THESIS

AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTAL VALUES AND PERCEPTIONS

TOWARD CHILDREN'S PLAYFULNESS

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master of Science

Colorado State University

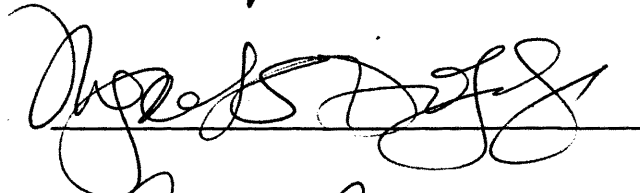Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 1997

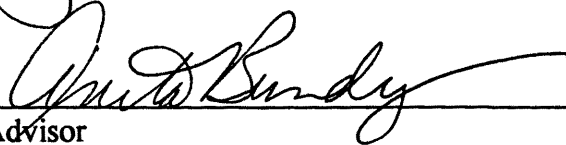COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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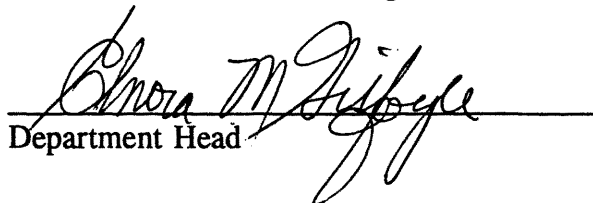REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTAL VALUES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARD CHILDREN'S PLAYFULNESS

Since play is the primary occupation of children, and parents have a significant influence in children's lives, it is important to understand the values, beliefs, and childrearing goals of parents in a multicultural society. This study explored the relationship between African American parents' values and beliefs about playfulness and their children's observed playfulness.

Forty-seven African American parents from a middle socioeconomic background and their children participated in this study. Observational assessments, the Test of Playfulness (ToP; Bundy, 1997) and the Children's Playfulness Scale (CPS; Barnett, 1990) were used to measure a child's playful approach. Parents completed questionnaires about their children's playfulness (CPS), and their children were observed during free play (ToP).

The findings revealed that African American parents shared similar values about playfulness to parents from other cultures. African American parents valued the social and joyful aspects of playfulness highly, whereas items reflecting humor were valued the least. Also, the CPS and ToP are both valid measures of playfulness

with African American parents and their children. The results suggested that mothers may be more accurate in judging children's playfulness than fathers. Cultural influences, parental experience, and parents' developmental goals may be contributing factors.

Discussion on the significance of the results, recommendations for future research, and a review of African American theoretical conceptions, family characteristics, parental beliefs, and the relationship of play and culture are highlighted.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

So, with a nod of thanks
to his friends, he [Pooh]
went on with his walk
through the forest, humming
proudly to himself.

A. A. Milne

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

It is a happy talent to know how to play.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

In examining the relationship between play and culture, there is considerable variation. For some social scientists, play is primary. According to the Dutch theorist Huizinga (1955), "culture arises in the form of play, that it is played from the very beginning," (p. 46). It is through play that society expresses its interpretation of life and the world. Conversely, researchers have postulated that play is culturally determined and that its effects vary among ethnic groups (Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1987; Roopnarine, Johnson, & Hooper, 1994; Schwartzman, 1978; Sutton-Smith, 1972). In this view, children's play is an outcome of broader participation within a specific cultural or subcultural setting (Roopnarine et. al., 1994). Another framework considers play and culture to have a bidirectional relationship (Bloch & Pellegrini, 1989; Ogbu, 1988). Play, a universal activity of children in all cultures, is viewed to be both a cause and a reflection of culture. Through play, children in a given culture develop or acquire the skills and competencies which are prerequisites for optimal functioning in their environment (Ogbu, 1988).

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Regardless of the direction of the relationship in play, culture is highlighted and celebrated. Thus, it is important that the childrearing practices and values of black families are studied when examining the play of black children. According to Hale-Benson (1986), "the study of childrearing is an examination of what goes in and the study of play behavior is the study of what comes out" (p. 89). Research on children's play has been documented extensively; however, research on the play behaviors of African American children or their families' belief systems is limited (Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Hale-Benson, 1986; Luster & McAdoo, 1994; McLoyd, 1980; Weinberger & Starkey, 1994).

In an increasingly multicultural society, occupational therapists have a responsibility to develop awareness and understanding of customs, values, and beliefs of families in order to provide effective intervention (Case-Smith, 1993; Lynch & Hanson, 1992; McCormack, 1987; Paul, 1995). What better way to examine all these variables, as well as the family's perception of, and relationship with, the child, than through play (Schaff & Mulrooney, 1989; Simeonsson, Bailey, Huntington, & Comfort, 1986)? Through play, a kaleidoscopic view into the life of the child and family can be seen (Schaff & Mulrooney, 1989).

Bundy (1993, 1997), along with other theorists, including Barnett (1990) and Lieberman (1977), have examined the nature of play and the qualities of playfulness (i.e., the attributes that the child brings to the environment). According to Bundy (1997), "it may be playfulness, rather than play activities, which, when evaluated, provides therapists with the information they seek regarding a young child's

development" (p. 53). In order to fully assess playfulness within the cultural context of families, there is a need for more scholarly work in this area.

Studying children and families is a timely endeavor, as researchers in recent years have attempted to explain the relation between adult beliefs and children's development (McGillicuddy-Delisi, 1992; Miller, 1988; Murphey, 1992; Palacios, Gonzalez, & Moreno, 1992; Rubin & Mills, 1992). Since childhood is an extended experience and parents are a major influence on children's lives, parental beliefs and behaviors are relevant to children's developmental outcomes (Bishop & Chace, 1971; McGillicuddy-Delisi, 1992; Miller, 1988; Murphey, 1992). Moreover, like play and culture, the complex relationships between parental beliefs and values and children's behavior are not linear, but multidirectional. Some theorists argue that parents do not construct beliefs but adopt them from their culture (Goodnow 1988; Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992). Therefore, variations in beliefs across culture and individual differences have been attributed to social class and gender within cultures (Goodnow, 1988; Miller & Davis, 1992).

Other theorists have expressed that parental beliefs determine child outcomes, and beliefs, in turn, are influenced by the parent's perceptions of the child (Murphey, 1992). Further, the child may adopt beliefs about him- or herself that correlate with parental opinions, and parental beliefs may reflect demographic, socio-cultural, and personal factors (Goodnow & Collins, 1990). In one study on parental values, childrearing, and play, Dutch parents of 2- and 3-year-olds valued play as influential for children's cognitive development, social development, creativity, personal

development, and exploration (van der Kooij & van den Hurk, 1991). The educational and cultural orientation of the parents influenced children's play. Higher education correlated with parents stimulating play.

In contrast, some researchers have found little or no relationship between parental beliefs and behavior (van der Poel, de Bruyn, & Rost, 1992; Siegel, 1992). For example, in one study on the relationships between parental attitude, behavior, and children's play, parents of playful 9- to 12-year-old children expressed support of children's play but differed behaviorally. Parents set limits on both their children's play and their own involvement in play (van der Poel et. al., 1992).

At least two studies have examined parents' values toward play and playfulness using an adapted version of the Children's Playfulness Scale (CPS) (Barnett, 1990). Pascual (1996) surveyed Anglo American parents' values on play and children's playfulness. She found that parents valued play and playfulness in their children, and play was important for its own sake, as well as for promoting learning and development. Social skills such as cooperative play, sharing, and expression of joy were valued highly by parents; whereas, behaviors relating to humor (teasing others, joking, clowning) were valued the least. Pascual postulated that Americans value social skills which are important for individual success in society, whereas potentially embarrassing behaviors like teasing and clowning may not be readily rewarded.

When Li, Bundy, and Beer (1995) examined Taiwanese parental values toward playfulness, they found comparable results. Taiwanese parents valued play and playfulness in their children and ranked social skills as the most important expression

of playfulness, and teasing, leadership, and restrained emotions as the least valuable. In contrast with Pascual's belief that American parents valued social skills as a precursor for individual success, Li et. al. (1995) explained that Chinese cultural values of collectivism and interdependency may have accounted for Taiwanese parents' values. Although both American and Taiwanese parents valued play and playfulness, there seemed to be a different cultural explanation for similar values.

When reviewing the literature on black parents' beliefs about play and children's playfulness, there is a gaping chasm. Although many researchers have focused on black children's play (preschoolers of low socioeconomic status) and have examined sociodramatic play (Griffing, 1980; Fein & Stork, 1981; Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990), children's playfulness has not been addressed. Results regarding the quality of sociodramatic play of black children are inconsistent; however, there are some similarities in the findings. Smilansky & Shefatya (1990) reported that children of low socioeconomic status (SES), including children of African and other ethnic descents, incorporated less diversity and variation in play roles, less advanced object utilization, less language usage during play, and fewer numbers of participants in sociodramatic play than children of middle socioeconomic status.

In comparison, Weinberger and Starkey (1994) investigated the play behaviors of African American preschoolers from impoverished families, in familiar environments, both indoors and outdoors. Their findings supported that African American preschoolers of low SES engaged in all types of play, including sociodramatic play, which can reflect social learning and relationships. Children most

frequently engaged in functional play (physical movement such as jumping, pushing toys, climbing), followed by pretend play. Constructive play (using objects to build something, drawing, puzzles) occurred least often and was the shortest in duration. The play of black children was investigated; however, it was from a cognitive developmental perspective, and playfulness was not examined, nor were parents' beliefs about their children's playfulness.

Although cultural studies on children's play are increasing and are stressing the role of the environment in shaping and organizing behavior, there continues to be a dearth of research on African American parents' perceptions or values as related to children's playfulness. As occupational therapists work with children in their occupational role as "player," or family member, it is critical that they understand families' values and goals. This study addressed the need for more research in this area, with the following questions investigated:

(1) Are the Test of Playfulness (ToP) (Bundy, 1997) and adapted versions of the Children's Playfulness Scale (CPS) (Barnett, 1990; Pascual, 1996) valid measures of playfulness with African American children and parents?

    (a) If so, how well do the parents agree with the construct of playfulness (i.e., do the responses of at least 95% of parents conform to the Rasch model)?

    (b) Do parents view the items manifesting playfulness (CPS) as a single unidimensional construct (i.e., do at least 95% of the 22 items conform to the Rasch model)?

    (c) What playfulness qualities do parents value?

(2) What is the overall relationship between parents' beliefs and values toward children's playfulness (CPS) and their children's observed playfulness (ToP)?

    (a) Is there a similar relationship between mothers' and fathers' beliefs and values toward playfulness and their children's observed playfulness?

CHAPTER TWO

Method

Participants

Forty-seven black parents (25 mothers and 22 fathers; 1 mother and 1 father were black Africans) and their children, between 3 and 10 years of age, were volunteer participants for this study. The 35 African American children (12 boys and 23 girls) ranged in age from 41 to 119 months (m = 80.5 months). All of the participants were recruited through personal contacts at a local school district, area churches, a major university, and other public places in a mid-sized Western city. Children had no known disabilities; all were from middle socioeconomic status home environments.

Instrumentation

Two adaptations of the CPS (Barnett, 1990) were used in this study. The original CPS is a 23-item instrument designed to evaluate a child's inclination toward a playful approach in his or her environment. The 23 statements describe a child's behavior in the following playfulness dimensions: physical spontaneity, social spontaneity, cognitive spontaneity, manifest joy, and sense of humor. For this study, the CPS was used as two questionnaires, one reflecting beliefs and the other values. On the CPS Beliefs scale, parents were asked to indicate on a Likert scale (0-3) how

much they *believed* their child acted like each play behavior described; whereas, on the CPS Values scale, parents indicated how much they *wanted* their child to play like each behavior (See Table 1 for CPS questions). Also, a modification of the original CPS was made in the following way: for CPS Beliefs and Values, we combined enthusiasm and exuberance into a single statement, resulting in item #15 (the child shows enthusiasm or exuberance during play) (Pascual, 1996). One item from the original CPS was coded inversely, and we chose to modify it, resulting in item #16 (the child freely expresses emotions during play).

The original CPS (Barnett, 1990) and its adapted versions are completed by educators or parents who know a child well. The CPS has been found to be reliable, valid, and an efficient means of measuring children's propensity toward play. Interrater reliability correlations between teachers were highly significant, with coefficients of .922, .958, and .971 for the test session, 1-month retest, and 3-month retest sessions, respectively. The playfulness scale intercorrelations and internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's coefficient) were high, ranging from .84 to .89 for the five dimensions of playfulness, and .88 for the entire scale. Principal factor analysis with squared multiple correlations were used on the 23 items of the CPS to test scale and item validity. In the individual playfulness items, the shared common variance ranged from 87.4% to 96.1%.

The Test of Playfulness (ToP) (Bundy, 1997) is an observational assessment administered during free play that examines four elements of play: framing, intrinsic motivation, internal control, and the freedom to suspend reality. These qualities have

Table 1

<u>CPS Beliefs and Values Questionnaire</u>

Children's Playfulness Scale

Date: _____   Child's Name: _____   DOB:_____

Age: _____   Gender: M   F   Birth order: _____ of _____

Very much	A little bit	Not very much	Not at all
I————————————I————————————I————————————I
3	2	1	0

_____ 1. The child's movements are generally well-coordinated during play activities.
_____ 2. The child is physically active during play.
_____ 3. The child prefers to be active rather than quiet during play.
_____ 4. The child runs (skips, hops, jumps) a lot in play.

_____ 5. The child responds easily to others' approaches during play.
_____ 6. The child initiates play with others.
_____ 7. The child plays cooperatively with children.
_____ 8. The child is willing to share playthings.
_____ 9. The child assumes a leadership role with others.

_____ 10. The child invents his/her own games to play.
_____ 11. The child uses unconventional objects in play.
_____ 12. The child assumes different character roles in play.
_____ 13. The child is interested in many different kinds of activities.

_____ 14. The child expresses enjoyment during play.
_____ 15. The child shows enthusiasm and/or exuberance during play.
_____ 16. The child freely expresses emotions during play.
_____ 17. The child sings and talks while playing.

_____ 18. The child enjoys joking with other children.
_____ 19. The child gently teases others while at play.
_____ 20. The child tells funny stories.
_____ 21. The child laughs at humorous stories.
_____ 22. The child likes to clown around during play.

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been identified as elements contributing to playfulness (Bateson, 1972; Bundy, 1993, 1997; Neumann, 1971; Kooij, 1989). Children's scores on the ToP were derived through video observation of play behavior in two settings (indoors and outdoors) for approximately 30 minutes. Each item was scored on a 4-point scale, a rating from 0 to 3. Each rating indicated the amount of time the child's behavior reflected an item (extent), the intensity of the behavior, or the ease or amount of skillfulness observed. Using Rasch analysis, Brooks (1995) concluded that the ToP is both reliable and valid when applied to children 15 months to 10 years of age (See Appendix A for ToP form and scoring information).

Procedure

The revised CPS questionnaires (Beliefs and Values) and a consent form (See Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the research were completed by participating parents. The investigator scheduled 1 hour to observe each child in a play situation. Each child was videotaped for 15-20 minutes in a familiar indoor and outdoor setting (i.e., home, school, neighborhood playground, etc.) that was conducive to play. Throughout the play sessions, little or no interaction occurred between the children and the investigator. At a later date, videotapes were observed and children scored on the ToP by the investigator and a second rater. A coding system was utilized to ensure anonymity of the parents and children.

Data Analysis

Several procedures were used to analyze data. First, ToP data were analyzed with FACETS Rasch analysis (Linacre, 1994), and CPS data were analyzed with the BIGSTEPS program (Wright & Linacre, 1995). Rasch analysis is a statistical procedure which involves logarithmic conversion of data into an interval scale. For this study, two assumptions apply to the use of Rasch analysis: (1) on the CPS Belief scale and the ToP, a highly playful child has a greater probability of getting a higher score on any given item than does a less playful child; (2) any child has a greater probability of getting a higher score on an easier item than on a difficult one. Similarly, when parents were asked to describe their values regarding playful behaviors, the following assumptions of Rasch analysis applied: (1) some behaviors will be more highly valued by parents than will other behaviors; (2) parents who value playfulness highly are more likely to value behaviors that are less valued by the group. When these assumptions were met, an item or a subject was said to conform to the Rasch model. The higher the percentage of items and people that conformed to the model, the greater the assurance that the CPS Beliefs/Values scales and ToP were measuring parents' values and perceptions toward playfulness and children's observed playfulness. Secondly, logit (log-odd probability unit) scores derived from Rasch analysis were entered into Pearson Product Moment correlations to evaluate relationships between parental values, beliefs, and children's observed playfulness (ToP).

CHAPTER THREE

Results

Are the ToP and adapted versions of the CPS valid measures related to playfulness

with African American children and parents?

The FACETS (Linacre, 1994) and BIGSTEPS programs (Wright & Linacre,

1995) were used to analyze children's scores on the ToP and CPS (Beliefs and

Values), respectively. With Rasch analysis, one can investigate whether the ToP and

CPS reflect unidimensional constructs of playfulness. The question of whether the

ToP and CPS are valid measures of playfulness for African American children was

answered by examining the percentage of children and items (and raters in the case of

the ToP) that conformed to the Rasch model. This was accomplished by examining

two categories of both standardized (t) and mean square (MnSq) statistics, infit and

outfit. Infit is sensitive to unexpected behavior affecting responses to moderately

difficult items near the person's ability level. Outfit is sensitive to unexpected

behavior by persons on items far from the person's ability level (very easy or very

difficult items)(Linacre, 1994).

A child or item fails to conform to the Rasch model when his or her response

pattern is erratic (i.e., the child received uncharacteristically low scores on easy items

or uncharacteristically high scores on difficult items). Therefore, the criteria for

children and items fitting the model consisted of both infit and outfit MnSq values of 1.4 or less and t values of 2.0 or less. In the present study, the ToP data from 97% (34 of 35) of the children conformed to the Rasch model, indicating that the ToP is a valid measure for use with African American children. The data from one subject (#19) failed to fit the measurement model (See Table 2). This indicated that the child's response patterns were unexpected (i.e., the child scored unexpectedly low on easy items, such as repeats action, engages in process, shares playthings). In Table 2, subject measures are reported as measure logits, and high positive measures correspond with more playful children.

To examine whether the CPS Beliefs and Values scales are valid measures related to playfulness with African American children, we examined how many parents' overall measure scores for the 22 items conformed to the Rasch model. A parent's measure scores conformed to the Rasch model if, for either the infit or outfit statistic, the MnSq and t statistics met the identical criteria set for child and item fit (MnSq $\leq$ 1.4; t $\leq$ 2.0). For CPS Beliefs, the responses of 47 parents (100%) conformed to the Rasch model, indicating that the parents agreed with a single unidimensional construct of playfulness. As can be seen in Table 3, one item (#9, assumes leadership role) failed to conform to the Rasch model. Therefore, 95% (21 of 22 playfulness items) conformed to the Rasch model. Apparently, leadership qualities fell outside the construct of playfulness for these parents.

Additionally, most parents gave children high playfulness scores on both the CPS Values and Beliefs scales, indicating that African American parents valued

Table 2

ToP Subjects

Measure	Model	Infit		Outfit		Subj		Age in
Logit	SE	MnSq	Std	MnSq	Std	Num	Gender	Months
1.84	0.21	1.1	0	0.8	0	1	F	118
1.53	0.19	1.2	0	1.0	0	2	F	101
1.47	0.20	1.0	0	0.9	0	3	F	116
1.40	0.19	1.2	0	1.3	0	4	F	95
1.38	0.19	1.0	0	0.9	0	5	M	119
1.26	0.20	1.2	0	0.9	0	6	F	121
1.21	0.19	0.9	0	0.8	-1	7	M	50
1.19	0.19	0.9	0	0.8	0	8	M	83
1.13	0.19	1.2	1	1.1	0	9	F	92
1.12	0.19	1.3	1	1.1	0	10	M	100
1.12	0.18	1.1	0	1.3	1	11	M	45
1.06	0.19	0.9	0	0.8	0	12	F	72
1.03	0.19	1.1	0	1.0	0	13	F	105
1.03	0.18	1.1	0	1.2	0	14	F	66
1.02	0.18	1.0	0	0.9	0	15	F	90
1.00	0.18	1.1	0	1.0	0	16	M	102
0.87	0.18	0.7	-1	0.7	-1	17	M	71
0.78	0.18	0.9	0	0.9	0	18	M	100
0.76	0.18	2.0	4	2.1	3	19	F	75
0.76	0.19	1.0	0	1.2	0	20	F	62
0.68	0.18	1.0	0	1.2	1	21	F	41
0.64	0.17	1.0	0	1.2	1	22	F	48
0.59	0.17	1.1	0	1.2	0	23	F	69
0.59	0.17	0.9	0	1.0	0	24	F	45

Measure Logit	Model SE	Infit MnSq	Std	Outfit MnSq	Std	Subj Num	Gender	Age in Months
0.58	0.18	1.0	0	1.4	1	25	M	109
0.51	0.18	1.0	0	1.0	0	26	F	88
0.50	0.18	0.6	-2	0.7	-1	27	F	69
0.43	0.19	1.0	0	0.9	0	28	M	51
0.41	0.18	1.0	0	0.9	0	29	F	117
0.36	0.17	1.0	0	1.0	0	30	F	45
0.36	0.18	0.6	-2	0.6	-2	31	M	94
0.34	0.17	1.2	1	1.2	0	32	F	99
0.28	0.18	0.8	-1	0.8	-1	33	F	61
0.22	0.18	1.2	0	1.1	0	34	F	53
-0.09	0.17	1.0	0	1.2	1	35	M	47

Note. Subjects in order of most playful (#1) to least playful (#35).
Underlined subject did not fit the measurement model.

Table 3

Item Calibrations for CPS Beliefs

Measure	Error	Infit MnSq	ZStd	Outfit MnSq	ZStd	Ptbis	Items
-1.14	0.17	0.69	-2.2	0.57	-1.9	0.60	14, shows enjoyment
-1.00	0.39	0.66	-1.0	0.45	-1.2	0.54	15, enthusiasm/exuberance
-0.87	0.16	0.62	-3.1	0.60	-2.0	0.62	16, expresses emotions
-0.72	0.15	0.91	-0.7	0.79	-1.0	0.58	2, physically active
-0.56	0.15	0.96	-0.3	1.06	0.3	0.56	17, sings and talks
-0.40	0.15	1.19	1.4	1.27	1.3	0.42	1, coordinated
-0.39	0.31	0.73	-1.0	0.65	-1.0	0.53	13, different interests
-0.25	0.14	1.02	0.2	0.87	-0.7	0.62	21, laughs at funny stories
-0.18	0.14	1.16	1.2	1.11	0.6	0.48	3, active vs. quiet
-0.16	0.14	1.05	0.4	0.93	-0.4	0.59	10, invents games
-0.06	0.14	1.05	0.4	1.12	0.7	0.59	4, runs, skips, hops
0.07	0.13	0.96	-0.4	0.84	-1.1	0.57	5, responds easily
0.17	0.13	1.10	0.8	0.98	-0.1	0.59	18, enjoys joking
0.17	0.13	1.20	1.6	1.14	0.9	0.50	22, likes to clown
0.26	0.13	0.84	-1.4	0.86	-1.0	0.59	7, plays cooperatively
0.32	0.13	0.77	-2.2	0.74	-1.9	0.64	6, initiates play
0.36	0.25	0.80	-1.0	0.87	-0.4	0.29	12, pretends roles
0.37	0.13	1.26	2.1	1.20	1.3	0.39	11, unconventional object
0.65	0.13	0.99	-0.1	1.02	0.2	0.52	8, shares playthings
0.65	0.13	1.34	2.7	_1.50_	_3.3_	0.51	9, assumes leadership
1.10	0.13	0.91	-0.8	0.86	-1.2	0.65	20, tells funny stories
1.61	0.13	1.01	0.1	1.03	0.2	0.48	19, gently teases

Note. Items are ordered from the easiest
        to the hardest.
The underlined item failed to fit the model.

playfulness highly in their children and that their children exhibited playful behaviors. In fact, on the CPS Beliefs scale, mothers and fathers awarded higher playfulness scores (measure logit) than the scores of children's observed playfulness as measured by the ToP.

Parents' values toward playfulness items

When examining the extent to which parents valued playfulness, the same criteria used for parent and item fit in CPS Beliefs were utilized. The CPS Values data from a majority of parents, 97.8% (46 of 47), fit the Rasch model, indicating that parents consistently valued behaviors in a similar way. Items that parents valued highly were primarily in the social skills area, as well as items expressing joyfulness, emotion, and exuberance (Table 4). Items that characterize humor were valued the least by the parents. Parents' values are ranked from the most important, expression of enjoyment (measure score -2.58), to the least important, gentle teasing of others (measure score 2.96) (See Table 5). "Gently teases others" failed to fit the Rasch model, suggesting parents saw it as outside the construct of playfulness.

Overall correlations between parental beliefs, parental values on playfulness, and observed play behaviors.

To answer the question of whether there is a relationship between parents' beliefs about their children's playfulness (measured by the CPS Beliefs) and children's observed playfulness (measured by the ToP), Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients were calculated between the measure scores generated by Rasch analysis for the ToP and the CPS. The results are reported in Table 6.

Table 4

Playfulness items rank

<div align="center">DIMENSION</div>

	Physical Spontaneity	Social Spontaneity	Cognitive Spontaneity	Manifest Joy	Humor
HIGHER VALUE	- physically active	- cooperative	- varied interests	- enjoyment	
		- shares		- emotions	
	- coordinated	- responds	- invents	- enthusiasm	
		- initiates play			
LOWER VALUE	- runs, hops	- leadership	- pretends		- laughs
	- not quiet		- unconventional		- sings
					- jokes
					- funny stories
					* teases

* Item failed to fit.

Table 5

Item Calibrations for CPS Values

Measure	Error	Infit MnSq	ZStd	Outfit MnSq	ZStd	Ptbis	Items (High to Low Values)
-2.58	0.34	0.89	-0.4	0.61	-0.7	0.35	14, shows enjoyment
-1.92	0.28	0.83	-0.9	0.52	-1.2	0.46	7, plays cooperatively
-1.52	0.25	1.02	0.1	0.99	0.0	0.34	8, shares playthings
-1.52	0.25	0.79	-1.2	0.64	-1.1	0.54	13, different interests
-1.24	0.23	1.33	1.7	1.42	1.1	0.16	8, expresses emotions
-1.19	0.23	1.00	0.0	0.72	-1.0	0.56	15, enthusiasm/exuberance
-0.77	0.21	0.89	-0.7	1.01	0.0	0.42	5, responds easily
-0.53	0.20	0.86	-1.0	0.76	-1.1	0.57	2, physically active
-0.41	0.19	0.82	-1.3	0.90	-0.5	0.51	10, invents games
-0.13	0.18	0.95	-0.4	0.83	-0.9	0.53	1, coordinated
-0.10	0.18	1.31	1.9	1.20	1.0	0.34	6, initiates play
0.03	0.18	0.88	-0.8	0.77	-1.3	0.58	21, laughs at funny stories
0.37	0.17	0.91	-0.7	1.16	0.9	0.53	17, sings and talks
0.46	0.17	0.91	-0.6	0.95	-0.3	0.55	12, pretends roles
0.49	0.17	0.83	-1.2	0.79	-1.4	0.63	18, enjoys joking
0.92	0.16	1.12	0.8	1.21	1.3	0.55	4, runs, skips, hops
1.14	0.16	0.94	-0.4	0.97	-0.2	0.44	11, unconventional objects
1.26	0.16	1.10	0.7	1.19	1.2	0.58	9, assumes leadership
1.38	0.15	0.75	-2.0	0.73	-2.2	0.69	20, tells funny stories
1.45	0.15	1.22	1.6	1.18	1.3	0.48	3, active vs. quiet
1.45	0.15	0.91	-0.7	0.89	-0.8	0.59	22, clowns around
2.96	0.15	<u>1.53</u>	<u>3.6</u>	<u>1.55</u>	<u>3.7</u>	0.33	<u>19, gently teases</u>

Note. The lower the measure number, the more highly the skill is valued.
The underlined item failed to fit the model.

Correlation coefficients between parents' beliefs and children's observed ToP scores revealed no relationship. When parental values and children's ToP scores were examined, results indicated a slight negative relationship. Overall, parental beliefs and values regarding playfulness correlated only moderately well (See Table 6).

Since the results were surprising and essentially revealed no relationship between children's ToP scores and parents' beliefs about their children's playfulness, we further investigated the role of gender by separating the data of mothers and fathers. When the correlation between mothers' beliefs and values (n=25) and children's ToP scores were compared to the correlation between fathers' beliefs and values (n=22) and their children's ToP scores, the results were much clearer (See Table 6). Mothers' beliefs about their children's playfulness and the children's ToP scores shared a moderate positive relationship, while mothers' values toward children's playfulness and the ToP had essentially no relationship. Mothers' beliefs and values were positively related. When we examined fathers' data, the results indicated that the ToP was negatively related to fathers' beliefs and values about their children's playfulness. Fathers' beliefs and values were strongly related.

In order to further clarify mothers' and fathers' disparate beliefs about their children's playfulness as related to the ToP, we plotted the scores (See Figures 1 and 2). To better describe the relationship between the ToP and CPS Belief variables, we removed any outlying points to get a more accurate view of the relationships. After the outlying points were removed, a truer correlation coefficient was yielded. Mothers' beliefs and the ToP were positively correlated (r=.61), and fathers' beliefs

Table 6

Relationship (r) of Parents' Beliefs, Values, and ToP

	Beliefs & ToP	Values & ToP	Beliefs & Values
Mothers (n=25)	.31 (p=.12)	-.05 (p=.81)	.52 (p<.01)
Fathers (n=22)	-.43 (p=.05)	-.31 (p=.19)	.72 (p<.001)
All Parents (n=47)	-.01 (p=.94)	-.16 (p=.28)	.60 (p<.001)

and the ToP had no relationship (r=.00). Using the same procedure for values, results revealed that both parents' values correlated positively with the ToP (mothers, r=.30, and fathers, r=.26). When all parents correlation coefficients were recalculated, results indicated that parents' beliefs and the ToP had a positve relationship (r=.32; p=.04), parents' values and the ToP had essentially no relationship (r=-.01; p=.98), and parents' beliefs, values and the ToP were postively correlated (r=.37; p=.02).

Given the apparent differences between mothers' and fathers' perceptions, we closely examined data from the 12 children for whom we had beliefs and values data from both parents. Each parent's measure belief score, plus or minus the standard error of measurement (SEm), was plotted for the 12 children; this represents a 95% confidence interval in which the true measure of the parent's belief about their child's

playfulness is likely to fall. When the mother's and father's belief measures plus or minus the SEm did not overlap, we considered the differences between their perceptions to be significant (See Figure 3). Seven sets of parents (58%) did not differ significantly from each other in beliefs, while 5 sets of parents (42%) differed significantly.
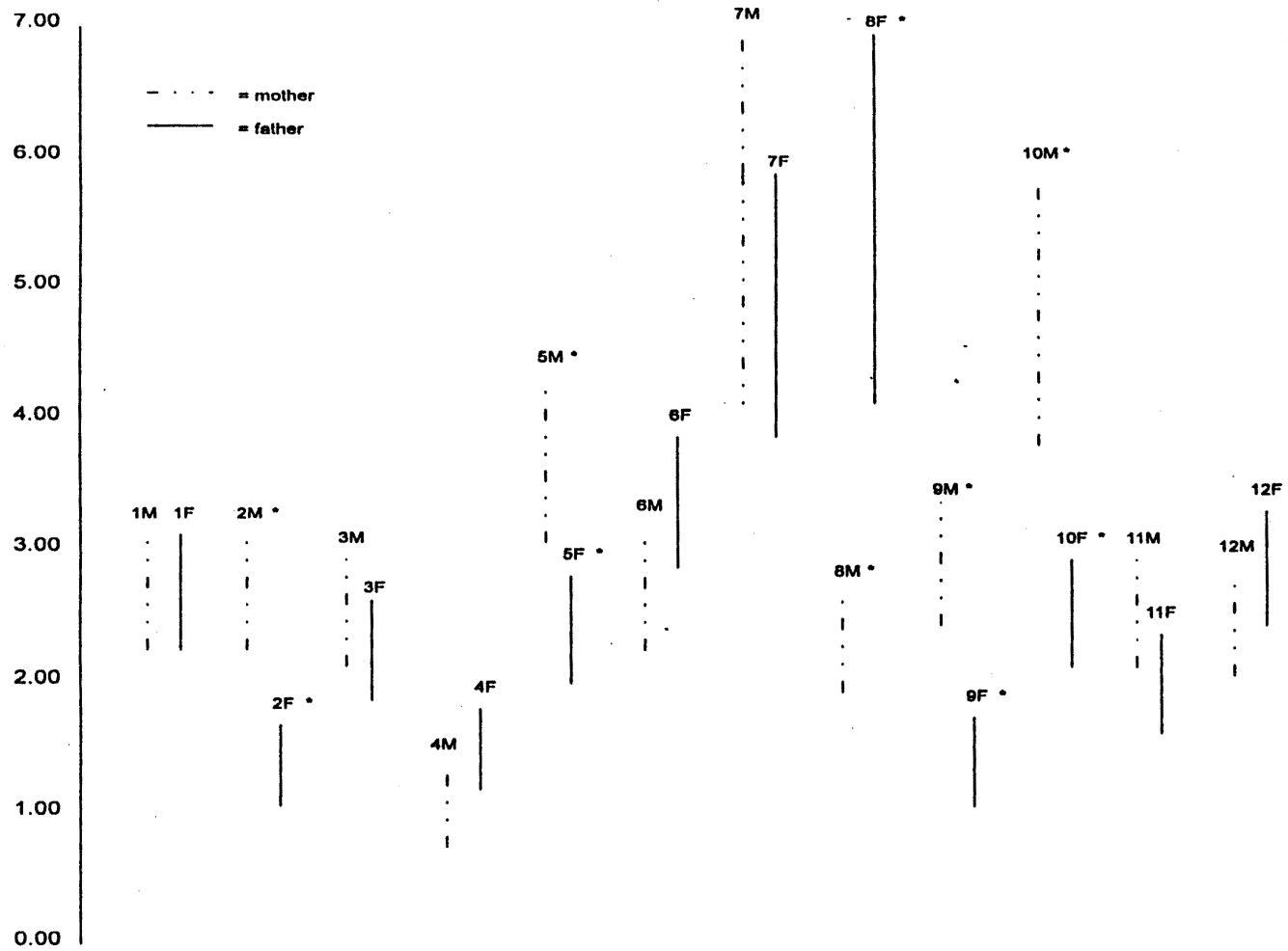
Figure 1. Mothers' Beliefs and Top Scores.

24
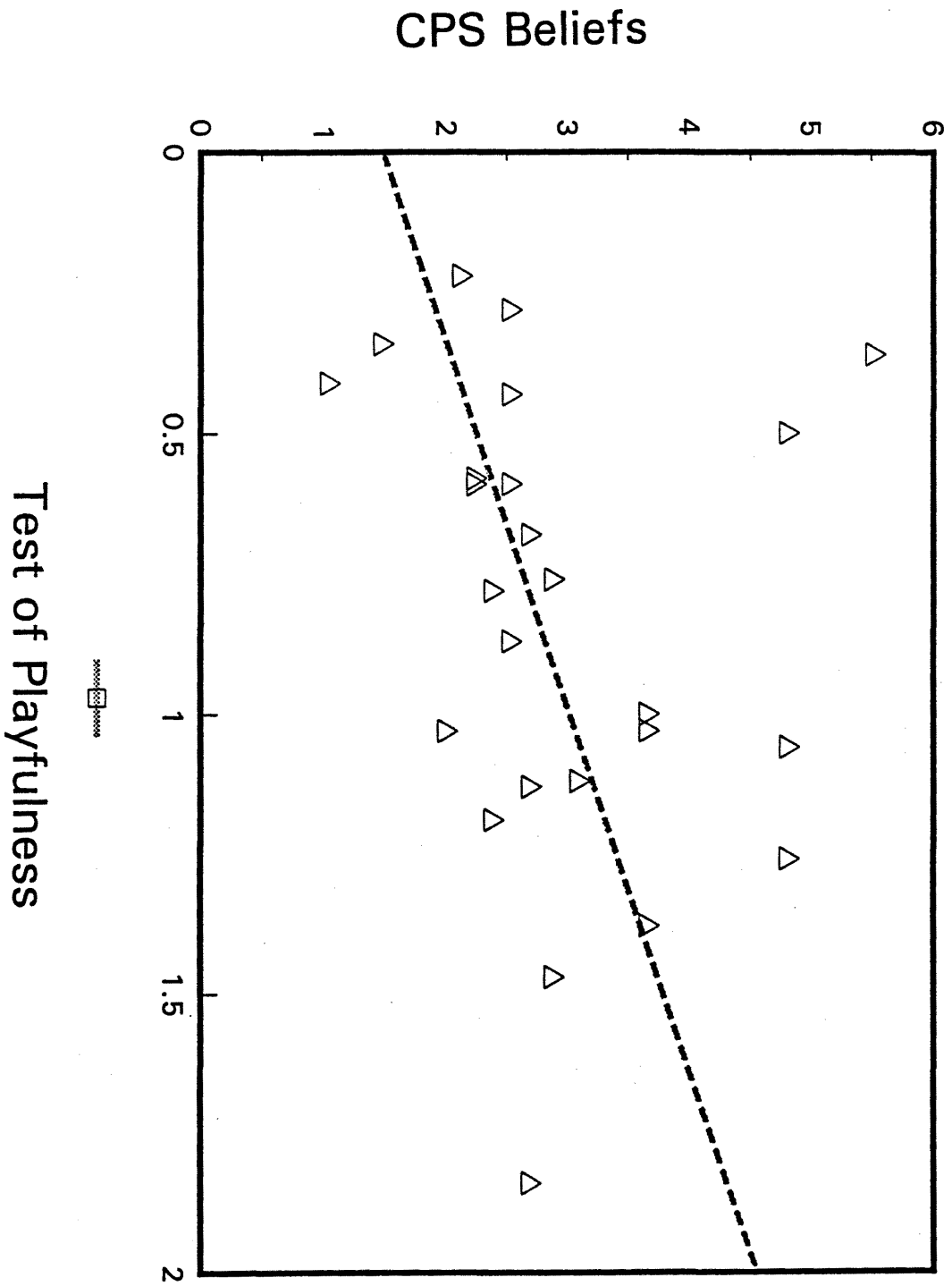
Figure 2. Fathers' Beliefs and ToP scores.
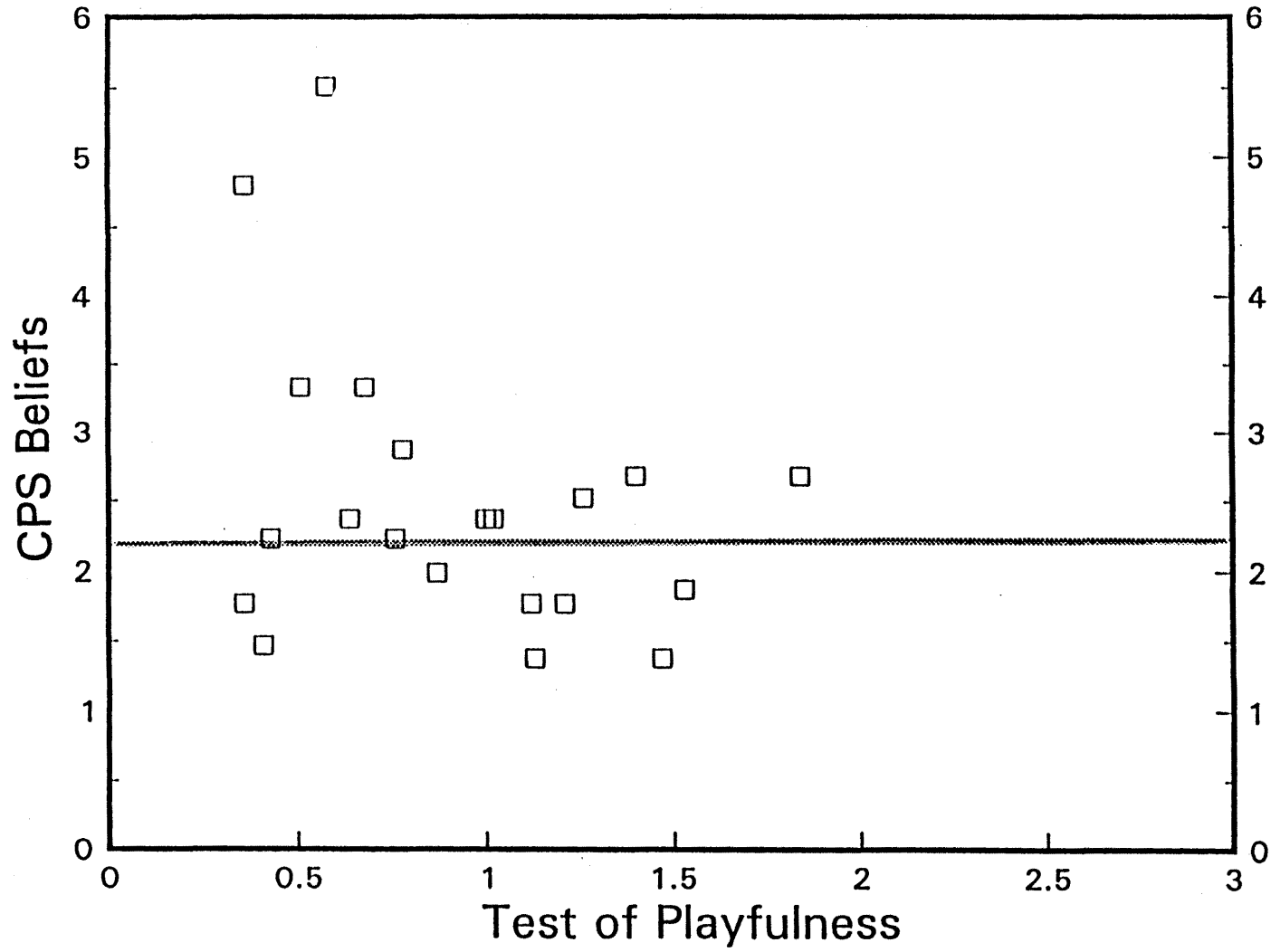
Figure 3. Belief measures between parents from same household, n=12.
Note. * = signficant difference in beliefs.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion

Parental beliefs about children and their ideas about children's development are complex and somewhat difficult to discern. The relationship between parental beliefs, values, child outcomes, and parents' behaviors spin a pattern of influences that are multidirectional (Murphey, 1992). African American parents in this study, similar to Taiwanese (Li et. al., 1995) and Anglo American parents (Pascual, 1996), indicated that they recognized and valued playfulness highly in their children. These results, coupled with evidence that parental beliefs influence children's behavior (Martin & Johnson, 1992; Palacios, Gonzalez, & Moreno, 1992), suggest that these black parents will encourage their children to play. In turn, play should support the development of mastery and creative thinking (Singer & Singer, 1990).

Although black, Caucasian, and Taiwanese parents valued playfulness and shared certain similarities in the manifestations of playfulness that they valued most highly, these similarities may reflect different cultural influences and developmental goals that parents set for their children. Variations in beliefs across culture and parental differences have been documented supporting the premise that parental beliefs are not constructed but adopted from culture (Goodnow, 1988; Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992). These differences reflect ethnicity, social class, educational level, gender, and

experience as a parent (McGillicuddy-Delisi, 1992; Rubin, Mills, & Rose-Krasnor, 1989). Traditionally, in Chinese culture, being a congenial group member and having good interpersonal relationships are important (Li et. al., 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In the Anglo American culture, individualism and independence are stressed highly for success (Googins, 1991; Pascual, 1996), but social skills are needed to ensure recognition of success. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the social aspects of playfulness will meet the developmental goals and cultural expectations of both societies.

In black culture, play is also valued for its socialization effect (Willis, 1992) and its inherent relationship to learning and creativity (Hale-Benson, 1986; Rubin et. al., 1983) and, ultimately, as a means of achieving success through education. Thus, given the importance of play for all parents, it is likely that African American, Anglo American, and Taiwanese parents' values toward playfulness reflect their personal cultures and other socioecological influences which impact their childrearing strategies and developmental goals for their children (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992; Ogbu, 1985; Rubin & Mills, 1992).

The parents in this study, like parents in previous studies (Li et. al., 1995; Pascual, 1996) valued expression of enjoyment above all other manifestations of playfulness. Children's enjoyment sometimes even overruled parents' concerns about certain types of play. For example, one parent expressed concern about her daughter playing with "Barbies" because of the doll's body image. However, this parent permitted her daughter to play with and collect various ethnic "Barbie" dolls and

accessories because the daughter cajoled and liked playing or pretending with the doll immensely.

The item "gently teases others" failed to fit the Rasch model for parental values. These results are similar to play research in which Taiwanese adults did not regard teasing and humor highly (Li et. al., 1995). Also, Caucasian parents ranked gently teasing as the least valued play behavior (Pascual, 1996). One explanation for black parents' ranking teasing lowly may relate to the negative consequences that can occur when teasing escalates and becomes hurtful. There is an art to teasing that requires reading subtle social cues and responding appropriately. This could be a cognitive play skill that parents believe is acceptable for older children and adolescents.

The social item "assumes leadership role" was outside the domain of beliefs for the parents regarding their children's playfulness. In this study, possibly, parents equated leadership with undesirable traits of aggressiveness or bossiness which can characterize some children's unskilled leadership abilities. Also, parents may not have seen their children as leaders. Parents in this study did not value leadership highly, comparably to parents in Li et. al (1995) and Pascual's (1996) studies. Leadership skills may be more acceptable and recognizable when children participate in games-with-rules (i.e., team sports, board games, tag). Games-with-rules require obvious flexibility, negotiation, competition, and delay of gratification (Hughes, 1991), which are leadership traits. Perhaps as a reflection of their age, few children in this study selected a structured game with rules during play.

From this study, both the CPS and ToP are valid measures of playfulness with African American parents and children. However, if both scales are valid measures of playfulness, the results suggest that mothers may be more accurate reporting their children's play behavior than fathers. Mothers awarded scores on the CPS Beliefs scale that matched their children's ToP scores to a greater extent than did fathers. Given their high correlations between beliefs and values, fathers may have tended to rate their children as they wished them to be, regardless of their children's actual playfulness. These differences between mothers' and fathers' beliefs may reflect individual socialization practices and parental experience (Murphey, 1992). Typically, African American mothers, like mothers in general, follow the social norm of being primarily responsible for children's childcare and socialization (Wilson, Tolson, et. al., 1990). Therefore, it is not surprising that mothers may be more accurate at judging their children's playfulness than fathers (Holden 1988; Miller 1988). Interestingly, Miller, Manhal, and Mee (1991) found that parents are not typically accurate. In fact, when parents do err, they show a tendency to overestimate their child's ability (Miller & Davis, 1992). Similarly, mothers and fathers perceived their children as more playful than actual ToP scores. One father even commented that dads like to brag about their children (hence high scores).

Overall, the reason for the lack of relationship between parental values and the ToP was unclear. Although these parents valued playfulness in their children highly, CPS values for all parents had little correlation with the ToP. Another possible explanation of variation in parental beliefs and values relates to the conceptualization

of playfulness. Although the ToP and CPS both measure playfulness, they correlated only moderately well; therefore, it is likely that the instruments represented different constructs of playfulness (Barnett, 1990; Bundy, 1997). Given this fact, parental values and beliefs on playfulness may yield stronger results if an assessment that corresponds more similarly to the ToP is utilized.

A characteristic typical of African American culture is unconditional interpersonal support by parents (Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990). When parental beliefs and values about children's play are high, they are perhaps expressing their unconditional support for their children. Far from being a detriment, a positive bias may be beneficial for children (Goodnow, 1988). Accordingly, fathers' optimism and behavior have corresponded with improved children's academic performance and adjustment during early adolescence (Brody et. al., 1994). Beliefs, in turn, affect parental behavior, which influences children's development (Miller, 1986). For example, a child may realize that a parent values creativity and exploration and incorporates that in play sessions. For this reason, the measurement of parental beliefs may sometimes transmit more about the parent-child relationship and be more predictive of children's development than parental behavior (Miller, 1986). Despite overall differences between the correlations of mothers' beliefs with ToP scores and fathers' beliefs with ToP scores, when we examined perceptions of both parents from the same household regarding a child's playfulness, most parents' responses overlapped, indicating similar beliefs about their child.

<u>Summary, conclusions, and implications for future research</u>

African American parents, like all parents, have cultural influences and practices which directly impact their childrearing practices and developmental goals. Since play is intertwined with culture, the results of the study suggest that both the ToP and the CPS are valid measures of playfulness for black children and families. Parents will value and cultivate playful traits and behaviors which are necessary for children's optimum functioning within a specific cultural setting. Parental values and perceptions, play-learning experiences, and cultural impact may sculpt young players to meet challenges in a changing society.

Occupational therapists will need to continue to be aware of parents' beliefs, values, childrearing practices, and goals in order to effectively provide intervention for children and families. Also, when occupational therapists assess children's playfulness, the ToP may be better than the CPS for children with disabilities. The ToP does not have a physical domain (like the CPS) and can assess children's playfulness regardless of their physical coordination and skills.

From this study, we conclude that African American parents value play and can identify playfulness in their children; however, mothers appear better able to recognize playfulness qualities than fathers. The complex relationship between culture, parental beliefs and values on playfulness, and the ToP could be further clarified, resulting in better research findings. A larger sample of African American families from various geographical areas, including parents of children with disabilities or at risk for developmental delay, is recommended. This sample may not

be a cross representation of black parents or children because there is a continuous range of intracultural variability and individual difference within any ethnic group. Additionally, it is not known what fathers from other ethnic and cultural groups think about their children's playfulness and whether their beliefs differ from those of mothers. Far too often, fathers are not widely represented in research involving play and children. The role of fathers in the child's world of play is important. For it is in play that truly an adventure is waiting to happen, and one that should not be missed.

> *Pooh knew that an adventure was*
> *going to happen, and he brushed*
> *the honey off his nose with the*
> *back of his paw, and spruced*
> *himself up as well as he could,*
> *so as to look Ready for Anything.*
>
> *- A. A. Milne*

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TEST OF PLAYFULNESS (ToP)--DRAFT 3/3/94

	EXTENT	INTENSITY	SKILLFULNESS
Name:_____	3 = Almost always	3 = Highly	3 = Highly skilled
Age: _____	2 = Much of the time	2 = Moderately	2 = Moderately skilled
	1 = Some of the time	1 = Mildly	1 = Slightly skilled
Tape:____	0 = Rarely or never	0 = Not	0 = Unskilled
	NA = Not Applicable	NA = Not Applicable	NA = Not Applicable
Rater: _____			

ITEM	IN EXT	IN INT	IN SKILL	OUT EXT	OUT INT	OUT SKILL	COMMENTS
Is actively engaged.							
Appears self-directed. Decides what to do & how to do it.							
Appears to feel safe.							
Demonstrates obvious exuberance, manifest joy.							
Tries to overcome difficulties, barriers, or obstacles to persist with an activity.							
Actively modifies complexity/ demands of activity.							
Engages in mischief or commits a minor infraction of the implicit or explicit rules.							
Repeats actions, activities; stays with same basic theme.							
Engages in process aspects of activity.							
Pretends.							
Incorporates objects or other people into play in novel, imaginative, unconventional, or variable ways.							
Engages in challenges (motor, cognitive, or social).							
Negotiates with others to have needs/desires met.							
Plays with others.							
Plays interactively with others.							
Assumes leadership role.							
Enters a group already engaged in an activity.							
Initiates play with others.							
Teases or jokes with others (verbal or nonverbal).							
Clowns.							
Shares playthings, play equipment.							

	IN			OUT			
ITEM	EXT	INT	SKILL	EXT	INT	SKILL	COMMENTS
Gives facial, verbal, and body cues appropriate to the situation and that say, "This is how you should act toward me."							
Responds to others' facial or body cues.							
Maintains cohesiveness of play frame.							
OVERALL PLAYFULNESS							

	EXTENT	INTENSITY	SKILLFULNESS
	3 = Almost always	3 = Highly	3 = Highly skilled
	2 = Much of the time	2 = Moderately	2 = Moderately skilled
	1 = Some of the time	1 = Mildly	1 = Slightly skilled
	0 = Rarely or never	0 = Not	0 = Unskilled
	NA = Not Applicable	NA = Not Applicable	NA = Not Applicable

Definitions of ToP Items

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Is actively engaged.	Extent -- Proportion of time the child is involved in activities rather than aimless wandering or other nonfocussed or undesirable activity. Intensity: Degree to which the child is concentrating on the activity or playmates).
Appears self-directed. Decides what to do and how to do it.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child appears to have a purpose and a plan.
Appears to feel safe.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child seems to feel physically and emotionally safe.
Demonstrates obvious exuberance, manifest joy.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child exhibits outward and obvious signs of having fun, being gleeful.
Tries to overcome difficulties, barriers, or obstacles to persist with an activity.	Intensity -- Degree to which the child perseveres in order to overcome obstacles to continuing the activity.
Actively modifies complexity/ demands of activity.	Skill -- Ease with which the child actively changes the requirements/ complexity of the task in order to vary the challenge or degree of novelty.
Engages in mischief; commits a minor infraction of the implicit or explicit rules.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child is involved in minor infractions of the implicit or explicit rules. The mischief is not done out of a spirit of meanness. Intensity -- The level of infraction committed. Note. The action should not cross the boundaries into "meanness" or excessively poor judgment resulting in someone's getting hurt. Skill -- The adeptness with which the child creates/ carries out the mischief.
Repeats actions or activities; stays with same basic theme.	Extent -- Proportion of time the child stays with same basic action or theme even if the objects used vary.
Engages in process aspects of activity.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child seems more interested in how something is done or in doing than in the outcome (product) or in doing nothing.
Pretends.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which there are overt indicators the child is assuming different character roles, pretending to be doing something, pretending something is happening that is not, or pretending an object or person is something other than what it actually is. Skill -- The degree of conviction and ease with which the child pretends.
Incorporates objects or other people into play in novel, imaginative, unconventional, creative, or variable ways.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child (a) uses objects commonly thought of as toys in ways other than those the manufacturer clearly intended, (b) incorporates objects not classically thought of as toys into the play (e.g., bugs, jars, cans, table legs), or (c) uses one toy or object in a number of different ways.
Engages in challenges (motor, cognitive, or social).	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child engages in activities that require him or her to "stretch" a little. Intensity -- Degree of challenge accepted by the child.
Negotiates with others to have needs/desires met.	Skill -- Ease and finesse with which the child verbally or nonverbally asks for what he or she needs.
Plays with others.	Extent -- Proportion of time during which the child interacts in any way with other children or adults involved in the same or similar activity.

Plays _interactively_ with others.	_Extent_ -- _Proportion of time_ during which the character of the activity would change dramatically if more than one child were not present. _Skill_ -- _Ease_ with which the child sustains an interactive (cooperative or competitive) activity.
Assumes _leadership_ role.	_Extent_ -- _Proportion of time_ during which the child has been responsible for setting the agenda. _Skill_ -- _Ease_ with which the child assumes and executes the leadership role.
Enters a group already engaged in an activity.	_Skill_ -- _Ease_ with which the child does something to become part of a group already engaged in an activity; the action is not disruptive to what is going on.
Initiates play with others.	_Skill_ -- _Ease_ with which the child approaches others and initiates a new activity or makes a _major_ change to the direction of an ongoing activity.
Teases or jokes with others (verbally or nonverbally).	_Extent_ -- _Proportion of time_ during which the child engages in teasing or razzing behavior or incorporates verbally-transmitted jokes or funny stories into play with others. Teasing is done "with a glint in the eye rather than out of blackness in the heart." _Intensity_ -- _Degree_ to which the teasing or joking approaches but does not cross over "the edge." _Skill_ -- _Ease and cleverness_ with which the teasing or joking is accomplished.
Clowns.	_Extent_ -- _Proportion of time_ during which the child engages in exaggerated or "galumphing" behavior especially (but not necessarily only) with the intent to gain others' attention.
Shares play things, play equipment.	_Extent_ -- _Proportion of time_ during which the child allows others to play with toys, personal belongings, or playmates or on equipment the child is currently using.
Gives clear facial and body _cues_ appropriate to the situation and that say, "This is how you should act toward me."	_Extent_ -- _Proportion of time_ during which the child acts in a way to give out clear messages about how others should interact with him or her.
Responds to others' facial and bodily cues.	_Extent_ -- _Proportion of time_ during which the child acts in accord with others' play cues. _Skill_ -- _Ease and smoothness_ with which a child responds to the cues of others.
Maintains cohesiveness of _play frame_.	_Extent_ -- The _proportion of time_ during which the child maintains the flow and cohesiveness of the play activity.

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

TITLE OF PROJECT: African American Parental Perceptions on Play and
Children's Playfulness

NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Anita Bundy, SCD, OTR, FAOTA

NAME OF CO-INVESTIGATOR: Carolyn Porter, OTR

CONTACT NAME AND PHONE NUMBER FOR QUESTIONS/PROBLEMS:
Carolyn Porter: 490-8927; Anita Bundy: 491-6173

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:
 The purpose of this research project is to investigate African American
parents' perceptions about playfulness and their children's play behaviors in a natural
environment. The Test of Playfulness (ToP) is a tool that will be used to assess your
child's playfulness skills. Your child will be videotaped during play for a total of
about 30-40 minutes.

PROCEDURES/METHODS TO BE USED:
 First, you will be asked to complete a one-page questionnaire regarding your
perceptions about playfulness. Next, your child will be videotaped playing in both
indoor and outdoor environments. Each taping will last approximately 15-20 minutes.
Your participation in this research is voluntary, and neither you nor your child will be
compensated. At the completion of this study, the videotape of your child will be
given to you, destroyed, or, with your permission, retained by the principal
investigator for use in future play research.

RISKS INHERENT IN THE PROCEDURES:
 There are no known risks associated with participating in this study other that
those related to play in a supervised environment. It is not possible to identify all
potential risks in an experimental procedure, but the researchers have taken
reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

BENEFITS:
 From your participation, further knowledge about African American parental
perceptions on play and children's behavior may be gained. In addition, you can gain
personal satisfaction knowing that you and your child contributed to the enhancement
of play and culture.

Page 1 of 3. Subject initials___ Date_____

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Videotapes will be stored in a secured area, and only persons involved in the study will have access. In addition, videotapes and questionnaires will be coded to ensure you and your child's anonymity. Upon completion of this study, videotapes will be destroyed as a standard procedure, unless you request your child's tape or give permission for its use in future play research.

LIABILITY:

The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury. Questions about subjects' rights may be directed to Celia S. Walker at (970)491-1563.

PARTICIPATION:

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you or your child may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly signed this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 2 pages.

_____

Participant name (printed)

_____   _____

Participant signature   **Date**

_____   _____

Investigator or co-investigator   **Date**
signature

Page 2 of 3. Subject initials____ Date_____

PARENTAL SIGNATURE FOR MINOR

As parent or guardian you authorize _____
(print name) to become a participant for the described research. The nature and
general purpose of the project have been satisfactorily explained to you by _____
_____ and you are satisfied that proper precautions will be observed.

_____

Parent/Guardian name (printed)

_____   _____

Parent/Guardian signature   Date

CHILD'S CONSENT

I agree to be videotaped while playing.

_____   _____

Child's signature (printed)   Date of birth

Page 3 of 3. Subject initials____ Date_____

APPENDIX C

Extended Literature Review

This literature review will explore various ideological perspectives on the black family and their relationships to parental childrearing strategies, beliefs, values, and behaviors. These are essential to understanding the black parent and his or her child. From this exploration, the quilted panorama of family characteristics, parental beliefs, and culture can be added to the base of knowledge about play and the African American family.

Conceptual Models

In this section, relevant conceptual models about the structure of black family life in the United States will be reviewed, along with a discussion of environmental and cultural task influences on family life. There are three basic ideological views about black families--the cultural variant, the cultural deviant, and the cultural equivalent views (Gibbs, 1990; Staples & Boulin-Johnson, 1993). The cultural variant orientation views the black family as a distinctive cultural group from the dominant culture but a legitimate and functional family system. Conversely, the cultural deviant approach views black family lifestyle as deviating from the normative patterns and values of the middle class. The cultural equivalent model proposes that black families are legitimate as long as they conform to middle-class family values, and differences are attributed to social class influences. Several authors and assumptions are associated with each of the various models. For a brief description of each model, see Table C1.

Table C1

Conceptual Models of Black Culture

Model	Assumption	Author
Cultural Variant		
Afrocentric	Black culture is influenced by African traditions, values, and customs	Nobles, 1988
Cultural Difference	African Americans have their own culture and childrearing practices which are based on African heritage	Boykin, 1983 Hale-Benson, 1986
Biculturation	A dual socialization exists between black culture and the dominant culture	Valentine, 1971
	Overlapping of cultures occurs; complementarity of cultures is important	DeAnda, 1984
Eclectic	Combines other theoretical views and acknowledges various influences on black culture; recognizes a distinctive black culture within the American experience	Chimezie, 1983
Cultural Deviant		
Pathology	Black culture is a deviant version of white American culture. The black family itself, specifically black women, are responsible for racial inequality (i.e., single-parent households, welfare dependency, educational failure).	Moynihan, 1965 (cited in Staples & Boulin-Johnson, 1993)

(table continues)

Table C1 (continued)

Model	Assumption	Author

Cultural Equivalent

Model	Assumption	Author
Lower-class	Black families are not different from white families. Black culture is a result of poverty.	Scanzoni, 1971
Poverty-Acculturation	Disorganization of black family is due to slavery, racism, oppression, poverty. The solution was to integrate black culture into the dominant culture.	Frazier, 1932 (cited in Chimezie, 1983)
Poverty	Class factors are more important than racial issues. Black family destabilization is the result of unemployment among black males and economic changes.	Wilson, 1987

Cultural Variant

African American social scientists have suggested that minority groups have distinct cultures, with different childrearing practices than the dominant culture (Hale, 1994). Black language, cognitive styles, behavior, and social and value systems are legitimate and adaptive within the black culture (Hale-Benson, 1986; Myers & King, 1983). These differences resulted, in part, from West African culture (Boykin, 1983) and adaptations to slavery, segregation, rural Southern culture, and Northern urban lifestyle (Gibbs, 1990).

Boykin (1983) suggested nine interrelated areas of African American culture with African roots: (a) spirituality: an approach to life in which higher forces influence everyday things; (b) harmony: people and nature are interconnected; fate is interrelated with other elements; (c) movement: approaching life rhythmically; music, dance, and percussion are interwoven for psychological well-being; (d) verve: an attraction for stimulation and action that is energizing and variable; (e) affect: sensitive to emotional cues; expressive emotions and feelings; (f) communalism: a commitment to social bonds with an awareness that group concerns transcend individual needs; (g) expressive individualism: the cultivation of being unique, spontaneous, genuine, and of a distinctive personality; (h) oral tradition: a preference for oral/aural modes of communication; the ability to use metaphorical and vivid forms of expressive language is emphasized and cultivated (i.e., the oratorical styles of Jesse Jackson and Barbara Jordan); and (i) social time perspective: time is treated like a social clock rather than a literal one.

One critique of the cultural variant model is that it does not explain why children from other minority or ethnic groups with distinctive cultures and childhood experiences are able to achieve in the American educational system, while black children may not (Ogbu, 1985). In addition, this perspective does not account for the current social problems besieging the black family, particularly males aged 15 to 25. These include crime, violence, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, and high rates of dropping out of school. Perhaps these problems can be better understood if they are conceptualized as an interaction between current social policies, environmental stress,

and coping strategies utilized within the home (Gibbs, 1990; Wilson, Lewis, et. al., 1995).

Biculturation Concept.

Black parents show evidence of participating in and accepting the mainstream ethos. Thus, black Americans are socialized in both African and European values (Valentine, 1971) and negotiate the two cultures. In fact, Boykin and Toms (1985) contended that "African Americans simultaneously negotiate three distinctively different realms of experience . . . mainstream, minority and black cultural" (p. 38-39). Mainstream culture refers to the values, norms, and behavioral patterns of the dominant group; minority culture refers to adaptations that minorities make in reaction to oppression; black culture refers to the proactive and positive cultural continuities that are transmitted, either explicitly or implicitly. A major point of disagreement among researchers is whether all cultures are of equal importance. DeAnda (1984) viewed biculturation as possible only when there is an overlap between the two cultures. The more overlap that exists, the more effective the process of dual socialization. DeAnda also pointed out that the two cultures might not be in opposition but may instead be complementary. "Complementarity of cultures is as important as similarity," says DeAnda (p. 103). The success of the Japanese in America can be explained by their culture's functional compatibility to the American one. Japanese American culture supports success-orientation and education, but it couples these with conformity and compromise (Kitano, 1969).

<u>Eclectic View.</u>

The eclectic view recognized a distinctive black culture and identified factors which contributed to its cultural foundation. Some aspects of black culture are seen as African retentions, and others are from the American experience. Some of these factors include, but are not limited to, African traditions, Christianity, oppression, lower-class status, poverty, and influences from other ethnic groups (Chimezie, 1983).

<u>Cultural Deviant</u>

<u>Pathology Concept.</u>

Black culture is viewed as deviant or negative, and its unique way of functioning contributes to oppression (Boykin & Toms, 1985). This model looks at black culture and sees promiscuity, alcohol and drug abuse, disorganization, violence, and illiteracy, and does not focus on positive cultural attributes (Chimezie, 1983). Historically, this perspective had its foundation in the work of E. Franklin Frazier, a black sociologist, who attributed black family lifestyle to slavery, racism, and poverty (Gibbs, 1990). A later advocate, Daniel P. Moynihan, studied the black family during the civil rights movement. Moynihan's study blamed problems in the African American family, such as teenage mothers and single-parent households, on black women, and these perceived weaknesses were pinpointed as the causes of poverty, unemployment, and educational failure (Staples & Boulin-Johnson, 1993). Differences between supporters of the pathology concept and those who advocate the

cultural variant hypothesis most likely relate to class ideology and ethnocentric values

versus a value-free approach (Staples & Boulin-Johnson, 1993).

Cultural Equivalent

Lower-class and Poverty Model.

This model, a slight variation of the cultural deviant model, proposes that

black culture is the result of class conflict caused by poverty. There are references to

similarities between black culture and lower-class white culture (Chimezie, 1983).

Theorists have attributed any differences between black and white family structures to

discrimination and access to opportunity; henceforth, black ethnic culture is a function

of poverty (Chimezie, 1983; Wilson, 1987). Specific traits, such as female

dominance, delay of gratification, fatalism, and disorganization, are a result of

poverty (Demos, 1990). Criticisms of this approach are that the traits associated with

poverty--unemployment, inadequate housing, and low income--only define poverty,

not culture (Staples & Boulin-Johnson, 1993).

Universal Model.

The universal model, a variation of the cultural equivalent model, suggests that

constructs, images, and behaviors are essentially the same across cultures (Ogbu,

1985). Universalists also have suggested that improving the social and economic

status of underclass black Americans relates to changing their childrearing practices,

which would thus affect achievement in school (Ogbu, 1985). Within the universal

model, a subgroup of proponents (hereditary) have claimed that black children fail in

school due to cognitive and other deficits, whereas another faction, environmentalists,

have proposed that failure has been due to individuals' surroundings (Ogbu, 1985). The environmentalist viewpoint will be discussed since it was applied to black children during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, with an implied assumption of cultural deprivation. The environmentalists believed that white middle-class children performed well in school because of certain attributes- motivation, as well as cognitive, social, and language skills. Consequently, black children did not excel in school because they lacked such characteristics. It was further postulated that black children lacked certain competencies because black parents did not use the same child-rearing practices as white middle-class parents (Ogbu, 1985). According to environmentalists, an effective strategy was to teach black preschool children certain play styles and to provide early childhood experiences which were thought to enhance learning (Ogbu, 1985; Hale, 1994). This deficit-oriented approach held white middle-class childrearing practices and development as the standard by which others are measured.

Clearly, there are some weak assumptions in the universal model. First, there is no historical or cross-cultural data that support the theory that changing one's childrearing practices will enhance social and economic conditions (Ogbu, 1985). Usually, socioeconomic changes precede changes in childrearing practices (Kaplan & Manners, 1970; Peters, 1988). Secondly, children from diverse cultural backgrounds (with different childhood experiences) do learn successfully in American classrooms. For example, an increasing number of Asians are outperforming both black and white American students. "There has yet to appear a journal article . . . suggesting that the

Japanese are genetically superior to white Americans" (Hale, 1994, p. 7). Instead, the number of hours that Japanese children spend in school studying and the transference between work and educational values are considered (Fuligni & Stevenson, 1995; Stevenson, Chen, & Lee, 1993).

Cultural-Ecological Model

The cultural-ecological approach can be applied to the study of black child development. One main assumption is that childrearing is culturally organized to prepare newborns to become competent adults within their society (Levine, 1977). Secondly, natural environmental influences affect the transmission of social organization and cultural values (Ogbu, 1985). In this model, children are taught the skills and competencies which are necessary for their survival. For example, contemporary middle-class Anglo Americans teach their children such skills as self-direction, initiative, independence, competitiveness, and other cognitive and communicative skills that are functional for career and social acceleration (Connoly & Bruner, 1974). In different populations, different appropriate strategies have evolved for varying environments, and these strategies determine which competencies are taught, such as practical, cognitive, social-emotional, and other skills (Peters, 1988). A parent living in the inner city will thus employ different strategies than one living in a small town. For example, a mother living in an urban area may encourage early independence and self-reliance in her children to assist the family, i.e., using public transportation to run errands and get to school.

African Americans participate to some degree in the cultural systems of mainstream America. Furthermore, the influence of the dominant culture varies among individual black Americans. Beliefs and values can be influenced by mass media, especially television and movies. By investigating such theories and assumptions, we learn about the nature, complexity, and contributions of black culture to family lifestyle and childrearing.

African American Family Characteristics

Although there is a need to be cautious in extrapolating from African traditions to current African American practices, similarities between the values of West African and Caribbean people continue to exist among black people throughout the world (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985). The classic works on African American family are by Hill (1972) and Nobles (1974). Hill and Nobles contended that strong kinship bonds, work ethics, and adaptable family roles are derived from African heritage. African principles such as a deep sense of family and kinship, cooperative work, and collective responsibility relate to adaptable family roles found in black families (Hill, 1972; Nobles, 1974; Nsamenang, 1992).

Childrearing and Socialization Patterns

African American parents have relied on the extended familial system (relatives, friends, and neighbors) to assist with childrearing and socioeconomic stresses, and to provide a supportive social network. Flexible family roles and spirituality, coupled with a supportive social environment, provide African Americans with means to adapt and respond to a wide array of routine and adverse social

changes (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993; Wilson, Greene-Bates, et. al., 1995). Studies of childrearing techniques among black parents indicate that there are strong similarities to white parents of the same socioeconomic level. However, there are also differences that reflect cultural values and attitudes (Peters, 1988). Bartz and Levine (1978) have compared Anglo American, Mexican American, and African American families with regard to childrearing attitudes and general behaviors. Although striking differences were observed in attitudes, the childrearing techniques that parents used to socialize their children were similar; only their desired goals were different (Bartz & Levine, 1978). As with all parents, black parents want their children to be self-sufficient, healthy, and competent adults. The childrearing strategies, attitudes, and patterns of behavior for black parents develop out of the economic, cultural, and racial circumstances of the day (Peters, 1988).

Some researchers (Young, 1970; Peters, 1988) have reported that black parents of all social classes tend to be more authoritarian than white parents. Black parents may use strict techniques to socialize obedience to authority in their children in order to assure they achieve in school. However, emphasis on conformity and obedience may be counterproductive to success in competitive classrooms in which conversing with teachers and competition with classmates are often rewarded. It is unclear how conformity affects a child's performance in classrooms. Thus, some black parents may be reinforcing behaviors at home which are not functional in the classroom, thereby placing their children at a disadvantage (Gibbs, 1990).

Since many black children are from single-parent households or have both parents working, they are socialized to be autonomous and independent at an early age (Bartz & Levine, 1978). This emphasis on early independence includes performing household tasks and taking care of younger siblings.

Flexibility in gender roles and sharing in decision-making are also encouraged by black parents as children approach adolescence, especially in working-class and middle-class families. These socialization practices result in less gender-specific behaviors (i.e., children are expected to perform chores according to their age and competence rather than their gender) (Bartz & Levine, 1978; Young, 1970).

Black parents spend a great deal of energy, directly and indirectly, in communicating a sense of racial identity to their children. This includes vast and consistent doses of culture (Konner, 1991), a positive self-esteem, self-worth, and pride in their ethnicity. Additionally, black parents must prepare their children to understand and cope with obstacles they will encounter in society (Chestang, 1984).

Many parents have been successful in raising confident children within a complex society. Recent studies show that black youngsters are successful and well-adjusted in school (Luster & McAdoo, 1994). The quality of family relationships, not the structure or composition of the family, influence self-esteem (Brown, Hutchinson, Valutis, & White, 1989). Factors such as adequate nurturing, love, and support determine a child's self-concept. Although a trend exists that supports a tendency for single-parent families to be associated with delinquent and maladaptive behavior in

children, it is not the structure itself causing these behaviors, but the relationships within the structure (Brown et. al., 1989).

Educational style

Minority researchers have proposed that "children of color" probably experience failure in school because educational systems do not recognize and teach to their learning styles (Boykin, 1983; Hale, 1994; Hale-Benson, 1986). This mismatch between the culture that black children bring to school and the culture of the school contributes to the achievement gap between African American and white children (Hale, 1994). Boykin (1983, 1986) suggested that the African American home environment generally provides an abundance of stimulation, intensity, and variation. This stimulating home environment produces the "verve" that is found in many black children. Boykin further postulated that exploration, behavioral change, novelty, and variability have not been incorporated into some classrooms. Consequently, without a stimulating school environment, the black child becomes disinterested in academics and seeks other avenues for affective and vervistic stimulation.

Parent-Child Communication

Although some researchers have found that black parents talk to young children less than do white parents (Peters, 1988), this can be misleading. Schacter (1979) emphasized social class and language-enriching environments as major factors in determining frequency of communication. Maternal education is a good indicator of a verbally stimulating home (Schacter, 1979). In addition to social class, other

factors, such as family composition, may be relevant to familial communication patterns (Wilson, Greenebates, et. al., 1995).

Values

Values related to the black family are rooted in African traditions. "The family is the source and the reflection of the African American culture. The culture of a people is the way in which they live their lives, the way they express their beings" (Willis, 1992, p. 132). Overall, these values include religion, respect for elders, kinship, mutual support and aid, adaptability, education, communication, strong work orientation, independence, and humor (Slonim, 1991; Willis, 1992), many of which are similar to West African cultural traits identified by Boykin (1983).

Peters (1988) commented on the high value of personal uniqueness in black culture. Individualism is often expressed in the way parents, as well as boys and girls, interact with and respond to young children in the family (Young, 1970). This individualism is often seen through stylistic and expressive clothing, music, hair, and language within the black community. Although black parents' authoritarian childrearing style (encouraging respect and obedience to others) (Staples & Boulin-Johnson, 1993) seems to conflict with individualistic values, it actually provides support to children and enhances their confidence and self-worth. For example, if a black child is performing poorly in math, the child may be able to maintain confidence and self-esteem by emphasizing his or her distinctive qualities in other areas where individual style can flourish (i.e., sports, music, dance, art). Also, black parents may value unique qualities in children (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Additionally, play is valued in African American households. Play is important for both socialization and development of physical skills (Willis, 1992). Further, since children are the future of any society, parents want their children to acquire an education. The family supports education as the means to a better lifestyle. The family also provides guidance, inspiration, and a sense of kinship (who his or her people are). Interpersonal support by black parents is often unconditional, as they want to encourage high levels of achievement for their children (Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990).

Finally, black families instill independence in their children. This may appear contradictory to the cooperative-communalism effort but is actually an empowerment mechanism. Independence encourages children to be successful and thus to have extra resources to help other family members who may need assistance (Willis, 1992). This is typified in the lyrics of singer Billie Holliday, which say "Mama may have, Pappa may have, but God bless the child that got its own." Although these values are not accepted by all African-Americans because of life circumstances or personal choice, they help form a set of beliefs which are today shared by many African-Americans (Willis, 1992).

The cultural styles and childrearing approaches unique to black parents are varying and adaptable. Families are essential in establishing a sense of personal and racial self-esteem. A familial environment provides cultural beliefs and practices that permit children to develop strategies for a bicultural lifestyle (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). All cultures, like families, have strengths and weaknesses. More

knowledge about the structure and functioning of black families, their communicative and expressive styles, and adaptive behaviors to American society is needed as we move toward the 21st century in order to meet the challenges of a changing, multi-ethnic, and global society.

Parental Beliefs and Children's Behaviors

The relationship between parental beliefs and children's behaviors is known to be complex, exists in various forms, and serves multiple functions for parents. Parental beliefs about their children's behavior affect parent-child interactions and feelings (Rubin & Mills, 1992). This section will discuss origins of parental beliefs, sociocultural influences, and other relevant parental interactions and their relationships to children's development. These parental concepts are not unique to black parents but encompass a broad field of parents.

<u>Origins of Parental Beliefs</u>

Mothers and fathers differ in both amount and type of experience with children (knowledge of child development, personal upbringing, experience with children). Therefore, they might be expected to show differences in their beliefs about children (Holden, 1988; Miller, 1988). Studies have been inconclusive as to whether mothers are more accurate at judging children's abilities. Women, who generally have more exposure to children, have been found to be more accurate and efficient in problem-solving children's behavior than men (Holden, 1988). In fact, Miller (1986) reported no differences between mothers' and fathers' abilities to estimate children's cognitive abilities.

Additionally, Goodnow, Knight, and Cashmore (1985) concluded that experience has little impact on parental beliefs. Two factors, cultural background and motivational-affective needs of parents, are determinants. First, ideas are integrated from the immediate culture, which influence beliefs. Second, some parental beliefs seem to be more functionally based than cognitively based. Anyone with primary responsibilities for a child's development may feel inclined to stress positive characteristics of childhood (such as developmental milestones) and to deemphasize problems (Miller, 1988).

Another interesting possibility when looking at parental beliefs is that high-ability children give clearer cues as to their level of competence, and, therefore, are easier to judge than children with low abilities (Hunt & Paraskevopoulos, 1980; Miller, 1988). Therefore, variations in parental accuracy could be related to children's abilities.

Sociocultural Influences

Beliefs about children's development and behavioral expectations have been reported to vary with social class, parenting experience, and ethnicity and culture (McGillicuddy-Delisi, 1992). Also, socioecological factors have influenced parents' beliefs (McGillicuddy-Delisi, 1982). Parents with more education or higher income were more likely to believe that children learn best by being actively engaged in environmental interactions, while their counterparts of lower socioeconomic status emphasized direct instruction in order for children to acquire skills.

When exploring cultural differences about beliefs, ethnicity has a strong effect. Goodnow, Cashmore, Cotton, and Knight (1984) found that cultural background, rather than education or individual experience, was a main influence on parental beliefs. Furthermore, parents' cultural backgrounds and beliefs influenced children's social interactions and play behaviors. The culture-specific socialization practices that parents emphasize serve adaptive functions for promoting developmental goals (Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995).

In a study incorporating ethnicity and SES, Hess, Kashiwagi, Azuma, Price, and Dickson (1980) found that the expectations for children by American and Japanese parents were strikingly different, indicating an ethnicity factor. American mothers wanted earlier verbal mastery and development of social skills than did Japanese mothers, who instead expected earlier emotional maturity, compliance, and social courtesy. In both cultures, higher SES parents held earlier expectations for children's development.

Parental Beliefs and Goals

Variations in parental beliefs are a result of cultural background (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993), and differences in cultural values lead to differences in parental beliefs. As both Hoffman (1988) and Levine (1988) have suggested, parental beliefs and behaviors are a function of the goals parents have for their children. For example, if one goal of immigrant or African American parents is to assist their children in succeeding at school, they may view conformity as a means to school achievement.

Brody and Stoneman (1992) studied the contribution of the goals and beliefs of parents and caregivers to child outcomes. Generally, findings indicated that different adults in the child's life had different goals for children's development, thereby placing various demands on the child. Parents and family members have an impact on children's behaviors through their relationships and the childrearing strategies which are practiced.

Parental Beliefs and Child's Gender

Previous research regarding children's personal-social development has reported that parents' beliefs vary with children's age and gender (McGillicuddy-Delisi, 1992). For example, parental beliefs and gender differences in personal-social development are related to parents' beliefs that boys and girls develop differently in achievement areas such as language, vocabulary, social studies, and science. Also, parental beliefs about children's personal-social development as related to age showed no significance, whereas gender was significant when combined with children's age. For some parents, belief constructs reflected an awareness that girls mature earlier than boys.

In summary, beliefs affect parents' behavior toward children. Beliefs are conceptualized in various forms and serve cultural interests. The belief systems of parents can be influenced by multiple factors; however, it is generally assumed that parents do have an impact and that their childrearing strategies affect children's physical skills, social-emotional behavior, and competence (Rubin, Mills, & Rose-Kranor, 1989). Since "play is the natural intellectual activity of the child" (Hale-

Benson, 1986, p. 90), and play serves an important function in children's social-emotional development and learning (Piaget, 1983; Sutton-Smith, 1967), an indirect correlation could be made that parental beliefs relate to children's play.

Parental Values, Beliefs, and Play

When examining the relationship between parental values, beliefs, and children's play, there is support for the concept that parental beliefs and behaviors influence children's play. Parents develop complex beliefs about children's social development, and these appear related to children's behavior (Rubin, Mills, & Rose-Kranor, 1989). Also, parental values and beliefs are associated with children's playfulness and creativity (Bishop and Chace, 1971). Play in young children is influenced by parental behaviors and beliefs, in which parents prepare their children to socialize with others and find peer acceptance (Swadner & Johnson, 1989). Moreover, this interaction of parental beliefs and behavior determines, in part, the quality of the parent-child relationship (Rubin & Mills, 1992).

In contrast, some researchers have found little relationship between parental behaviors and attitudes toward play. van der Poel et. al. (1991) found that parents of more playful children believed that children should be given support and be encouraged to play, but, in practice, also set limits on playful opportunities and their own participation in their child's play. Additionally, the results of van der Kooij and van den Hurk (1991) supported little relation between parental opinions about play and parental behavior. Children's perceived playful characteristics (adaptability and activity) had a negative relationship to parental behavior.

Also surprising is that many parents perceived play as only for fun or amusement and did not regard play as an important dimension of a school's curriculum. Parents and teachers separated play and learning and did not integrate the two (Rothlein & Brett, 1987).

Socioeconomic Status and Play

The SES of the family in which children are educated also affects play. Some researchers (Doyle, Ceschin, Tessier, & Doehring, 1991; Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990) concluded that preschoolers of low SES engaged in fewer episodes of sociodramatic play than did children of middle SES. Qualitative differences in the sociodramatic play of disadvantaged children included the following: fewer verbalizations during play sessions, less advanced object utilization, less diversity and variation in play roles, and fewer participants in sociodramatic play sessions (Smilansky, 1968; Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990). Other researchers (Doyle et. al., 1991; Fein & Stork, 1981) have found no difference in the quality of sociodramatic play between low and middle SES children. In a recent study, Weinberger and Starkey (1994) studied the play of 21 African American preschoolers in both indoor and outdoor settings. Their findings indicated that urban African American children of low SES engaged in cognitive play. Functional play (jumping, climbing, pushing toys) was the most common type, followed by pretend play, and constructive play (building, manipulating objects). Although the quality of the pretend play was high, the duration was less than that of the other types of play. The classroom environment and management may have contributed to the level of pretend play.

Play and Culture

"Play, a dominant activity of children in all cultures, is viewed to be both a cause and an effect of culture" (Roopnarine & Johnson, 1994, p. 5). Play expresses culture; it serves as a mechanism for cultural learning and transmission, and a gauge of child development (Schwartzman, 1978). Play is characteristic not only of young children but also young mammals, birds, and even the aloof reptile (Brownlee, 1997).

Cultural Differences in Play

Children in different cultures have varied opportunities for play, and the amount of time that a child can play depends on cultural expectations. For instance, Micronesian Truk youngsters spend virtually all of their time playing until the age of 10 (Broude, 1995). In contrast, the Kipsigis children of Kenya have numerous chores, yet they invent ways to make play out of work. Harkness and Super (1983) described Kipsigis children playing tag while watching the cows or climbing trees while caring for their younger siblings. In Ecuador, Jivaro adults discourage children from playing, in part because they think play distracts children from work (Broude, 1995). The adults even frown upon teasing, because they believe that it leads to lying in adulthood.

Cultural Differences in Games

In some societies, children engage in highly complex and elaborate games, whereas, in other cultures, the games are simple (Hughes, 1991). Competition is an ingredient in the play of many children, yet there are societies in which competitive play is almost unknown. One of the clearest layers between play and culture relates

to the types of competitive games found within a culture and their relationship to the political and social hierarchy (Hughes, 1991). According to Sutton-Smith and Roberts (1981), the competitive games of a culture reflect the values of society and perhaps give practice of skills needed for success.

Anthropologists have identified three categories of competitive games--games of chance, games of physical skill, and games of strategy. "In games of physical skill, the outcome depends upon the strength, dexterity, or agility of the players" (Broude, 1995, p. 255). These games of skill are often found in cultures that emphasize individual accomplishment in children (Broude, 1995). For example, in American schools, children compete for ribbons in field day competitions.

Games of chance are prevalent in societies in which uncertainty characterizes everyday life (Broude, 1995). There is a high degree of individual, social, and environmental uncertainty (Sutton-Smith & Roberts, 1981). In essence, there is a relationship between games of chance and situations that promote feelings of insecurity in people (Broude, 1995).

Games of strategy are found in societies with social stratification and where parents expect children to be obedient (Broude, 1995). Success in these societies depends on planning, organization, deductive reasoning, and, to a lesser degree, on physical agility and fate (Hughes, 1991). Highly organized sports (football, soccer, baseball) are games of strategy that depend on chance and physical skills. The games reflect the general attributes of the cultures in which they are found (Hughes, 1991).

Finally, the three types of competitive games are often played in all cultures. Through games, children learn the necessary tools for competency in adulthood. Games are not trivial occurrences, but rather reflect cultural values more accurately than not (Hughes, 1991). Although football may teach teamwork and competition, it may also encourage aggression, intimidation, treachery, and the spirited end-zone victory dance.

There are vast differences in play both cross-culturally and within cultures. The value of studying cultural differences or similarities of children's play reflects the complexity of cultures. Across cultures, children grow up to be similar, yet different, from one another.

Summary

There are various colored threads, concepts, and orientations that characterize the black family. These perspectives form a patchwork quilt to facilitate a better understanding of black family structure, function, and lifestyle. Contemporary African American families have values and cultural styles that are adaptable for families to be successful. Moreover, parental beliefs are fluid and help shape children's behavior. Variation in children's play and adult perceptions about play produces a cultural piecework. The influence of culture is woven throughout parental beliefs and children's playfulness. The summary of past research on African American families, parental beliefs, and the relationship of play and culture will promote a better understanding of African American parents and their perceptions about children's playfulness.