systems may decrease the capabilities or adaptation in these same children. According to Bronfenbrenner, this disruption of systems would have a similar effect when moved to an exosystem level. Through ecological theory we can see that development in the trustworthiness of the environment is closely connected to how development will occur. Rossi (1980) and Humke and Schaefer (1995) agree that the reason for a move is key in interacting with the environment in producing a stressed or nonstressed move. This can then be extended to Bronfenbrenner's work and the importance of the child's microsystem environment and mesosystem linkages. In Bronfenbrenner and Crouter's (1983) work Bronfenbrenner comments specifically on the effect of poor linkages on low-income families:

... one of the debilitating factors in the lives of lower-class families is that their social networks typically do not extend into the circles of power that control the

allocation of resources and determine the capacity of parents to manipulate the social environment so it becomes more responsive to their own and their children's needs. (p. S116)

The impacts of disrupted ecological linkages along with disrupted social capital seem to combine to create a developmental disturbance that is not easily overcome by the low-income mobile child. It becomes important then that we try to understand these disruptions in the developing child's life in order to fully understand the environmental context in which they live. Only with a thorough understanding of the environment and the child's development within that environment, may we hope to offer solutions to some of the many challenges faced by the low-income population.

This study investigates some of the environmental situations in which frequently mobile children find themselves. In addition I explore the data to determine if these childhood situations appear to be related to adult functioning. In the remainder of this chapter I explore the literature in detail and review what is known about frequent childhood mobility and its effects on low-income children. This includes why children move, as well as the various outcomes of mobility.

Literature Review

Why families move. Several studies have addressed the varied reasons for family mobility (Humke & Schaefer, 1995; Long, 1992; Rossi, 1955; Schachter, 2001a). These studies include explanations of upward mobility, frequent mobility by military families, and moves prompted by poverty and its associated factors. In this section I highlight some of the basic findings on mobility and then address these specific issues.

In his exploration of the reasons for U.S. population moves, Schacher (2001a) found that in the year between March 1999 and 2000, the highest percentage of people moved for housing-related issues (52%). This was followed by family reasons at 26% and work-related reasons, 16%. Housing-related issues included items such as wanting to own not rent, moving to a better neighborhood, and cheaper housing. Family-related reasons included change in marital status, establishment of own household, and other changes resulting in altered family structure. Schacher found that the higher one's education level, the greater the likelihood that one moved for work-related reasons. Of those moving for family reasons, 33% of those with less than a high school education moved compared to 16% of those with a graduate degree. Schacher also determined that the unemployed were no more likely than the employed to move for work-related reasons. Of particular interest to this study, he found that the poor are more likely than the nonpoor to move for family reasons. In households with incomes lower than \$10,000, 33% moved for family-related reasons as compared to 23% of those living in households with incomes over \$75,000. These figures are helpful to us as we reach an understanding of why people move.

In his 1955 classic *Why Families Move*, Rossi discusses what he calls vertical moves. These are upward moves not instigated because of a housing need defined by physical space, but precipitated by the prestige value of the move. They are moves associated with job promotions or the desire to move to a neighborhood with more expensive housing or a neighborhood that is perceived to be more desirable. Studies show mixed, but generally positive results of the adaptation abilities of children whose families make vertical moves. Although the immediate result may be family

disruption, families generally return to equilibrium quickly. In general, these families do not lose all microsystem and mesosystem links. In many job-related moves parents frequently do not lose all the social capital previously available to them. This is particularly true in our technological era where computers and frequent travel make communicating simple.

Another group of frequently mobile families is those associated with the U.S. military. Although moving may be stressful on military families they have social supports not available to others. In fact these supports are mandated by Title 10 Sections 1056 and 1785 (<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>) of the US Code as published by the U.S. House of Representatives. These relocation services are available to families through the Military Assistance Program and include both instrumental and counseling supports that separate them from most of the low-income population (<http://dod.mil/mapcentral/relocation.html>).

In the introduction to the reprint of his work, Rossi (1980) discusses trends that are becoming large factors in mobility today, including what he calls forced or derivative moves and implied moves. Forced moves are the result of natural disaster, housing demolition, and other such factors that are beyond the individual's control. In recent years the demolition of many older, unsafe low-income housing units has come under this heading. Rossi speculates that about 5% of household relocations are a result of forced moves. Implied moves are moves that are instigated because of marriage, divorce, separation, death, imprisonment, and military induction or other radical household changes. These are the types of moves most often encountered by the low-income segment of the population.

Childhood Risk factors and mobility. In a study of children and mobility, Long (1992) found that children with above average mobility are more likely to be living with one parent, more likely to be poor, and more likely to live in a household where the caregiver is unemployed or failed to graduate from high school. These are all factors that reduce life chances (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). In Humke and Schaefer's 1995 review of the literature on the effect of relocation on children and adolescents, frequent residential mobility was found to be a stressful life event that can negatively influence a child's development. Factors that increased the risk of impairment to a child's psychosocial and educational adjustment were negative parental attitude towards the move, moving due to family disruption, poor premove adjustment, the number of previous moves, the distance of the move, and the presence of multiple stressors. Contributing to the long-term effects of the move on children are factors such as the desirability of a move, the reason for relocation, and the support of family members (Scanlon & Devine, 2001). In their review of the literature Scanlon and Devine concluded that although some studies found that socioeconomic status, family structure, and premove functioning moderate the effects of a move, the correlation between mobility and other risk factors such as poverty and life-style changes show that highly mobile families have a profile of cumulative risk. Moves become more problematic for a child with the presence of one or more risk factors including economic stress, lack of social capital, or lack of social support. Poverty plays a key role in not only why people move but also in the risk factors predicting the outcomes of the moves.

Outcomes of Frequent Mobility

For the purposes of this study I have grouped the literature on outcomes into three categories: educational outcomes, social support and social capital, and family turbulence or chronic instability. Throughout this literature there is also a constant discussion of the outcomes of frequent childhood mobility and their relationship to poverty. Clearly understanding these outcomes will help in comprehending the obstacles the frequently mobile child faces with each move and subsequent adult outcomes.

Educational outcomes. Frequent residential mobility is associated with lower school engagement, lower achievement, and an increased risk of not graduating from high school. Several studies have investigated the mechanism for the association between mobility and school achievement (Haveman et al., 1991; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Teachman et al., 1996; Wright, 1999) but the exact mechanism has yet to be found. These studies conclude that although there may be interacting factors, which are not all clearly understood, such as family structure, ethnicity, and poverty, frequent mobility is a main contributor to lack of school achievement and graduation.

Lower levels of school engagement and higher rates of school disruption also contribute to significant educational problems for frequently mobile youth. We see through a growing literature, documentation of the lower rate of high school completion for the child experiencing frequent school changes associated with mobility (Haveman et al., 1991; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Teachman et al. 1996). This is important because as these children reach adulthood and become parents, their education level becomes directly linked to future income (Danziger & Gottschalk,

1996; Mayer, 1997). A recent review of the literature on frequent residential mobility found evidence that academic achievement is reduced in the mobile child and that this may influence childhood well-being (Scanlon & Devine, 2001). Scanlon and Devine also concluded that the effects of mobility are particularly pronounced for children from low-income or from single parent families.

In their exploration of factors in childhood that affect success in young adulthood, Haveman et al. (1991) chose high school completion as an indicator of success. Lack of high school completion is a key factor in those experiencing persistent poverty. They found that although all the family stress factors had an effect on educational outcomes, only the number of moves was significant in its relationship to high school completion. Three or more moves between the time a child was four and seven decreased the probability of graduating 14% from the base level whereas three or more moves between 12 and 15 decreased the probability by 10%. It is clear from these findings that frequent childhood moves are associated with the decreased likelihood of high school graduation and increased chances of experiencing poverty.

Mobility is a significant predictor of educational attainment although it may be confounded by ethnicity and family income (Wright, 1999). Wright examined both internal (within the same school district) and external (moves from district to district) mobility among grade school children in Kansas. Interestingly internal mobility was found to have the highest association with lack of attainment. Within district transfers are found to be most common among lower income students. Short distance moves are often precipitated by family factors such as decreases in income, which are frequently brought about by changes in family structure. After his initial analysis Wright

concluded that location mobility was significant in predicting achievement scores. In subsequent analyses however, he found its significance lowered in magnitude to ethnicity and low family income. This illustrates frequent mobility's place as part of a risk pool predicting low school achievement. Low family income level and ethnicity are also events that along with frequent mobility affect a family's social capital.

Having accounted for initial differences in academic achievement and differences between the sexes for a Head Start population Mantzicopoulos and Knutson (2000) concluded that frequent mobility and high academic risk go hand and hand. They join others in not being able to track the exact mechanism by which this occurs. In a study of residential mobility after divorce (Scott, Crowder, & Trent, 1998), it was speculated that divorce is a main factor in increased mobility, because in most cases the children remain with the mother they frequently experience a decline in the economic status of their neighborhood. The result of moving under these conditions is increasing difficulty retaining social support.

Social support and social capital. One of the consequences of frequent mobility is a disruption in the social support system and with that the social capital available to the individuals comprising a family. Social support has been known to diminish the effects of financial difficulties (Conger & Elder, 1994) and to reduce or buffer stress (Eamon, 2001). Perceived social support can help individuals alter their appraisals of an event as stressful (Wethington & Kessler, 1986). In addition, frequent mobility has been shown to disturb the social capital of individuals and families (Teachman et al., 1996).

In a study of the effects of economic distress on rural farm families, Conger and Elder (1994) found a direct association between economic pressure and negative mood. Negative moods create conflict in marriage and harsh parenting practices. Using the same data, Simons, Whitbeck, Melby, and Wu (1994) showed that economic pressure decreased support from a spouse. They then took this a step farther and investigated how outside social support might mitigate the effects of economic pressure. Although outside social support diminished the effect of financial difficulties, it did not diminish the developmental problems created by the effects of harsh parenting. Although this particular study was done in a rural area, Conger and Elder believe the results transfers to all settings.

It is this same social support from the outside community that Coleman (1988) theorizes can serve as social capital for the parents and be valuable in moderating an external stress such as frequent mobility. Hagan et al. (1996) state that external stress can be reduced through parental support as a family coping strategy. The ability of the family to provide parental support to recompense for the loss of community and family social capital can become strained by the loss of these resources as experienced by the frequently mobile. When moves were necessitated by family breakup the re-establishment of norms was particularly challenged. In investigating a low-income mobile population we must consider the possibility that parents may become so distressed by the change in social structure or other external stresses that parental support as a coping strategy either does not exist or is no longer available to the children. This lack of parental support, caused by elimination of one parent from the microsystem, leaves the children of frequently mobile families with generally weak

mesosystem linkages. Having lost the supports in one environment, the frequently mobile child must struggle to re-establish them in subsequent environments. Hagan et al., in their study of mobility in a suburb of Toronto, concluded that negative results of mobility are significantly more pronounced in families with uninvolved fathers and unsupportive mothers. The presence of uninvolved fathers or unsupportive mothers represents a loss of within-family social capital. This loss of social capital is a situation that often occurs as parents divorce and try to come to terms with their own experiences, but it may also occur in intact families where parents have distanced themselves emotionally from family members. Hagan et al. attribute this loss of social capital to a lack of system closure. When the father does not participate, whether present or absent in a family, the system is unable to reach closure. Without system closure, the established family norms and obligation and reciprocation functions of a bounded relationship cannot take place. This results in an inability for the social capital produced within a family to remain functional, again causing disadvantage for the child experiencing frequent moves.

Eamon (2001) discussed the social support network outside a family and its ability to mitigate the effects of stress. Frequent mobility disturbs both the mesosystem and exosystem environments and their influences on development. Findings suggest that the stress buffering effect of perceived social support may be more important than the actual social support received from the environment (Wethington & Kessler, 1986). Faced with a new situation after moving, it is quite likely the child will perceive a lack of social support. This is particularly true when the move is prompted by a family disruption (Humke & Schaefer, 1995). Perceived social

support influences adjustment by modifying appraisals of the situation. As Wethington and Kessler note, "It is only when the event is evaluated as threatening and coping capacities are evaluated as inadequate that stress occurs" (p. 84). Frequent mobility in childhood is clearly a stressful event that is quite likely to cause an evaluation of coping skills as inadequate. As a rule, lower-income families have fewer social contacts and a lower quality community environment. In the context of mobility in the lower income population, both the pre- and post-move environments may affect socioemotional development by undermining parenting practices, by peer influences, or by the presence of violence (Eamon).

Beyond a disruption in social support we must acknowledge the loss of social capital when a child moves. In most cases this loss involves all aspects of social capital including information gathering and peer or community norms. The child will need to re-establish her trust network in the new setting. This is in line with the belief that individuals who are in entrenched bounded social networks are more likely to accumulate social capital (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). These are the types of social networks that become problematic for highly mobile low-income families. The buffering effect of social capital becomes unavailable for the children in these families (Teachman et al., 1996). Teachman et al. also discussed their findings on social capital as it affects long-term outcomes. They identified loss of social capital as a result of mobility as a predictor of dropping out of high school. Dropping out of high school and loss of social capital are important factors in considering the consequences of frequent mobility, as dropping out of school has been directly connected with a

decline in income and with falling further behind. Thus loss of social capital becomes directly related to future success.

Children in poverty are already at a higher risk of socioemotional problems, including lower levels of sociability and initiative, and of more frequent problems with both internalizing and externalizing behavior (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Hanson, McLanahan, & Thomson, 1997). Mobility, then, adds even more instability in their lives. Geographic and residential mobility can disrupt system closure and connectedness. Coleman's (1988) premise is that, for families who have moved often, the social relations that constitute social capital are broken at each move. In the majority of cases children have little input on decisions about relocation (Brown & Orthner, 1990). This may contribute to their view of the move and increase the stress associated with it. Combined with the loss of social support and social capital this stress contributes to an overall disruption of the child's well-being at each move.

Family turbulence. Frequent residential mobility has been recognized as a main component contributing to family instability or turbulence. Family turbulence is a concept that is used to capture the chronic instability that results from frequent and repeated changes in a family's daily life. The exact aggregate of indicators of family turbulence varies from study to study. Frequent mobility however has been a key indicator in several studies (Ackerman, Kogos, Youngstrom, Scoff, & Izard, 1999; Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002; Moore, Vandivere, & Ehrle, 2000). Recent studies of children in chronically turbulent families have found correlation evidence of developmental problems such as externalizing and internalizing behavior in preschool and primary age children (Ackerman et al.) as well as problem behaviors among

children 6 to 17 years old (Adam & Chase-Lansdale; Moore et al.). These behaviors interfere with a child's ability to form a new social support system. It has been postulated that the effects of constant mobility on child functioning may be due to the disruption of friendships with schoolmates and teachers, child-parent relations, or in combination with other events that create a chaotic environment for the child (Ackerman et al.; Brown & Orthner, 1990).

The presence of family turbulence seems to be more frequent and problematic for low-income children. If the turbulence is short lived and results in a move in an upward direction it may not influence long-term well-being. If this chaotic environment persists, however, it may cause poor long- and short-term outcomes for the developing children. According to Moore et al. (2000), various indicators point to higher levels of turbulence in the disadvantaged population than in the population as a whole. Their study indicated that turbulence is associated with lower levels of school engagement and higher levels of behavioral and emotional problems.

In a study of African American adolescent girls currently living in low-income families it was determined that family instability, as measured by parental separations and residential mobility, increased adolescent adjustment problems (Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002). It was suggested that these problems occur because frequent moves disrupt lives both inside and outside the home. The authors noted that adolescence was a time when community links began to form that, coupled with normative developmental transitions, increased the disruptive nature of frequent mobility. By adolescence, children who move are not only losing their parent's social capital but the personal social capital they have begun to establish.

Studies that have explored the loss of social capital and high school graduation in frequently mobile children have concluded that moving is associated with loss of human capital and poor school performance (Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Teachman et al., 1996). Mechanisms for this association have not been clearly defined. Researchers speculate that changing schools reduces the knowledge of the school by parents and students, and may force a change in curriculum that causes difficulty for the child. Families may be less likely to use resources available from the school or children may feel isolated, with the possible consequence of seeking marginal social contacts, such as students on the fringes of the school social network who have little social capital themselves (Teachman et al.). Despite not having a solid understanding of the mechanism, Pribesh and Downey noted that they were unable to identify any group that consistently benefited from moving. It is apparent that family structure and economic well-being are tightly linked in any discussion of the mechanisms at work in the frequently mobile child.

Summary

Despite the varying foci of the literature reviewed, the authors keep returning to the fact that frequent residential mobility does disadvantage children. A single mechanism has not been isolated for the disruptive results of mobility on children but the authors continually warn that this disadvantage is greatest for those in low-income, single parent homes.

As we examine this problem from a theoretical perspective, we can see the significant interactions of the individual and the environment. Children in mobile low-income families experience disruption in their microsystem environments as

interpersonal connections with friends and relatives are broken. Mesosystem linkages between home, teachers, and peers and other important resources become unavailable to children. Strains are also seen in the exosystem. These include lack of knowledge of community norms and a lack of the security established by an obligation network. These losses are transferred to the child through a disruption in the social capital of the parents.

In this study I use this literature on the effects of frequent mobility on children as a basis for determining some of the themes to be explored. These include social support, educational attainment, and links to economic outcomes. It is important to remember that residential shifts are not random. Whereas some moves are upwardly mobile, frequent mobility tends to be tied disproportionately to low-income, single parent families. Using the Even Start data set with its given population of low-income participants, I explore the ways in which the participants describe their lives and the effects frequent childhood mobility had on them.

CHAPTER 3

Method

This study uses secondary data from interviews included in a long-term follow-up study of Oregon's Even Start Program ($n=31$) conducted in 1998-1999. These data were used to perform an in-depth qualitative analysis and create a picture of how mobility affected the participants. Participants in the sample described their experiences with mobility in childhood and their perceptions of the effect of that mobility. The Even Start Study is particularly appropriate because of the links between frequent mobility and low educational attainment as seen in the literature.

Oregon's Even Start Program

Participants in this study were members of a follow-up study of Oregon's Even Start program. Even Start is a federally funded family literacy program established in 1988 by the United States Congress (Federal Register, September 28, 1994). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act defines family literacy as a program that includes the following four-components:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children
- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher and full partners in the education of their children.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency
- Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

Even Start targets low-income parents eligible for adult education services under the Adult Education Act (P.L. 89-750) who have children under the age of eight.

Even Start is charged with recruiting the most needy in a community, based on income and literacy skills, and giving them the opportunity to improve basic literacy skills, become their child's first and best teacher, and improve their parenting skills. These families typically have multiple barriers to overcome including deep and persistent poverty, a history of drug or alcohol abuse, experiences with family violence, learning disabilities, low academic achievement, physical and mental health problems, or a lack of English literary skills.

Sample. Participants in the follow-up study included 28 mothers and 3 fathers from 29 families. All were past Even Start students from three programs in Oregon. The three programs were selected because they had been in operation for at least four years, and thus had a substantial pool of English speaking former participants from which to recruit. The families in the sample entered Even Start between 1989 and 1996, and had participated in the program for an average of 1.8 years. The interviews were conducted in 1998 -1999. The participants were required to have been out of the program for at least two years to be included in this study.

Each program targeted a slightly different population and began operations at different times; consequently, the demographic characteristics of the study participants vary somewhat across the three programs as shown in Table 1. At the time of the interviews, the mean age of the participants was 32.3 years. Most (73.3 %) were married or living with a partner, with the remaining 26.6% single, divorced, or separated. The average number of children per family was 2.9.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample Overall and by Program.

CHARACTERISTIC	TOTAL	SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3
<i>Sex of Participant</i>				
Female	28	7	10	11
Male	3	1	1	1
<i>Age of Participant</i>				
Range	23-51	28-36	23-28	33-51
Mean	32.3	31.9	25.4	39.5
<i>Monthly Pretax income</i>				
Range	540-8750	1074-4964	540-8750	1600-4125
Median	2283.5	1600	2900	2433.5
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Married/Living Partner	24	7	8	9
Single/Divorced/Separated	7	1	3	3
<i>Number of Children</i>				
Range	1-6	1-6	1-5	2-4
Mean	2.9	3.5	2.5	2.8
<i>Place of Birth</i>				
US	27	8	11	8
Mexico	4	0	0	4
<i>Education at Entry to Even Start</i>				
8 th grade or less	4		3	1
Did not finish high school	20	9	6	9
Diploma or GED	3			3

Due to the criteria for enrollment at the time of entry into Even Start, 24 of the participants had reported having less than a high school education and only 3 had a diploma or GED. The median pretax income of the group at the time of the interviews was \$2284 per month with a range of \$540 to \$8750. Four of the participants were born in Mexico, but by the time of entry into the Even Start program they were fluent in English. As can be seen on Table 1, participants in the Site 2 program were, on average, much younger than either Site 1 or Site 3 participants, undoubtedly because the Site 2 program targeted young parents, and also because it was the program that started most recently. Because the Site 3 program began operations in 1989, the Site 3 participants were oldest. They also had the largest families, perhaps a reflection of the fact that many were nearing the end of their childbearing years.

Procedures

Initial Contact and Recruitment of Participants

An Even Start staff member from each program approached former Even Start participants about participation in the study. Low-income families tend to be fairly mobile and the Even Start population is no exception. Finding former Even Start students was extremely challenging. Contacts were made by phone, mail, or through a chance in-person encounter. In some cases, the former participant had periodically kept in contact with the Even Start program and the staff had their current address and phone number. Some programs have reunion events from time to time and/or send holiday mailings to former participants, which facilitated the subject recruitment process. Participants were also often able to provide contact information for other students who had attended the program with them. When contacted about the study,

participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the type of data that would be collected, and were they invited to join the study. Although all former students located and contacted indicated interest in the study, not all were eventually interviewed because the research team was unable to reach some interested participants at the time of the interviews. A few who agreed to participate missed several scheduled interviews and were dropped from the list of potential subjects.

Interview Procedures

Even Start parents completed an in-depth interview in a location of their choosing, usually at the Even Start site or in their home. Occasionally the former student was interviewed in the home of the staff member who was conducting the interview. The interviewer in nearly every case was a staff member from the Even Start program they attended. Informed consent documents were given to participants prior to the interview. These documents were written in lay language and the interviewer was instructed to go over each one verbally and answer any questions before asking for the participant's signature.

The Interview Protocol

The adult interview protocol consisted of three sections: a demographic profile, open-ended questions about a variety of topics, and survey measures. The open-ended qualitative questions covered the following topics: Even Start participation, employment and family resources, transportation and economic well-being, childcare arrangements, education and parental involvement in schools, mental health, and social support.

Included in the interviews were also questions about their family of origin experiences and childhood mobility. A copy of the protocol is located in Appendix A. Participants were asked general questions about what their family was like when they were growing up and their relationship with their parents. The mobility questions asked were: How often did your family move when you were a child? and, Do you know why? In analyzing the data I focus on the responses to these questions and the perceived consequences of frequent mobility in the participants' lives.

Data Coding and Analysis Procedures

Qualitative analysis. The original qualitative interviews with the mothers were coded by Leslie Richards the principal investigator, and three graduate students from Oregon State University. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded for thematic content using the principles of grounded theory (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) and qualitative analysis techniques (Berg, 1995; Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992; Strauss & Corbin 1990). Each interview was first read several times to identify common themes across interviews, then the entire content of the interview was systematically coded. Data were coded by thematic content regardless of where in the interview the content appear. The coding scheme is presented in Appendix B.

For this study I extracted data from the original qualitative interviews that was coded Family of Origin by the original research team, using WinMax data management software. In addition, I read through all of 31 interviews to determine if any of the other material not included in the original family of origin code should be included in my subcoding procedure. After reviewing the interviews I decided that no additional information related to the research question on frequent childhood mobility

would be gained by including additional material in my subcoding. I then subcoded the family of origin material into categories based on the predominating themes found in the data. To subcode the data I developed additional categories to further classify the original codings. In order to do this I took the data from three interviews and read through them three times each identifying common themes in the material. In addition, another graduate student at Oregon State also read through the same family of origin material and identified what she considered the common themes. In these independent readings of the material the same sub-themes were noted. Themes that emerged in the subcoding were emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; substance abuse; the family's economic situation; participant educational level; geographic relocation; health; the marital relationship of the parents; parent child relationships; and sibling relationships (for the complete coding scheme see Appendix C). The family of origin data from each interview were then read and coded with the identified themes. Each subcode was then extracted from the interviews and read for content. The material was analyzed by looking for patterns within and between the various codes and interviews. In this presentation of findings I focus on the material subcoded geographic relocation and its relationship to the other identified themes. (Berg, 1995; Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In the presentation of findings I have used direct quotes of participants without correcting for grammar or word choice. The quotes included were chosen because they were representative of the overall experiences of the participants. Pseudonyms have been used for the participants with each participant retaining the same pseudonym throughout the analysis. Place names have also been changed.

A key issue I faced was defining frequent mobility. As I reviewed the literature, I realized that there was no standard for this term. Definitions of frequent mobility vary from more than three times during the school years, to four or more moves in two years, to a measure of moderate mobility as under eight moves, with nine or more being frequent (Scanlon & Devine, 2001). Other studies do not group the number of moves at all (Brown & Orthner, 1990) and one study (Wood, Halfon, Scarlata, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993) called the top 10% of its random sample frequent movers. There was no previous standard. In forming my definition of frequent mobility I considered the lack of precision in several of the interviewees' answers to the retrospective questions about how frequently and why they moved in childhood. I also took into account the fact that this was not a random sample. As was discussed in the literature this was a population that was predisposed to frequent moves. For the purposes of the qualitative study I defined frequent mobility as four or more moves during childhood. This seemed to be a natural breaking point between groups in the study with 14 participants falling below this line and 17 above.

Quantitative analysis. While analyzing the qualitative data several differences emerged in the participants' descriptions of their economic stability in both childhood and adulthood and perceived parental social support in childhood, as related to childhood mobility, which lent themselves to quantitative analysis. In conjunction with the qualitative interviews quantitative measures were also gathered. Chi-square analyses were performed to determine if there were significant differences from the expected values between mobility groups on (a) the indicator of childhood economic well-being and (b) economic status at the time of the interviews. For the purposes of

this quantitative study zero to three moves during childhood were identified as the *low mobility group* and those with four or more moves were considered *highly mobile*.

Current income was figured in dollars per month and in terms of stability, with two groups, those who were *in or near poverty* and those who were *neither in nor near poverty*. Childhood economic well-being was categorized in two groups, those whose families *received assistance or were in severe hardship* and those whose families were *stable economically*. Additional chi-square tests were performed to determine if there was a significant difference between the expected values and actual values of the mobility groups between those with perceived social support of a parent or parental figure in childhood and those without. For the purposes of this study those who self-describe their relationship with a parent or parental figure (a grandparent) as good or supportive were classified as having perceived parental social support in childhood.

Two additional chi-square tests were performed to determine the relationships between those who moved frequently in childhood and those who did not, and parental marital status during the participant's childhood, and the participant's education level at their entrance into the Even Start program. To understand the relationship between the average monthly income of the frequent and low childhood movers among those in poverty and those neither in nor near poverty independent samples *t*-tests were performed.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Qualitative Data Analysis

When looking for trends in the lives of the participants it became apparent that, for this population, frequent mobility is just part of a constellation of risk factors. It is hard to tease out the influences of poverty, family structure, dropping out of school, and the role of mobility in the lives of these families. These are the same factors that have been confounding in many of the quantitative studies on mobility (Mantizicopoulos & Knutson, 2000; Scanlon & Devine, 2001; Wright, 1999). In studying the stories of the interviewees however, we get a strong sense that mobility has not only combined with other factors in influencing their well-being but in many cases is key in beginning a cycle of disruption in their lives.

First, I explore the reasons for some of the families' moves to see what role, if any, mobility plays in upsetting the environments these families have established. Then I move to a discussion of the themes that became apparent in the interviews and literature including why people move, the effects of mobility on educational levels, the effects on social support, and mobility and health as contributors to family turbulence. In addition, I provide examples of how frequent mobility in childhood affected goals in adulthood. As the intent of this analysis is to paint a picture of the lives of these Even Start participants, and the role frequent childhood mobility played in shaping their environments, whenever possible, I let the participants speak for themselves.

Why People Move

Reviewing the data there appear to be three basic categories of movers. The first group consists of those who move for new jobs or in hopes of finding jobs. Housing need, either due to change in family size or monetary considerations, necessitates the moves of the second group. Closely related to both housing and job concerns are those moves instigated by a change in family structure. In the next section I look more closely at why some of the participant families had frequent moves during their childhoods.

Lack of job stability. Like other frequently mobile families, job stability played a role in the lives of some of the low-income population interviewed. One of the Even Start mothers, Kelly, first explained the frequent mobility she had experienced as a young child with this statement, "When I was little and we were with my father, we probably moved anywhere from once a month to, if we were lucky, we stayed in one place longer than a year." When asked what her father did for a job she expanded,

He was kind of an entrepreneur in the sense that he would work some place for six months. He couldn't work for anybody; he had to be the boss. And he was always inventing things, always had great ideas. He worked for a major movie studio once, he built the little houses and stuff when Godzilla came and broke them up Another time he worked on cars. He could take a car apart, and put it back together without looking at a book. He was just naturally like that
Some people said that he was too smart.

It is hard to know exactly what effects this high mobility had on Kelly. When asked if she attributed her frequent moves to her father's inability to hold a job, she replied "yeah," she thought that was the reason. The fact that Kelly was under five when she experienced these moves does not eliminate the risk factors of mobility. It has been

found by researchers that experiencing three or more moves between the ages of four and seven decreases the chance of high school graduation by 14% (Haveman et al., 1991). Her father left the family when she was five. By the time her father left her life, Kelly had accumulated a number of risk factors that increased her chances of dropping out of school: high mobility, living with a single mother, and poverty (Scanlon & Devine, 2001). Due in part to her father's inability to hold a job, Kelly began her life in poverty and has not yet been able to escape it. At the time of the interview, even after completing the Even Start program and obtaining her GED, Kelly was still struggling and found herself living only slightly above the poverty line.

Representative of some immigrant families from Mexico was Anna's family. Anna was born in Mexico but spent much of her youth following her migrant worker parents throughout the United States. When asked if she moved after coming to the United States Anna recalled, "We moved, oh gosh, we were migrant workers, so we moved lots of times." She then recounted her moves, explaining that they followed the harvest from Florida to Utah, to Wyoming to Texas and back. Despite the fact she and her eight siblings worked in the fields with her parents, the family still experienced the hardships of poverty and changing housing conditions. Explaining she said, "No, no there was times when we used to go to bed without no food. You're hungry, no electricity, no water, you know. Really bad." She told about one of the houses they lived in saying,

You could see the stars Through the roof, it was like; I don't even know what was holding this little shack. I don't remember what it was, but I could see the stars, and here I'm having my last bowl of beans and

I'm trying to eat it really good ... and I was going to eat it and then something falls and plops into my bowl of beans It was a baby rat.

The mobility of low wage migrant families presents a picture of frequent mobility as the core of family life. As we can tell from Anna's description, the mobility she experienced was not taking her into a better lifestyle but taking her from difficult circumstance to difficult circumstance. The end results however are the same as for others in the study, a complex of intertwined events including frequent mobility and poverty. Anna's story is also interesting because Anna's family is one of the five families in the group that were frequently mobile in childhood that are currently living neither in nor near poverty. In the early days of the Even Start program, some participants were allowed to enroll that had slightly higher education levels. Anna already had her GED when she entered the program and she was hoping to develop more life and job skills during her time in Even Start. In addition Anna came from an intact and supportive family, having ready access to her family's social capital system throughout her many moves. We might speculate that her current success is a result of the buffering effects of good social support and the availability of social capital as well as her previous educational obtainment.

Unlike the vertical housing moves experienced by more affluent movers, Lucinda, another mother in the study, reported on the frequent moves she made in childhood. Despite the fact that she reports moving for job and housing opportunities for her family, these "better" opportunities were never realized. When asked how often she had moved as a child she guessed that it had been somewhere between 15

and 20 times. She was then asked if she knew why they moved so often, she explained,

In the same area, it's just housing conditions ... we moved from Oregon to California for Dad to get better work. Then we moved back to Oregon because my sister was up here and my mom and dad wanted to live here. Mostly around the valley here.

Lucinda's family remained mobile throughout her childhood. Despite their search for something better Lucinda described her family as living in severe hardship throughout her youth. This has carried over into her own life, as at the time of the interview, Lucinda and her family were still living in poverty. Another group experiencing frequent mobility were those participants who moved to improve their housing situations.

Housing Needs. Juanita, another one of the Mexican born participants, experienced frequent childhood mobility due to the extreme poverty into which she was born. Juanita is an example of the value of a strong social support network that provides housing support. When discussing her mobility, she explained that when she was a child they did not have a house. Her family would stay in one place for three or four years and then move on when the family they were staying with needed more room. Fortunately for Juanita, her family had others in the community they could count on for housing support until her father, a construction worker, was eventually able to build their own house. Throughout her childhood her father's work often took him away from his family for long stretches of time. She reports, "They keep moving a lot of people (for work). My dad sometimes just stayed out of the house for months so we don't see him a lot." Her father's absences continued throughout Juanita's

childhood. Despite the support that Juanita had from her mother and other extended family members, she still mentions the loss of her father's daily support in her life. Interestingly, although as a child she was no longer experiencing frequent mobility, her father's job related absences were still affecting the family.

Heather was another participant who attributed her frequent mobility to a need for better housing. Heather, one of eight siblings, was raised by a single mother. Her family received assistance when they were growing up, including subsidized housing. When questioned about the number and reasons for her childhood moves Heather recalled the moves they had made and the fact that some of her siblings were born after the family moved to Oregon. She responded to questions about her mobility as follows:

We went from California to over here ... we just moved around Maple Grove, different schools and stuff Like every three years. Just, we'd move from a house to apartments Why, why, why, why, I know it wasn't because, you know, mama got kicked out. Mama was always good; she's always kept her bills up and everything. I don't know, just mom would just decide we needed a bigger house and stuff like that.

Heather implies that these were residual moves necessitated by the increasing size and ages of her family. Like others in the study Heather's mobility was a result of necessity rather than prestige.

Marital Disruption. Another reason for frequent mobility in childhood was parental separation or divorce. In a number of the families the precipitator of the disruption seemed to be some type of physical or substance abuse. Several of the participants discussed a break-up in their family as the beginning of their experience with frequent mobility. Ellen told her story saying,

My parents they didn't really get along and stuff so, they got separated when I was ... ten, ten or nine, somewhere in there ... And then I moved up here with my mom. I guess it was all right ... My Mom she's getting mad at my dad and she'll move out and then go back. So we moved around quite a bit. But it was like back and forth from Reno to, from Reno to Milwaukee, to Reno, to Milwaukee, and then finally we moved up here to Cypress when I was maybe 10, 11, somewhere around there.

Parental divorce and separation were frequent in the sample as a whole became marital disruption is also a key issue in lack of high school graduation, which was a common factor in the sample. However, marital disruption did occur at a greater frequency among those who experienced frequent childhood mobility than those who did not.

Frequent residential mobility was often associated with families where some type of emotional, physical, or substance abuse was present. In several cases, the abuse situation contributed to the family's break-up, resulting in a childhood of instability for the interviewee. In the description of one of the mothers, we can see the chaotic life style abuse created for Ashley. She spoke about growing up in an abusive family. In her case this led to the break-up of her parents' marriage and led her into a period spent in transition. Discussing her childhood mobility Ashley explained that for the first 12 or 13 years she lived in the same house, however when her parents separated, she moved between 5 and 10 times. In Ashley's case, not only did the split between her parents lead to frequent mobility but it was also the stimulus for her to leave school. Ashley expressed this clearly when she explained,

At that point it was my father who was abusive and drank ... they had joint custody so my brother and I were basically passed back and forth between Mom and Dad. And it was during that time I quit school. Well basically after the divorce and Mom decided she was a free woman and we had no supervision at all. So we were basically raising ourselves.

In some cases frequent mobility caused the participants' problems because of the challenges of continually readjusting. In others cases they suffered not only from the problems of the move itself, but the lifestyle that resulted from it. Kelly, whose father left when she was five, was asked about when her father left and that highly mobile period in her life. Kelly recounted, "... I had to go see a psychiatrist. And because I guess I was emotionally attached. But there's a lot that I don't remember because I'm the type of person when I'm in pain I forget." In discussing her relationship with her mother throughout her growing up years she said,

There was us three, and my little brother was six years younger. And so basically we got to do whatever we wanted. Because my mom worked, she worked Monday through Friday, 8 to 5, she worked evenings as a cocktail waitress and then in her spare time she took classes at the Community College and State University ... As a child she was just somebody who popped in once in a while. So it wasn't a strong relationship until high school."

Like Ashley, Kelly was basically raising herself. In effect because of the lack of a relationship with her parents, Kelly lost the social support and some of the associated social capital of both parents. Not only did she lose these familial relationships, but felt she had no other choice but to begin to make adult decisions.

When discussing government assistance her family had received when she was a child Kelly explained,

I know we didn't have medical and that kind of stuff. Because there was times where I broke bones and never told her. And that's just the way we were. And we took on, like I said, the kids, us kids took on that responsibility. We chose not to tell her things.

By the time Kelly was high school age she had dropped out of school and begun helping her mother support herself and her three siblings. Again she was

making adult decisions, as she explained, “ it wasn’t something that was just said, ‘you will go out and put food on the table.’ But I saw what needed to be done and so I did it.”

Mobility and Educational Experience

Low educational achievement was the common link between all the participants in the Even Start program. In analyzing the data I found no difference in educational attainment at the time of entry into Even Start between the low mobility and high mobility groups. Of the 31 participants in the sample 4 had dropped out in the eighth grade or below, 20 had entered but not completed high school, 3 had GEDs or a high school diploma and the information was missing in four cases. The results of the chi-square test, described in the quantitative section, found no significant difference between the expected and actual group membership of the mobility groups in connection with educational level at the time of entrance into Even Start. What appeared in the stories of the frequent movers however were some classic examples of why they had left school early.

As discussed earlier, Kelly made the decision to quit school to help support her family. Sean’s decision was based on his perception that he had lost the social support of his family and his education did not really matter. When asked about his parents’ involvement in his schooling, he related,

My mom did in grade school, she was wonderful. She was called a room mother. And my dad made ribbons for the track meets. That was at grade school, once I got into junior high, they lost interest, we lost interest in school.

Sean quit school at the end of his freshman year although getting As and Bs because he got “bored.” After completing Even Start, Sean reported being more interested in what his children are doing in their classes, asking them, “ So what’s going on and that type of thing.” He was trying to prevent what he had experienced in his childhood. Sean was one of the participants at the lower end of the frequent mobility scale with five moves in his childhood. He grew up with both of his parents in a family that he describes as “just breaking even” financially. At the time of the interview, Sean was struggling to make ends meet, with an income below the poverty line.

Jillian, another frequent mover, reports her experience with moving and schools this way,

So we were going, we were moving a lot ... a lot of different schools. And it’s kind of, it was kind of fun, but kind of unsteady at the same time. I kind of like to be in one spot, take care of it, and so, yeah we did.

Jillian also reports her family to be “kind of unfit,” reporting problems clashing with her parents. Jillian’s family received assistance when she was growing up. Amidst the instability in her life, Jillian’s ultimate decision to quit school came when she was 15 and became pregnant.

It is difficult to determine exactly what role frequent mobility played in the decisions of Kelly, Sean, and Jillian to quit school. Frequent childhood mobility however is the one of the key factors that ties them all together. One speculation is that the changing environments they experienced in their childhoods may have disrupted the social capital available to them. This includes the presence of social capital available from solid relationships between adults in a community, which is available

to others but is not available to frequently mobile parents. Frequent mobility in and of itself matters (Coleman, 1988; Pribesh & Downey, 1999).

Frequent Childhood Mobility

Parental social support in childhood, as reported by Hagan et al. (1996), seemed to serve as a buffer to the effects linked to frequent mobility in some of the participants' families. Several of the participants in the study had experienced four or more moves in their childhood yet found that it caused little disruption in their lives. This was the case with Mike, who related this comment when asked about his childhood moves,

No we really didn't move that much. We probably moved, ah four of five times in the entire time that I grew up, including right down to when I was born ... Ah I think they just kind of wanted a change of environment. They were trying to find a better place to raise us. That was pretty much what their whole gist was.

Mike experienced several of the factors associated with frequent mobility including living in a family that struggled to get by and not completing high school. Mike, however, did have the presence of both of his parents in a supportive relationship. Reporting on his relationship with his parents he mentioned his relationship was good when he was a child and describing his relationship with his father he noted "Me and my Dad get along great." As suggested by Hagan et al. (1996) the social support and social capital received from his family may have been enough to buffer any stress Mike may have felt from his mobility. It is also important to keep in mind that, like other stresses in life, individuals have varying abilities to handle the stresses a frequently mobile child encounters.

Lily was another participant in the frequently mobile category that described good relationships with her parents as a child. Although she was frequently mobile she did not associate this with any dysfunction in her life. When asked about her experience with childhood mobility and moving from California to Oregon she explained,

We moved up here when I was three, my dad lived on Oak Creek and he lived there for a long time until I was about nine. And then he moved to an apartment. My mom and I and my sisters lived on 8th street in a house until my mom bought some property ... between Mason Falls and Hopefield. And we lived, until she had enough money saved to get a mobile home to put up there, we lived there I can't remember when we moved out of there, but then she moved back down into town, and that was in my early teens. And my dad lived in his apartment ... and then he got some property up in Rivera ... so it was all in the same town.

Lily also explained that she alternated between living with her mother and her father during her childhood. When asked about her mobility as a child she was quick to point out however that although she had made several moves they were all within the same school district and she did not believe they were disruptive. In fact, these numerous moves (at least seven) from place to place in the same area, and back and forth between her parents had all taken place before she was in the tenth grade. Lily left home in the tenth grade, moved to Granite City, and spent the next several years moving around sharing houses with several different friends.

In retrospect, Lily did not associate moving with any disruption in her lifestyle. She did, however, relate a story about one of the moves that took place when she was about seven when her family was moving out to some rural property. When they first moved she reported, "And we lived, until she had enough money saved ... For a brief

period we lived in a green army tank” She went on to discuss what it was like for them before they were able to get a mobile home for the property,

We lived, yeah, we moved out of White Street, and out to the property. We had all our stuff there, sort of stacked together in boxes and things, covered up. It wasn't winter or anything, but it was probably summer, spring or fall. I don't know how long we lived that way. But I remember that sometimes we wouldn't have milk and we had cereal and I'd complain because I had cereal with water. My sisters would be mad because they didn't get cereal at all.

It is hard to untangle the various factors influencing Lily's life but it is clear from her description that mobility, poverty, and living with a single parent, put her at risk for dropping out of high school. When viewing Lily's life from an outsiders' perspective, we see many signs of hardship. Lily, however, views her life as ordinary. This attitude was seen in many of the interviews. Hardship is not a problem; it is the only life they have known. Lily reports having a good relationships with both of her parents during her childhood. This was used as an indicator of good perceived childhood social support. Although her parents were separated, she still felt the network of family social support despite the mobility in her life. It is possible that the presence of perceived social support was enough to protect her from feeling the disruption frequent mobility seems to have played in her life. Lily knew that at anytime she was welcome in both of her parents' homes, as she says “And it was sort of my choice. I just wanted, whoever I wanted to live with it was my choice.” In spite of leaving home during high school, she described her relationship with her mom as good except for the two years she distanced herself from her mother. She explained her relationship with her mother saying, “It was good as a kid, and then it was an abrupt leaving, and then it was good as an adult. My mom's a good mom.” Lily left to

visit her sister for spring vacation when she was in the tenth grade. During this time Lily lived with friends or other teenagers she met in Granite City. It was not clear from Lily's description what had brought about this disruption in her relationship with her mother. Throughout most of this period her mother continued to try and contact Lily. She explains by saying,

My mom had tried being nice, "oh come home." And then she tried being mean, "Come home right now" or "I'm call the cops" or ... the principal's gonna press charges against me cause you're not in school." And I said, "I'm sorry, I'll write him a letter or give him a call and let him know that I'm in control of this situation." But you know, she tried different things and then they just kind of waited for me to contact them. And it was a couple of years like that. And you know, I was just hanging out with friends and living with other teenagers, or young people.

Lily seems to be an example of the literature reporting that what is more important than the social support received is the perceived social support (Wethington & Kessler, 1986). Lily was one of the frequent childhood movers that was neither in nor near poverty at the time of the interview, showing her resilience after growing up in poverty, dropping out of school, and being subject to repeated moves in her childhood.

Social support and social capital. Lucinda, who attributed her childhood mobility to her parents' search for better jobs and better housing, also acknowledged the difficult family situation and lack of parental participation she experienced. Describing her childhood she explained, "[It was] Rough, Mom and Dad were alcoholics. It was rough ... No money; they weren't there, no discipline, no support, no nothing. And it was just hard times." Lucinda's family received assistance as she was growing up and she is currently still living below the poverty line.

Lucinda went on to discuss her relationships with her parents, explaining that she and her mother fought all the time and there was a lot of distance between her and her father. She explained, "Lots of distance there. My dad wasn't a very good father, so. Me and my parents weren't real close." She explained that her father was a long haul truck driver and was gone for "weeks and months." In her description of her childhood experiences, Lucinda clearly highlights the lack of support she received from her parents and, in particular, the lack of involvement of her father. As often found with frequent movers, it is difficult to determine how all the hardship in Lucinda's life fit together. Lucinda reported moving between 15 and 20 times during her childhood. In addition to the lack of parental social support she describes, with such frequent moves in her childhood, it is doubtful that Lucinda would have a chance to draw on the social capital available in the community, particularly as she had no parental support to open those opportunities. Lucinda's description of her family lends support to the idea that lack of parental social support may be a key factor in her development. The lack of paternal participation in Lucinda's life gives us an example of Hagan et al.'s (1996) work on frequent mobility as a reducer of social capital. With a lack of parental participation Hagan et al. believe that the system is unable to reach closure. Without system closure, the established family norms and obligation and reciprocation functions of a bounded relationship cannot take place. As we can see in Lucinda's case, this leaves the mobile child at a distinct disadvantage. Frequent mobility often disrupts socioemotional adjustment (Schaefer, 1995). Although we do not have direct evidence of the cause, we are given information about Lucinda's socioemotional adjustment, as she describes herself when she first entered the Even

Start program explaining, “Yes I was probably one of the biggest ones in the whole class. The first group, we were a pretty devastated group. We didn’t want to talk; we didn’t want to do anything. We all just wanted to be left alone.” As noted by Scanlon and Devine (2001), frequent moves become more problematic for children with the presence of economic instability, lack of social capital, or lack of social support.

Another frequently mobile participant, Jane discussed the loss of her mother’s social support, when describing her childhood and her relationship with her mother.

She begins explaining her feelings about her mother saying,

My mom was not a mom to me. She didn’t do her motherly duties of being a mom to me ... I basically raised myself and took care of myself to the best of my knowledge of what I knew how. I moved several, several times, I moved a whole lot when I was a young kid, and never was steady in one place for more than maybe six months. So I moved a lot, and my family life was very dysfunctional.... My mom was with a lot of men. She dated a lot of men. She had her problems ... you know it was just some relationship wouldn’t work out and we’d have to move out. Or we’d move in with my grandparents and you know ... It was a back and forth, back and forth situation.

Jane also told about the time when she was about six and her mother gave up custody to her grandparents saying “and (she) said that she couldn’t take care of me, but took my little sister. And took care of my little sister. And um, and then came back probably a year or two later and finally got me back.” Although in retrospect Jane clearly recalls not liking the lifestyle she lived with her mother, she also felt abandoned by her mother when she was left with her grandparents and her sister was not. Throughout most of Jane’s childhood, her father was not present in her life. She explained, “I didn’t start seeing my dad until I was 9. I seen my dad when I was 9, then he left and didn’t come back until I was 12. And from the time I was 12, I’ve seen

him at least once, maybe three or four times a year.” Even her stays at her grandparents’ house were not a time of stability for her. As she says, “When I was at my grandparents I think that my lifestyle was decent, I’m not going to say great ... Or I got what I needed. Um, I didn’t ... it was a very confused childhood for me.”

Jane’s story presents another instance of intertwined risk factors. Frequent mobility is tightly linked with Jane’s perception of a lack of social support from her mother and her father. Jane’s life seems to be a perfect example of the inability to get settled in one environment before being displaced to another. Parental social support can sometimes be a buffer in families like Jane’s, but unfortunately even this was not available to her.

Low Childhood Mobility

Many of those in the group experiencing low childhood mobility also experienced lives of hardship. Without the added burden of frequent mobility however their reports portray less chaotic childhoods. On the whole, these participants display better adult outcomes, with a large majority living neither in or near poverty at the time of the interviews. Clarissa, one of the participants in the low mobility group is an example of someone who experienced a degree of chaos in her childhood but at the time of the interview was doing well. Clarissa moved only once during her childhood, she explains saying

We moved only once. Ah there was a brief time when my parents were together ... my father was an alcoholic and abusive, so when my mother stopped living with him then we moved in with my grandparents.

She reports that her grandparents raised her and provided stability much like parents in her childhood. She continues to explain that while she lived with her grandparents her mother attended nursing school during the day and worked nights so they did not have a close relationship. Adding to the activity in Clarissa's life was the fact that her grandparents took in boarders as well, describing the situation she reports,

And at that time anybody black came in through the town, you know like people that worked for the state fair would come there. Or if they have any kind of convention, cause there was still prejudice back then.

Clarissa's family received government assistance as she was growing up to supplement her mother's income. Despite the hardships she faced as a child she describes her childhood as that of a "typical 1950's family". Seeing themselves as part of a normal family was common in the descriptions of those in the low mobility group, however these types of descriptions were missing in those in the frequent mobility group. This leads to the speculation that it is the addition of frequent mobility to the mix that pushes families into chaos.

Social support and social capital. Participants experiencing low childhood mobility were more likely to perceive good social support from at least one parent or grandparent in childhood than those in the high mobility group. Sarah was one of the mothers in the low mobility group. Sarah reported having a good relationship with her mother despite problems with her father. When asked what her family was like growing up she explained,

Dysfunctional. Somewhat dysfunctional. And my mom and dad divorced when I was about 9 and my dad had some major problems. And I don't talk to him very much these days. He was brought up on sexual molestation charges ... we moved to California.

At first her story sounds much like those in the high mobility group. She continues however by describing her mom,

My mom was the primary person, she was a very strong person, she was a big role model, very admirable for how she handled the situation that she was going through. And she went on welfare when they split up and instead of staying home like a lot do she went to college. I learned that from her.

When asked about their relationship she responds, "It was pretty good. I was kind of a wild teenager, so. But it was okay." Sarah also explained that they had moved to California after the divorce to be near her aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Sarah may have described her family as dysfunctional, but through her relationship with her mother, she had parental social support not often available to those in the high mobility group.

Gayle was a member of the low mobility group that had good parental social support from her mom despite her father's absence. She said succinctly "... well, my mom worked and was stable" and she then described their relationship as "Close. Really close." Kristin, also raised by a single mother, received most of her familial social support from her grandparents as she explains, "my mom, no my grandparents raised me. My mom was a single parent and she worked nights I think we were not very close at that time." She continues saying, "I was very close to my grandmother." The presence of social support seems to be a common factor in the low mobility group. Clearly social support is important, its dominating presence in the low mobility group as opposed to the high mobility group leads to the speculation that the disruption of frequent mobility also contributes to the disruption of social support. The

analysis of the interviews also suggests two additional factors that differ between the frequent from the low mobility groups: experiences of family turbulence and the descriptions of the influence that frequent childhood mobility had on the decisions participants made for their own children.

Family Turbulence

Frequent mobility, family structure, and health problems combined to create a turbulent lifestyle for Celia and her family (Moore et al., 2000). Asked to discuss the reasons for the frequent moves in her childhood she explained,

They was always back and forth because of the jobs. She would miss him and then we'd move back down to California, then they'd get in a fight, separate and come all the way back here. Or we moved to a different place in California, different cities.

Celia continued explaining "We, whenever they were together we had a house, when they were separated we always lived in hotels." Adding to the chaotic lifestyle caused by frequent moves, Celia and her six siblings did not necessarily stay together throughout the years. Celia related, "It was a mixed up home, they stayed in contact though, we were just always separated. Some kids were with him, some of the kids were with her, or it was the other way around." Celia's family struggled financially, receiving welfare and church support during her childhood. When Celia was 11 or 12 her mother had a heart attack and began having seizures, She reported, "It was hard because she had a brain tumor. She'd have seizures and stuff, so you didn't know what she was going to do next." When she was 15, her mom died and Celia left school to care for her younger sisters. Celia is one of the participants in the high mobility category that, at the time of the interview, was still struggling at the poverty line.

Celeste was another mother that experienced family turbulence from frequent mobility and health problems. When asked to describe her family she replied,

They were all crazy. My whole family ... My mom was in and out of institutions and my dad was not around My brother grew up on drugs and my big sister went off and lived with a guy who smacked her around.

Explaining more about her relationship with her mother she continued, "She had mental problems. She still kind of does. I think it's mainly just drugs and depression."

When asked about her mother being in and out of mental institutions while she was growing up she continued, "Part of the time, yeah. And the rest of the time she should have been." Celeste went on to talk about her relationship with her mother,

We never really had (a relationship)... I mean when she was home she partied a lot and she was always with different guys and just kind of around. She got around a lot. So, I didn't really know her that much. Didn't care to know her that much.

Speaking about her relationship with her father she says, "Kind of the same thing but for different reasons. He was just always working. He gets drunk on the weekends ... he's not nice, he just, he wasn't a nice guy." Celeste reports that, despite the fact that she had an older sister, she became the caretaker because her sister was not able to handle the responsibility. She described her mobility during this time as follows:

"Well I know in my third grade year I was in seven schools. Yeah that was the most. And then it was usually one or two schools most of the time. That was my big year."

Celeste's family was in severe economic hardship during her childhood. When asked if her family was on food stamps she related,

We were part of the time ... at one point we lived in a car ... But I know we had a tent at one point in time But mainly my dad, he just, he was too proud. I mean he'd rather go hungry than be on food

stamps. But I know part of the time we actually were. I think that was kind of when me and the other ones were old enough to say, hey, you know this won't cut it.

Celeste is currently still struggling economically having declared bankruptcy to get back on her feet.

Celia and Celeste experienced chronically chaotic lives as witnessed by their descriptions of their childhoods. Frequent mobility and parental health problems combined to increase turbulence in these families' lives. As discussed in the literature (Moore et al., 2000), it appears that this has led to reduced life chances for Celia and Celeste. Both women essentially lost social support from their parents and in fact ended up being the caretakers in their families at a young age. Poverty, frequent mobility, low social support, and low educational attainment are again enmeshed as in the lives of so many other frequently mobile families.

Childhood Mobility and Adult Decisions

The experience of frequent mobility in their pasts directly influenced some of the decisions and goals of the interviewees. They recognized that the experiences they had were not optimum for raising a child and did not want their children to have the same experience. Unfortunately in some situations, despite their best intentions, they were not able to meet the goals they had set. This was the case with Jane, whose experiences were examined earlier. Despite her dislike for the constant mobility she endured as a child, she has been unable to prevent the same life style for her children. When asked how many times she had moved in the five years preceding the interview she said that she had experienced at least 15 moves, probably more. When discussing

what she called her “dysfunctional” life style as a child, she quickly moved into a description of the lifestyle she is able to provide her own children saying,

The moves and the number of partners, that was very dysfunctional. My mom didn't help me with my homework, my mom ... wasn't there for me at all. It was I had to do it all on my own And you know, with Brad and Chase, my two kids, they um, I don't want them living that style, that lifestyle. And Brad has already had to. Um, we have moved a lot because of the fact that I can't afford to live on our own. Um, there's not enough money involved ... I have to have a roommate, and as soon as I get a roommate then they're either moving or I have to move out ... So um, it's been very, very hard for me to keep that lifestyle from happening to my kids that I had when I was growing up. And it's already affected Brad very, very much so. I just got his test scores back and they are the lowest test scores that they've ever seen ... Yeah, Oh I know it's the moving Brad was with one of his little friends playing outside and I had told Brad to come inside the house ... and help pack. And his friend goes, “What are you packing for?” And Brad goes “We're moving again.” And his friend goes, “Well where are you moving to?” And he goes “I don't know.” Brad goes, “I never know where I'm moving to.” And Brad goes, “my mom doesn't have enough money to move into our own place, so we just kind of move where we can” “Well I hope I move out to Gresham and go back out live in Fairview district.” Cause he wants to go back out to the school out in Fairview cause he was doing tremendous out there ... and then we had to move him. But Brad said that he hopes that he can go back out there and go to school out there cause he misses it ... But, he knows ... the situation and he said “my mom can't afford it and so we don't know where we're moving from one day to the next.”

Through Jane's description we can see how her own experiences are being repeated in her son's life. She vividly describes the effect frequent mobility is having on her son. Not only is he being removed physically from one environment to another but is also losing the social support available from school and friends. Jane believes her current frequent mobility is playing a significant role in her son's well-being much as her mother's did in hers.

Jennifer was another mother in the highly mobile group who felt strongly about her past experience. She is a classic example of the premise that frequent mobility is a contributor to leaving school early. Jennifer clearly associated frequent mobility with her eventual decision to quit school. Her experiences with frequent mobility, and changing schools in her childhood are influencing Jennifer's adult decisions about her own daughter's schooling. When asked how often she changed schools in her childhood, she replied,

Oh all the time. That's one reason I don't, I won't change her in schools 'cause I ... went to like eight different grade schools probably. Three different junior highs, two different high schools. I didn't like it, 'cause you just, you get that first initial, every time you go into a new school everyone stares. I think that's why I dropped out, that change all the time it made me just like I didn't want to go to school cause it was always new faces, new people, making new friends.

The determination to make life better for their children than it was for them is clearly seen in these two examples. Frequent mobility not only made an impact on these mother's lives, but also was recognized as doing so and impacted their thoughts on the subject as adults.

Those in the low mobility group did not relate similar stories of overwhelming events in childhood affecting their present day decisions. Although this does not mean such events did not occur in the low mobility group, the fact that they were so vividly expressed by the frequent movers supports the major effect that frequent mobility had in their lives. The frequent movers told these stories spontaneously in response to questions about their children and like all participants were not responding to specific prompts to do so.

Summary

Participants in the low mobility group encountered parental break-ups and life with alcoholic parents much like those in the frequently mobile group. On the whole however their descriptions of childhood painted pictures of a less frantic world. They were more likely to talk about “falling in love” or teen pregnancy as reason for dropping out of school than the frequent movers who often told stories about family upheaval and of lack of support as reasons for dropping out of school. The non-movers described childhoods with the support of at least one parent and other family members. Word such as good, normal and fun accompanied the descriptions of family life by the non-movers.

The number of risk factors present in the childhoods of the non-movers also differed from those frequently mobile. The presence of economic hardship is one of the risk factors not as frequently mentioned by the non-movers. It is also interesting to note that low mobility, parental social support, and economic well-being are tightly intertwined for the non-movers much like frequent mobility, low parental social support and poverty are for the frequent movers.

The qualitative analysis presented an opportunity to broaden our understanding of the life experiences of a group of frequently mobile individuals and a similar group of nonmovers. The common themes in the interviews were easily identifiable. This lends support to the premise that these stories are representative of the stories other frequent movers have to tell. Letting the individuals speak for themselves allowed us insight not only into their actual lived experiences but also their perceptions of these experiences. Through the quantitative analysis we were able to uncover the relative

stability of the low mobility group as compared to those frequently mobile, and follow this trend through the descriptions of the participants lives and the patterns they formed. In order to further test these relationships quantitative analyses were performed.

Quantitative Analysis

Questions suggested by the qualitative analysis revolved around the relationships between mobility, both childhood and current income, and social support. Chi-square tests and t-tests were run to confirm these relationships. The results of these tests support the patterns seen in the qualitative findings. Table 2 summarizes the results of the Pearson chi-square tests.

Table 2. Summary of Chi-Square Analysis of the relationships between Frequent and Low Childhood Mobility and variable

Variable	χ^2	<i>p</i>
Poverty Status at time of Interview	4.014	.04*
Poverty Status in Childhood	5.231	.02*
Marital Status During Childhood of Participants' Parents	.055	.81
Perceived Childhood Social Support	1.106	.29

**p* < .05

When comparing differences between those who experienced frequent childhood mobility in their childhoods with those who were less mobile, several interesting relationships were found. Those in the low childhood mobility group were more likely to be neither in nor near poverty at the time of the interviews than those in the high childhood mobility group. The Pearson $\chi^2 = 4.014, p = .04$, indicated that there is a significant difference between the expected values of the groups.

A chi-square test was also conducted to evaluate the significance of the difference between expected and actual values of a measure of poverty status in childhood for frequent and low mobility groups. The test showed a significant difference between expected and actual values: Similarly participants who were frequently mobile in childhood, on average, were less economically stable in childhood than those in the low childhood mobility group ($\chi^2 = 5.231, p = .02$).

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that income at the time of the interview was greater in the low mobility population than in those who moved frequently in childhood. The test was significant ($t = 2.280 (12.82), p = .04$) with Levene's test for equal variance not significant, ($F = .620, p = .46$), equal variance was not assumed.

In addition to tests run on the economic situation of the participants and their families, chi-square tests were run to examine the relationship between the marital status of the participants' parents during their childhood and belonging to the frequent childhood mobility group or the low childhood movers, ($\chi^2 = .055, p = .81$) and the relationship of perceived childhood parental social support and childhood mobility level ($\chi^2 = 1.106, p = .29$). These relationships were not significant.

In studying the chi-square tests of childhood mobility and current poverty status, and childhood mobility and perceived social support I noticed that in the low mobility group the chi-square tests reported the same number of cases, 4 each for current poverty and low perceived childhood social support, and 10 each for neither in nor near poverty and high perceived childhood social support. Looking more closely I realized that these were the same cases in each analysis. While the sample size is too small to statistically explore these relationships, it appears that a clear pattern exists. Those living neither in nor near poverty at the time of the interviews reported the presence of both perceived social support and low mobility in childhood. For those living in or near poverty at the time of the interviews, there appeared to be no pattern in perceived social support between the childhood mobility groups. This is a relationship that is also seen in the qualitative analysis and needs to be further explored in a larger sample.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

The main themes emerging from an analysis of the family of origin data from the frequent movers in the Even Start long-term follow-up study center around family dysfunction, economic hardship, frequent mobility, and the adaptations the interviewees made to deal with these situations. The interviews revealed patterns of frequent mobility often precipitated by economic hardship, a change in family structure, or parental substance abuse. A description of a healthy intact family background was rare. When used, it seemed to be more of a coping mechanism than an accurate description of the circumstances, as demonstrated by Jane who viewed her highly mobile life as nothing out of the ordinary.

Geographic relocation interfered with schooling as well as their ability to rely on outside sources of support. Those in the more highly mobile group in childhood tended to describe lives that were fairly chaotic and often self-described as “dysfunctional”. Those in less mobile families tended to view their childhoods in a more positive fashion, despite descriptions of the presence of poverty, marital disruption, and other risk factors associated with dropping out of school (Haveman et al., 1991; Wright, 1999).

Yet on the whole, the interviews revealed a group of individuals who had developed coping skills and exhibited signs of resilience. The common thread that brought this group together, enrollment in Even Start, is a witness to this resiliency. Even Start is a program designed to provide adult basic education and increase parenting skills. The individuals interviewed made the most of these services in their

attempt to overcome backgrounds that were not training grounds for success. At the time of the interviews, many of the families were beginning to overcome the adversity they experienced in their earlier life. In the following sections I discuss some of the limitations of the study, how ecological and social capital theory help explain some of the findings, and how frequent mobility interacted with educational attainment and poverty. I also discuss some of the differences found between those with low mobility in childhood and the frequent movers, and implications for future action.

Limitations

It is important to note the limitations of this study. The sample used for this study became one of its largest limitations. The inclusion criteria for Even Start, the presence of risk factors, limited my ability to look at differences between frequent and non-frequent movers. In addition, this sample is not necessarily representative of all Even Start families. In particular, Latino/a participants in the sample are different from most Oregon Even Start Latino/a parents because of the fluency they had obtained in English, many having moved to this country as children or young adults. The sample also includes only those families that could be located and were willing to share their stories. It is therefore plausible that this sample may over represent families whose circumstances are better than those that could not be located. Former Even Start families that move more frequently quite possibly faced greater problems than those reported by the sample.

The Even Start interviewees in this sample were not necessarily representative of all low-income individuals. These participants had several characteristics in common: They had low literacy skills but were motivated to join the program, all had

children in grade 3 or below, and all were fluent in English. However, having low educational attainment and the presence of young children at home are among the risk factors for poverty. It would not be unrealistic therefore to assume some similarity between the sample and the general English speaking low-income population. It is important to remember that low educational achievement was a given in this study, a characteristic of both the high and low mobility groups. Low economic status is frequently linked to decreased educational status, which was characteristic of all study participants. It is interesting to note that beyond this close connection, those participants who were the most mobile during childhood are the ones who, at the time of the interviews, are still the most financially unstable.

The interviews used for this study were designed to explore the changes that participating in Even Start made in the participants' lives. So although they included direct questions on mobility, it was not possible to gain the in-depth perspective that would come from a study designed exclusively for exploring the effects of frequent mobility. Similarly, the quantitative measure of childhood mobility was constructed from interview responses, as were childhood economic stability and parental social support. Although direct questions were asked about these issues, a study focused only on mobility may have obtained more direct quantitative information.

Discussion

Differences Between Low and Frequent movers

I found that, as a group, there is a statistically significant difference in both childhood economic stability and income level at the time of the interviews between those with low childhood mobility and those experiencing frequent moves in

childhood. The economic benefit belonged to those participants in the low mobility category at both points in time. The participants in the low mobility group who at the time of the interviews were stable economically reported, without exception, the presence of some type of familial social support. Although their childhoods were not without disruption and at some point they all dropped out of school, they described lives that were, on the whole, less chaotic than most of the frequent movers. Within the low mobility group, participants who, at the time of the interviews were still struggling in or near poverty were also those who reported a lack of childhood social support from a parental figure. The descriptions of their families as they were growing up are surprisingly like those of the frequent movers.

The frequent childhood movers did not uniformly report the presence of social support, as was indicated by the lack of significance in the quantitative findings. These results highlight the close association that environmental stability, the presence of social support, and the presence of available social capital seem to have. In the group who found themselves still in poverty at the time of the interviews there was no difference in perceived childhood social support between the low and frequent movers.

Although parental divorce and separation were common in the sample as a whole, nearly two thirds of those reporting frequent mobility reported family disruption through separation or divorce whereas only half of those with low mobility reported experiencing a disruption in the parental relationship. This may be an example of the interconnection of the risk factors of poverty, lack of a high school education, being raised in a single parent family, and frequent mobility and how

difficult it is to determine the mechanism for the effects of frequent mobility. It may be that in this sample Long's (1992) findings that being raised in a single parent family may be linked to frequent mobility in the United States are obscured by other risk factors.

I see evidence that frequent childhood residential mobility is intricately linked with poverty, social support, and family structure as witnessed by both the description of the participants and the quantitative data. It also appears that whatever the exact mechanism, moving matters.

Frequent Movers

In responding to the original question: How do Even Start participants describe their experiences with frequent mobility, it would be fair to say that, in general, they paint a picture of backgrounds characterized by instability. Frequent residential mobility was closely related to poverty and situations that caused a disruption of social support in general. Lack of parental support in childhood was prevalent in the interviews. Each participant had started life in a different place with a different family, so it was striking to see how the commonalties in their lives grouped them together. The salience of this study lies in its support of the findings of previous quantitative studies. The premises derived quantitatively concerning the disruptive nature of frequent mobility are played out in the descriptions of the lives of the participants. Through their stories, we see frequent mobility as a disrupter of ecological linkages and social capital, and as a disrupter of educational attainment. In addition, the interlocked relationship between frequent childhood mobility and adult economic status is apparent, even in a sample of parents with initial low educational attainment.

Social capital theory. Frequent mobility played into the loss of social capital by the study's participants in several ways. First, we saw the disruption of family social capital. We also surmised a disruption of the social capital from the community that is available to the child through the parent as in Kelly's example. These disruptions included all aspects of social capital. Frequent mobility often occurred as a result of marital breakup which leads to a disruption in the ability of the child to develop a belief in the trustworthiness of parents and the family system, and in turn, an ability to rely on a system of family obligation and reciprocity. The ability of the family system to enforce family and social norms is also compromised by family breakup (Coleman, 1988). This was particularly apparent in the stories of children, such as Celia, who as a result of marital breakup and its related difficulties, began a period of moving not only with family members, but also back and forth between parents.

Loss of community social capital, as discussed in the literature, seemed inevitable in some of the participants' stories as a result of frequent childhood mobility. Parents, such as Jillian's, Lucinda's, and Kelly's, had little chance to establish themselves in one environment before they uprooted and moved to another. These constant moves would seem to make them unable to take advantage of the information gathering or obligations and reciprocity that become available through community social capital. Creation of social capital by the participants also seems compromised by situations where they constantly moved from community to community.

Ecological theory. Through the examples of our participants we see how disruptions in one ecological environment affect not only the relationship within that environment but also affect other imbedded environmental settings. In particular we saw how frequent mobility prevented the establishment of the individual in one ecological niche, before being dislodged to another. In some cases this came about by a disruption in family structure, in others it was the search for housing or employment, but the end results were the same.

We see through examining proximal processes, the dynamic interaction between person and environment, the effect of frequent mobility on the study participants. As in other studies, the mechanism for this interaction may not be clear. What was clear was the tightly intertwined relationship between frequent mobility, lack of educational attainment, poverty, and the individual. In this instance the ability of the participants in the study to manipulate their environments was limited by the environment itself. The cycle of low social support, low educational achievement, and poverty limited the potential well-being of the individual.

Educational attainment. The educational attainment of all the participants at the beginning of this study was low, with the majority (90%) having dropped out before completing high school. From those who were frequent movers during their school years, such as Jillian and Jennifer, we hear stories about the instability this brought to their lives. In Jennifer's case this constant mobility led directly to her decision to drop out of school as she said, "I didn't want to go to school cause it was always new faces, new people, making new friends."

Participants also told stories about the general lack of parental support in their lives. In these instances the value of the social support available from teachers gains more importance. Teacher-based social support has been shown to decrease the drop out rate by more than half (Croninger & Lee, 2001). It appears an increase in school stability would increase the life chances of the frequently mobile sample. Again it is important to note that educational achievement and poverty are tightly linked.

Poverty. Participants who shared their stories of high mobility and childhood economic instability and single parent households were also the individuals who, at the time of the interviews, were in the most precarious financial positions. This study then gives additional support to several previous studies that have found links between these background characteristics and poverty in adulthood (Rank & Cheng, 1995; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Steglin & Frankel, 1993).

Throughout the interviews we saw the strong association of lack of school achievement, frequent mobility, family structure, and poverty. As with previous quantitative studies it was not possible to determine a cause and effect relationship between these variables. What we do get is a verbal picture of the complexity of these situations. Jane, a frequent mover, who discussed how her mother was completely insensitive to her needs, reported an example of this complexity. In Jane's case this involved forcing her, perhaps through necessity, to dress in an out of the ordinary way, which caused her considerable pain. Jane described the situation as follows:

It was hard for me to go to school because I had to wear old um, bell bottom pants, the stripes you know, and the checkered and the unmatched, and I went to school the way that my mom wanted me to look, not the way that I would rather have looked ... and there were several days that I would just, I'd ride my bike and take the biggest hill

and jump off my bike and scratch myself up so I didn't have to go to school that day. So I could go back home, so I didn't have to go to school.

Jane had a single mother who lived below the poverty line, due to her constantly changing relationships with men, and her constant mobility she had little time left for understanding Jane's needs. In her story as well the stories of the other participants we can see the difficulty of ascribing a single cause to the developmental problems these families encounter.

Implications for Action

Further Research

The limitations of this study suggested several improvements for further research. A larger sample chosen from a less homogenous low-income population would be a valuable improvement for additional qualitative studies. The use of a longitudinal data set would allow for more detailed exploration of income changes in adulthood and participant's socioemotional adaptations. A qualitative study focused on comparing the differences between those frequently mobile in childhood and those less mobile would be a valuable addition to the literature. The opportunity to further examine the participant's life stories would broaden our understanding of the effects of frequent childhood mobility and its adult outcomes, and perhaps help unravel the interaction of some of the childhood risk factors.

Specifically further studies should include questions about material that was not available in this data set. Information on both the number of moves and the location of the moves would allow exploration of the effects of distance on frequent childhood mobility. More questions on childhood relationships with siblings and

adults other than the parents, and direct questions about having social support would help construct a better measure of childhood social support. Soliciting descriptions of what effects, if any, those frequently mobile in childhood attribute to their mobility would be valuable. More specific information on the causes of dropping out of school in the frequently mobile group would allow valuable information for comparison with low mobility groups. Frequent mobility, particularly among the low-income continues to increase and any additional insight into the consequences of this phenomenon can only serve to benefit those it effects.

Social Action

In an age of welfare reform, this study raises questions about what policies might be helpful in ameliorating poverty and increasing well-being. Moving matters. We are not going to stop the rising numbers of movers in this country. What we can do is prevent some moves caused by economic strain and decrease the risk factors associated with those we cannot prevent. I encourage exploration of several types of programs. These include programs that discourage mobility and recognize the importance of parental, school, and community social support.

Welfare reform has helped to destabilize housing in this country. As benefits are cut so is the money available to obtain housing (Nichols & Gault, 1999). This not only necessitates moving but also in many cases leads to homelessness. It is essential that we support policy to underwrite the cost of housing in the low-income population. Expansion of the Department of Urban Development's Section 8 voucher program may be a way to do this. Programs that encourage businesses to locate in both urban

and rural low-income areas and to provide opportunities for on-site training will also decrease the need for mobility. This requires government tax incentives.

As school budgets are stretched to their limits, it is imperative that we are mindful of the social aspects of schooling, particularly in high-risk populations. To do this, money must be available to retain school counselors or similar individuals. One suggestion for decreasing the impact of frequent mobility is assimilating newcomers into the community as quickly as possible. Using school resources seems to be an efficient way of doing this. We need to strengthen the availability of parent education activities that would help families better recognize and prepare for the possible consequences of frequent moves. Educational activities might include introductory meetings for parents new to a school where strategies to buffer the effects of moving could be presented. In addition schools need to provide programs to increase social support of new students through increased contact with teachers and peers.

Additional research is needed on the constellation of childhood risk factors that includes frequent mobility, family structure, poverty, and low educational attainment. We need to continue to explore the mechanisms of this relationship and how altering one of the variables may affect the others. Further research also is needed on optimizing our housing and social policies in order to alleviate the strain of frequent mobility on individual and family well-being.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between frequent childhood mobility and perceived social support, education level, and economic well-being in a sample of Even Start parents. Through interviews, insights were gained into

the lives of 17 Even Start parents who experienced frequent childhood mobility and 14 of their less mobile counterparts. Through their words vivid pictures formed of their experiences of frequent mobility and its relationship to other risk factors that lowered their life chances. Although this study was based on limited data, frequent childhood mobility made such a significant impact on people's lives that they vividly recalled and discussed their childhood experiences with mobility.

The most striking factor about the qualitative portion of this study is its parallel to previous quantitative studies on the outcomes and risk factors of frequent mobility. In agreement with previous literature, I also found that low mobility seems to promote the retention of social support and thus social capital, whereas frequent mobility causes more disruption in this relationship. In addition, I found a significant relationship between frequent childhood mobility and current economic status.

From the former Even Start parents we heard stories of growing up in poverty, experiencing life with single mothers, a lack of family social support, and living in frequently mobile families. In some participants' lives, the connection among these factors seems clear. In some cases they seem to be hopelessly blurred. However clear or blurred their stories may be, with a closer look it becomes apparent how confounded these variables are. In our modern era it seems certain that Americans will continue to be movers. It also seems likely that frequent mobility will continue to affect the low-income population disproportionately. Current welfare reform and the tight economy offer little hope of remedying the housing, job, and financial situations that challenge this population. It becomes important then to pay increased attention to frequent childhood mobility and its effects on individual lives. We need to continue to

explore its interactions with other childhood risk factors. As we attempt to ameliorate the consequences of dropping out of school, marital disruption, lack of social support, and poverty on the life chances of an individual we need to remain aware of the disruption that frequent childhood mobility adds to the equation. Although we cannot prevent frequent mobility we can develop ways to buffer its effects on the lives of our children and other family members.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Assessing the Long-Term Impact of Even Start: A Follow-Up of Forty Oregon Families Parent Interview Protocol, Even Start, 1998

We are part of a team that is evaluating the long-term effects of Oregon Even Start Programs. We would like to ask you some questions about your experiences with the Even Start program. Your information will help us find out what worked well in the program and what could be improved. This interview is voluntary, if you don't want to answer any of the questions you don't have to. All of the information you give to us will be kept confidential. We appreciate you taking time to talk with us about the program.

I. Even Start Participation

- 1) What made you decide to participate in the Even Start program?
- 2) What was your goal in participating in Even Start?
- 3) When did you leave the Even Start program? Why?

II. Family of Origin Characteristics

- 1) What was your family like when you were growing up?
- 2) What was your relationship with your mother like?
- 3) What was your relationship with your father like?
- 4) Did your parents work? What kind of work did they do?
- 5) Did your family have enough money to get by?
- 6) Do you know if your family ever received welfare or other assistance?
- 7) How often did your family move when you were a child? Why did you move?

III. Family Healthcare

- 1) * *Adult Health Survey*
- 2) * *Child Health Survey*
- 3) Did participating in Even Start change your health habits (exercise, sleeping patterns, stress management, doctor visits)? If so, how? What about your dietary habits? If so, how?

IV. Current Family Income

- 1) Is your income regular and reliable? If irregular, why?

- 2) Is there anyone else who contributes to your household expenses? Who? How much? Do they contribute regularly or occasionally? Why?
- 3) Compared to two years ago, would you say your family's economic situation?

has

- Improved a lot = 5
 Improved a little = 4
 Remained the same = 3
 Gone down a little = 2
 Gone down a lot = 1

- 4) Since leaving Even Start, has there been a time when you had a hard time making ends meet? If so, why? Were you able to do anything about it?

- 5) Have you ever had a problem paying for any of the following necessities? If yes, when was the last time that happened to you? (Use cue cards)

	Before/During Even Start		After Leaving Even Start	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Food				
Housing				
Clothing				
Utilities				
Health care				
Childcare				
Credit payments				
Other				

V. Employment/Work Effort

- 1) What kind of jobs have you had since Even Start?
- 2) Did you develop job skills in Even Start? What kind?
 Have you developed other job skills since leaving Even Start?
 Have you received any kind of job training? If so, what kind?
- 3) How is your job going now?
- 4) Have you received any raises or promotions at your current job?
 Do you get any benefits? If yes, describe.

- 5) If you aren't currently working, when did you last have a job?
How long did you work at this job?
Why did you leave that job?
Are you looking for a job now? If yes, what kind of job are you looking for?

VI. Housing Characteristics

- 1) How much do you spend per month on housing?
- 2) Is this housing adequate for you and your family's needs? Why or why not?
(Probe: size, quality, price, landlord)
- 3) What is it like living in this neighborhood?
(Probe: For you? Your children?)
- 4) Have you had to move in the past five years? If so, why? How many places have you lived in?
- 5) Have you ever had a time in the last five years when you didn't have housing of your own? When? (Explain)

VII. Home Environment and Parenting Practices

- 1) **Parenting Ladder* (When entered Even Start and Now)
- 2) What are your greatest strengths as a parent?
- 3) What are your biggest challenges as a parent?
- 4) Did participating in Even Start influence your parenting practices? If so, how?
- 5) Now that your children are older, what kind of activities do you do together?
How did Even Start change the types of activities you do with your children?
- 6) A) Do you think participating in Even Start changed your relationships with your children? How?
B) Sometimes parents get along really well with their children and sometimes they don't get along so well. This can change over time. How are you getting along with each of your children now?
How do you think your partner gets along with each of the children?
- 7) What do you think are the biggest strengths of and challenges for your family as a whole?

VIII. Childcare Arrangements

- 1) Are any of your children in some sort of childcare? (Center, friend, family, in-home provider, after school care, other)
- 2) **Childcare Checklist* (one per child)
- 3) Overall, how much do you pay for childcare each month?

4) In the past five years, how many different childcare providers have you used?

(If changes, ask why)

IX. Education and Parental Involvement

- 1) Did participating in Even Start influence your involvement with your child's education? If so, how?
- 2) Do you spend time participating in other school activities? If yes, how often and what types of activities? (Probe: parent organizations)
- 3) **Parent Rating of Child* (Even Start child only)

X. Mental Health

- 1) We know that Even Start parents sometimes struggle with feelings of depression and low self-esteem. To what extent was this a problem for you when you were in Even Start? What about now?
- 2) Here's a checklist about how things are going for you right now. Can you take a minute to fill it out?

**CES-D Depression Scale*

- 3) Now, could you fill out this checklist about how you are feeling about yourself right now?

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory*

XI. Social Support/Life Skills

- 1) Did participating in Even Start change your social circle? If so, how? (Probe: the people you turn to for support or those who turn to you)
- 2) Do you continue to have contact with any people you met through Even Start?
If so, who? What are these relationships like?
- 3) *Knowledge of Community Resources/Life Skills Inventory*
- 4) Have you used (or are you currently using) any community Resources since participating in Even Start? If yes, which ones?

What are the most important ways, if any, Even Start affected you as a person, your children, and your family as a unit?

Appendix B

Parent Interview Coding Scheme

- Challenges and Barriers
 - Education
 - Even Start participation
 - Self-sufficiency
- Childcare Issues
- Even Start Participation
 - Decision to participate
 - Goals upon entering
 - Why/when left Even Start
- Facilitators
 - Education
 - Even Start participation
- Family of Origin
- Family of procreation
 - Issues with spouse/partner/ex
- Family/Parenting
 - Family as a whole
 - Challenges
 - Strengths
 - Goals/prediction of child's future
 - Involvement with child's education
 - Influenced by Even Start
 - Parent/child relationships
 - Parent changes because of Even Start
 - Spouse/partner/ex
 - Parenting challenges
 - Parenting strengths
- Health/Mental Issues
- Housing Characteristics
- Making Ends Meet
- Personal Changes/Opportunities
 - Child
 - Family as a whole
 - Nutrition/health
 - Self
 - Spouse/partner
- Social Support
 - Agency support
 - Taking care of self

- Transportation Issues
- Work/Education/Skills Developed
 - Current job since leaving Even Start
 - Education/job skills gained at Even Start
 - Education/job skills gained since Even Start
 - Partner's work

Appendix C

Family of Origin Sub-coding Scheme

- Family of Origin
 - Abuse
 - Emotional Abuse
 - Physical or Sexual Abuse
 - Economic Situation
 - Education
 - Parents'
 - Respondents'
 - Geographic Location
 - Health
 - Parents'
 - Respondents'
 - Housing
 - Marital Relationship
 - Parent/Child Relationship
 - Sibling Relationships
 - Father
 - Grandparent
 - Mother
 - Step parent
 - Substance Abuse