ABSTRACT
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL STRESS
RELATED TO HAVING CHILDREN WITH
AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
DEPARTMENTAL HONORS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

by
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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
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The purpose of this study was a comparative analysis of parental stress related to having children with and without disabilities.

The Parental Stress Index survey was used to determine the levels of stress in parents with children with and without disabilities. The survey considers child Characteristics, Mother Characteristics, and Life Stress events. The survey has 120 questions with the last 19 being optional.

These surveys were distributed to two schools in the Midwest. One was an NAEYC Accredited Early Childhood program. The other was an Early Childhood Special Education program located within an elementary school. Both facilities served children from 3 to 5 years of age in a center-based curriculum.

**Results**

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my professors and to my family. My family has been very supportive in my education process. They are always there to help me with anything from printing labels to proof reading my rough copies.

I also dedicate this to my professor at Ball State who gave me the confidence to complete this thesis and continually revitalize my desire to work for the well being of all children.

Finally, to Dr. Staley the professor who has made me a competent and confident teacher. She has supported and guided me through this project and others. Her high expectations require me to go above and beyond. I find that working with her makes me demand more of myself. Thank you for your unconditional confidence in my ability, your understanding, and your willingness to supervise my thesis along with your regular class load. I will never be able to thank you enough.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART

### I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- Introduction ............................................................................. 1
- Purpose of the Study .............................................................. 1
- Background and Significance of the Study ............................ 1
- Hypothesis ............................................................................ 1
- Research Questions .............................................................. 1
- Definition of Terms .................................................................. 2
- Assumptions of the Study ....................................................... 2
- Limitations of the Study .......................................................... 2
- Organization of the Study ....................................................... 2

### II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .............................................. 4

- Introduction ............................................................................. 4
- Stress and Social Support in Fathers and Mothers of Young Children ............................................................................ 4
- Parental Stress and Family Functioning (Original Study) .......... 5
- Parental Stress and Family Functioning (Follow-up Study) ....... 7

### III. METHODOLOGY ......................................................................... 8

- Introduction ............................................................................. 8
- Hypothesis ............................................................................ 8
- Population ............................................................................. 8
- Sample ................................................................................... 8
- Respondents ........................................................................... 8
- Instrument ............................................................................. 8
  - Validity ............................................................................. 12
  - Reliability ......................................................................... 12
  - Normative Sample ............................................................. 12
- Permission ............................................................................. 13
- Procedures ............................................................................ 13
- Analysis of Data .................................................................... 14
- Summary ............................................................................... 16

### IV. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION .............................................. 17
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction ................................................................. 21
Summary of the Study ......................................................... 21
Purpose ........................................................................ 21
Hypothesis .................................................................... 21
Sample ......................................................................... 21
Respondents ................................................................ 21
Instrument .................................................................... 22
Procedures ..................................................................... 22
Data Analysis ................................................................ 22
Conclusion ...................................................................... 25
Summary of the Results .................................................... 25
Limitations ..................................................................... 25
Recommendations ............................................................. 25
Implementations .............................................................. 26

APPENDICES ................................................................. 27

A. Institutional Review Board ............................................. 28
B. Letters of Permission .................................................. 29
C. Parental Stress Index Questionnaire ................................ 30
D. Parental Stress Index Answer Sheet ................................ 31
E. Cover Letter .............................................................. 32

REFERENCES ............................................................... 33
PART I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The responsibilities of parents are becoming more demanding. These demands come from children, working, and other external obligations. One additional demand could come from having a child with a disability.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine parental stress related to children with and without disabilities.

Background and Significance of the Study

I am interested in finding out what teachers can do to help relieve the stress of the student's parents. I will be working as an Early Interventionist, and I find this very important information for my future.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was examined: There is no difference in parental stress for parents with children with and without disabilities.

Research Questions

This study examined the following questions:

1. Do parents of children with disabilities have higher levels of stress?

2. How can teachers help lower parental stress?
Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms were used throughout this study:

Children- 3-5 year olds enrolled in regular or special education preschool programs.

Disabilities- Any characteristic that puts a child in need of special help. The disabilities in the sample ranged from Downs Syndrome, Autism, Fetal Drug Exposure, and Developmental Delays.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions will be made by the researcher in this study:

1. The Parental Stress Index accurately reflected the level of parental stress for each participating parent.

2. The responses on the survey were accurate and honest.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited in the number of surveys. There were 13 surveys received from parents with children without disabilities and 5 surveys received from parents with children with disabilities. These are not large enough samples and the number in each group are not comparable.

Organization of the Study

Part I of the study contains an introduction, purpose of, background and significance of the study. It also contains the hypothesis, research questions guiding the study, definition of terms, and assumptions and limitations of the study. Part II contains the literature review on various articles discussing parental stress. Part III states the methodology of the study. It contains the hypothesis, sample, respondents, as well as the instrument. The validity, reliability, permission, procedures, and an analysis of data are also included. Part IV includes the results of the study. It restates
the introduction, hypothesis, sample, respondents, instruments, data analysis, and contains the results. Part V has the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.
PART II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine parental stress related to children with and without disabilities. I chose to review previously written articles on parental stress and its relationship to children with and without disabilities.

Literature Review:

Introduction

This chapter contains a collection of literature reviews related to the topic of Parental Stress.

The various categories researched were:

1. Stress and Social Support in Fathers and Mothers of Young Children with and without Disabilities

2. Parental Stress and Family Functioning (original study and follow up study)

Stress and Social Support in Fathers and Mothers of Young Children with and without Disabilities

In research completed by Dr. Hadadian, she explored the Stress and Social Support in Fathers and Mothers of Young Children with and without Disabilities. She completed this by using 30 families, half with children with disabilities and half without disabilities and the Parental Stress Index. "Implications include planning for active engagement of fathers in all areas of service delivery in Early Intervention Programs, including encouragement for more participation in programming; opening a direct line of communication through designing tailored workshops, support groups and
counseling; recognizing fathers' strengths beyond their traditional roles; and viewing them as an additional emotional source of support for mothers (Hadadian, 226).

In the review, it stated that many parents of children with disabilities experience high levels of stress and depression. Other studies reported higher child-related stressors among families of children with disabilities.

"Parental stress during the early years of life is critical factor in parent-child interaction and child development (Hadadian, 228)." Hadadian concluded "the stress levels of parents of children with special needs were higher than the compared group both Child and Parent Domains (230)." There was no apparent differences in the stress levels of mothers and fathers in each category.

**Parental Stress and Family Functioning**

(Original Study)

In 1991, Lily Dyson conducted a study to determine the association of the presence of a child with handicaps and "Parental Stress and Family Functioning (Dyson, 623)." She used 55 families of children with disabilities and 55 families with children without disabilities.

She found that many families containing children with disabilities are successful in adapting to the needs of their child. She also discovered these families to contain a great deal of stress. She reported minimal differences "in their family functioning (Dyson, 623)." Her results "reinforce the need for family intervention to alleviate parental stress and for individualized programs emphasizing family strengths and idiosyncratic attributes (Dyson, 623)."

Previous research shows an inconsistency in whether parents with children with disabilities contain more stress than other parents. Few reports determined higher stress levels, while others show no correlation of stress.
Dyson blames these inconsistencies on inadequate or absent comparison groups. She noted that unequal sample groups may bias the results. She controlled her experiment based on Socio-economic status, which may cause extra stress; also "Single parents exhibit more stress (Dyson, 624)."

These results are "important for the implementations of P.L. 99-457, and law requiring interagency collaboration in responding to family and child needs (Dyson, 624)."

The complete composition of Dyson's study contained 110 families. "The children's records indicated the following diagnosed disabilities: mental retardation (18); physical and sensory handicaps (22); speech disorders (8); learning disabilities (2), and developmental delays (5) (Dyson, 625)."

To prove her experiment Lily Dyson chose to use background information, a Questionnaire on Resources and Stress-Short Form (QRS-F), and the Family Environment Scale. "The QRS-F contains 52 items that yield four scores, including Parent and Family Problems, Pessimism, stress related to Child Characteristics and Child's Physical Incapacitation (Dyson, 625)." "The QRS-F yields a total scale score that is a global index of parental stress (Dyson, 625)."

She analyzed the results with the SPSS-2nd edition. She determined "parents of children with handicaps scored substantially higher than parents of children without handicaps on each of the measures (Dyson, 626)."

She used a sample that controlled unrelated stress. She used middle-class subjects. "Stress as related to the care of a child with handicaps is clearly independent of economic and social conditions (Dyson,627)." "Families require support and services in caring for a child with handicaps, regardless of Socio-economic Status. Service providers need to consider family strengths (Dyson, 627)." Families need help developing strengths and family styles. To decrease stress, intervention should be
directed at increasing child competence, caretaking of the child, and changing parental perception (Dyson, 628).

Parental Stress and Family Functioning
(follow-up study)

In Lily Dyson's second evaluation of these children, she used 74 of the original 110 families. "The disabled group scored significantly higher in parental stress than did the nondisabled group at both periods (Dyson, 212)."

There was no significant variation in the stress levels, in comparison with the first test. Dyson used the same questionnaires as in the previous test. The surveys were completed by the same parent(s) that completed the first surveys.
PART III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine parental stress related to children with and without disabilities.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was examined: There is no difference in parental stress for parents with children with and without disabilities.

Sample

The sample was obtained at two separate schools in the Midwest. One of the schools is an NAEYC accredited preschool ran in correlation with a nearby University. The second of the schools is an elementary school ranging from Kindergarten to 6th grade. It contains a special education preschool that serves Developmentally Delayed 3-5 year olds.

Respondents

All thirteen surveys were completed by the mother. The average age was 4 years 8 months. This includes 9 males and 4 females.

Instrument

Parental Stress Index considers Child Characteristics, Mother Characteristics, and Life Stress events are some of the Domains represented in the questionnaire. The survey has 120 questions. The last 19 questions are optional. The survey was constructed with two domains. The Child Domain consists of six subscales, while the
Parent Domain contains seven subscales. The composition of the survey is as follows:

Child Characteristics Domain Score: High Score = 122

"High scores in the Child Characteristics Domain are associated with children who display qualities which make it difficult for parents to fulfill their parenting roles (Abidin, 41)."

Child Characteristics Domain Subscores

1. Child Adaptability/Plasticity: High Score = 31

"High Stress results from the Child's inability to adjust to changes in their environments (Abidin, 41-42)."

2. Acceptability of Child to Parent: High Score = 17

"High scores are produced in this area when the child possesses physical, intellectual, and emotional characteristics which do not match the parents' hoped-for child (Abidin, 42)."

3. Child Demandingness/Degree of Bother: High Score = 24

"High Scores in this area are produced when the parent experiences the child as placing many demands upon him/her (Abidin, 42)."


"Children whose affective functioning shows evidence of dysfunction are associated with high scores (Abidin, 43)." This child appears to be an "unhappy, depressed child who frequently cries and does not display signs of happiness (Abidin, 43)."

5. Child Distractibility/Hyperactivity: High Score = 31

"High scores on this subscale appear to be associated with children who display many of the behaviors found in the Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity, DSM III 314.01 (Abidin, 43)."

6. Child Reinforces Parent: High Score = 12
"The parent who earns high scores on this subscale does not experience her child as a source of positive reinforcement. The interactions between parent and child fail to produce good feelings by the parent about herself (Abidin, 43)."

**Parent Characteristics Domain**- High Score = 153

"High Scores in the Parent Characteristics Domain suggest that the sources of stress and potential dysfunction of the parent-child system may be related to dimensions of the parent’s functioning (Abidin, 44)."

**Parent Characteristics Domain Subscales**

1. **Parent Depression, Unhappiness, Guilt**- High Score = 27

   "High scores on this subscale are suggestive of the presence of significant depression in the mother (Abidin, 44)"

2. **Parent Attachment**- High Score = 16

   A high score in this area may be due to the parents inability to "feel a sense of closeness to the child or parent’s real or perceived inability to accurately read and understand the child’s feelings and/or needs (Abidin, 45)."

3. **Restrictions Imposed by Parental Role**- High Score = 26

   "High scores on this subscale suggest that the parents involved experience the parental role as restricting their freedom and frustrating them in their attempts to maintain their own identity (Abidin, 45)."

4. **Parent's Sense of Competence**- High Score = 37

   High scores may be produced by parents who lack practical child development knowledge, possess a limited range of child management skills, or find the role of parent to be less reinforcing than they expected (Abidin, 46).

5. **Social Isolation**- High Score = 18
"High Scores in this area are parents who are socially isolated from their peers, relatives, and other emotional support systems (Abidin, 46)."

6. **Relationship with Spouse**- High Score = 23

"Parents who earn high scores on this subscale are those who are lacking the emotional and active support of the other parent in the area of child management (Abidin, 46)."

7. **Parental Health**- High Score = 16

"High scores are suggestive of deterioration in parental health which may either be the result of stress or an additional stressor in the parent-child system (Abidin, 47)."

**Life Stress**- (Optional)- High Score = 17

This scale is optional to the parents completing the survey. It contains questions on matters outside those of the child and often out of their control. This includes questions about death, change in income, and also change in marital status.

My survey scores vary based on the high scores from each category along with influence from the total scores. There are three total scores. Two of the Total Scores have been mentioned; however the other total score is the sum of the Child Domain and the Parent Domain. A High score is 260 or over, while a low score is 175 or below. "Low scores may be earned by both parents under low levels of stress and other situations in which dysfunction in the mother-child systems exist (Abidin, 40)."

The average score is the 15th - 85th percentile. This score ranges anywhere from 180 to 250. I chose to give brief explanations of each category to better explain the method I chose to use. This information came out of the Parental Stress Index -Manual. These are the categories in which parents may find themselves overwhelmed.
Validity

Parental Stress Index has concurrent validity based on "research conducted in the areas of infant development, parent-child interaction, attachment, child abuse and neglect, child psychopathology, childbearing practice, and stress (Abidin, 8)." The items were constructed to meet these categories. They also tested the readability of the test. "Ninety-five percent of the items were found to be directly related to at least one research study (Abidin, 8)." Correlations between each item and the subscales were obtained. These correlations "were made in congruence with the content validity as established in relation to clinical and research studies. Items which did not contribute to the domains or subscales were deleted (Abidin, 9)."

Reliability

The reliability was determined for each subscale, each domain, and the total score (Abidin, 9)." The coefficients ranged from .71 to .99. The highest correlation was in the area of Restriction of Role. "Parental Stress Index has test-retest reliability of .817 and .706 obtained by the Child Domain and Parent Domain which indicate a strong relationship (Abidin, 11)."

Normative Sample:

"The individuals who formed the norm group were all female; however, the PSI is written in such a manner as to be equally applicable to male respondents. The norms presented are based upon the responses of female parents; male parents typically earn much lower scores (Abidin, 39)." This test was normed on a sample of 534 parents from pediatric clinics in central Virginia. The parents represent both normal children and those with children referred to clinics because of potential problems. The mothers were predominately white mothers representing mostly low income families (under $20,000). The parents were mostly married and of a variation
of educational levels. The majority of mothers worked part-time or were unemployed, while the majority of the fathers were employed full-time. The ages of the mothers ranged from 18 to 61 with a mean age of 29.8 years. The fathers' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years with a mean age of 31.6 years. Children ranged from one month to 19 years of age. Fathers earned low stress scores on all components of the Parental Stress Index.

Permission

The Ball State Institutional Review Board was contacted for approval of using human subjects in a research project (see Appendix A). The assistant superintendent and the director also wrote a letter granting permission for the research project (see Appendix B).

Procedures

To start the research project, a telephone call was made to each facility to set up a meeting to discuss the project. A cover letter and sample letter of permission were included in the packet, which was left at the school.

Once permission was obtained from the schools, IRB forms were completed and turned in for approval. When approval was received, the gathering of data began. Each parent packet included a Parental Stress Index Questionnaire (see Appendix C), and a Parental Stress Index Answer Sheet (see Appendix D). They were placed in an envelope with a cover letter (see Appendix E) stapled to the outside. Each answer sheet contained a label with specific questions to answer and all of the responses remained anonymous. As the answer sheets were received they were tallied and graphed to determine the levels of stress (the graph is on the inside of the answer sheet).
A week after the initial distribution of surveys, a half sheet letter was sent out to each parent.

**Analysis of Data**

Of the surveys sent out 13 were received back from the parents of children without disabilities and 5 from the parents of children with disabilities.

After analyzing the 13 surveys from the parents with children without disabilities, I found relatively normal scores. Of the 13, twelve had scores in the normal range, and one was in the low/defensive range. "In a study of the impact of defensiveness on PSI results using the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale, Lafiosca and Loyd (1987) found that low and moderate defensiveness results in clinicians' being able to interpret PSI scores as valid. High defensiveness was associated with suppression of primarily the Parent Domain scores (Abidin, 40)."

Mothers can be candid in answering questions about their child, however have difficulty being candid when "responding to their own characteristics or situational stressors (Abidin, 40)." All thirteen surveys were completed by the mother. The average age was 4 years 8 months. This includes 9 males and 4 females. The Child and Parent Domains were all normal, however there were a few subscales that were borderline high or high.

There were high scores on three surveys in Child Mood in the Child Domain. Two surveys were high in Restriction Imposed by Parental Role in the Parent Domain, and one high score in Child Reinforces Parent. One survey portrayed high Life Stress. Then there were surveys with high scores in Parental Health and Social Isolation both in the Parent Domain.

The sample of surveys from parents of children with disabilities were substantially smaller. The average age of the children was 4 years and 2.5 months.
This average was 5.5 months younger than the children without disabilities' average. Of the five surveys four were filled out by just the mother, and one was filled out by both parents.

The scores were on the higher end. Three of the surveys were high in the Child Adaptability/Plasticity subscale, three were high in the Child Distractibility/Hyperactivity subscale, three were high in the Child Reinforces Parent subscale, four were high in the Child Demandingness/Degree of Bother subscale, two were high in the Child Mood subscale, and four were high in the subscale of Acceptability of Child to Parent. Four surveys were high in the Child Domain.

Of the Parent Domain only one survey was high. One was high in the area of Social Isolation, one in the area of Parental Health, one in the area of Restrictions Imposed by Parental Role, and one in the area of Parent's Sense of Competence. Two of the surveys had high Total Scores, and one had a High Life Stress Score.

The Child Domain scores were higher than Parent Domain on 4 of the 5. This is unusual because there are over 40 more points allotted to the Parent Domain.

Table of Stress Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Surveys</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

* The surveys with high scores were combined. They are represented by the number in each column. This table shows the surveys with high scores.

**Chapter Summary**

Based on the reliability and validity, the Parental Stress Index will adequately measure the stress of parents. The results of this study show that parents of children with disabilities have higher stress levels on the Parental Stress Index.
PART IV
RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine parental stress related to having children with and without disabilities. This part includes the results from the study.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was examined: There is no difference in parental stress for parents with children with and without disabilities.

Sample

The sample was obtained at two separate schools in the Midwest. One of the schools is an NAEYC accredited preschool ran in correlation with a nearby University. The second of the schools is an elementary school ranging from Kindergarten to 6th grade. It contains a special education preschool that serves Developmentally Delayed 3-5 year olds.

Respondents

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Instrument

Parental Stress Index considers Child Characteristics, Mother Characteristics, and Life Stress events are some of the Domains represented in the questionnaire. The survey has 120 questions. The last 19 questions are optional. The survey was
constructed with two domains. The Child Domain consists of six subscales, while the Parent Domain contains seven subscales.

**Data Analysis/Results**

The hypothesis of the study was "There is no difference in parental stress for parents with children with and without disabilities."

Of the surveys sent out 13 were received back from the parents of children without disabilities and 5 from the parents of children with disabilities.

After analyzing the 13 surveys from the parents with children without disabilities, I found relatively normal scores. Of the 13, twelve had scores in the normal range, and one was in the low/defensive range. "In a study of the impact of defensiveness on PSI results using the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale, Lafiosca and Loyd (1987) found that low and moderate defensiveness results in clinicians' being able to interpret PSI scores as valid. High defensiveness was associated with suppression of primarily the Parent Domain scores (Abidin, 40)."

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Based on the above data, the hypothesis of this study: "There is no difference in parental stress for parents with children with and without disabilities." was rejected.

Summary of Results

The Analysis of the data indicated the following:

PART V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This part includes a summary of the research, conclusions, and recommendations based on the results of the surveys. This Part includes a summary, conclusions, and recommendations obtained from the study.

Summary of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine parental stress related to children with and without disabilities.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was examined: There is no difference in parental stress for parents with children with and without disabilities.

Sample

The sample was obtained at two separate schools in the Midwest. One of the schools is an NAEYC accredited preschool ran in correlation with a nearby University. The second of the schools is an elementary school ranging from Kindergarten to 6th grade. It contains a special education preschool that serves Developmentally Delayed 3-5 year olds.

Respondents

All thirteen surveys were completed by the mother. The average age was 4 years 8 months. This includes 9 males and 4 females.
Instrument

Parental Stress Index considers Child Characteristics, Mother Characteristics, and Life Stress events are some of the Domains represented in the questionnaire. The survey has 120 questions. The last 19 questions are optional. The survey was constructed with two domains. The Child Domain consists of six subscales, while the Parent Domain contains seven subscales.

Procedures

To start the research project, a telephone call was made to each facility to set up a meeting to discuss the project. A cover letter and sample letter of permission were included in the packet, which was left at the school.

Once permission was obtained from the schools, IRB forms were completed and turned in for approval. When approval was received, the gathering of data began. Each parent packet included a Parental Stress Index Questionnaire (see Appendix C), and a Parental Stress Index Answer Sheet (see Appendix D). They were placed in an envelope with a cover letter (see Appendix E) stapled to the outside. Each answer sheet contained a label with specific questions to answer and all of the responses remained anonymous. As the answer sheets were received they were tallied and graphed to determine the levels of stress (the graph is on the inside of the answer sheet).

A week after the initial distribution of surveys, a half sheet letter was sent out to each parent.

Data Analysis

Of the surveys sent out 13 were received back from the parents of children without disabilities and 5 from the parents of children with disabilities.
After analyzing the 13 surveys from the parents with children without disabilities, I found relatively normal scores. Of the 13, twelve had scores in the normal range, and one was in the low/defensive range. "In a study of the impact of defensiveness on PSI results using the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale, Lafiosca and Loyd (1987) found that low and moderate defensiveness results in clinicians' being able to interpret PSI scores as valid. High defensiveness was associated with suppression of primarily the Parent Domain scores (Abidin, 40)."

Mothers can be candid in answering questions about their child, however have difficulty being candid when "responding to their own characteristics or situational stressors (Abidin, 40)." All thirteen surveys were completed by the mother. The average age was 4 years 8 months. This includes 9 males and 4 females. The Child and Parent Domains were all normal, however there were a few subscales that were borderline high or high.

There were high scores on three surveys in the Child Mood part of the Child Domain. Two surveys were high in Restriction Imposed by Parental Role in the Parent Domain, and one high score in Child Reinforces Parent. One survey portrayed high Life Stress. Then there were surveys with high scores in Parental Health and Social Isolation both in the Parent Domain.

The sample of surveys from parents of children with disabilities were substantially smaller. The average age of the children was 4 years and 2.5 months. This average was 5.5 months younger than the children without disabilities' average. Of the five surveys four were filled out by just the mother, and one was filled out by both parents.

The scores were on the higher end. Three of the surveys were high in the Child Adaptability/Plasticity subscale, three were high in the Child Distractibility/Hyperactivity subscale, three were high in the Child Reinforces Parent subscale, four were high in the Child Demandingness/Degree of Bother subscale, two were high in
the Child Mood subscale, and four were high in the subscale of Acceptability of Child to Parent. Four surveys were high in the Child Domain.

Of the Parent Domain only one survey was high. One was high in the area of Social Isolation, one in the area of Parental Health, one in the area of Restrictions Imposed by Parental Role, and one in the area of Parent's Sense of Competence. Two of the surveys had high Total Scores, and one had a High Life Stress Score.

The Child Domain scores were higher than Parent Domain on 4 of the 5. This is unusual because there are over 40 more points allotted to the Parent Domain.

**Table of Stress Survey Data**

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<td>Attachment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Surveys</strong></td>
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* The surveys with high scores were combined. They are represented by the number in each column. This table shows the surveys with high scores.
Conclusions

Summary of the Results

Although the samples were of varying sizes, I feel that educators should be aware that stress is felt by every parent to some degree. On average, my surveys show that parents with children with disabilities do indeed experience higher levels of stress than parents of children without disabilities.

Limitations

The study was limited in the number of surveys. There were 13 surveys received from parents with children without disabilities and 5 surveys received from parents with children with disabilities. These are not large enough samples and the number in each group are not comparable.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for further research are suggested from the results of this study:

1. Community assistance/programs should be available for parents of children with disabilities.
2. School systems/Communities should offer parenting classes for all parents, especially those scoring high on the Relationship with Spouse.
3. Teachers should be sensitive to the needs of parents and offer additional help with unfamiliar material.
4. Future exploration of how teachers, school systems, and communities needs to be explored.
5. For parents scoring high in Child Adaptability/Plasticity, teachers can help parents develop transitions to generalize an change in environment.
6. For parents scoring high in Acceptability of Child to Parent, teachers need to encourage the parents by telling of all the positives of the child.

7. For parents scoring high in Child Demandingness/Degree of Bother, they need to have available a place to take their child to have some time alone.

8. High Child Mood and Parent Attachment Scores makes it hard for a parent to get close to his/her child, parents need to be made aware of actions that may be given by the child and misinterpreted by the caregiver.

9. High Distractibility/Hyperactivity score may be worthy of investigation into the possibility of ADHD.

10. Parents, who do not feel reinforced by their child, need to be reinforce by the caretakers and community.

11. Parents high in Depression need help controlling the variables in their life.

12. Increased acceptance of children with disabilities will help parents scoring high in Social Isolation.

Implications:

Based on these results, parents need our educated help. As educators, we are responsible for the well-being of all children. When there are high levels of stress in the home, this puts our children at-risk for abuse.

As teachers we can help parents by listening to their problems, advocating for the education of their children, or by explaining various educational processes, and/or options. However we can do more. As teachers we have the future at our fingertips. Whatever we do will impact the future. We should be resources for parents, with a broad knowledge of our community, we can serve as a coordinator finding parents an appropriate support group. Parent education is becoming more and more important due to young mothers. We need to be there not to judge, but to support their efforts. As teachers children are our profession.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval
TO: Amy Schorling  
1516 W. Jackson St.  
Apt. #1  
Muncie, IN 47303

FROM: Barbara Rothlisberg, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

DATE: March 20, 1997


Your protocol entitled "Comparative Analysis of Parental Stress Related to Having Children With or Without Disabilities" has recently been approved as revised as an exempt study by the Institutional Review Board. Such approval is in force during the project dates March 20, 1997 to March 20, 1998.

It is the responsibility of the P.I. and/or faculty supervisor to inform the IRB:

- when the project is completed, or
- if the project is to be extended beyond the approved end date,  
- if the project is modified,  
- if the project encounters problems,  
- if the project is discontinued.

Any of the above notifications should be addressed in writing to the Institutional Review Board, c/o the Office of Academic Research & Sponsored Programs (2100 Riverside Avenue). Please reference the above identification number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project. Be sure to allow sufficient time for extended approvals.

slj
APPENDIX B

Letters of Permission
January 23, 1997

Dear Institutional Review Board,

I grant Amy Schorling permission to distribute an anonymous survey to the parents of the children who attend the Living Learning Lab.

She will be collecting information regarding the parental stress related to having children with and without disabilities.

Sincerely,

Carol Strauss
Head Teacher
February 28, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that Amy Schorling has requested and received approval to do a research project entitled "Comparative Analysis of Parental Stress" related to having children with and without disabilities. This project will involve parents of children enrolled in Morrison-Mock School's early childhood special education program.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 747-5207.

Sincerely,

M. Tim Heller
Assistant Superintendent-Instruction K-12
APPENDIX C

Parental Stress Index Questionnaire
APPENDIX D

Parental Stress Index Answer Sheet
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<th>SA = Strongly Agree</th>
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APPENDIX E

Cover Letter
Attention Living Learning Laboratory Parents:

My name is Amy Schorling, and I am a senior currently working on a research project at Ball State University. I am researching parental stress related to having children with and without disabilities. As a future teacher, I am interested in helping teachers meet the needs of their parents.

This survey is called the Parental Stress Index. It consists of a question booklet and an answer sheet to record the answers. I am asking that you please return both the question booklet and answer sheet in the original envelope.

This survey is anonymous and voluntary. On the label please circle your relationship to the child, for example, mother, father, or both. Fill in age (yrs/mos) and gender of the child. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE SURVEY OR OTHER PAPER WORK.

Please return to your child's teacher by ________________, and feel free to contact me at 284-4398 with any questions.

Thank you for your help,

Amy L. Schorling

(This survey takes approximately 30 minutes.)
Attention Morrison Mock Parents:

My name is Amy Schorling, and I am a senior currently working on a research project at Ball State University. I am researching parental stress related to having children with and without disabilities. As a future teacher, I am interested in helping teachers meet the needs of their parents.

This survey is called the Parental Stress Index. It consists of a question booklet and an answer sheet to record the answers. I am asking that you please return both the question booklet and answer sheet in the original envelope.

This survey is anonymous and voluntary. On the label please circle your relationship to the child, for example, mother, father, or both. Fill in age (yrs/mos) and gender of the child. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE SURVEY OR OTHER PAPER WORK.

Please return to your child’s teacher by ______________________, and feel free to contact me at 284-4398 with any questions.

Thank you for your help,

Amy L. Schorling

(This survey takes approximately 30 minutes.)

Dr. Lynn Staley
Department of Elementary Education
Ball State University
285-8560

Amy L. Schorling
284-4398
REFERENCES


