

**INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL TECHNIQUES AND OPINIONS ON
THE PRESCHOOL CHILD'S EATING BEHAVIOR AS
OBSERVED IN THE HOME AND AT THE LABORATORY**

by

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INTRODUCTION

Although the general "problem" of food likes and dislikes appears frequently in articles of various areas such as foods and nutrition, education, and psychology and has been the topic of much study, little research has been done by collecting data on the relation of the parental techniques and opinions to the eating behavior of the preschool child. In few instances has research been done which was supplemented by observation in the home during the mealtime.

"The child's early feeding experiences are among the foundation stones on which are built many of his later life patterns."¹ A reason frequently given by parents for sending children to nursery school is so that the child will eat better.

Today many nutritionists, social workers, doctors, teachers, and parents have experienced and/or read of the pioneer campaigns, in the 1920's and 1930's, for nutritional work with children to bring about the improvement of health of children of all economic classes. More recently efforts have been made by townships, cities, counties, and states to develop a comprehensive educational program reaching not only the children but also parents, teachers, nurses, and social workers.

From the standpoint of nutrition, it is certainly not essential that every child learn to like all foods equally well.

¹"Eating Patterns of Children: A Guide for Doctors and Nurses," New York: National Association for Mental Health, Inc., 1951, p. 3.

Nevertheless, in the social setting in which most children live, it is desirable to learn to accept and eat a well-balanced diet consisting of a variety of foods.

The objectives of this study were as follows: (1) to investigate the food likes and dislikes of a group of preschool children and to determine the relationships, if any, among members of their families by making a comparison of father and child, mother and child, and sibling(s) and child; (2) to compare the child's eating at the Child Development Laboratory with that in the home; and (3) to discover the "current" opinions of the parents toward the mealtime and to compare parental opinions and techniques observed during mealtime. Further, it was hoped that the findings would provide information that would be helpful to those interested in the area of family and child development as well as to parents of preschool children.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

McCarthy investigated the feeding problems of forty-eight children in relation to the food aversions in the family. Fourteen of these children constituted a "feeding problem group."² It appeared that about one-third of the children's food aversions were identical with, and might conceivably be due to, those of someone in the family. Children in the problem group showed a

²Dorothy McCarthy, "Children's Feeding Problems in Relation to Aversions in Families," Child Devel., Dec. 1935, 6(4):277.

much lower percentage of liked foods, and a much higher percentage of foods to which they were indifferent and which they disliked or refused than did the non-problem group. A much higher percentage of identical food aversions occurred among siblings than between children and parents. Correlation with age indicated a growing indifference to food in general and a tendency away from strong likes and strong aversions with increase in age; this trend was much more evident in the non-problem group of children.

Herring studied possible criteria for the measurement of liking and disliking, which are behavioristic terms.³ The more frequent forms of response to taste stimuli as they occurred in these experiments were: reaching for, taking, smiling, eating without turning away or pushing aside, saying, "I want some," and doing nothing to avoid; also, turning away, closing lips, shaking head, saying, "I don't want that" or "My mother says I shouldn't eat that," and doing nothing to approach the food.

Mirone, Torrance, and Roughton studied the food intake at noon of nursery school children, three years to three years and ten and one-half months of age. With the exception of Irish and sweet potatoes, vegetables were consumed in the least amounts, and desserts in the largest amounts. About one-third as much liver was consumed as beef. The boys drank 88.2 grams of milk as compared with 102.3 grams for the girls. Sex, day of the

³John P. Herring, "The Measurement of Liking and Disliking," *J. Educ. Psychol.*, March 1930, 21(3):163.

week, and week order had no significant effect on the quantity of food consumed during the noon meal. The correlations and progressions of milk and solid food intake were highly significant for the girls, but not significant for the boys.⁴

In the hope of gaining a more accurate understanding of how conditioned reactions are built up, Moss conducted a series of experiments with two children, age two and age four.⁵ That these likes and dislikes as well as many of our later preferences and aversions are the direct result of early conditioned reflexes seemed to be supported by this experiment.

"Significance of this decrease in food intake during the preschool period, its association with observations in psychological studies, and its effect on growth progress are areas for further study."⁶ In 1951 Beal reported that for over 20 years the Child Research Council, Denver, Colorado, has been studying growth and development of children (then numbering 170), most of whom are of Northern European ancestry from middle-class homes in Denver. The pattern of each child's growth has been observed since birth to determine differences between children, at any age of maturity level.

One interesting observation was the change in appetite and

⁴Lenore Mirone, Francis V. Torrance, and Cleo W. Roughton, "Food Intake of Nursery School Children at Noon," J. Am. Dietet. Assoc., August 1956, 32(8):709.

⁵Fred A. Moss, "Notes on Building Likes and Dislikes in Children," J. Exptl. Psychol., Dec. 1924, 7(6):475.

⁶Virginia A. Beal, "Nutritional Aspects of a Human Growth Study," Nutrition News, Chicago: National Dairy Council, Feb. 1951, 14(3):11.

food acceptance most children showed in the preschool period. After a rapid rise during the first 12 to 18 months, intake levels of nutrients reached a plateau and some, including calcium, even dipped markedly. About this time the rate of growth decelerated while the child's activity in feeding and other areas showed increasing independence. The period of either stationary or decreased intake was maintained until three to four years of age, when the intake curve rose. The median calcium intake, which reached a high point of about 1.1 grams at the end of the first year, decreased to about 0.8 grams at two and a half years, then rose to 1 gram at about four years. There was considerable variation among children in the timing of this decrease. Some showed gradual lowering of intake, most markedly in milk and certain vegetables, and others showed abrupt drop in appetite and enthusiasm for food. This change first appeared at any time between one and three years; the lower level lasted a month or two or persisted for two years or more. None of the children in the research council's series, according to that data, had gone through this period without altering appetite and food intake.

In discussing appetites and attitudes, Wagner expressed her viewpoint on feeding the young child..."It is the mental pattern we create around eating, the way we present food to the child that will influence an active like or dislike of a particular food."⁷ She also stated that family food preferences are reflected

⁷Muriel Ginsberg Wagner, "Appetites and Attitudes--A Viewpoint on Feeding the Young Child," J. Am. Dietet. Assoc., April 1954, 30(4):330.

in likes and dislikes of the children, but food "jags" and appetite lags are part of the normal maturational process.

Roberts considered the noon meal of the nursery school to be an important nutritional measure and a means of developing desirable food habits in the child.⁸ According to this author, the influence of the group at lunch time helps the child, who has difficulty conforming to rules, by setting examples for him; the doing of certain unexpected things teaches him to accept routine as a matter-of-fact.

Aschmann made a study of family procedures related to the feeding of young children.⁹ The purpose of this study was to ascertain what procedures relating to the feeding of preschool children were carried on in the homes of a group of nursery school children, and what relation might exist between the feeding situation and other aspects of family life, such as family attitudes and knowledge of child nutrition. There was a decidedly consistent relation between family attitudes and the child's eating behavior; the children ranking highest in eating behavior lived in families ranking highest in their attitudes. Aschmann stated that this would seem to indicate a need for more serious consideration of family attitudes as affecting children's behavior. There was a less marked relation between family procedure and the child's eating behavior. The mother's

⁸Lydia J. Roberts, Nutrition Work with Children, p. 373.

⁹Adelaide Anne Aschmann, Family Procedures Related to the Feeding of Young Children, p. 51. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Kansas State College, 1939.

knowledge of child nutrition was not consistently related to the feeding of the child.

Dale,¹⁰ Prevey,¹¹ Radke and Klisurich,¹² and Sweeny¹³ offered suggestions and experiences with nursery school feeding or experiments, principles or factors in food habits, nutrition and the emotional significance of food. These articles were mostly concerned with stimulation of appetite and did not offer research material or similar information concerning attitudes of parents as compared with eating patterns of children.

PROCEDURE

The subjects of this study were 18 families who had children attending the Kansas State College Child Development Laboratory, Manhattan, Kansas, during the fall semester, 1957, and the spring semester, 1958. Seventeen families had one child enrolled and one family had two children enrolled in the laboratory. These families were purposely chosen because it was believed that the parents would be interested in any study connected with the welfare of their children. It was also hoped to gain their cooperation in keeping accurate records and giving frank informa-

¹⁰Jane Dale, "Pre-Arranged Meals for Nursery School Children," J. Home Econ., June 1936, 28(6):371-373.

¹¹Esther Prevey, "Self-Service in a Nursery School," J. Home Econ., June 1936, 28(6):376-379.

¹²Marian Radke and Dayna Klisurich, "Experiments in Changing Food Habits," J. Am. Dietet. Assoc., May 1947, 23(5):403-409.

¹³Mary Sweeny, "Changing Food Habits," J. Home Econ., Sept. 1942, 34(7):457-462.

tion. So that observations of the lunch situation could be made, children were included from both the younger and older morning groups in the laboratory. When this study began, the nine children from the younger group ranged in age from two years, five months to three years, two months; the mean age being two years, ten months. The ten children from the older group were from three years, four months old to four years, four months; the mean age being three years, ten months.

The first contacts with the mothers were made by telephone. The purpose and nature of the study were briefly explained and permission was asked to interview them in their homes. During the first visit, data were recorded on Form I (Appendix). The half-page general information form, which supplemented Form I and contained names and ages of the family and occupations of the parents, was filled out previously by the interviewer from records obtained at the Child Development Laboratory. This form served as an introduction to the open-end questionnaire, Form I. The following forms (Appendix) to be filled in by the father and mother respectively were left in the home at this time:

Form II, Parental Opinions Relating to the Feeding Situation, contained questions and comments concerning the eating situation and one was to be filled out by both the father and the mother in order to obtain the opinions, examples, and comments of each parent. Some revisions were made on Form II by adding further explanation to such phrases as "finger foods" and "attitudes," terms which seemed to be more familiar to professional people than to most parents.

On Form III, Food Preference Chart, the father and mother were asked to indicate food likes, dislikes, refusals, and indifferences from the 98 foods listed on this chart.

On form IV, Seven-Day Food Record, the mother was asked to keep a record of all meals and snacks served in the home for a period of seven consecutive days. The amount eaten and amount not eaten by the preschool children were recorded also.

After completing the interview, arrangements were made by the interviewer to observe each child during one of the meals served in the home, at a time when the home conditions would be most nearly normal. It was emphasized to the mother that the procedures of the planning, serving, and eating of the meal should be carried out in the customary manner.

Originally it was planned that at the time of observation of the meal in the home, the interviewer would explain that she had some studying or writing to do. If invited to do so, the interviewer then would join the family for dessert or the meal. But in all the situations the parents mentioned that a more normal behavior would be observed if the interviewer joined the family for the whole meal. Form V (Appendix) was to be filled out immediately upon leaving the home before the next observation. Preceding the meal, the interviewer referred to this form to make accurate notations more probable.

The questionnaires and forms left with the parents at the time of the interview were to be collected at the time of observation of the preschool child in the home situation.

The Food Preference Chart for the older siblings of the preschool child was filled out either at the time of the interview, if possible, or preceding or following the meal to be observed in the home. Pictures of each food were shown to the child. The older grade school children filled in the form with little assistance. With the children below second grade level, the names of foods and pictures were read by the interviewer. By using a ruler under the name of each food presented on the form, the child was able to fill out his own chart.

Two group teachers, including the interviewer, kept daily records (Form VI) of the food eaten at the Child Development Laboratory by each child in the study during each noon meal for the period of observation. The younger group of children were observed for a nine-week period, starting the second nine weeks of the fall semester and the older group of children were observed for the following nine-week period, which occurred at the beginning of the spring semester. A daily record (Form VII) of the mid-morning snack eaten and returned was also kept by the interviewer with some assistance from advanced students at the laboratory.

During the period of observation the interviewer planned the menus to include a variety of nutritious and new foods. The noon meal at the laboratory was planned to furnish one-third of the daily food requirements for preschool children in a given age range. The same menus were used with both groups of children with some seasonal substitutions of certain foods.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Time

The interviewer learned to know the children's food habits at the laboratory by observing them or eating with them daily during the noon meal for the entire school year. The information gained from these school associations proved extremely valuable while visiting the homes, for the mothers continually asked about their children's behavior at the laboratory. Most of the mothers seemed to welcome an opportunity to talk and visit with the interviewer. One home interview took three and one-fourth hours, but the average lasted about an hour. Each home visit to observe the meal took approximately an hour and a half, so that about two and one-half hours were spent by the interviewer in the two visits in a home.

Subjects

In this study there were 19 preschool children, 18 families, and 20 siblings for a total of 77 subjects. Two children, a brother and a sister, although from the same family were considered individually. Fifteen of the 19 preschool children were observed in their homes. Since a brother and sister were in the same family, a total of 14 homes were visited at mealtime.

The 19 preschool children had a total of 20 older brothers and sisters as shown in Table 1. Two of the preschool children had no brothers or sisters. Ten of the children had no older siblings. In two of the homes there was an older sibling; in

five, two older siblings; in one, three older siblings; and in one family, four older siblings. No relatives lived in the homes, but one family had two college students rooming in the home.

Table 1. Number of families with siblings older than selected preschool child.

	Number of Older Siblings					Total
	0	1	2	3	4	
Number of Families	10	2	5	1	1	19 ¹

¹The two children from the same family are considered individually.

Comparison of Likes and Dislikes

Group Comparison. Form IIIa (Appendix) was developed to summarize the information on the Food Preference Chart for each of the 77 subjects. This form was mimeographed in yellow paper for the father, green for the mother, pink for the girls, and blue for the boys to facilitate handling of the material.

The likes and dislikes were grouped from Form IIIa and a comparison made between all fathers and preschool children, all mothers and preschool children, and all siblings and preschool children.

The Kansas State College Statistical Laboratory applied the chi-square test of significance to the data collected from the Food Preference Charts to determine relationships between preschool children's food likes and dislikes and those of family members (Table 2).

Table 2. Relationships between preschool children's food likes and dislikes and those of family members.

Groups of Foods :	Preschool Children and		
	Mothers	Fathers	Siblings
Fruits	16.56** ¹	17.30**	21.97*** ²
Meats	13.37**	ns ³	ns
Vegetables	ns	ns	23.44***
Other Foods	ns	ns	18.87***

¹4 d.f.= .001 < P < .01

²4 d.f.= P < .001

³No significance.

The significant relationships are as follows:

(1) The children's likes and dislikes with respect to fruits are significantly associated with those of each parent and the brothers and sisters in the family.

(2) The children's preferences for meats are related to those of the mothers but not to those of either the fathers or the siblings.

(3) The children's preferences for vegetables and other foods are related only to those of the siblings.

Individual Family Comparison. Although only four of the nineteen preschool children had two or more older siblings, a comparison was made of these four families (Table 3).

Two of the four mothers, Case C and D, had more likes than dislikes than any of the fathers or siblings, except Case L. This father and his son had the highest percentage of food likes (99 per cent).

The parents as a group tended to have more likes than older siblings or preschool siblings. The preschool children tended

Table 3. Numbers and percentages of food likes, indifferences, and dislikes¹ of four families.

Case	Family Member	: Age : of : Sib.	Reaction to Ninety-Eight Foods					
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
C	Child	3.6	50	51	31	31	10	10
	Father		88	89	9	9	0	0
	Mother		92	93	6	6	0	0
	Sibling, girl	15	74	75	15	15	6	6
	Sibling, girl	11	80	<u>81</u>	17	<u>17</u>	0	<u>0</u>
	Total per cent			389		78		16
	Average per family			77.8		15.6		3.2
D	Child	4	56	57	32	33	5	5
	Father		79	81	8	8	11	11
	Mother		94	95	4	4	0	0
	Sibling, girl	14	62	63	14	14	19	19
	Sibling, girl	12	63	64	17	17	14	14
	Sibling, boy	10	77	79	2	2	4	4
	Sibling, boy	8	37	<u>37</u>	23	<u>23</u>	29	<u>29</u>
Total per cent			476		101		82	
Average per family			68		14.4		11.7	
K	Child	2.6	62	63	18	18	7	7
L	Child	4	37	37	26	27	22	23
	Father		97	99	1	1	0	0
	Mother		90	91	5	5	3	3
	Sibling, girl	7	64	65	18	18	12	12
	Sibling, boy	6	97	<u>99</u>	0	<u>0</u>	1	<u>1</u>
Total per cent			454		69		46	
Average per family			76		11.5		7.9	
P	Child	4	38	39	14	14	32	33
	Father		91	93	4	4	3	3
	Mother		70	71	16	16	9	9
	Sibling, boy	8	32	33	23	23	20	20
	Sibling, boy	6	56	<u>57</u>	12	<u>12</u>	8	<u>8</u>
Total per cent			293		69		73	
Average per family			58.6		13.8		14.6	

¹Does not include foods "not tasted" or "unknown."

to have more foods to which they were indifferent than their older brothers and sisters or parents. Perhaps this difference is due to the possibility of more foods which the preschool child has not tasted, and that at this age his food likes or dislikes are not as influenced by other people as by their parents. Possibly as the sibling's age increases, new ideas are being developed about food; which may mean more foods to which he is indifferent and more definite dislikes or refusals.

According to this limited sample of four families with two or more older siblings, no significant comparison can be made. In each family there is a wide range of differences among family members.

Comparison of Child's Eating at Home and at the Laboratory

The Food Preference Chart for the preschool child, which was filled out by the mother, was compared with those records kept by the two teachers during a period of observation of lunch time at the laboratory. The Food Preference Chart, the information on the Seven-Day Food Record, and the two questions pertaining to foods especially liked and disliked which were asked the mother during the interview were checked against the school records.

The records for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday which correlated with the days when lunch was served at the laboratory were used for comparison. In general, the records kept at home and those at the laboratory were consistent as to

food likes, dislikes, and indifferences. Seven of the 19 children reported to have few or no food dislikes had not tasted or had not been served one-fourth to one-fifth of the 98 foods listed on the Food Preference Chart. Perhaps this would indicate that they have been exposed to a somewhat limited selection of foods, especially vegetables. From observations kept at the laboratory, two boys, Cases K and P, tended to have more dislikes than their mothers previously stated in the interview and as checked on the Food Preference Chart. A comment of one of these mothers when asked which foods she thought her child should have every day was the following: "Milk, meat, vegetables, and cereal if he wants it. I ask him what he wants. For example, I don't fix his breakfast until he gets up and then he tells me what he wants." The other mother when asked what foods child P especially disliked replied, "Most everything I fix he eats." Several of the mothers commented during the interview that they did not like to throw food away as it was too expensive or leftovers were not desired. Because of the amount of time needed three times a day for meal preparation, a lack of favorable response from even one family member can be discouraging. Therefore, these mothers were more likely to prepare foods which all or most family members liked.

Records Kept at the Laboratory. From records kept at the Child Development Laboratory, all of the 19 children took one or more bites of some of the foods listed as "dislikes" or "refuses!"

These foods for the most part included spinach, turnip slices, liver, broccoli, eggs, cooked carrots, salmon, and beets. Child A,

a boy four years three months, would not taste the "new" or "have not tasted" foods, such as salmon, which was listed by his mother as "unknown," but he usually took several bites of some foods listed as "dislikes."

When observations and records kept for the younger children were compared with those of the older group eating lunch at the laboratory, the younger children seemed to be more influenced by the attitude of the adult and the mealtime atmosphere. For example, the younger preschoolers were more likely to eat most of the "unknown" or "disliked" food and perhaps even have seconds if the lunch time was a pleasurable experience. Pleasant feeding experiences are as important as proper food. Some children's eating problems vanish when they are with other children. Some may be distracted by having other children around. The older group of children, in general, seemed to be more distracted by the amount of group conversation in which they are becoming increasingly interested, as compared with the younger group of children who seem to be preoccupied with the process or mechanics of eating.

At the laboratory the attitudes of the adults, the attractiveness of the food, and the somewhat new and different experience to the children of sitting on child-size chairs at low tables with small attractive dishes may have influenced the majority of children to taste the food on their plates. The attitude of the adult keeping records should be considered as influential, as individuals vary, and may influence the amount and type of food allowed for second servings and number of

desserts, for example.

A complete list of food likes, indifferences, and dislikes of the older and younger group of children is included in the Appendix. The list was compiled from the records kept of food eaten at the laboratory during the period of observation. Perhaps this list would be of use to mothers of preschool children as well as nursery school teachers.

If over one-half of the children in the group observed had seconds of a food or had eaten all served them by the teacher or expressed other favorable attitudes toward this food, a food was listed under "liked." A food was designated as "disliked" if over one-half of the children did not take more than two tastes or expressed their dislikes in a similar way. A food was listed under "indifferent" if approximately half of the children expressed likes, or half denoted dislikes for a particular food.

Records Kept in the Home. Only one of the mothers interviewed mentioned that her menus were planned in consideration with those of the laboratory. However, the interviewer noticed that eight of these mothers usually collected the available weekly menu served at the laboratory. According to the Seven-Day Food Records kept by all the mothers, there was no repetition in the home menus of the meat dish or main dish served at the laboratory.

To provide further data concerning the number of food likes possible in view of foods not served or tasted, Cases C, D, E, and P (previously compared in Table 3, page 14) were again studied to provide additional information on the types of foods served and eaten in the homes. Fresh vegetables, vegetables other than

potatoes, and fresh fruits, in that order, were lacking most frequently in the diet over the four-day period. However, if the preschool child had received one-third of his nutritional requirements at the laboratory, these would have been included in providing a daily balanced diet for that child. Case P lacked a total of 11 of the basic 28 foods during the four-day period, Case C lacked nine, Case D lacked 3, and Case E lacked one during this period. Case P represents one of the three families which had discontinued the use of vitamins or cod-liver oil a year ago.

Parental Opinions Relating to the Eating Situation

Previous to the pre-testing period, six judges filled out Form II. The six judges were a professor and department head; a professor; an assistant professor; an instructor, who was head nursery school teacher; two graduate students in the Department of Family and Child Development; and an associate professor in the Department of Institutional Management.

Three categories were selected to represent the range of parental opinions relating to the eating situation. The three headings were Constructive (Desirable), Partially Constructive (Partially Desirable), and Non-Constructive (Undesirable). Examples from the answers of the judges were used as guides for determining arbitrary classifications representing Constructive responses. Examples were designed for the headings Partially Constructive and Non-Constructive. The Non-Constructive examples included not only those which were extreme or severe but also

those which indicated indifference or lack of constructive guidance.

Then the tentative Form IIa (Appendix) was presented to the same professional judges for verification and for agreement among the majority of judges to aid the interviewer in classifying the parental responses as objectively as possible. The parental opinions were classified by the use of the numbers 3-2-1, respectively, with the 3 representing the constructive opinion. This method was chosen arbitrarily to compare the opinions of each father and mother with the criteria of the professional judges.

Figure 1 shows the comparison of parental opinions relating to the food situation by father and mother and by eighteen families. The numbers 1, 2, and 3 represent the three levels for Non-Constructive, Partially Constructive, and Constructive, respectively. For example, if a parent had a number 2 for his comments as rated by Form IIa, this would result in a representation of the median or Partially Constructive type of opinions.

Cases C, I, P, and S of the nineteen cases ranked below the Partially Constructive or median level in Fig. 1. Six fathers and five mothers of the 38 parents ranked below the median. Both parents of Case K had the same ranking. Cases P, Q, and S have the same ranking due to the fact that only one form was filled out by each of these families. In each case the mother stated that the father and mother were in agreement in regard to opinions relating to the food situations.

According to the ranking, four of the 18 parents had identical opinions, 11 varied little in their opinions, whereas

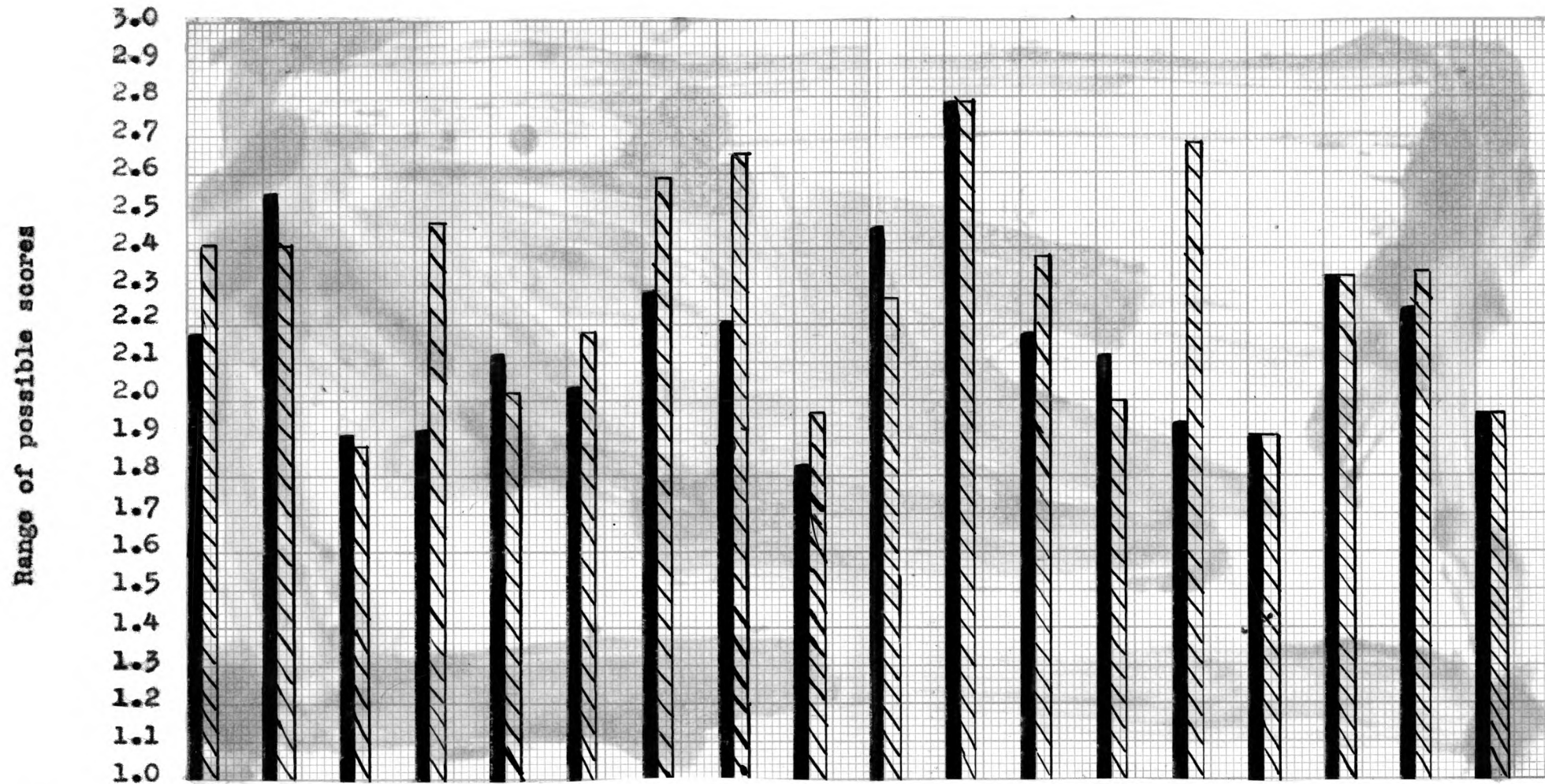




Fig. 1. Comparison of expressed parental opinions relating to the food situation by father and mother and by eighteen families.

Father: 
 Mother: 

¹Two siblings from the same family were observed, so parents K and L are the same.

three groups of parents represented a difference of at least 17 per cent in their opinions. Eight of the mothers ranked higher than their husbands, while six of the husbands ranked higher than their wives. Two siblings from one family were observed, so while 19 preschool children were studied, only 18 different homes were contacted.

Observation of Mealtime in the Homes

Child's Eating Behavior Observed in the Home. Five children were observed to be matter-of-fact during the meal in the home. Four were indifferent throughout their dinners. Three children were finicky toward their meal; two were overtly happy; and one was garrulous.

Awareness of Observer. The interviewer's presence seemed to have somewhat affected the eating of one child of the older group and one child of the younger group during the visit to the home. The behavior of these two children could best be summarized as being "overtly happy." One mother said this was the first time "Bill" had crawled under the table. The other child, eager to sit on the interviewer's lap during the meal, got down from her chair and ran to the interviewer's chair three times.

Parental Techniques. Fourteen of the original 18 families found it convenient to have the interviewer return for an observation of a meal.

Each father and mother was given an individual score as well as a family score based on the methods and techniques used during the meal which was observed in the home.

A schedule was devised by the interviewer to classify the techniques used by the parents. Form V for recording observation of the meal in the home included a list of constructive and non-constructive techniques in relation to the preschool child's eating behavior. Examples of the constructive techniques or methods would be the following; being matter-of-fact, talking about outside interests rather than about the child's eating, encouraging independence, showing expectancy, and being effectively firm. Examples of non-constructive techniques would be talking about the child's eating behavior to him, being too lenient or too firm, being over-solicitous and hovering, bribing the child, and expecting child to sit at table until all have finished eating.

The parents were scored accordingly and then the 15 observations were rated on a scale ranging from Constructive to Non-Constructive. Two families were grouped as using most constructive techniques followed by two families with scores almost coinciding with most constructive. A group of six families was at the median point and four families approached or represented the non-constructive classifications.

The constructive techniques (Table 4) most frequently observed were talking about outside interests rather than the child's eating, being matter-of-fact, and showing expectancy. About three-fourths of the families talked about outside interests to their children during the meal. About one-half of the families, mothers especially but some fathers, encouraged the child's independence in food serving and feeding himself.

Table 4. Constructive family techniques observed during a mealtime in the homes of preschool children.

Constructive Techniques	Family's Rank according to Observed Techniques														Total
	D	G	N	F	B	J	K	H	E	A	M	I	C	P	
Including child in conversation	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x	11
Talking about outside interests rather than child's eating	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x				10
Being matter-of-fact	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					10
Parental agreement in disciplining child	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								7
Showing expectancy	x	x	x	x	x	x									6
Encouraging independence	x	x	x	x	x			x							6
Being effectively firm	x		x			x				x					4
Using positive statements	x	x		x											3
Total	8	7	7	7	5	5	4	4	3	3	1	1	1	1	57

The non-constructive techniques most frequently observed (Table 5) were talking to the child about his eating, being too lenient or too firm, and being over-solicitous and hovering. Five of the families talked almost continually to the child about his eating.

The implications of Tables 4 and 5 indicate certain phases of child guidance which could be emphasized in a parent education program as well as what is being accomplished by parents in guiding their children's eating behavior.

In addition to using more objective methods of analyzing qualitative material, case studies were made of each observation in the home. Four case studies of observations at mealtime with a preschool child were selected for presentation on the basis of their representing constructive, partially constructive, and non-constructive techniques used by these families. These cases as presented are disguised to preserve the anonymity of the families. Comments by the interviewer have been made following the presentation of each case study. Case 1 and Case 2 represent the use of non-constructive techniques. Case 3 represents the median or partially constructive and Case 4 represents the use of constructive techniques.

Case Studies. Case 1. The Jones Family. Ann, aged three years and eight months, had an older brother, aged eight.

At the Jones' home, the evening meal was usually served in the dining room around the corner from the kitchen. The table was pushed up against the wall. The mother sat opposite the father, with Ann on her right. The interviewer and Ann's brother

Table 5. Non-Constructive family techniques observed during
mealtime in the homes of preschool children.

Non-Constructive Techniques:	Family's Rank According to Observed Techniques														Total	
	D	G	N	F	B	J	K	H	E	A	M	I	C	P		
Being too lenient or too firm							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8	
Being over-sollicitous and hovering						x				x	x	x	x	x	6	
Talking about child's eating behavior to him									x		x	x	x	x	5	
Hurrying child												x	x	x	3	
Coaxing and urging												x	x	x	3	
Bribing					x									x	2	
Expecting child to sit at table until all are through														x	x	2
Total	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	5	6	7	29	

sat opposite the wall.

A cloth tablecloth was used and the adults had cloth napkins while the children had paper ones. All the food was placed on the table in serving dishes. Everyone had a large glass of milk. Ann sat on a youth chair with her plate placed on the table.

When the interviewer arrived the mother told Ann's brother to show the interviewer the TV room where Ann was playing, and then perhaps Ann would come for dinner. Ann was in the TV room, sitting on the floor playing records and was somewhat reluctant to come for dinner. Her brother leaned down to where Ann was sitting and said, "Ann, don't you want to come to dinner now? We're all ready to eat dinner. ____ is here. ____ is here!" The last remark was said more loudly as if to get her attention. Using some "baby talk," her brother asked Ann several more times if she didn't want to come to dinner. After the interviewer made a comment which made Ann smile, Ann was ready.

When all were ready for dinner, Ann's brother was told to remind Ann that she could wash her hands now. The father said to her brother, "Perhaps you should go with her, Andy, in case Ann needs some help." Ann quickly and somewhat loudly answered, "No!" The family laughed and the father mentioned that Ann wanted to do it by herself.

Ann climbed into the youth chair which was placed on a rug. She wore a bib over an apron and a cloth was placed under and around her plate and service. She had an adult-sized plate, salad fork, and spoon which she used most of the time.

The mother put Ann's food on her plate. When the broccoli

was passed, Ann said, "No! I don't want that," as she made a face. The mother said, "Here, honey, just a little bit." The father, who was quite pleasant and an interesting conversationalist said, "Now you know, little Annie, you like that." Ann said "Well, okay." Then Ann smiled.

Most of the conversation centered around the adults and was somewhat directed by the mother.

Ann took little bites, ate at a moderate rate, and intermittently dawdled. Ann wanted another olive. The mother said she should eat some other foods first. Ann was reminded to eat some of her salad, which as yet she hadn't tasted.

Some of the conversation at the table was not about outside interests but about food and Ann's eating. For example, Ann's brother said, "Momma, I rode with Mrs. Ryan today and her little girl was so quiet. She never cried, never hollered. You hardly knew she was there. I asked her if she was always that quiet and she said, 'Yes!' I don't know why Ann can't be like that." Everyone laughed. Ann said nothing. Then the mother resumed the conversation.

Before dessert the brother and mother were removing all the dishes from the table. Ann got down and started to help too. Ann's father said, "Be careful, Annie. Here, you'd better take this plate. Be careful." Ann was very careful and walked slowly to the kitchen.

After dessert was finished everyone sat at the table and visited. The meal lasted about 40 minutes. Ann had sat quite some time but didn't appear restless. When everyone had removed

his dessert dish to the kitchen, Ann was most eager to show the interviewer her "secret" that she had tried to keep during dinner. The secret was her room, which she said she would straighten up first. This remark received a laugh from her family. Ann wanted to read a story to the interviewer while her brother went to help his mother with dishes. The father was reading the evening paper.

During the interview the mother was asked what helped Ann to "cooperate." The mother replied, "I wish I knew. I try not to make too much over it. I hope that Ann will eat from seeing the rest of the family eat. They are very good to eat everything." When asked to comment on Ann's likes and dislikes as compared with her sibling, Ann's mother said, "Ann has more dislikes than her brother. He had his too when he was smaller."

Ann's family tried hard to be relaxed but their inconsistency is perhaps best illustrated by the family's talking down to Ann. Yet seemingly they were anxious for her to meet higher standards that are expected of older children. The conversation was directed and dominated by the mother. Ann was included little in the conversation.

This case illustrates a trend toward non-constructive parental techniques.

Case 2. The Roberts Family. Jimmy, aged four years, two months, had two older brothers, six and eight years old. When the interviewer arrived, the mother said that dinner would be postponed 15 minutes as the father would be late in getting home-- if he was able to come home for dinner because of his work. She told the boys to "wash your hands so you'll be ready when Daddy

gets home."

This family ate around a breakfast bar. They sat on stools with the height of the stools varying according to the size of the boys as nearly as possible. As the boys get taller they planned to cut off the legs of the stools to the desired lengths.

The meat was placed on all plates. The other foods were placed in small serving dishes and were easily available for the children to assist themselves. The mother didn't have to leave the table to get seconds. When refilling the water glass, she leaned back toward the sink which was easily accessible.

As everyone sat down at the breakfast bar the mother said, "Okay, now, boys, you show _____ how grown up you can be. Use your manners, see how good you can eat." Most of the conversation was among the three adults. Attention was directed to the boys' eating several times. The mother reminded them several times during the meal to eat and be good eaters.

As the oldest brother started to help himself to the mashed potatoes, the mother said, "Now, Bobby, remember, the guests are served first. Boys, we've got company. Say 'excuse me' and 'please.'"

Jimmy had a large plate and large glass of milk. He had an adult fork and asked for a spoon, which his mother provided. He ate slowly but tended to take large bites. He sometimes didn't chew with his mouth closed. One brother was sleepy. The father reminded him to sit up straight on his chair.

The mother placed the following amounts on Jimmy's plate:

2/3 c. meat
1/2 c. peas
1/2 c. mashed potatoes and gravy
1/2 c. gelatin salad
1 buttered roll (served later)

Jimmy was dawdling so his mother picked up his fork and said, "I haven't had to feed Jimmy for two weeks. He has been such a big boy!"

The mother also commented about the boys' personality as well as their likes and dislikes. "Now, Jimmy is the best one. He likes a variety and lots of different foods." The father said, "Richard likes fruit plates, vegetables and desserts, but not meat. The oldest brother, Dwayne, likes meat, potatoes and gravy." Richard was sitting around the corner from his father. The father fed Richard most of the one-half cup serving of meat which Richard had only tasted. When the meat was almost gone, Richard made a face and said, "I don't want any more. That is fat!"

Jimmy said he was cold. The mother said, "Okay. Here's a bite of meat. You eat this while you go over and close the door." While the mother was filling a water glass, the father picked up Jimmy's fork and tried to give him a bite of meat. Jimmy opened his mouth and he already had a mouthful. He chewed for a while. The interviewer saw him take it out, put it in his hand, look at it; and then it disappeared.

The oldest brother finished eating and wanted to go outdoors to play. The mother said, "No, you should stay in the house while

we are still eating." Dwayne put on his coat and started out the front door and the mother reminded him again to stay indoors. The father said, "Let him go." To which the mother replied, "Well, okay, but only for ten minutes, Dwayne."

A short time later Jimmy wanted to go and play. His mother said, "No, Jimmy, you stay here. _____ is your guest, so you should stay here. She came to see you." Jimmy was squirming and becoming more restless. When the mother got up to get dessert, he left to go outdoors.

During the meal the mother said, "Well, you are probably seeing such awful things. You won't want to write about us in your thesis. You should come and hide behind a tree if you want to see a normal situation."

Jimmy's six-year-old brother stayed for dessert; then excused himself to go and play. After the children were gone, the adults had a stimulating conversation. As the interviewer left, the children were still playing in the yard.

During the interview when asked if Jimmy feeds himself all that he eats, the mother stated; "No, it depends on the television. If the TV is going, I sometimes have to feed him." She further explained, "The boys get up early so by the time the evening meal comes, they are almost ready for bed. If a good TV show is on that they want to see, then we can adjust the TV set so they can watch it during the meal." She said, "Every meal, every day, we sit at the kitchen bar. The TV is usually going. I suppose it shouldn't but after all, the boys are up for such a short time anyway, that they may as well enjoy themselves."

In regard to desserts as a part of a meal, Jimmy's mother said, "If my family liked desserts, I'd bake every day for them. And, why not, you put good food in them--eggs and milk. But the boys don't care for them and father and I don't need them."

The father and mother tended to be calm, matter-of-fact, and humorous but were coaxing, bribing, hovering and over-solicitous. Both parents tended to be firm, but weren't usually consistent in discipline.

The atmosphere was much different in this family as compared with Case 1. The children and parents seemed relaxed. The lack of consistency and what would seem to be undesirable techniques used by the parents didn't appear to keep any family member or the guest from enjoying the mealtime experience.

Perhaps the following example best illustrates the general nonchalant feelings toward this routine and typifies the general attitudes of the family, including the preschooler, Jimmy. As Dwayne got down to answer the doorbell, he knocked his salad to the rug. The mother said, "Oh, Dwayne, look what happened! I'll get something to clean it up." Jimmy, with hands on hips, frowning, and looking disgusted said, "Oh, Dwayne, you spilled it on our rug. You shouldn't have done that."

Case 2 illustrates a trend toward non-constructive parental techniques.

Case 3. The Smith Family. Bobby, aged three years and four months, had no older brothers or sisters.

Although the family usually ate in the kitchen, this evening meal was served at the table in the dining room. The mother said

Bobby always thought it a treat when they got to sit at the big table in the dining room.

A linen tablecloth and napkins were on the table. Bobby had a large plate, large glass of milk and adult-sized fork, knife, and spoon. Colored teacups and saucers and water glasses were at each plate. The casserole and relish plate and other serving dishes were placed on the table.

Bobby was very excited upon the arrival of the interviewer. He jumped up and down and tried to stand on his head. The mother sat down and visited a few minutes with the group before saying, "We could eat now if you want to."

Bobby was sitting in an adult-sized chair. He was still excited and appeared to be somewhat restless. Shortly he asked for his high chair. The mother said, "He wanted to sit on a big chair like us." Bobby said, "I want my high chair so I will be higher."

The mother asked the interviewer if she would like to help herself to the casserole, which was hot. Bobby said, "I want to, too." His father said nothing but looked steadily at Bobby. But to the surprise of the parents, especially the father, Bobby, smiling broadly, said, "I'll hold my plate." The father's look had changed from one of firmness to one of surprise.

The mother served the father's plate also. The relish plate was passed and suggestions were made to Bobby that he try each relish on the plate. Several times during the meal his mother said, "Why don't you eat those two carrots, Bobby?" "Okay." The mother continued, "You haven't been eating as well as you

usually do." Bobby looked at the interviewer sitting across the table and said, "Will I grow big some day?"

Bobby asked for some bread. His mother said, "No, Bobby, you know you wouldn't eat anything else. You eat some more first."

The conversation was varied and included topics other than those concerning Bobby's eating. Bobby shared to quite an extent in the conversation. A train whistle was heard. Bobby was asked to identify it and tell why a steam engine is different from a diesel. Bobby hesitated before answering, while both parents continued questioning him. Finally Bobby remembered and answered the somewhat difficult question. Bobby's mother smiled and said, "Bobby is going to be an engineer when he grows up."

During the meal Bobby said, "Hey! How come we don't have the green one on?" The mother laughed and said, "We usually have a green plastic cloth on the table. In fact, it's underneath," she stated as she raised up a corner.

Later the mother said, "Bobby, would you like some bread now?" Bobby said, "No. I want a roll." His mother said they weren't having hot rolls tonight, but that he could have some bread. She explained to the interviewer she usually baked hot rolls every day. They weren't having hot rolls that night, "because when we have hot rolls, Bobby won't eat anything else."

The father asked Bobby to pass the butter. Bobby wanted to "pass it back," but his father said, "No!" Bobby reached for the butter plate. His father raised his hand and held it firmly in the air for a short while and said nothing. The

interviewer said she would put the butter over by the bread and jelly. Bobby apparently satisfied said, "Yes!" and started eating again.

During the main course, Bobby asked his mother if he could have some ice cream for dessert. The mother said he could when they were ready for dessert. When the mother was ready to clear the serving plates, she asked Bobby if he wanted any pie and quickly added, "No. You usually won't eat any cherry pie." While the mother was gone from the table, the father cut the pie. He cut one small piece and said, "You could eat a little piece of pie, wouldn't you, Bobby?" Bobby didn't respond but looked willing to taste it. When the mother returned she said, "Bobby doesn't want any pie." To which the father replied, "Yes. But...well...okay."

Bobby asked for more dessert. Then his mother said, "Are you still hungry?" Bobby said, "Yes!" "Well, then, you can eat some more casserole, because you didn't eat very well before, did you?" He finished the one-half cup serving put on his plate and then asked for more ice cream. The mother said, "Okay. You were hungry, weren't you? You are eating better."

Bobby asked his father, "How come I have a cup?" (colored teacup) His father said, "I guess your mother didn't know where everyone would sit when she set the table. You'll leave it alone, won't you? So your mother won't have to wash it again." Bobby said, "I want to pour my milk into the cup." His father said, "No!" The mother coming back to the table said, "That's okay, Bobby," telling him that he could.

During the interview the mother said, "Bobby eats everything he likes and then the rest is put on a spoon. So he doesn't feed himself all that he eats." She said he was "an absolute pig" when he was a baby and was put on a diet by the doctor.

The attitude toward Bobby's eating most characteristic of this family was that of inconsistency as has been illustrated. The father was matter of fact, firm, and somewhat humorous. The mother was humorous and somewhat inconsistent. As was evident by their conversation, they enjoyed their mealtime.

Case 3 indicates a trend of partially constructive parental techniques.

Case 4. The White Family. Patsy, aged four, had two older sisters, aged 14 and 12, and two older brothers, aged eight and ten.

Patsy met the interviewer at the front door and was very excited. After everyone exchanged greetings, the mother went to the kitchen to finish last-minute preparations. The father excused himself to glance through the evening paper. The oldest sister was sewing on a dress so the other children and the interviewer visited. Patsy in her excitement jumped on the sofa where the interviewer and oldest sister were sitting. Patsy's oldest brother commented in a friendly way, "Let's remember, Patsy, when you put shoes on the sofa it gets dirty and sometimes it tears. What are those shoes for? That's right. You're going to wear them to Sunday school on Sunday."

All the food had been placed on the table. The utensils were adult size and the cups were plastic. The table top was

bare except for the dishes. Patsy sat in a high chair with a foot rest.

Approximately half of the wall separating the kitchen and dining room had been cut away and the table extended on both sides of the wall with a drop-leaf effect. When they wanted a larger table, it could be extended to the living room table. The mother said they'd considered putting in a Lazy Susan so they could just turn it instead of having to pass things so much. She felt that passing the food was such a job with a family this size.

Patsy asked to sit in the corner and asked for the interviewer to sit next to her. The mother said, "_____ will have to help serve Patsy then. That's pretty good. _____ will have to work on a night off." The family members were amused and laughed but quietly.

When the rolls were passed, the mother said, "Take the little one there, Patsy. It's just about the right size for you to eat."

Patsy could serve herself but needed some help with the gelatin salad which was difficult to manage.

The food had been passed around the table and all were eating. Patsy's mother said, "Oh, you didn't get a potato, Patsy. Which would you like, a sweet potato or white potato? Okay." Patsy indicated she preferred a sweet potato. Her mother gave her a small one. Later when she noticed that Patsy hadn't tasted the potato, she said, "Would you like for me to cut it up for you?" Patsy nodded. Toward the end of the meal, her father said to Patsy, who had not touched the baked sweet potato, "Patsy,

would it help you out if I would eat the other part of the potato? Are you sure? Thank you, Patsy."

Patsy took little bites, ate slowly and intermittently dawdled. Once Patsy leaned toward her plate and ate from her plate without her fork and said, "Look, I can eat it this way." Her mother said, "Why don't you use your fork to pick up those little pieces of broccoli. You're doing real well, Patsy."

An older brother sitting next to his father said, "Mom, I was so thirsty I drank four glasses of milk. Ha. Ha." The father said, "Tell her the rest, Billie." "And...I took too much jello. I'm just too full to finish it." The mother said, "Okay. You can take your plate and napkin over." As the children finished the mother would say, "Are you finished? Okay, you can carry your plate and napkin to the sink."

Patsy's younger brother, who had finished eating, brought a small turtle to the table to show the interviewer. Patsy's mother said, "Now, Steve, the table is no place for a turtle. You can show him to _____ later in the living room."

Patsy was the last child to leave the table. She had been at the table approximately 20 minutes. None of the children wanted any dessert just then. They were told they could come back to the table later for dessert if they preferred. As the interviewer was leaving, two of the older children had gone to the kitchen to get some dessert, pecan bars. Patsy brought one in a napkin to the interviewer so she "could eat one, too."

The mother said, "We like for the children to leave the table when they are finished and not have to wait. It also gives

us a chance to have a little time to ourselves when it isn't quite so noisy."

At the time of the interview the mother said the older children as a rule were much better eaters than Patsy. The older boy, age ten, and the younger sister, age twelve, were the best eaters. The eight-year-old brother was reported to be more of a problem eater, having fewer likes.

She said some of the family liked sweet potatoes and some liked white potatoes and this made extra dishes. She explained that some of the children had indicated a dislike for sweet potatoes, so they had not been served for some time. "However, recently the older brother said he would like for me to fix them again so he could taste them."

One technique which the mother said she used to get the children to "cooperate" is as follows: "You taste your potato and make room on your plate for it (the requested, favorite food) while I pass it around the table."

The over-all attitudes of the family members whether toward the eating situation or conversation before and after the meal, as observed, were typical of the older brother's comment in the first paragraph--pleasant and understanding. The mother and father appeared to be calm, matter-of-fact, and gay; however, the father was firm and the mother was effectively firm.

The conversation was shared by all the family members and directed in a pleasant way by the father and mother so each child had an opportunity to talk during the meal. Most of the conversation was about outside interests with few comments about the

eating.

This case illustrates a trend toward constructive parental techniques.

Relation of Parents' Techniques and Expressed
Opinions to Child's Eating Behavior as
Observed in the Home and at the Laboratory

The children were ranked according to their eating behavior. Evidence for ranking was based on records kept at the laboratory and records of meal observation in the home. By qualitatively analyzing these records for each child, the interviewer listed typical eating behavior for each child. Each child was ranked according to his attitudes toward his meal, his eating behavior, eating habits, expression of food dislikes, and his reaction to or use of conversation at the table.

The rank order of individual preschool children by eating behavior observed at the laboratory and home, and by parental opinions and techniques in the home are shown in Table 6. Most of the children's eating behavior observed in the homes was somewhat consistent with that observed at the laboratory. There was no relation between parental opinions and the child's eating behavior as observed at the laboratory; the children ranking highest in eating behavior did not necessarily live in families with a high percentage of constructive opinions. There was some relation between parental techniques and the child's eating behavior observed in the home during a meal. However, the two extremes, the parents ranking highest and the parents ranking lowest, were more likely to be consistent with their children's

eating behavior. The expressed parental opinions were not consistently related to the parental techniques observed during the meal. With the possible exception of Case P, no consistent relation can be noted (Table 6). Thus the influence of parental opinions and parental techniques as related to the child's eating behavior does not seem important.

Table 6. Rank order of individual preschool children by eating behavior observed at laboratory and home, and by parental opinions and techniques in home.

Case No.	Children at Laboratory	Parental Opinions	Parental ¹ Techniques	Children ¹ at home
N	19	5	16.5	19.
D	18	8	19	17.8
K	17	18.5	10.8	12.7
R	16	10.5	—	—
L	15	18.5	10.8	11.4
S	14	4	—	—
J	13	14	12.7	16.5
C	12	2	2.5	7.6
B	11	17	14.0	8.9
Q	10	13	—	—
E	9	6	7.6	14.0
A	8	10.5	6.4	15.2
H	7	15	8.9	10.2
I	6	1	3.8	3.8
F	5	7	15.2	6.4
G	4	16	17.8	5.1
M	3	9	5.1	2.5
O	2	12	—	—
P	1	3	1.3	1.3

¹15 cases observed in home so each weighted on basis of 19 cases (multiplied by 1.27)

CONCLUSIONS

Answers were sought to three questions concerning the influence of parental techniques and opinions to the preschool child's eating behavior as observed in the home and at the laboratory.

The first question was: Would there be a relationship of food likes and dislikes among family members?

(1) As a result of the comparison of food likes and dislikes of all family members: (a) The children's likes and dislikes with respect to fruits were significantly associated with those of parents and brothers and sisters; (b) children's preferences for meats were significantly related to those of mothers but not to those of either fathers or siblings; and (c) children's preferences for vegetables and other foods were significantly related to those of siblings but not to those of fathers or mothers.

(2) When individual families were compared, there was a less marked relationship of food likes and dislikes among members of a family. In general, the parents tended to have more food likes than siblings or preschool children. The preschool child tended to have more food indifferences than older siblings or parents. This would seem to indicate no consistent relation of food likes or dislikes existed among members of a particular family.

The second question was: Would there be a relation between what is eaten when the preschool child is observed in the lunch situation at the Child Development Laboratory and what is eaten in the home?

(3) In general, the records of foods eaten at home and at the laboratory were consistent as to food likes, dislikes, and indifferences. However, according to the records kept at the laboratory, all 19 children were observed to eat some of several of the foods listed as "dislikes" or "refuses" by the

mothers.

And the third question was: Would there be a similarity between parental opinions and parental techniques observed during the mealtime situation?

(4) Four families ranked below the median or partially constructive level when the comparison was made of expressed parental opinions relating to the food situation by father and mother and by 18 families. Six fathers and five mothers of the 36 parents ranked below the partially constructive level. According to the ranking, four parents had identical opinions, 11 of the 18 parents varied little in their opinions, whereas three groups of parents represented a difference of at least 17 per cent in their opinions. Eight of the mothers ranked higher than their husbands, while six of the husbands ranked higher than their wives. There would seem to be a somewhat consistent relation of opinions toward the food situation between the father and mother.

(5) There was no relation between parental opinions and the child's eating behavior as observed at the laboratory; the children ranking highest in eating behavior did not live in families ranking lowest in their opinions, but neither did they live in families ranking highest.

(6) A somewhat consistent relation resulted from a comparison of parental techniques observed during a meal and the child's eating behavior observed in the home.

(7) The expressed parental opinions were not consistently related to the parental techniques observed during the meal.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that this inconsistent relation between parental opinions and the child's eating behavior could indicate a need for more serious consideration and evaluation of types of methods for collecting data of this nature. Perhaps this also points out the need for further consideration of factors other than parental opinions and food habits as affecting the child's eating behavior. Although earlier studies indicate that "feeding problems" are relatively common among children, and they further hint that the child's behavior, attitudes, and habits are influenced by parents; few studies of children in the home have been done by a trained observer. Many articles available to the general public indicate these "opinions", and seldom has the reader been referred to specific research. Workers in the field of family and child development and parental education are in need of more accurate knowledge of certain phases of child guidance, which could be emphasized in a parent education program, as well as what is being accomplished by parents in guiding their children's eating behavior.

EVALUATION OF METHOD

Up to the present time family research has reportedly relied almost exclusively on the questionnaire and the interview as means of gathering data. It was evident from this study that valuable information concerning the underlying reasons for certain behavior in children and their families can be secured

through visits to their homes.

Home visits were an essential part of the case studies. It is very important to have the proper approach to the parents. The home interviewer should be impersonal, with tact and a keen understanding of people, and a sympathetic attitude toward any condition found. He must be a good conversationalist which involves his ability to talk about things that are of common interest to the parents. To make the subject feel genuinely at ease, the interviewer should make the visit as enjoyable as possible to obtain good rapport. If parents have confidence in the interviewer, they will usually respond.

Further development of the place of observational methods in the role of the family researcher has been stimulated by recent research of new approaches in family research.¹⁴ "The normal interaction of member and member, of member and group, defies recall by the lay participant, but constitutes the overwhelming bulk of the significance of life in a family setting."¹⁵ Blood also stated that in his judgment, such direct observation is just as essential to understanding the family as a social group, as it is to understand the development of the individual child.¹⁶

¹⁴Marvin B. Sussman, "New Approaches in Family Research: A Symposium," Marriage and Family Living, Feb. 1958, 20(1):36.

¹⁵Robert O. Blood, Jr., "The Use of Observational Methods in Family Research," Marriage and Family Living, Feb. 1958, 20(1):47.

¹⁶Loc. cit.

A combination of the questionnaire-interview method was used for the initial home visit. The open-end questionnaire (Form I, Appendix) served as an excellent avenue of approach to the parents. Informal verbatim notes written unostentatiously while conversing with parents were helpful to the interviewer in making the home visit reports more authentic and meaningful.

The analysis of these records proved helpful in making evident detailed characteristics of behavior that often are unnoticed in mere observation. The interviewer analyzed the records in the study qualitatively with the exception of the analysis by chi-square method of food likes and dislikes. It would have been helpful to have quantitative analyses of records taken in the homes.

Although the Seven-Day Food Records and the records kept at the laboratory had some value, upon further consideration for future use, these records do not seem to merit the effort and time required on the part of the mothers and nursery school teachers.

The interviewer's opinion is that the material involved in this study would have been sufficient for a much larger research project. Although much was gained from this "cross-sectional" study of factors pertaining to food and the preschool child, advantages of a more limited aspect of this broad area can be recognized.

It is the opinion of the interviewer that, while "food problems" are apparently relatively common among preschool children, people in general are not as concerned about food in con-

nection with health as was true of the 1920's and 1930's. Perhaps this is one reason for the apparent lack of current research or studies available on this subject.

Although the records and forms used in this study were prepared as objectively as possible, the influence of the subjective attitude of the interviewer should be considered in the interpretation of the results. The subjects of this study were a select sample of a group of preschool children already enrolled at the laboratory. Because of the usual various limitations relating to the research--such as time, money, energy, lack of current resource material, and the problem of selecting families which are willing to be observed--all the implications could not be explored.

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Also, appreciation is extended to the following members of the advisory committee; Mrs. Leone Kell, Mrs. Louise Langford, and Miss Nina Edelblute.

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A P P E N D I X

Form I. General Information.

Form Ia. General Information.

Form II. Parental Opinions Relating to the
Food Situations.

Form IIa. Developmental Tasks; Clean Plate;
Discipline; Equipment; Environment
and Other Factors; Procedures;
Quantity or Second Servings.

629

PEERLESS
CLASP
FEDERAL ENVELOPE CO.

Date _____

No. _____

FORM I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What foods does your child especially like?
2. What foods does your child especially dislike?
3. Is he (she) allergic to any foods? If so, which foods?
4. What foods does your child eat between meals?
5. What meals does your child eat with the family?
6. Is he (she) usually hungry at mealtime? Explain.
7. Does he usually have seconds of all foods served? Explain.
Breakfast?
Lunch?
Dinner?
8. Does he feed himself all that he eats?
Only the food he likes?
Only the first part of the meal?
9. Does your child have any eating problems (such as refusing certain foods, eating too much of a food, etc.)?
10. How long does it take him to eat his meals?
Breakfast?
Lunch?
Dinner?

11. Who tends to him during mealtime?
12. Is his attitude toward food
 cooperative?
 casual?
 resistant?
13. What helps him to cooperate?
14. Which foods do you feel that your child should have every day?
15. What is your attitude toward desserts as a part of the meal?
 Between meals?
16. Does your child take vitamins or cod-liver oil? Comment.
17. How does his behavior as regards eating compare with that
 when he was a baby?
18. Would you care to comment on the sibling's behavior, attitudes
 and food preferences in comparison with the preschool child?
 Age Sex
19. Does any member of your family have any unusual food likes?
 Explain.

FORM Ia. GENERAL INFORMATION

NO. _____

Child's Name _____

Father's Occupation _____

High School Graduate? _____

Date of Birth _____

College Graduate? _____

Age _____

Mother's Occupation _____

High School Graduate? _____

College Graduate? _____

Children:	<u>Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Age</u>
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Adults other than parents:	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Sex</u>
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Date _____

NO. _____

FORM II. PARENTAL OPINIONS RELATING TO THE FOOD SITUATIONS.

Part I. You are at the table with your preschool child. Think of the following items and comment briefly on how you feel or what you believe about the following.

1. Introducing new foods:
2. "If you eat all that's on your plate, you'll be a big boy some day!"
3. Number of desserts per meal:
4. Size of servings:
5. Your child wants to eat the same food every meal! He is in a "food rut." What would you do?
6. Importance of a resting or quiet time before the meal?
7. Size of chair:
8. Quantity of milk:
9. Use of "finger foods", such as carrot sticks or pieces of tomato.
10. Seconds expected at each meal?
11. Throwing fork very hard and repeatedly on table!
12. Number of sandwiches or toast per child?

13. Clean plate:
14. Size of utensils:
15. Your child insists on serving himself from the serving dishes:
16. Spoon used with main meal instead of fork:
17. Taste all foods served at a meal?
18. Attitude of the adults during the meal?
19. She insists on having another cookie before finishing the fruit cocktail.
20. Banging the glass of milk on the table:
21. Playing with the food:

Part II. Comment on the following questions or give examples.

22. How would you encourage a child to taste all foods served at a meal?
23. Should the child be allowed to choose which foods he will have for the second servings? Explain.
24. If a child says he is still hungry after eating a second helping of dessert, what should be the next procedure?
25. When should the child be made to leave the table?

26. What would you do if a child is very slow in eating the main course and does not like many vegetables?
27. When can the child leave the table to go play?
28. Would you expect some spilling or broken glass and if so, what do you feel might be some reasons for such?
29. What is the role of the adult in an eating situation with young children?
30. What methods would you use to get a child to eat what's good for him?
31. Should some directions about eating be given children?
If "yes," how?
If "no," explain.
32. At what age or time should table manners be stressed so that the child can learn table etiquette at an early age?
33. When a child is playing with his food, it is advisable to _____
_____?
34. At what age can a child be expected to feed himself with little adult help?
35. Height of table:

Form IIa

I. DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

<u>CONSTRUCTIVE</u>	<u>PARTIALLY CONSTRUCTIVE**</u>	<u>NON-CONSTRUCTIVE</u>
6. Resting Time? *Realizes that a quiet relaxing period will help digestive process and leave child in calmer mood.	Good idea, but... Recognizes value, but...	Not important. Un- necessary, of no value.
9. Finger Foods? *Important. *Use them as much as possible. Recognizes importance.	Recognizes them as important only.	Not important. Does not recognize them as important and helpful as regards manipulation.
28. Broken Glass Expected? *Yes. *Coordination required. *Normal learning. *Suggest use of plastic dishes until manipulation improves.	Possible in younger children. Should be reminded to be careful.	No excuse for carelessness and clumsiness.
32. Table Manners? *Recognizes that children can learn by example. *No age stated for definite acquiring of table manners.	Should be helped in order to know desirable habits.	Expected by definite age.
34. When Can Child Feed Himself? With spoon at 2½ years. *About 3½-4 years, depending on child, appetite, and types of food served.	Fine, if possible and can do it properly.	Does not support self- feeding or independency, and sequence of motor development not considered.

*Statements included by professional people.

**The parent to be ranked Partially Constructive must contain part of
statements under Constructive.

II. CLEAN PLATE

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 13. Clean Plate? *Not necessary.
*Nice goal, but no pressure. | A nice goal. Not carry to extreme. | Definitely. Must finish first course before dessert. |
| 17. Should Child Taste All Foods?
*Suggest but not insist. | Insist on tasting all foods. | Insist on clean plate. Bribery or use dessert as such. |

III. DISCIPLINE

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5. Child Eats Toast Only?
*Check the reason why, perhaps food jag. *He could taste other foods while adult "makes" the toast. | Taste everything before eating dessert. | Withholding dessert. Does not consider that children are fair judges of what they want to eat or does not recognize food jag. |
| 11. Throwing Fork? *Distraction if very young. *With older child, warning first, then remove fork and then child if behavior persists. | Told why it's wrong and then scolded if done repeatedly. | Fails to seek cause or tries to reason or scolds young child. |
| 2. "If you eat all that's on your plate, you'll grow up to be..."
Bribery. *Not desirable.
*Never use. | States it should be used sparingly. | Accepts and uses this type of statement. |
| 20. Banging Glass: *Remove glass if continues after reminding him that accident might occur.
*Distract very young child. | Told why it's wrong and then scolded if done repeatedly. | Fails to seek cause or tries to reason or scolds young child. |
| 21. Playing with Food! *If merely feeling texture, be permissive.
*If testing limits, distract very young child. *Check cause, may be bored or not hungry. | Tends to make issue of the situation before being effectively firm. | Fails to seek cause or tries to reason or scolds or disciplines young child severely. |

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 25. | Remove Child From Table?
*When he has lost all interest in eating and is deliberately misbehaving or disrupting others,
*After being warned. | Remove often. Occasional warning. Very little reason. | Frequently remove with little or no reason and no warning. |
| 27. | When Can Child Leave Table to Go Play?
*When he is through eating.
*Should not remain at table during lengthy adult conversation. An example would be to leave after first course and return for dessert. | Usually expected to wait until after dessert. | Does not allow for children getting tired. Must wait until all adults are finished. |
| 33. | When Playing with Food?
*Distract him. *May have eaten enough and is ready to leave table. | Tends to make issue of situation before being effectively firm. | Fails to seek cause or tries to reason or scolds young child. |

IV. EQUIPMENT

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 7. | Chair: *Important that feet have support. *To fit child so he's comfortable. | To reach table. | Mealtime comfort isn't indicated. |
| 14. | Size of Utensils?
Child. *Child size. | Child size would be desirable, if possible. | Does not recognize value of small size or that which is easiest to handle. |
| 16. | Spoon Used Instead of Fork?
*Let him if he desires. *He will learn to use fork later. | Yes. If possible. Shouldn't continue very long. | Insists on using fork. |

V. ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER FACTORS

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 18. | Attitude of Adult?
*Matter-of-fact. *Encouraging without pressure, pleasant. | Recognizes and emphasizes physical help mostly. | Importance of eating is stressed. Happy atmosphere not mentioned. |
| 29. | Role of Adult?
*Mainly as that of example, encouragement, or help when needed. | Recognizes and emphasizes physical help mostly. | Overly concerned about <u>what, how much or how</u> he eats. |

VI. PROCEDURES

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1. | Introducing New Foods: *With a favorite or liked food in small amounts. *No insistence that they be eaten. | Recognizes importance but fails to mention as an accompaniment to a liked food. | Insists that child eats with no recognition of value of serving new foods. |
| 15. | Child Insists on Serving Himself! *Good! *If food isn't too spilly or difficult to manage. | Allows some freedom now and then. | Does not allow some freedom to choose his own food and continually reminds him to be careful. |
| 19. | Another Cookie Before Finishing Fruit Cocktail? *Usually okay. | Depends on what she has eaten during main course. | No. |
| 22. | How to Encourage to Taste All Foods? *By example, pleasant atmosphere. *Small servings. | Shows considerable expectancy. | Coaxes or urges him to eat. |
| 23. | Allow Child to Choose Foods for Second Servings? *Yes, if meal is well planned there would be no reason for not considering personal likes. | In partial agreement. | Does not try to further independency and personal likes as decided by the child. Limits what he can have. |
| 24. | Child is Still Hungry after Eating Dessert! *Serve more of the first course with milk, then dessert if still hungry. | Serves some of main course with no more dessert. | Does not allow any more dessert or offers bread only. Dinner is over. |
| 26. | Slow in Eating and Doesn't Like Many Vegetables! *Small servings. *Serve finger foods often. *Colorful selections and served in different ways. | Gives small servings and expects to take small taste. | Urges him to eat. |
| 30. | Method to Use so He'll Eat What's Good for Him? *Gives encouragement but no insistence, proper meal planning. *Recognizes importance of outdoor exercise. | Fails to consider other factors than eating itself. | Does not recognize good habits develop from satisfying experiences. † |

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---|
| 31. | Should Some Directions about Eating be Given? *Relaxed atmosphere, setting good example, minimum of positive verbal directions. | Places most emphasis on verbal directions. | Critical and expects him to meet adult standards. |
|-----|---|--|---|

VII. QUANTITY OR SECOND SERVINGS

- | | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 4. | Size of Servings? *Adjust to child. *Good to have small ones with opportunities for seconds. | Small. | Expects adult size. |
| 8. | Quantity of Milk? *Three-fourths cup per day desired. *If not fond of milk, he may get it in other foods. | Usually expects one quart per day. | Quart is expected, or of no concern. |
| 10. | Seconds? *Should be available, don't insist. If desire, give small second servings. | Seconds of a particular food only. | Adult expects second servings, or allows only one serving. |
| 3. | No. of Desserts? *No set number. Two reasonable. *Depends on what child has eaten before dessert and kind of dessert. | Two at most. | Never more than one. No limit. |
| 12. | No. of Sandwiches or Toast? *Depends on appetite for other foods. *Should taste everything if he wants more toast. | Two at most. | No limit or only one allowed. |

Directions to Committee Members: (1) Please comment on the above attempts for rating the parent's opinions as given on Form II. Space has been provided under each number. (2) Please feel free to express other "goals" or other constructive, partially constructive, or non-constructive statements.



Form III. Foods You Eat.

Form IIIa. Food Preference Chart Summary

6:9
PEERLESS
CLASP
FEDERAL ENVELOPE CO.

NO. _____

I am a Father ___ Mother ___ Child ___

Age _____

Date _____

FORM III: FOODS YOU EAT

Check the appropriate column. The definitions are as follows:

Likes: You like this food.

Dislikes: You eat this food only upon urging.

Indifferent: You eat this food but show little feeling toward it.

Haven't Tasted: This is a food that you haven't tasted or don't know what it is.

Refuses: Will not eat.

FRUIT:	LIKES	DISLIKES	INDIFFERENT	HAVEN'T TASTED	REFUSES
Apples, baked					
Apples, fresh					
Apricots, canned					
Bananas					
Fruit Cocktail					
Grapefruit, fresh					
Oranges					
Peaches, canned					
Peaches, fresh					
Pears, canned					
Pears, fresh					
Pineapple, canned					
Pineapple, fresh					
Plums, canned					
Prunes					
Raisins, cooked					
Raisins, dried					
Strawberries					
Watermelon					

MEATS:	LIKES	DISLIKES	INDIFFERENT	HAVEN'T TASTED	REFUSES
Bacon					
Beef Stew					
Beef Roast					
Chicken, Fried					
Chicken and Noodles					
Ham					
Meat Loaf					
Hamburgers					
Liver					
Pork Chops					
Sausage					
Steak					
Turkey					
Weiners					
Fish					
Oysters					
Salmon					
Shrimp					
Tuna					

VEGETABLES:	LIKES	DISLIKES	INDIFFERENT	HAVEN'T TASTED	REFUSES
Asparagus, buttered					
Baked Beans					
Green Beans					
Lima Beans					
Navy Beans					
Beets					
Broccoli					

VEGETABLES:	LIKES	DISLIKES	INDIFFERENT	HAVEN'T TASTED	DISLIKES
Brussel Sprouts					
Cabbage, cooked					
Cabbage, raw					
Carrots, cooked					
Carrots, raw					
Cauliflower, creamed					
Cauliflower, raw					
Celery					
Corn					
Lettuce					
Onion, creamed					
Onion, raw					
Peas					
Sweet Potatoes, candied					
Sweet Potatoes, battered					
Baked Potatoes					
Creamed Potatoes					
Mashed Potatoes					
Fried Potatoes					
Scalloped Potatoes					
Sauerkraut					
Spinach					
Tomato, baked					
Tomato, sliced					
Tomato Soup					
Turnips					
Vegetable Soup					

DAIRY FOODS:	LIKES	DISLIKES	INDIFFERENT	HAVEN'T TASTED	REFUSES
Butter					
Cheese					
Cottage Cheese					
Custard					
Eggs, boiled					
Eggs, deviled					
Eggs, fried					
Eggs, scrambled					
Ice Cream					
Milk, Chocolate					
Milk, White					

BREADS - CEREALS:	LIKES	DISLIKES	INDIFFERENT	HAVEN'T TASTED	REFUSES
Wheat Bread					
White Bread					
Rye Bread					
Boxed Cereal					
Cooked Oatmeal					
Rice Pudding					
Spanish Rice					

OTHER FOODS:	LIKES	DISLIKES	INDIFFERENT	HAVEN'T TASTED	REFUSES
Coconut					
Honey					
Gelatin Desserts					
Macaroni					
Nuts					
Olives					
Peanut Butter					
Spaghetti					

CHILD _____ Age _____
 Father _____
 Mother _____
 Sibling _____

FORM IIIa.
 FOOD PREFERENCE CHART SUMMARY

FRUITS:	Likes	Indifferent	Dislikes	Total
Child Likes				
Indifferent				
Dislikes				
Total				

DAIRY PRODUCTS:	Likes	Indifferent	Dislikes	Total
Child Likes				
Indifferent				
Dislikes				
Total				

MEATS:	Likes	Indifferent	Dislikes	Total
Child Likes				
Indifferent				
Dislikes				
Total				

BREADS-CEREALS:	Likes	Indifferent	Dislikes	Total
Child Likes				
Indifferent				
Dislikes				
Total				

VEGETABLES:	Likes	Indifferent	Dislikes	Total
Child Likes				
Indifferent				
Dislikes				
Total				

OTHER FOODS:	Likes	Indifferent	Dislikes	Total
Child Likes				
Indifferent				
Dislikes				
Total				

Form IV. Seven-Day Food Record in the Home

Form V. Observation of Meal in the Home

Form VI. Food Record

Form VII. Snack Record

6x9
PEERLESS
CLASP
FEDERAL ENVELOPE CO.

Date _____

NO. _____

Length of

Time: ___ Hr. ___ Min.

Meal:

Time Started: _____

Time Finished: _____

V
FORM ~~VI~~: OBSERVATION OF MEAL IN THE HOME

1. Advance warning given to child?
2. What was child doing when called?
3. Child's response to mother's call?
Comes readily?
Delays?
Refuses?

4. Seating: Comfortably Restlessly
Back
Feet
Elbows

5. Serving:
Method?

6. Promptness in beginning to eat:
Promptly?
After reminding?
Urging?

7. Menu:

8. General Environment:

Attractions?

Table Cover?

9. Child's Utensils:

Manner of Holding Size

Fork
Spoon
Glass
Cup
Plate

10. Child's attitude toward his meal:

Overtly happy?
 Matter-of-fact?
 Finicky?

11. Extra servings: Amount

Of what?

12. Accidents:

Adult's attitude?

Child assists?

13. Child's independence in eating:

Needs much help?
 some?
 little?
 no?

14. Child's attitude toward others besides observer:

15. Parental attitudes: Mother Father Other

Calm, matter-of-fact
 Ever solicitous
 Humorous, gay
 Flippant
 Serious, grave
 Firm
 Lenient
 Coaxing
 Bribing
 Hovering
 Over-sentimental
 Garrulous

Talks about child's eating?

Talks about outside interests?

Topics of conversation?

16. Eating:

Takes little, moderately, large bites?

Eats: fast, slowly, moderate rate, intermittently dawdles

Chews steadily, mouth closed, swallows readily

Proper utensils used?

17. Eats in undesirable ways:

Gurples?

Eats when getting attention?

18. Food aversions: How Expressed

What foods?

19. Has water with meal Yes No

20. Portions of foods served: (Tbsp.) Eats all served? Food not eaten:

21. What child does after he leaves the table?

Napkin used?

Removes dishes?

22. Child's awareness of observer: Evidence.

23. Comments:

FORM VII. SNACK RECORD

Name of Teacher: _____

Name of Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Name of Child	SERVING AND SIZE		COMMENTS: Time Start-Fin.	Name of Child	SERVING AND SIZE		COMMENTS: Time Start-Fin.
	Drink	Snack			Drink	Snack	
	1st				1st		
	2nd				2nd		
	Return				Return		
	1st				1st		
	2nd				2nd		
	Return				Return		
	1st				1st		
	2nd				2nd		
	Return				Return		
	1st				1st		
	2nd				2nd		
	Return				Return		
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	Return				Return		
	1st				1st		
	2nd				2nd		
	Return				Return		
	1st				1st		
	2nd				2nd		
	Return				Return		
	1st				1st		
	2nd				2nd		
	Return				Return		

Size Serving: 1 = 1 apple slice, 1 sandwich etc.
 1/2 = 1/2 glass of milk, juice etc.

A Complete List of Food Likes, Indifferences, and
Dislikes Compiled from Records Kept at the
Laboratory of Nine Children in the
Younger Group

A Complete List of Food Likes, Indifferences, and
Dislikes Compiled from Records Kept at the
Laboratory of Ten Children in the
Older Group

6x9
PEERLESS
CLASP
FEDERAL ENVELOPE CO.

A Complete List of Food Likes, Indifferences, and Dislikes Compiled from
 Records Kept at the Laboratory¹
 of
 Nine Children in the Younger Group

Likes

Apple Sauce
 Apple Wedges
 Bacon
 Baked Potato with Cheese
 Bran Muffins
 Carrot and Pineapple Gelatin Salad
 Carrot Sticks
 Celery Sticks
 Cheese Cubes
 Cheese Puffs
 Cheese Souffle
 Chicken Drumsticks
 *Creamed Dried Beef on Toast
 *Creamed Sweetbreads on Toast
 *Creamed Tuna on Toast
 Deviled Eggs
 *Egg Salad Sandwiches
 Green Beans
 Hamburgers
 *Indian Corn
 Macaroni and Cheese
 Macaroni, Cheese, and Dried Beef
 Mashed Potatoes
 Meat Loaf
 Orange Slices
 Potato Salad
 Roast Beef
 Scrambled Eggs

Spaghetti and Meat Balls
 Raisin Bread Toast Strips
 Whole Wheat Toast Strips
 Tomato Soup
 Tomato Wedges
 Toasted Cheese Sandwiches
 Waldorf Salad
 Weiners and Buns
 White Grapes

Dislikes

Carrot-Raisin Salad
 Creamed Carrots
 Creamed Potatoes
 Green Pepper
 Liver Loaf
 Potato Soup
 Radishes
 Scalloped Potatoes
 Sweet Potatoes

Indifferences

Apple, Celery, and Orange
 Salad
 Asparagus
 Baked Apple
 Baked Egg with Bran
 Topping
 *Baby Lima Beans
 Beef Stew
 Beet Slices
 Breaded Tomatoes
 Broccoli
 *Buttered Carrots
 Buttered Peas
 *Cabbage Slaw
 Cabbage Wedges
 *Cauliflower, Raw
 Chicken Souffle
 Cornbread Sticks
 Cottage Cheese
 *Creamed Cauliflower
 *Creamed Fish
 *Creamed Onions
 Creamed Peas
 Fish Sticks
 Lettuce Wedges
 Liver
 Meat Patties
 Salmon Souffle
 Scalloped Lamb with Macaroni
 Spanish Rice
 Spinach
 Turnip Slices
 Vegetable Salad
 Vegetable Soup with Ground
 Beef

¹Does not include desserts

*Food ranked higher by this group of children.
 Refer to page 17 for further explanation.

A Complete List of Food Likes, Indifferences, and Dislikes Compiled from
Records Kept at the Laboratory¹
of
Ten Children in the Older Group

Likes

Apple Sauce
Apple Wedges
Bacon
Baked Potato with Cheese
Bran Muffins
Carrot and Pineapple Gelatin Salad
Carrot Sticks
Celery Sticks
Cheese Cubes
Cheese Puffs
Cheese Souffle
Chicken Drumsticks
*Chicken Souffle
Creamed Cheese and Jelly Sandwich
Hamburgers
Green Beans
Macaroni and Cheese
Macaroni, Cheese, and Dried Beef
Mashed Potatoes
Meat Loaf
*Meat Patties
Orange Slices
Potato Salad
*Salmon Souffle
Scalloped Lamb with Macaroni
Scrambled Eggs
Spaghetti and Meat Balls
Whole Wheat Toast Strips
Raisin Bread Toast Strips

Toasted Cheese Sandwiches
Tomato Wedges
Waldorf Salad
Weiners and Buns
White Grapes

Dislikes

Asparagus
Baby Lima Beans
Buttered Carrots
Cabbage Wedges
Cauliflower, Raw
Creamed Carrots
Creamed Cauliflower
Creamed Fish
Creamed Onions
Creamed Potatoes
Green Pepper
Liver Loaf
Radishes
Spinach
Sweet Potatoes

Indifferences

Apple, Celery and Orange
Salad
Baked Apple
Baked Egg with Bran Topping
Beef Stew
Beet Slices
Breaded Tomatoes
Broccoli
Cabbage Slaw
*Carrot-Raisin Salad
Cornbread Sticks
Cottage Cheese
Creamed Dried Beef on Toast
Creamed Peas
Creamed Sweetbreads on
Toast
Deviled Eggs
Egg Salad Sandwiches
Fish Sticks
Indian Corn
Lettuce Wedges
Liver
Potato Soup
Roast Beef
*Scalloped Potatoes
Spanish Rice
Tomato Soup
Turnip Slices
Vegetable Salad
Vegetable Soup with
Ground Beef

¹Does not include desserts

*Food ranked higher by this group of children.
Refer to page 17 for further explanation.

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL TECHNIQUES AND OPINIONS ON
PRESCHOOL CHILD'S EATING BEHAVIOR AS OBSERVED
IN THE HOME AND AT THE LABORATORY

by

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The objectives of this study were as follows: (1) to determine the relationships of food likes and dislikes of preschool children to those of their families; (2) to compare the child's eating at the Child Development Laboratory with his eating behavior in the home; and (3) to discover and compare the "current" opinions of the parents toward their children's eating behavior.

The subjects of this study were 18 families who had children attending the Kansas State College Child Development Laboratory, Manhattan, Kansas, during the fall semester, 1957, and the spring semester, 1958. Seventeen families had one child enrolled, and one family had two children enrolled in the laboratory. So that observations of the lunch situation could be made, children were included from both the younger and older morning groups in the laboratory. The mean age of the younger group was two years, ten months; that of the older group, three years, ten months.

The following forms plus an open-end questionnaire were used to collect data from the 77 subjects: Parental Opinions Relating to the Eating Situation, Food Preference Chart, and Seven-Day Food Record. The sentence-completion questionnaire, check-list, and recording form left with the parents at the time of the interview were collected at the mealtime observation. Records of the snacks and lunch eaten at the laboratory were kept by two group teachers. Menus were planned by the interviewer. In 14 of the 18 homes, 15 preschool children were observed during one of the meals served in the home, at a time when the home conditions would be most nearly normal. Case studies were made

of each mealtime observation in the home.

A chi-square analysis showed that children's likes and dislikes with respect to fruits were significantly associated with those of the parents and siblings; the children's preferences for meats were significantly related to those of the mothers; and the children's preferences for vegetables and other foods were significantly related to those of the siblings. In general, the parents tended to have more likes than siblings or preschool children. The preschool child tended to have more food indifferences than older siblings or parents. Although the records of food eaten by each child at home and at the laboratory were consistent to food likes, dislikes, and indifferences, fewer dislikes were observed at the laboratory. There was a somewhat consistent relation of opinions toward the food situation between the father and mother in all families but three. With the possible exception of one family, there was no consistent relation of parental techniques and expressed opinions to the preschool child's eating behavior as observed in the home and at the laboratory. However, the parents ranking highest and the parents ranking lowest (the extremes) in techniques and opinions were likely to be consistent with their children's eating behavior.

The home observations provided valuable information. The mealtime was an excellent situation for observation of family interaction, because at that time family members usually were grouped together.

These findings indicate a need for more serious consideration and evaluation of methods for collecting data of this nature.

As yet, only a little is known about family interaction at meal-time as observed in the home. Although family workers hesitate to set standards or draw up formulas, research can increase understanding of the preschool child and his family, and thus have practical implications for teachers and parents.