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A study of relationship between parental knowledge and interest and the nature of child participation and interest in the activities of a community center

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A STUDY OF
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST
AND THE NATURE OF CHILD PARTICIPATION AND INTEREST
IN THE ACTIVITIES OF A COMMUNITY CENTER

Submitted by

Phyllis E. Barrow

(B.S. Virginia State College, 1944)

In Partial fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Education

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

There have been various opinions expressed by workers in the field of Education and Group Work on the need for children to actively participate in school work and recreational activities. While the function of the child in the group situation has been discussed, no evidence has been presented to indicate what effect parental knowledge and interest might have on the nature of participation and the interest of the child in such activities.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to show the relationship between parental knowledge and interest and the nature of participation and interest of their children in the activities of a community center; and (2) to obtain data through functional record forms on children and personal interviews with parents that could be used in the formulation of a more purposeful group work program at the Cambridge Community Center.

Significance of the Study. In order that a community center fulfill its function as an agency for the promotion of the normal growth and development of children it is necessary for that center to know the needs of its constituents.

Finding parents with little knowledge and interest in the activities of their children whose nature of participation and interest were correspondingly low would indicate a need for a program of parent education which should be of value to parents and children alike. The long range values which may be arrived at by pointing up the need for closer parent-child relationship in the community lend further significance to this study.

Scope of the Inquiry. In this study fifty-two homes were visited and the mothers or female guardians of eighty-three children were interviewed concerning their knowledge and interest of their children's activities at the Cambridge Community Center.

While the sample was not a large one, it was significant in that it represented sixty-one per cent of the total membership of children between the ages of seven and sixteen years which was the age range of the study.

II. THE SETTING FOR THE STUDY

Location. The Cambridge Community Center is situated in Cambridge, Massachusetts; a City with a population of over 110,000.¹ The exact location of the agency is in what is known as the "Howard Street Area",² a section which according to the 1940 United States Census had a total population of 3,657 persons; 567 foreign born whites, representing twenty-six countries, 1,855 native whites, and 1,232 Negroes. Within the boundaries of this area are also located one public elementary school, four Negro churches, and one municipal playground and gymnasium.

History. The history of the Cambridge Community Center is the story of the growth and development of a neighborhood idea, neighborhood hope, and a neighborhood plan.

In an already crowded area new families began to move into the "Howard Street Area" in the late "twenties". They were people from everywhere - Finland, Lithuania, Russia, Germany, Erin, Poland and many from the West Indies.

1. Sixteenth United States Census, 1940

2. Ibid., Tract 15

3. Loc. Cit.

The Negroes of the neighborhood were the first to see what their young people needed, therefore in 1928, twenty-five pioneers attended the first meeting called by the pastor of a local Negro Church and they talked over the problem. The result of months of work, weekly meetings and discussions finally brought about a five year lease from the City at one dollar annual rental an old school building which in 1929 became the Cambridge Community Center, Incorporated.

The economic crisis of those days created quite a hardship for the people in the area, but undaunted, the parents, determined to give their children a chance to grow as healthy physical and moral Americans, kept the Center going.

The mothers worked especially hard. The booklet A Cambridge Romance recounts their efforts as it states:

"They started clubs and classes in choral singing, dancing, crafts, cooking, acting, athletics, personal hygiene and good citizenship for the teen agers. They put on lectures, concerts, modest little parties, child care classes and forums for the grown ups. They established a useful Family Guidance Service."

In fact they did so much with so little that when in 1937 the Board of Directors, an interracial body then a year old, applied for membership in the Community Chest, the Cambridge Community Federation voted the Center in officially

4. A Cambridge Romance, Unpublished Booklet, 1943 p. 93

as a participating agency.

The budget then set up made possible for the first time a full-time head worker to expand the work previously directed by two able persons. The post was accepted by a young Negro woman in April 1940 and the immeasurable and enduring benefits which she brought about will long be felt by the Center and the community as a whole.

The Cambridge Community Center during World War II served many needs of the day. An Industrial Workshop Project was initiated by a benefactor who made possible the employment of many persons salvaging vital war materials from radio tubes. The other section of the building was used as a neighborhood U S O Center on week ends. The neighborhood thus contributed to the war effort men for fighting, women for salvaging war materials and entertainment for the soldiers.

Before the close of the war the old building which now had been purchased from the City was declared unsafe. This problem was solved by the purchase of a nearby tenement into which was moved the Nursery School, Group Work, and the U S O programs while the Workshop after minor repairs remained in the old building.

While the temporary purpose was served this arrangement was too inadequate, therefore a building fund campaign was started and under able volunteer leadership in the neighborhood

and the wider community pledges totalling approximately \$145,000 were received between 1945 and 1946. The cornerstone of the new building was laid two years later.

"By vote of the neighborhood membership, the major portion of the building fund went into the gymnasium, a handsome structure which was designed ingeniously to serve also for dances, big events, theatricals, etc. The rest helped restore the original building for Nursery School, Club Rooms, Crafts, Offices, Kitchen, Common Room and Library." 5

In December 1948 the first headworker who had worked tirelessly to see her dream of a new and more functional building achieved, resigned to accept a challenging position with a national organization. The Center always fortunate in times of crisis secured the services of another well qualified Negro woman to head the work in the new building.

With a neighborhood rich in a twenty year old tradition, but in the midst of a post-war slump new needs and problems arose, a small segment of which may be resolved as result of this study.

5. Dedication Pamphlet of Cambridge Community Center
1948, p. Early Planting

Policies and Objectives. The purpose of the Cambridge Community Center as formulated by the founders in the original charter is as follows:

"The purpose of the Cambridge Community Center shall be to provide a Center for the recreational, educational and social activity of the people of the community who desire to make wholesome use of their leisure time."

While all the specific policies of the Cambridge Community Center as drawn up by various functional committees of the Board of Directors were too many and varied for discussion here, there were certain program policies which were put into effect during the 1948 - 1949 program year and as they are related to this study, they will be discussed.

Upon evaluation of the group work activities carried out in the new building which opened in December, 1948, it was found that there were many limitations in the program which might have been assets if there had been a closer relationship between the parents of the participating children and the staff. Devious means had been used during the year to encourage parents to attend meetings and entertainment functions but with few exceptions the parents who presented themselves were those of the most well adjusted children in the Center.

6. Revised By-Laws, Cambridge Community Center, Incorporated, 1929

A policy was therefore adopted whereby, all children five through fourteen years of age could be registered with or by a parent during the 1949 - 1950 program year. It was felt that even though this association with the parent might be brief some contact based on mutual interest in the child could be established.

Another policy change was the charge of fifty cents annual membership fee for all children five through fourteen years of age, thus eliminating the former twenty-five cent annual fee for the five to twelve year olds.

Although attempts were made to interpret the new policies, registrations were slow for the first three months because many parents found it more inconvenient to come with their children than to pay the increased membership fee.

During the "setting up" month of September, the program staff visited sixty-five homes in the neighborhood and there interpreted the new policies and left a prospectus of the year's program with the parent.

Program and Activities. The program at the Cambridge Community Center was divided into three areas, the Nursery School for children two to four years in the mornings and the Home Industries and group Work Activities in the afternoons and evenings for the older children and adults.

The Home Industries is a department where special types of crafts were done. Children as young as three years and adults of all ages learned the skills of pottery making, all types of leather work, weaving, woodwork, and almost anything that could be made by hand. The work was done creatively without patterns on an individual basis but in a group situation.

The group Work Program was developed in a gradual manner by adding yearly those activities which it was felt by the community and the staff would be acceptable and beneficial to the constituents.

The afternoon program was arranged for children from five through thirteen years of age. While the types of activities in the old building had all to be confined to small groups because of limited space, the new building with its large gymnasium provided for an excess energy outlet through physical exertion as well as small club and class groups.

Almost every group of boys had a basketball team, and while a day was set aside for club meetings, the gymnasium held the greatest satisfaction for them. Many boys also had classes in group Work Crafts and Home Industries, cooking, and weekly Boy Scout meetings.

While the girls' teen agers seemed to enjoy the gymnasium games as much as the boys, the younger girls had

classes in cooking, sewing, ballet, chorus and story hour.

Because of a limited budget the scope of the program was dependent upon the number of volunteers with skills in the various activities.

The evening program of activities were keyed to the older teens, young and older adults. Here again basketball took the lead, but there were social clubs, music lessons, citizenship classes, and dramatics and stage craft groups as well.

In the twenty clubs and classes conducted by supervised volunteer leaders the emphasis upon Group Work Program centered around promoting the physical, emotional and cultural growth of its members through group experiences. ^{Note}

The Personnel and Membership. Frederick Soule recently expressed a hope that the future workers in settlement houses would never lose the simplicity of neighborliness which has always marked their efforts. ⁷

The principle of neighborliness has always been a guide for staffs at the Cambridge Community Center.

At present the staff consists of an Executive Director, an Associate Program Director (Female Group Worker), a male Group Worker, the Home Industries and Nursery School Directors,

Note: See Appendix for Schedule of Program Activities

7. Frederick Soule, Social Settlements in Greater Boston
1950 p. 15

an Office Secretary, Custodian, Housekeeper and an average of thirty weekly volunteers from the local colleges and the community.

The professional program staff, all college trained, is an interracial group headed by the Executive Director, a woman with national and international experience in education and social work; the Associate Program Director who functions as the Female group Worker has had experiences in education and group work; and the Male group Worker has had experience in the United States Army and group work agencies. The Home Industries Director, and American citizen of European birth is a skilled craftswoman with knowledge acquired first hand from people in Europe, the Dutch East Indies, Africa, Canada, and the United States.

The membership at the Center is open to all persons regardless of race, color, sex or creed, but the majority of the participating membership is Negro. An annual membership fee of one dollar is charged all persons fifteen years and up, and a lower fee of fifty cents is charged younger persons.

While a majority of the membership of the group Work Department came from the immediate neighborhood, many children in the Nursery School and both children and adults in the Home Industries Classes came from the wider Cambridge and greater Boston Community.

The total membership including a new group of well wishers called the "Friends of the Center" consisted of approximately 623 persons.

Thus from this total group, eighty three children between the ages of seven and sixteen years were studied.

CHAPTER TWO

PROCEDURES USED IN THE INVESTIGATION

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The procedures used in this study were (1) to construct a Home Visitation Interview Schedule to obtain information concerning a parent's interest and knowledge of the nature of participation and interest of her child in the activities of the Cambridge Community Center; and (2) then to construct a Group Leader's Record Form which the leader could use to record the nature of participation and interest of the children.

Care was taken that the interview schedule and the record form had items which were as parallel as possible in order that the information sought might be accurately obtained.

After the group leaders had collected a portion of their data, conferences were held and the form further discussed with the result that the needed changes in the record form were recognized. The necessary changes were made and the group leaders collected the remainder of their data on the eighty-three children studied.

Similarly after personal interviews with six parents it was found necessary to make a few minor changes in the interview schedule and with those revisions made, the investigation proceeded until the fifty-two parents in the study were interviewed and the findings compiled.

The Group Leader's Record Form. In order to obtain information concerning the nature of participation of the children, a Group Leader's Record Form was constructed. The interest of the children was evaluated on the basis of the leader's opinion after an observational period of at least eight months.

The children in the study were observed and the nature of their participation and interest recorded without their knowledge.

The children were enrolled in eleven different clubs or activity groups and ranged in chronological age from seven to sixteen years. There were twenty seven boys and girls between seven and ten years and fifty six boys and girls between the ages of eleven and sixteen years of age.

With the exception of two younger boys who were Jewish all the children in the study were Negroes.

There were nine group leaders who obtained the data on the eighty three children; four of the leaders were white student volunteers, two Negro community volunteers, the Home Industries Director and two group workers who acted in a supervisory capacity with the volunteers, but also conducted groups.¹

1. Program Activity Schedule, see Appendix

Description of Group Leader's Record Form. The Group Leader's Record Form was divided into the following categories: (1) General information, (2) Nature of child participation and (3) Interest.

The general information sought was obtained from the answers to six general classification items, namely:

1. Name; 2. Age; 3. Parent or Guardian's Name
4. Address; 5. Grade; 6. Cultural Background

The nature of child participation was obtained from the answers to eight items covering the following topics:

1. Name of Group; 2. Frequency of Meetings;
3. Attendance; 4. Punctuality; 5. Siblings in Group;
6. Degree of Participation; 7. Membership in other groups; 8. Office held

The relative degree of interest of the child was obtained from the answers to ten items covering the following topics:

1. Members regard for group; 2. Reaction of members to leader; 3. Reaction of group to member;
4. Activity most enjoyed; 5. Status of member in group;
6. Tendency to exhibit skills; 7. Child-parent communication; 8. Anxious to leave Center; 9. Reason for child participation; 10. Discipline problems.

A copy of the Group Leader's Record Form may be found in the Appendix.

The Sample in the Study. Fifty two homes were visited and the mother was the person interviewed in all except five cases. These exceptions were where the child lived with a grandmother, a female guardian, an older sister and an aunt. One father of a teen aged boy answered the questions of the interviewer.

The size of the families in the homes visited averaged slightly more than three members.

America, Canada and British West Indies were largely represented in the cultural backgrounds of the persons in this study.

Tables I and II respectively show the size and cultural background of the families in the study.

TABLE I

THE NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF THOSE INTERVIEWED BY FAMILY CLASSIFICATION,
IN GROUPS A B and C

Family Classification	Number of Parents	Number of Children seven through sixteen	Total Number Children in Family
Families with both parents at home	35	73	127
Number of families with only mother at home	15	30	45
Families with only a guardian at home	2	3	5

TABLE II

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF FAMILIES STUDIED, BY CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Cultural Background	Number of Families	Percent of Families
American Negro Northern and Southern	21	40.3
Canadian Negro 1st Generation	1	1.9
Canadian Negro 2nd Generation	8	15.1
Canadian Negro and Greek - white	1	1.9
British West Indian 1st Generation	10	19.2
British West Indian 2nd Generation	10	19.2
Jewish 2nd Generation	1	1.9

Attitude of the Parents. Without exception the investigator was received cordially and cooperatively. The reason given for the informal personal interview in each case was to determine the interest and participation of the child in the parent's opinion and knowledge for the purpose of evaluating the year's work and formulating plans for the next year. Since that was one of the purposes of the study, the interviewer felt justified in not telling the parent that his knowledge was also being tested as it might have influenced the reliability of the results.

The willingness and the ability of the persons approached to make reliable answers has been mentioned by Koos² in his discussion of the criteria for the appraisal of questionnaires. He stresses the need for a careful validation of the questionnaire.

Validation of the Instrument. While a form of questionnaire was used in this study the informal personal interview technique eliminated some of the tendencies toward unreliability.

Wylie³ used the personal interview method in some of his cases and he remarked that Koos in a discussion of the oral interview considers it to be "dominately valid" and

2. Leonard V. Koos, The Questionnaire in Education, a Critique and Manual, 1928 p.99
3. James A. Wylie, A Survey of Five hundred four Families unpublished Ed. D. Thesis, 1949 p. 20

and worthwhile. Wylie further states that ⁴ "Any test or questionnaire is valid only to the extent that its findings enable the prediction of various kinds of behavior in specific situations."

The questions asked the parent were either factual or personally opinionative in nature, therefore any deviation from the actual fact or opinion would have been a deliberate attempt to mislead.

None of the fifty two parents were prepared for the interview in any way and therefore approached the situation without help from their children or other members of the family.

Since the items in the two instruments constructed obtained the types of information sought they were considered both valid and reliable.

4. Loc. Cit

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION AND INTEREST OF THE CHILDREN

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Children in a group situation generally react toward the following three stimuli; the leader, the other group members and the activity carried on within the group.

The extent to which the leader influences the group is dependent upon his acceptance by the group. As DuVall points out:¹

"The brilliant college student may be a leader on the campus, but he will probably not be able to influence the behavior and attitudes of the club of boys to most of whom school is a "pain in the neck". To avoid this DuVall concluded, "Volunteers should not be invited to lead groups of members too unlike themselves."

The extensive influence exerted by the other members of the group was discussed by LaPiere and Farnsworth who wrote:²

"Children have a power of control over other children that frequently exceeds that of adults. The child for example, often selects a much more effective mode of punishment for another child than can the adult. The sneer, the taunt, and the pummeling of a boy are usually far more to be feared by another boy than the pleas, the tongue lashing and the spanking by his parents."

-
1. Everett W. DuVall, Personality and Social group Work, 1943 p. 186
 2. R. T. LaPiere and Paul Farnsworth, Social Psychology, 1945 p. 135

If the activity engaged in by the group is flexible enough to allow for the individual differences within the group, the attention span should increase, the attendance remain regular and the discipline problems decrease.

Presentation of Data on the Nature of Child

Participation

On the basis of the group record data submitted by nine group leaders it was disclosed that all of the eighty three children studied belonged to at least one group and fifty four belonged to two or more groups in the Cambridge Community Center. 81 percent of the children attend their groups regularly and 98 percent were usually on time. As to their degree of group participation it was found that 66 percent were very enthusiastic, 30 percent occasionally active and 4 percent rarely active.

Table III summarizes the nature of participation of the eighty three children in eleven group activities based on the group leader's data.

Presentation of Data on Child Interest. In the opinion of the group leaders it was found that on a whole the interest of the children in their activity was high.

TABLE III

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN WHOSE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION WAS OBSERVED,
BY ITEMS, IN GROUPS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

ITEMS	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Number who Participated	Percent who Participated	Number who Participated	Percent who Participated
1. Belong to one group	51	100	32	100
2. Belong to two or more groups	30	58.8	24	75
3. Regular attendants	41	80.3	26	81.2
4. Irregular attendants	10	19.6	6	18.7
5. Usually punctual	49	96.0	32	100.0
6. Usually tardy	2	3.9	0	0
7. Held office	8	15.6	1	3.1
8. Very enthusiastic	32	61.5	22	68.7
9. Occasionally active	17	33.3	8	25.0
10. Rarely active	2	3.9	2	6.2

While almost half of the children had a tendency to exhibit their skills to their leader there was a fairly even distribution between a tendency not to exhibit skills at all and the desire to exhibit to parents, parents and peers or a threefold combination of parents, peers and leader.

With very few exceptions the nature of participation of the children appeared to result from their own interest in their activities, however later data on parental knowledge and interest revealed other aspects of this item.

The following Tables IV through IX present graphic data on the interest of the children.

The data on the children indicated that those whose nature of participation was high had an equally high interest rating in the activities in which they were enrolled.

This relationship was pointed out by the fact that 100 percent of the children belonged to at least one group and approximately 94 percent of them like their group; 91 percent liked their leader and 82 percent liked the other members in their group. The low incidence of discipline problems among the group studied, less than 10 percent, also indicated high interest along with high participation rating.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDRENS' INTEREST REACTIONS TOWARD THEIR GROUP, THEIR LEADER,
AND EACH OTHER, BY INTEREST REACTION ITEMS, IN TERMS OF EIGHTY THREE CHILDREN

EIGHTY THREE CHILDREN

Interest Reaction Items	Percent Approve	Percent Disapprove	Percent Indifferent
Reaction toward Group	93.9	6.1	
Reaction toward Leaders	91.6	3.6	4.8
Reaction toward each other	81.9	7.3	10.8

As shown in Table IV the relatively small percentage of children who dislike or were indifferent to their groups indicated that a degree of interest was high for the majority. The reaction of the groups to their leaders was also high, 92 per cent, which demonstrated the rapport which must have existed between the children and their leaders.

The groups were organized on the basis of age or interest, but with few exceptions they might have also been classified as "friendship" groups as well.

The volunteer leaders were for the most part people with backgrounds quite different from the children in their groups, but they usually adapted themselves readily to the situation at hand.

TABLE V

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVITIES MOST ENJOYED BY CHILDREN, BY RANK ORDER OF
POPULARITY IN GROUPS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Activities in rank order of popularity	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sports	37	72.5	8	25.0
Home Industries	2	3.9	7	21.8
Scouts Boy	3	5.9		
Scouts Girl			4	12.5
Crafts (Group Work)	4	7.8	3	9.4
Cooking	2	3.9	4	12.5
Chorus (Girls)			2	6.3
Dancing	1	2.0	2	6.3
Reading	1	2.0	1	3.1
Nothing	1	2.0	1	3.1

In Table V the activities enjoyed by the children were enumerated in rank order of popularity. The activity ratings varied from Sports which 54 per cent of the children listed to Reading which slightly more than 2 per cent of them enjoyed.

It was evident that Home Industries appealed favorably to a great many children, especially the girls. In those classes they completed articles of clothing or pottery which are attractive to children and adults as well.

The fact that sports ranked first among all of the activities was an interesting disclosure, since the adult membership had voted that a large gymnasium be constructed.

TABLE VI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS AMONG EIGHTY THREE CHILDREN,
 BY DISCIPLINE CLASSIFICATION, IN GROUPS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Discipline Classification	Number	BOYS		GIRLS	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Usually cause trouble	3		5.9	5	15.6
Occasionally cause trouble	0		0	5	15.6
Rarely or never cause trouble	48		94.1	22	68.8

As revealed in Table VI the discipline within the groups studied was not a large item for consideration since its incidence was relatively low, a total of approximately 10 percent being usual "trouble makers".

It is true that 90 percent of the children were usually interested in their activities to the extent that they rarely, if ever, caused any undue disturbance, but of the minority group it was found that most of those children appeared to be either emotionally immature or more capable than the rest of the group and therefore the activities which the majority of the children enjoyed held no interest for them at all.

TABLE VII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF LEADER - FOLLOWER TENDENCIES, BY TENDENCY ITEMS IN GROUPS
OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Tendency Item	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Leaders	13	25.4	7	21.8
Followers	34	66.6	21	65.6
Indifferent	4	7.8	4	12.5

As was shown in Table VII the interest in their groups was manifested by a significant number of children (20) who exhibited traits of leadership.

The leadership ability among the children was observed closely and in some cases it was apparent that if not carefully guided, certain leaders could do more harm than good to the group. On the whole however, the indigenous leadership was of the quality ^{which} ~~which~~ holds potentialities for the future of the Center.

TABLE VIII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDRENS' REACTIONS TO DISMISSAL FROM SESSION,
BY SELECTED ITEMS IN GROUPS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Selected Items	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Anxious to Leave	11	21.6	0	0
Reluctant to Leave	40	78.4	32	100

Table VIII indicated that the desire to remain in the Community Center after the session was over was almost universal among the children studied. The new and adequate plumbing facilities particularly intrigued the younger children. The frequency of requests for water and toilet privileges among the lower age group was almost incalculable. For the older children the permission to take just one more "shot" on the basketball court made them extremely happy.

While not conclusive evidence, it was interesting to note the presence of television sets in the homes of several children who appeared anxious to leave at the close of their session at the Center.

TABLE IX

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHOSE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION WAS MOTIVATED
BECAUSE OF INTEREST IN GROUPS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Motivations	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Own interest	47	92.1	24	85.0
Other interests	1	2.0	5	15.6
Own and other interests	3	5.9	3	9.4

Table IX revealed that in the opinion of the group leaders the majority of the children were motivated to participate in the activities by their own interest in them. While this may be true, it may also be possible that a larger number of children than indicated were motivated to participate by other than personal interest in the activities since previous data have revealed strong follower tendencies and friendships within the groups.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST OF THE PARENTS

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THE KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST OF THE PARENTS

Authorities in sociology and psychology have agreed that over protection and over affection are more desirable than neglect and little affection.¹ It was suggested however, that the criteria of a good family environment should be:²

"Little parental criticism; absence of nervousness in both parents; frequent confidences between parent and children; some physical expression of affection; and common family activities."

Presentation of Data on Parental Knowledge. The data obtained by personally interviewing fifty-two parents revealed that approximately 45 per cent of them had a completely accurate knowledge of the nature of their childrens' participation, while 32 per cent of the parents were almost as well informed.

A score card is presented in Table X which indicates the parental knowledge of eighty-three childrens' activities.

From the data received on item 10 of the interview schedule relative to communication between child and parent with regard to activities it was revealed that of the eighty-three children eleven or 13.2 per cent always told their parents

1. William F. Ogburn, and Meyer Nimkoff, Sociology, 1940

p. 732

2. Loc. Cit.

TABLE X

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WITH KNOWLEDGE OF EIGHTY THREE CHILDRENS' ACTIVITIES BY KNOWLEDGE ITEMS IN GROUP RESPONSE AND PERCENTAGE SCORE RATINGS

Items on Knowledge of Nature of Child Participation	Correct Responses		Percent Score Ratings				
	Number	Percent	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
1. Name of Group	53	63.8					
2. Frequency of Meeting	40	48.1					
3. Regularity of attendance	71	85.0	44.5				
4. Punctuality	67	80.7		32.5			
5. Reasons for tardiness	68	81.9			12.1		
6. Other Children in group	76	91.9				7.3	
7. Office held in group	59	71.0					3.6
8. Degree of Participation	70	84.3					
9. Enrollment in other groups	60	72.2					

sixty three or 76 percent occasionally told and nine or 10.8 percent never or hardly ever told their parents of their activities at the Center.

Table X indicated that the knowledge which the parents had concerning the nature of their childrens' participation in the activities at the Cambridge Community Center was above average.

The score card based on the number of correct responses given on 9 items, revealed that 77 percent of the parents had a knowledge between "excellent" and "good", while the remainder of them had an "average", "poor", or "very poor" knowledge of their childrens' activities.

The data further revealed that while the majority of the parents had a reasonably accurate knowledge, the percentage of parents who were uninformed was high enough to indicate a need for a closer relationship between some of the children and their parents, and to warrant some concern regarding the existent relationship between the Center and the homes.

Presentation of Data on Parental Interest. The interest of the parents in the activities of their children was found to be of two varieties. For example, 81 percent of the parents were interested to the point of seeking information from the children relative to their activities and groups, but only 34 percent of them ever attended any events their children were in at the Agency.

In Tables XI and XII data are presented concerning the interests of parents of eighty three children.

The data obtained from parents disclosed the fact that while a sizeable majority of them had a high rate of knowledge of their childrens' activities, their interest in those activities was high in some respects and low in others. This was shown from the data on parent knowledge in which the over all rating of the group to their responses was approximately, 76 percent. Interest in the childrens' activities was high, 81 percent, in terms of the parent discussing the group; however, the manifestation of interest by attending scheduled events or communicating with the leaders was comparatively low, 34 percent.

TABLE XI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WITH INTEREST IN CHILDRENS' ACTIVITIES BY INTEREST
ITEM, BY PARENTS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Interest Items	Parents of Boys		Parents of Girls	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. Name of Child's Leader	45	88.2	24	77.0
2. Does child like group	45	88.2	28	87.5
3. Reaction of child to Leader	45	88.2	26	81.7
4. Reaction of group to child	43	84.3	25	78.1
5. Child's most enjoyed activity	39	77.4	23	71.8
6. Is child discipline problem	46	90.1	24	77.0
7. Child's leadership ability	36	70.5	23	71.8

TABLE XII

PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO ACTIVELY SHOW INTEREST IN CHILDRENS' ACTIVITIES, BY INTEREST ITEMS IN PARENTS OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Interest Items	Parents of Boys	Parents of Girls
	Percent	Percent
Parents' attendance at events at Center	23.5	50.0
Parents with suggestions for children	9.8	12.5

Influential Factors with Regard to Parental Knowledge and Interest of Activities. Certain factors which may have contributed to parental knowledge and interest in their children's activities were as follows:

1. Voluntary communication between the child and the parent based on the child's experience in the groups.

2. Planned or impromptu parent motivated conversations relative to child's activities at the Center.

3. Direct communication from the Cambridge Community Center to the parent through home visitation by the staff or by mail.

4. Indirect communication from the Cambridge Community Center to the family through mimeographed literature distributed by the children.

5. Parent visitation to or participation in the Cambridge Community Center and its program.

From the data it was found that a high percentage of the parents obtained their knowledge either by means of spontaneous or planned conversations with their children.

Visits were made to homes in the community by the Staff at the beginning of the program year and in cases of problems involving discipline within the groups.

Communication by mail was found to be almost ineffectual in getting parents to attend meetings or other events, therefore

because of the cost as compared with the results this form of communication was cut to a minimum. In its place a large portion of mimeographed literature related to program activities and events was distributed to homes by the children.

It was remarked by several of the parents interviewed that they no longer received notification of events being held at the Center and for that reason did not attend.

All the parents and guardians visited the Center at least once for the registration of their children and met at least one staff member at that time.

Four parents in the neighborhood continued voluntary services to the program of the Agency during the year and one of the parents was on the paid staff.

These findings through observation indicated that a degree of communication between the parents and children existed but direct lines of communication between the Center and the parents are weak.

CHAPTER FIVE

A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS

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A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS

A comparative evaluation of the findings obtained through the careful observation, investigation and recording of data brought into focus a relationship between parent knowledge and interest and the nature of child participation and interest. At the very outset this relationship was questioned and one of the objectives of this study was to verify or disprove that such a relationship exists.

As was indicated in Table X found on page 38 , 77 percent of the parents made responses to items concerning their knowledge of their childrens' activities which could be rated good to excellent. Based on the fact that all of the children studied belonged to one group and fifty four belonged to two or more added to a high attendance and punctuality record the over all nature of child participation was rated as being above average.

A definite relationship appeared to exist between the knowledge of the parent compared with the nature of child participation by the findings on items 7 and 8 in the Group Leader's Record Form and the Home Visitation Interview Schedule respectively both of which were constructed to obtain information concerning the degree of child participation.

The data revealed that 66 percent of the children were usually "very enthusiastic" participants in their activities and of this same group 90.7 percent of the parents were aware of their childrens' enthusiasm while 9.3 percent of them were not.

Parental Interest and Child Interest. Just as parental knowledge and the nature of child participation were found to indicate a certain degree of relationship, similarly there existed a degree of relationship between parent interest and child interest in the activities of the Cambridge Community Center.

The children who participated enthusiastically or even those who were occasionally active had in the opinion of the leaders observing them a high degree of interest in their groups. This was correspondingly true of the parents' knowledge and interest.

In each item constructed to obtain information concerning the interest of the child in his activities there was evidenced a small percentage who either disliked the group actively, the leader, or the other children. Invariably the children who caused the discipline problems were the same who lacked interest and could hardly be called participants in the activities of the Center.

Since the size of this disinterested group was small, it was evident through comparison of data that the parents of this group with a few exceptions were disinterested and unintelligent concerning their childrens' activities.

In the subdivisions of the same item, 30 percent of the children were classified as "occasionally active" and 4 percent as being "rarely active". Of these parents it was discovered that 60 percent know their children were "occasionally active" and 75 percent knew their children were "rarely active". It would appear then, that in the three subdivisions of this item the parents knew of their childrens' degree of participation and either approved or sanctioned good or poor participation.

Item 3 on each of the data recording instruments concerned itself with regularity of attendance and here it was found that 81 percent of the children were usually regular attendants and of this group 94 percent of the parents were aware of their childrens' attendance record.

Other comparisons were made, and are shown on Table XIII, which clearly indicates a definite relationship between parental knowledge and the nature of child participation for as the knowledge was high so was the nature of participation and as the knowledge decreased so did the nature of child participation.

TABLE XIII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE COMPARISON BETWEEN PARENTAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE NATURE OF CHILD PARTICIPATION, BY CHILD PARTICIPATION ITEMS, IN GROUPS OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Child participation items	Parents		Children	
	Number of correct responses	Percent of correct responses	Number	Percent
1. Regular attendance	63	75.9	67	80.7
2. Irregular attendance	8	9.6	16	19.2
3. Punctuality	66	79.5	81	97.5
4. Tardiness	1	1.2	2	2.4
5. Office Held	2	2.4	9	10.8
6. Degree of Participation Very enthusiastic	49	59.0	54	66.2
7. Occasionally active	18	21.7	25	30.1
8. Rarely active	3	3.6	4	4.8
9. Belong to other group	46	55.4	54	66.2

Findings of Relationship between Parents and Children.

In a comparison of data obtained concerning the parents and the children in the activities at the Cambridge Community Center the following relationships were found to exist:

1. The knowledge of most of the parents concerning the nature of their childrens' participation was high. The nature of the childrens' participation was correspondingly high.

2. The interest of most of the parents in their childrens' activities was equally as high as the majority of the childrens' interest in their own group activities.

3. The children who had little or no interest in their activities were usually extremely low in their nature of participation. In a few cases these parents were aware of their childrens' low performance and interest rating; however, the majority of these parents were found to be lacking in knowledge and interest with regard to their childrens' activities.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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In this final chapter the investigator summarizes the findings of the study and formulates the conclusions indicating the limitations and proposes recommendations for future research.

I. SUMMARY

The Problem. This was a study to determine the possible relationship between parental knowledge and interest and the nature of child participation and interest in the activities of a community center. The investigation was conducted in order that the findings might be used as a tool for the further improvement of the program at the Cambridge Community Center.

The procedures used in the investigation were to construct two instruments, a home visitation schedule for the purpose of obtaining information concerning a parent's knowledge and interest in the child's activities at the Cambridge Community Center, and a group leader's record form in order that the nature of child participation and interest in terms of fact, observation and opinion of the leader might be recorded.

After careful screening of items observations of eighty three children were recorded as to the nature of their participation and interest and the fifty two parents were interviewed to determine their knowledge and interest.

Findings on the Nature of Child Participation. The findings on the nature of participation of eighty three children in the activities of the Cambridge Community Center were as follows:

1. All of the children in the sample belonged to at least one group, while 66 percent belonged to two or more groups.

2. The attendance in all of the eleven groups to which children belonged was usually regular, 81 percent of the children being present at almost every scheduled session.

3. Almost every child was punctual for his group activities since the findings revealed that only 2 percent were habitually tardy.

4. Data on the degree of participation within the groups revealed that 66 percent of the children were usually "enthusiastic" in their activities, 30 percent were "occasionally active" while 4 percent were "rarely active" in the groups at the Center.

Pertinent Findings on the Interest of the Child. The findings on the interest of the eighty three children studied in the opinion of the group leaders were as follows:

1. A large number of children, approximately 94 percent liked their activity group, while 6 percent apparently disliked their group.

2. The activity most enjoyed by the whole group was sports with 54 percent of the children listing it, however the other activities at the Center were enjoyed by the children in varying degrees with Home Industries being rated the second best liked activity of all.

3. The majority of the children studied liked their group, 93.9 percent, their leader, 91.5 percent, and each other, 81.9 percent.

4. In the area of leader-follower tendencies 24 percent generally exhibited qualities of leadership 66.2 percent were usually willing followers, while 9.6 percent usually had indifferent attitudes toward their group.

5. Most of the children had learned some skill during the year either in basketball, or other sports, dancing, cooking, sewing or the specialized crafts in Home Industries. Of this group it was found that the majority of the children tended to exhibit their skills to their leader, while the remainder divided this tendency to exhibit skills among their parents their peers, the leader or/and a combination of all

three.

A small percentage comprised almost entirely of adolescent boys "shied away" from any form of exhibitionism whatsoever.

6. There were 13.2 percent in the groups who usually appeared anxious to leave the Center at the close of their group activities.

7. In the opinion of the group leader approximately 85.5 percent of the children appeared to be motivated to participate in activities because of their own interest in them . The leaders also indicated however that 7.2 percent of the children participated because of motivation other than their own, while for another 7.3 percent it was obvious that participation was affected by indecision apparently caused by motivation of interest outside the group as well as their own.

8. By means of the interviews with the parents it was revealed that 13.2 percent of the children always told them of their activities, 76 percent occasionally told and 10.8 percent never or hardly ever discussed their activities at home.

Pertinent Findings on the Knowledge of the Parents.

1. The parents who had good to excellent knowledge of their childrens' activities numbered sixty four or 77 percent of the entire group.

2. On the items constructed to obtain information concerning the parents' interest of such things as the name of the child's leader, how the child reacted to the group activity, the leader, the other children, etc. it was found that 81 percent of the parents were able to give correct responses.

3. On the item constructed to obtain information concerning the parents' interest in the children's activities to the extent of coming to the Center to the events in which their children were participants, it was found that 33.7 percent of the parents were so inclined.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were formulated from the findings in this study:

1. That there is a relationship between parental knowledge and the nature of child participation in the activities of a community center.
2. That there is also a relationship between parental knowledge and interest and child interest in activities of a community center.

3. That such a relationship as was found to exist forms the following type of ratio and subsequent equations:-

Parental knowledge : nature of child participation

:: child interest : parental interest

Parental knowledge x parental interest = nature of
child participation x child interest

4. That such an equation was found to exist was indicated by the fact that as parental knowledge was high the nature of child participation was high and as parental interest was high child interest was high. This same relationship existed to a significant degree when knowledge and interest of the parents were low.

Hypothetical Conclusions. Hypothetical conclusions regarding the program of activities at the Cambridge Community Center are as follows:

1. There is a need for a line of communication between the agency and the home in order that the parents might become more intelligently informed of their childrens' activities.

2. There are children in the Agency whose nature of participation and interest in activities are very low - their needs are not being met.

3. There are children whose attitudes show that they are not emotionally mature enough to fit normally into the groups.

4. There are parents who are unaware of their responsibility to their children or the neighborhood.

5. Activities which are most enjoyed are those requiring use of muscular coordination and the more intricate hand skills of the specialized crafts such as Home Industries.

Recommendations of this Study. The recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. In order that a more direct line of communication between the home and the Agency might be established, a group should be organized within the Center to publish a newsletter or paper concerning the activities of the Cambridge Community Center.

2. Some form of "interest finder" should be developed in order that the latent skills and interests of some children might be discovered.

3. Serious cases of child maladjustment should be referred to the proper case work agency or/and a case work-group work situation should be set up within the Cambridge Community Center in order that problems of maladjustment might be discovered and treated during the early stages of development.

4. A program of parent education should be developed which could help all the parents to better understand their children and themselves.

5. Activities which increase the physical, mental and emotional development of the children should be continued and further stress should be placed upon the development of groups in which children with qualities of leadership might be used to the fullest extent.

Limitations of this Study. While it has accomplished its purpose this study has limitations from the point of view of use by other group work agencies.

1. The sample was a comparatively small one and limited to the immediate neighborhood of the Cambridge Community Center.

2. The data which were purported to be accurate and unbiased were nevertheless recorded by many persons who had no previous experience of this nature.

3. The study was almost entirely limited to Negro children and their parents; a wider cross section of representative races should prove more valuable to more group work agencies.

Suggestions for Further Research. There are many aspects of this study which could be investigated further.

1. A study could be made to compare the nature of participation of children from broken homes with those who live with both parents.

2. A study to determine the effect of intelligence on the nature of child participation and interest could be conducted.

3. A control study on the effect of a program of parent-education on the nature of child participation and interest could be conducted.

4. A control study of the effect of a program of parent education on the knowledge and interest within childrens' activities could be conducted.

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APPENDIX

HOME VISITATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. General Information:

1. Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Name of children enrolled in Center: _____

II. Items 1 - 10

1. What is the name of _____ club group or activity?
2. How often does the group meet? _____
3. Does _____ attend regularly? Yes _____ No _____
4. Is _____ usually on time for his activities? Yes ___ No ___
5. Have you any idea why he is usually late? _____
6. Are there any other children in family in club? Yes ___
No ___
7. Does _____ hold any office in the group? Yes ___ No ___
8. How does _____ usually participate in group activities?
Very enthusiastically _____
Occasionally active _____
Rarely joins in _____
9. To what other groups in Center does _____ belong?

10. Does _____ ever find time to tell you of his activities?
Always _____
Occasionally _____
Never _____

III. Items 11 - 21

11. Who is the leader for _____ group? _____
12. Does _____ seem to really like his group? Yes ___ No ___

HOME VISITATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

13. How does _____ feel about the leader?
 usually likes _____
 sometimes resents _____
 usually dislikes _____
 Other _____
14. How do the other children get along with _____?
 very well _____
 occasionally they quarrel _____
 ignore _____
 other _____
15. What activity does _____ seem to enjoy most?
 cooking _____
 Home Industries _____
 Chorus _____
 Other _____
16. Does _____ usually seem to be in trouble in his group? _____
17. How does _____ fit into the group?
 usually a leader _____
 usually a follower _____
 occasionally a leader _____
18. Has _____ brought home anything recently to show you
 that he's made? _____
19. Do you ever find time with all your duties to talk to
 _____ about his activities? _____
20. Do you ever have time to come to any events that _____
 is in? _____
21. Do you ever suggest to _____ things you'd like to see
 him do or make at the Center? _____

GROUP LEADER'S RECORD FORM

Leader's Name: _____

I General Information:

1. Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Age _____ 4. Grade: _____
5. Name of Parent or Guardian: _____
6. Cultural Background: _____

II Participation of Member in Center Activities:

1. Name of group or activity: _____
2. How many times a week does group meet? _____
3. Does member attend his activity regularly? Yes ___ No ___
4. Is member usually on time? Usual excuse _____
5. Does member have any brothers or sisters in group? _____
6. Does member hold any office in group? Yes ___ No ___
7. What is the nature of member's participation in the activities of group?
usually very enthusiastic _____
occasionally active _____
rarely joins in _____
8. To what other groups in Center does member belong?

III Interest of Member in Center Activities:

1. Does member like his group? Yes ___ No ___
2. How does member react to leader?
generally approves _____
usually disapproves _____ Other _____
Ignores _____

GROUP LEADER'S RECORD FORM

3. How does group react to member?
 usually approves _____
 usually disapproves _____
 ignores _____
 other _____
4. What activity does member enjoy most?
5. Does member usually cause trouble in group? Yes ___ No ___
6. How does member react in group?
 usually a leader _____
 usually a follower _____
 usually indifferent _____
7. Does member seem anxious to exhibit skills to
 parents _____
 peers _____
 leader _____
 not at all _____
8. Does member seem anxious to leave club at close of
 session? Yes ___ No ___
9. Does member tell his parents of his activities?
 Yes ___ No ___ Don't know _____
10. Has parent ever inquired about the program or leader?
 Yes ___ No ___
11. Does member seem to participate in his activity
 because of
 his own interest _____
 some other reason _____

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Leaders
						<u>Monday</u>
2:30			Tutoring Class English Letitia Young			Judith Zartarian Iola Gregory Phyllis Barrow George Skelly
						<u>Tuesday</u>
3:00	*Busy Bees Club Girls (8-11 yrs.) J. Zartarian	Chorus Girls 12-16 D. Gather- wright	Cooking Class Girls 8-11 W. Singleton	Sports Girls 10-15 Roxie Bas- majian Helen Constant	Movies Boys & Girls 7-15 Shirley Oliver	D. Gatherwright Erna Graves C. VanGeuns George Skelly
			Sewing Class Girls 12-15 Lottie Davis			<u>Wednesday</u> Letitia Young Winifred Singleton
	Cooking Class Girls 10-12 I. Gregory	Sewing Class Girls 8-11 yrs. Erna Graves				Lottie Davis Cornelia van Geuns
3:30	*Junior Girls Club 7-10 yrs *Phyllis Barrow	*Pottery (Home Ind) 7-13 yrs *C. VanGeuns	*Textiles (Home Ind.) 7-14 yrs. *C. VanGeuns		*Girls Scouts (11-15) Thelma Smith	Charles Nelson Jerome Dunn
						<u>Thursday</u> Roxie Basmajian Helen Constant
4:00	9 yr olds (Boys) Gymnasium George Skelly	*Panthers Boys 11 yrs Club & Gym *G. Skelly	*Eagles Boys 11-13 Club & Gym *Charles Nelson	Stamp Club Boys & Girls 12-16 yrs. Kenneth Bowen	*Warriors Boys Club 13-15 *George Skelly	Cornelia van Geuns Kenneth Bowen Mary Arnold
	*7 - 8 yr. old Boys Crafts *George Skelly		Jays (Boys) 8-10 yrs. Jerome Dunn	Ballet Boys & Girls 6-12 yrs. Mary Arnold		<u>Friday</u> Shirley Oliver William Hazelton Thelma Smith
4:30				Mexican Jacket Class Home Industries Cornelia Van Geuns		George Skelly Girls 13-16 yrs.

*Groups and Leaders Studied
Home Ind. = Home Industries

Evening Schedule of Activities for Boys and Girls
14 - 16 years

<u>Time</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Leaders</u>
6:30	Basketball Girls 12-15 L. Catallo		Tutoring Class Grade School Subjects Horton Reed			<u>Monday</u> Helen Baker Beatrice Alleyne Leona Catallo
7:00	Cooking Boys 11-16 Mrs. Baker		Piano 14 - 16 Iris Todd Warriors Gymnasium L. Plenty M. Bispham	*Boy Scouts 10 - 15 *Courtlandt Burnett		<u>Tuesday</u> Iris Todd
						<u>Wednesday</u> Horton Reed Laurence Plenty Milton Bispham
7:30	Sewing Girls 14 - 17 Beatrice Alleyne			Sewing Girls 14 - 17 Beatrice Alleyne		<u>Thursday</u> Courtlandt Burnett Beatrice Alleyne
8:00						
8:30						
9:00						
10:00						

Cambridge Community Center

Junior Registration Card No.

1. Name _____ 2. Date of registration _____
3. Address _____ Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
4. Date of Birth _____ 5. Age _____
Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
6. Place of Birth _____ 7. Sex _____
Male _____ Female _____
8. Telephone Number _____
9. Date of first registration _____
Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
10. No. of brothers & sisters _____ 11. School _____
12. Grade _____ 13. If not in school, highest grade completed _____
14. If working, firm or employer _____

15. Job _____
16. Data regarding parents (If not living with parents, give data regarding guardian:
- Father: a. Name _____ Place of birth _____
c. Descent _____ d. Place of employment _____
e. Job _____
- Mother: a. Name _____ b. Place of birth _____
c. Descent _____ d. Place of employment _____
e. Job _____
17. Membership in other organizations

Cambridge Community Center

Senior Registration Card No.

1. Name _____ 2. Date of registration _____
3. Address _____ Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
4. Date of birth _____ 5. Age _____
Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
6. Place of birth _____ 7. Sex Male Female
8. Phone Number _____
9. Date of first registration _____
Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
10. No. brothers & sisters _____ 11. School _____ Grade _____
13. If not in school, highest grade completed _____
14. If working, firm or employer _____ Job _____
16. Data regarding parents (If not living with parents,
give data regarding guardian)
- Father: a. Name _____ b. Place of birth _____
c. Descent _____ d. Place of employment _____
e. Job _____
- Mother: a. Name _____ b. Place of birth _____
c. Descent _____ d. Place of employment _____
e. Job _____
17. Membership in other organizations
- _____
- _____