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THE NONPROMOTION MESSAGE'S AFFECTIVE IMPACT ON PARENTS

by

SANDRA KAYE DAVES

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Department of Administration and Supervision at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

March 1987

Major professor: Robert R. Lange
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ABSTRACT

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This study was conducted to investigate the nonpromotion message's affective impact on parents. An interview guide was developed to collect data on parents' reactions to several aspects of public schools: Elementary schools in general; Messages received from elementary schools; Current practices (nonpromotion) in schools; Parents' feelings as a result of their child being retained; Information about their family.

Interviews were conducted with parents of 180 children who attended public schools. Ninety interviews were
conducted with parents of children who had been retained in either second, third or fifth grade and 90 were conducted with parents of children who had been identified as low achievers in second, third or fifth grade. Statistical and ethnographic analyses were completed to investigate parents' feelings about nonpromotion.

There was little statistical evidence to indicate that parents perceived the nonpromotion message as an evaluation of themselves and the level of parents' affective reaction to the nonpromotion message was fairly neutral. Grade level at which a child was retained and socio-economic status of the family were unrelated to parents' affective reaction and self-evaluation scores. Also parents tended to blame the teacher and the child for a nonpromotion more than they blamed the school programs, the principal or themselves.

One emerging concept revealed by the ethnographic analysis was that the school's strategy for working with parents had an influence on the parents' reaction to their child's nonpromotion. Parents' compliance with the need for nonpromotion seemed to be influenced by what the school personnel said rather than a personal response to what they felt would be the best for their child's future. Parents did what the school told them to do, they believed that the
school provided them with accurate information, and that nonpromotion was the best alternative for their child.

The exploratory data analyzed by this study provided some insight into the parents' emotional readiness and reaction to the academic failure of their child and provided suggestions for improved parent-school communications. A need for open and honest communication and cooperation between parents and educators was indicated. The use of parental contact had a positive influence on the parents' perception and support of the nonpromotion decision.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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She thanks all of the parents who welcomed her into their homes and provided information about their experiences with public schools in the hope that it would help to improve education for all children.

The author is also grateful to the personnel in the public school system who helped her collect the information necessary to complete this study, and to her friends for nurturing her through the good and bad times.

Above all, the author wishes to thank her family for the constant reminder that they loved her and that she would make it, and for their pride in her accomplishments which filled her with the sustenance to complete the task. For these reasons she dedicates this document to her father and mother.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Retention or nonpromotion, the practice of having a student repeat a year at the same grade level, has been instituted throughout the history of American education as a method to remediate low academic performance. Although retention rates have fluctuated in response to prevailing philosophies in education, nonpromotion remains a common practice in most school systems. Currently, with philosophical emphasis leaning toward the grade standard theory (Lunden, 1979; Trotter, 1982) and the establishment of minimum competency testing programs mandated by state legislatures and/or local school boards, the practice of retention is being encouraged (Rose, Medway, Cantrell, & Marcus, 1983).

Most of the research data collected over the past 30 years fail to indicate any significant academic or social adjustment benefit of nonpromotion (Gilbert, 1985; Walker, 1984; Rose, Medway, Cantrell, & Marus, 1983; Leggett, 1983; Van Zant, 1982; Ammons, 1976; Wayne, 1971; Kamii & Weikart, 1963; Coffield, 1954; and Goodlad, 1954). A majority of
the literature indicates that, within one to three years of retention, nonpromoted students reach academic achievement levels no higher then they would have if they had been promoted. Although studies indicate that a few students do seem to benefit from nonpromotion, it is not known why these students benefit while most students are impaired by grade retention. The question of why retention is effective in some individual cases remains, making the need for research outside the parameters of standard retention study techniques timely (Gilbert, 1985).

Whatever the causes and impacts of academic failure, parents and schools have a definite responsibility to seek solutions to these problems (Morris, 1980). Practically all parents are concerned over the school success (or failure) of their children. The prestige of the entire family is involved with a promotion decision and in a case of failure the family's best efforts are called upon to handle the situation successfully (Goodlad, 1954; Robinson, 1936).

Little is known that will help school professionals understand parents' emotional readiness and reactions to the academic failure of their child. It is possible, however, that such an understanding could provide additional dimensions for improved parent-school
additional dimensions for improved parent-school communications and help schools provide assistance for parents with their children (Mour, 1981).

A major part of the negative impact of a child's nonpromotion may be related to the affective reactions of parents. They may perceive the child's retention as a message about parenting failure. Parents may identify the success or failure of their children as an indicator of their own success or failure. Schools need to address these issues. In a study of the effects of positive messages from teachers to parents, Servette (1972) found that the teachers' personal contacts increased parents' self-value and self-worth, a finding that could have far-reaching implications for children and their education.

This study was designed to explore the nonpromotion message's affective impact on parents as an initial step in the investigation of the relationship between variables that result in the failure of nonpromotion. The study also explored the extent to which parents received the retention message as an evaluation of themselves and how parents' level of affective reaction related to their perception of the school, their perception of their child, their perception of their child's emotional status, and their interaction between themselves and their child. Parental
Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was as follows: What was the affective impact on parents when they were informed of the nonpromotion decision for their child?

The purpose of the study was to investigate the affective reactions of a sampling of parents whose children had been retained or were low achievers in a large public school district in central Florida. One hundred eighty in-home interviews were conducted to explore this purpose. The intent was to look closely at parents' reactions to the retention of their child in an attempt to provide information relevant to the promotion process. Results of this study were intended to be used by school systems that are examining the implementation of new or revised promotion polices.

Study Questions

The specific questions addressed by this study follow:

1. To what extent did parents initially receive the retention message as an evaluation of themselves?

2. What was the level of the parents' affective reaction to the decision to retain their child?
3. How did the affective reaction to retention differ among three parent groups: parents whose children were actually retained; parents who reported their perceptions of another family's experiences with retention, and parents who reported their perceptions of the general public's experiences with nonpromotion?

4. How did the child's grade level relate to the parents' affective reaction to their child's retention?

5. Was the level of the parents' affective reaction related to their perception of the school, their child, their child's emotional status and the interaction between themselves and their child?

6. How did the school's strategy for informing parents of their child's actual or potential retention affect the parents' affective response to the retention decision?

7. Was the extent of parent involvement in the retention decision related to the parents' affective reaction to their child's nonpromotion?

8. How did the affective responses to a child's retention differ between parents who were themselves retained in school and parents who were themselves never retained in school?

9. On whom did parents place the blame of their child's nonpromotion?
10. How did family socio-economic status relate to the parents' affective reaction to school retention, their evaluation of themselves, whom they blame for their child's retention, and their involvement in the retention decision?

Operational Definitions

A discussion of terms and constructs addressed by this study follows:

1. Parents. In this study, parents were those individuals identified as the child's parent on the permanent record file maintained at the school system.

2. Retention/Nonpromotion. Retention or nonpromotion, in this study, was the official school action requiring a student to repeat a grade level for a second year, as recorded on the child's permanent school record file or as reported by parents during the interview.

Derived Score Variables

Each of the measured variables used for this study were operationally defined as responses or scores derived from replies reported during the parent interview as recorded on the interview guide (Appendix 2). Specific responses used to determine each of the measured variables are listed in Chapter 3. These variables include:
1. **Evaluation of Self.** Evaluation of self was a score derived from parents' replies during the interviews indicating the extent to which parents perceive their child's retention as reflecting on themselves or the quality of their parenting.

2. **Affective Reaction.** Affective reaction was a score derived from replies reported during the parent interview which reflected the parents' emotional response to their child's nonpromotion. Affective reactions refer to those reactions pertaining to or resulting from emotions or feelings rather than from thought (Morris, 1976).

3. **Parents' Perception of the School.** Parents' perception of the school was a score derived from the parents' reported opinions about the elementary school.

4. **Parents' Perception of Their Child.** Parents' perception of their child was a score derived from the parents' reported opinions about their child.

5. **Parents' Perception of Their Child's Emotional Status.** The parents' perception of their child's emotional status was a score derived from the child's feeling about her/himself as perceived and reported by their parents.

6. **Parent Involvement in the Retention Decision.** Parent involvement in the retention decision was the score reflecting the extent to which parents reported their participation in making the decision to retain their child.
Categorical Variables

Categorical variables were operationally defined by responses reported during the parent interview as recorded on the parent interview guide (Appendix 2).

1. School Strategies. School strategies referred to those techniques employed by the school to inform parents about their child's school progress in relationship to nonpromotion.

2. Blame. Blame was the person or policy perceived, by the parents, to be at fault for a student's nonpromotion. Parents selected their response from an ordered category presented during the interview.

3. Parents' Perception of the Interaction Between Themselves and Their Child. Parents' perception of the interaction between themselves and their child was determined by parents' responses to an ordered category indicating their perception of the interaction between themselves and their child as a result of their child's nonpromotion.

4. Parent Retention. Parent retention was determined by parents' responses to a dichotomous choice indicating the nonpromotion of either parent, at least once, during their own elementary school career.
5. Socio-economic Status. Socio-economic status was determined by the parents' response to the total family income scale presented during the interview.

6. Grade Level. Grade level was the grade at which a child was retained or identified as a low achiever as reported in the school records or by the parent.

7. Parent Groups. The parents interviewed were categorized into one of three groups: parents who reported that their child was actually retained; parents who reported their perceptions of another family's experiences with retention; and parents who reported with their perceptions of the general public's experiences with promotion.

Significance of the Problem

Current trends in school improvement have produced an increase in the number of students retained (Rose et al., 1983). The concept of minimum grade level competencies and the use of achievement test scores as criteria for grade level promotion will likely increase the use of retention as an educational practice.

If such practices continue to be common school policy, educators need to better understand the factors that effect the subsequent low achievement of nonpromoted students. Perhaps the affective reaction of parents is a key factor.
to school success after the nonpromotion decision. With a better understanding of the impact of retention on parents' affective reactions, schools may find it beneficial to use specific strategies for working with the parents of low achieving students who are potential candidates for nonpromotion.

Several researchers have recommended the need for further investigation into the problems addressed by the present study. Halliwell (1961) found that very few studies have been concerned with actual research on reporting student progress to parents or on parents' interpretation of and reaction to such reports. Brown (1981) recommended improved parent-teacher communications to alleviate problems related to dealing with student retention issues. Mour (1981) found that to work successfully with failing students teachers must also work with parents. He recommended that schools attempt to identify the emotional state of parents of students who fail to determine whether their emotional state will enhance or inhibit their willingness and ability to work with the problems.
Limitations of the Study

This study had a limited population. The population consisted exclusively of parents of pupils who attended one large public school system in central Florida and only those parents for whom information could be ascertained from the cumulative records maintained at the district office. Only those parents for whom accurate addresses were available and only those who could be located and were home at the time of the visitation were included in the sample. Most interviews were conducted in the afternoon, evening or on weekends so any parents working or not at home during those times were excluded from the sample.

Another limitation related to the sampling units. Several sampling units identified as parents of low-achieving promoted students had experienced a nonpromotion with another child in the family or had experienced a nonpromotion with the identified child but at some other grade during their school career. Since parents were unable to ignore previous experiences they had with nonpromotion they were encouraged to respond with their most current nonpromotion experiences. This unforeseen limitation caused an adjusted sample of 110 parents who had students retained in grades kindergarten through eight and 70 parents of promoted low-achievers.
A limitation related to collecting data by asking people to answer potentially threatening questions is that respondents may not share their honest beliefs and reactions due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Also, parents may respond in a manner that they believe is appropriate or with what they believe are socially expected responses.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Perspective

As America established a national school system of graded classes and compulsory school laws, the practice of retention became widespread. In fact, by the early nineteenth century retention rates had reached as high as 52% (Walker, 1984), with approximately every other child being retained at least once during their first eight years of school (Rose, Medway, Cadwell & Marcus, 1983).

Retention continued to be a common practice until the 1930s. At that time social scientists, fearing the potential adverse effects on students' social and emotional development, began to challenge such widespread use of nonpromotion. As a result of these fears, the practice of "social promotion" (uninterrupted or continuous progress through the standard school grades) was established to reduce the number of overage, low-achieving students at each grade level. This practice continued for the next 30 years (Rose et al., 1983) and was accompanied by a sharp decline in the number of nonpromotions.
In the early 1960s educators began to notice a decline in student achievement as measured on standardized achievement tests. Many attributed this decline to relaxed academic standards (Rose et al., 1983) including the use of social promotion. So, once again, educators slanted toward the use of retention as a method of increasing individual student achievement and maintaining high academic standards (Ames, 1980).

Retention rates have always responded to prevailing educational philosophies. Thus, as the American educators rekindle their infatuation with the grade standard theory of education, they also promoted the practice of retaining students (Trotter, 1982). Current trends toward educational accountability have also affected the use of nonpromotion policies. Many state legislatures and local school boards have recently mandated the establishment of minimum competency testing programs. While these mandates do not explicitly require retention they often make promotion contingent upon mastery of grade level objectives. Such state and local policies have encouraged school systems to opt for nonpromotion alternatives (Rose et al., 1983).

Although retention rates have declined since the 1930s, they still averaged around 20% in 1971-1972, with a cost factor of $700-900 million a year (Funk, 1969;
Jackson, 1975). The prevalent use of grade retention continues. At present, indications of increased implementation of nonpromotion policies can be seen in several states. Atlanta public schools retained four times as many first graders in 1981 as they did in 1980 and the District of Columbia retained 32% of their primary grade students in the 1980-1981 school year (Rose et al., 1983).

The Retention Decision

Anfinson (1941) found a wide variation in the nonpromotion rates and practices implemented in public schools nationwide. Stroup and Zirkel (1983) investigated trends in retention rates and reported that although the courts had in the past deferred to the school officials on promotion/retention decisions there was an increasing tendency for the judiciary to look more closely at: (1) decisions based on limited, inflexible criteria; (2) the school's procedure for permitting a challenge to retention decisions; and (3) a disproportionate number of retentions involving minority children. The courts' caution in relationship to nonpromotion has put increasing pressure on those educators responsible for the promotion/retention decision.

Professional educators must analyze their own philosophy of education in relationship to nonpromotion. In
his investigation of a dramatic drop in retention rates from 1969 to 1974, Lauber (1976) indicated that the educational philosophy of principals and teachers was an important factor in determining the use of retention at the school level. He concluded that the reduction in the use of nonpromotion resulted from a change in the educational philosophy of district administrators. If educators adhere to the philosophy of the equalization of educational opportunity theory they are more likely to decide in favor of promotion or the continuous progress of students (Lunden, 1979). In fact, Lauber (1976) indicated that acceptance of this type of educational philosophy could ultimately remove the need to retain students, as it tends to eliminate grade level distinctions.

If, however, educators accept the philosophy of the grade standard theory, they tend to make decisions in favor of nonpromotion (Lunden, 1979). Two additional philosophical issues which educators must debate in the promotion/retention decision include the impact of the failure experience and the degree to which the students or the schools are responsible for student achievement (Rose et al., 1983).

Although Raksakulthai (1982) reported that teachers perceived nonpromotion matters to be in their domain, the seriousness of these decisions indicated that the onus of
retention should not rest on the classroom teacher alone (Wayne, 1971). Cooper (1980), in her investigation of the retention decisions made for kindergarten and first-grade students, reported that teachers usually initiated the consideration of a child for nonpromotion but the final decision was actually made by the parents and/or the school administrator. Hubbell (1981) and Rau (1974) reported that the teacher, the parent and the principal often made the decision as a group. Millaway (1975) recommended that even more professionals should be involved in this important decision-making process and included the school counselor and a teacher from the subsequent grade level on the decision-making team. Young (1981) concluded that an even more effective team included the student, support personnel and, in small school districts, even the superintendent of schools.

Lieberman's (1980) review of nonpromotion research indicated that the child's attitude toward her/his own retention is a critical issue to be addressed. He stressed that educators must consider the student as a viable member of the decision team, especially in cases of strenuous personal objection or affirmation.

Regardless of who makes the final nonpromotion decision, it is usually incumbent upon the teacher to justify the reasons for retention. Leggett's (1983) review
suggested that teachers most frequently retain students because of the following six beliefs: (a) retention makes students work harder and be more successful; (b) repetition of work lays a better foundation for future progress; (c) certain pupils who learn slowly will have a chance to "catch up"; (d) standardized test barriers will increase the average mental age for each grade level; (e) classes in the upper grades will be more homogeneous in achievement level; and (f) students are not ready for work at the next higher grade. She also noted that none of these reasons have been supported by objective evidence and thus retaining a student for any of them does not appear to be justifiable (Leggett, 1983).

Even though educational literature does not support grade retention, teachers and principals continue to support its use. Calvano (1981) found that there was a significant difference between teachers' level of education and their attitude toward nonpromotion. Rose et al. (1983) found that principals' continued use of nonpromotion was related to their philosophical beliefs. Lunden (1979) reported that principals also supported nonpromotion because of a lack of knowledge about the effects of nonpromotion and because of a variety of contextual variables including parental attitudes toward the placement
decision, pressure from teachers, and local and state policies.

It is quite probable that most school systems have no consistent policies, procedures or criteria to systematically implement retention. Rose et al. (1983) found that less than half of the school systems they surveyed nationally had a written policy covering retention. Thus Walker (1984) recommended that each state and school system establish a set of formal guidelines for nonpromotion practices, including policies that treat each child's referral in a manner similar to those set forth in Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act.

It is the responsibility of the nonpromotion decision makers to become aware of the current state of research with regard to grade retention and to establish and implement procedures which are systematic, consistent, (Lunden, 1979), and that result in the best possible development for children (Goodlad, 1954). Walker (1984) reviewed the current literature on nonpromotion and offered the following suggestions for policy makers to consider: (a) development of good kindergarten screening programs; (b) provisions for flexible programming to offset the need for retention and to account for individual differences; (c) if retention is unavoidable, do it early or not at all;
(d) establishment of local norms from data collected on retained and retainable students; and (e) consideration of retention-prone children as if they were exceptional education students (provide the same thorough identification, follow up and due process policies to those children). Light (1981), in an attempt to assist educators make more objective retention decisions, developed a 19-category scale which can be used as a starting point to identify students to be recommended for retention. Young (1981) identified 12 items most often used by elementary school personnel to justify nonpromotion: parent and student support for the retention; low academic functioning; social immaturity; young chronological age; small physical size; slow intellectual ability; placement (in primary grades); frequent absences; deprived home life; transiency; poor language skills; and lack of effort. Calvano (1981) reported the use of similar justifications but he concluded that most teachers typically use only four or five criteria: achievement levels; social maturity factors; parental attitudes; chronological age; and mental age. Rau (1974) found that the teacher's evaluation of a pupil was the factor of greatest importance in establishing a basis for the nonpromotion decision and that a greater degree of readiness for the next grade level was considered to be the most important expected outcome of the process.
Vaughn (1969) reminded educators that the decision to retain should never be made on a single criteria and Farley, Frey and Garland (1933) recommended that every effort should be made to secure the best possible adjustment for each child. Lieberman (1980) identified several questions which he felt should be considered during the retention decision-making process. In order to address the impact of nonpromotion on a child's self-concept he recommended that decision makers respond to the following questions: If children have a good self-concept, will retention debilitate them and give them a long-lasting, low self-concept? If children have low self-concepts, will retention debilitate them further to the point of consigning them to a school career fraught with misery? If children have low self-concepts, is it a result of low achievement, and will retention foster their achievement which will in turn, enhance their self concept? A popular misconception should not be overlooked in trying to answer these questions -- students, by virtue of retention, do not automatically go to the top of the class in the repeated year. More often they enter somewhere in the middle or lower ranking of the class.

Rose et al. (1983) recommended several additional questions which may drastically affect a child's retention: Should the child repeat instruction? Was the curriculum
material taught? Did the teacher try alternative strategies? Along with the retention decision the team must consider special services needed by the child over and above or different from the regular classroom programming since it is doubtful that retention in and of itself will work to the benefit of the child. Teachers must provide special programs if retained students are expected to succeed.

Educators should decide what curriculum materials should and should not be repeated and in what instructional setting the child will best receive appropriate instruction. It would be illogical to recycle a student using instructional methods which were inappropriate the first time. Such practice may even be considered as educational negligence.

Walker (1980) pointed out that the possibility of noxious consequences are far more likely with retention than promotion, so until definitive research exists to support retention it seems unadvisable to retain children at all. If, however, retention is unavoidable to compensate for inequities in the educational system, the decision-making process must be a comprehensive, multifactor study making use of all of the resources in the school system and it must be a response to overplacement and immaturity rather than academic deficiency (Lauber,
1976). Also, unavoidable retentions should be used at the kindergarten level when factors such as peer relations and academic expectations are not yet clear and there is more time to remediate any potential negative effects (Walker, 1984).

Presently, retention is most common at the first-grade level. Lieberman (1980) found that in the few cases when research supports retention it is only as a programming option for kindergarten through second grade. Nonpromotion is frowned upon for use at fourth grade and beyond; third grade is regarded as the pivotal grade. Students retained beyond the fourth grade are usually victims of inappropriate disciplinary action or a lack of special education services or both. Also, self concept issues seem to take on much greater importance beyond third grade (Lieberman, 1980).

Characteristics of Retained Students

Numerous studies have focused on the characteristics of students who have been retained during their school career. The creation of such a profile of the nonpromoted student is an attempt to identify high risk students in order to provide intervention strategies that hopefully will alleviate the need for grade retention.
Trotter (1982) confirmed that elementary students referred for nonpromotion differed significantly on 31 measures from a variety of standardized testing instruments. He also reported that the most meaningful factor was verbal IQ followed by interpersonal skills and suggested that the prime predictor of the referred group was reading achievement. Pottorff (1979) listed five characteristics of first graders that had the greatest predictive value in discriminating between nonpromoted and promoted students these were: being a member of a minority race; coming from a large family; having a mother and/or father with a lower level of education; coming from a separated, divorced or single parent home; being academically low in reading and math; and having poor school attendance. In regards to minority students, Ammons (1976) reported that black males were retained more than any other category of student and Rau (1974) related that 20 to 25 percent of all nonpromoted students in kindergarten through third grade were categorized as disadvantaged. Aebersold’s (1971) investigation of characteristics identified the same five as Pottorff, but in addition he observed that 59% of retained students had relatively severe health problems and 24% had been designated as being behavior problems.
Vaughn (1969) added several more variables to Pottorff's profile of nonpromoted students including: having working mothers; low socio-economic backgrounds; fathers employed in unskilled labor; poor attitude toward school; and little parent interest in school. Garner (1967) identified four additional factors which affect retention status: age (younger students were more likely to experience failure); gender (boys were more susceptible than girls); lower language achievement, and birth order (the later in a family a child was born the more likely she/he would be retained). Cooper (1980) found students who were smaller than their peers were more likely to be retained. One additional factor reported by Rose et al. (1983) was that students who lived in the southwest tended to experience more nonpromotion than those from other regions of the United States.

Leggett (1983) studied the characteristics of nonpromoted students. She reported that those students possessing characteristics associated with a high incidence of retention actually experienced low rates of academic benefit from repeating a grade. In the same study she identified six characteristics that were common among students who had made at least some progress during the year in which they were retained. These factors included being: female; a first or third grader; older than
average; white; average or above average in intelligence; and within a critical range in both reading and total battery scores on standard achievement tests.

**General Effects of Nonpromotion**

Before reviewing the research related to the effects of nonpromotion on students, their academic achievement and their self concept and adjustment, Jackson (1975) pointed out that most of this research has employed one of two research methods, both of which have methodological flaws. One compared the progress of the same children over two years (the year of the retention decision and the year of nonpromotion) without controlling for maturation or environmental changes in the child’s life which biases the results toward the benefits of retention. The other method compared matched groups of retained and promoted students. Since the retained group was determined by the school district the independent variable is not randomly assigned. This ex-post facto method does not account for the reasons why one group was promoted and the other not, thus the design was biased toward the disadvantages of nonpromotion. Rose et al. (1983) also observed that virtually no follow up studies have been conducted on the original studies to further investigate the effects of grade retention.
As a whole, most of the data collected over the past 70 years failed to evince any significant benefits of nonpromotion for the majority of students with academic or adjustment problems (Rose et al., 1983). Most studies reiterated the probability that nonpromotion had a contributing harmful influence on the vast majority of students (Aebersold, 1983). With rare exception the research indicated that retention was not advantageous either to the student or to the school (Casavantes, 1974; Boesel, 1961). Because the positive effects of nonpromotion are so meager it does not warrant the effort and money invested in it. The prodigious monetary costs resulting from nonpromotion could be more advantageously spent (Sulayti, 1981; Powell, 1955).

Leggett (1983) noted, in her review of the nonpromotion research, that several points stand out in regard to the effect of nonpromotion policy and practices on students: 1) keeping low achieving children within their age group did not appear to result in lower academic achievement; 2) the threat from a strict promotion policy seemed to have no effect on students who are in danger of being retained; 3) students who are not promoted continued to lag behind in achievement; 4) once a child was retained, neither the teacher to whom she/he was assigned
nor the method of assignment significantly affected test scores.

Roach (1983) concluded that retention is associated with a decline in attendance and Craig (1978) and Floyd (1982) found that school systems with high nonpromotion rates have correspondingly high withdrawal rates. Also, high rates of nonpromotion lead to significantly greater heterogeneity of ages and physical development among students in the upper elementary grades (Coeffield, 1954). Nonpromotion does not appear to reduce the range of specific abilities with which a teacher must cope nor the variability in achievement but does increase the incidence of troublesome behavior with which a teacher must deal (Goodlad, 1954).

Nonpromotion Effects on Academic Achievement

The literature was replete with studies conducted to determine the effects of nonpromotion on the academic achievement of school children. A variety of populations were examined, numerous different instruments were employed, and various evaluation techniques and analysis strategies were implemented, however, the overwhelming conclusion reported by the vast majority of these studies was repeated over and over -- nonpromotion in itself does
not improve the academic achievement of school children
(Gilbert, 1985; Walker, 1984; Maddocks, 1983; Rose et al.,
1983; Leggett, 1983; Roach, 1983; Oldham, 1983; LeDantec,
1983; Nabors, 1983; Holmes, 1983; Gutierrez, 1983; Whitney,
1983; Van Zant, 1982; Ebey, 1981; Cooper, 1980; Moore,
Worth, 1960; Anderson, 1958, Coeffield, 1954; and Goodlad,
1954).

Rose et al. (1983), when studying matched groups of
promoted and nonpromoted students, reported that promoted
students made academic gains of 8 to 12 months while
nonpromoted students made a six month gain in the same time
frame. More recent findings are no different than older
reports. For example, Keyes (1911) reported that when
retained students' progress was measured, 20% to 35% of
these students learned more their second year in the same
grade level, however as many as 40% actually regressed
academically during the second year.

Several researchers did report academic gains made by
students that had been retained (Cromer, 1984; Gutierrez,
1983; Van Zant, 1982; Turner, 1982; Hains, 1981; and
Gerstel, 1981), however, all of these studies measured and
reported gains made by the students for the one year
following the retention decision. As Klauber (1971),
Maddocks (1983) and Whitney (1983) pointed out when the
effects of academic achievement of the retained students were observed over two or three years, the magnitude of the effects were relatively small and were no longer significantly different from those students that were in the matched pair promoted groups. Only one study, by Oldham (1983), reported that students of average ability, who had been retained one or more times in the primary grades, achieved significantly higher in math throughout their school career than matched pairs of students who had been routinely promoted.

Powell (1982) identified grade level as a significant predictor of retention success and concluded that the earlier the child was retained, the greater the likelihood of upward movement in their relative academic position in the class. Powell also indicated that the higher the pretest percentile rank, the greater the probability that the retained child will show test score gains. Cheyney and Boyer (cited in Goodlad, 1954) reiterated this point in their observations that the lack of readiness for work in a given grade is largely due to a slow learning rate which will not be improved by repeating a grade. Although teachers and principals continue to use what appears to be positive effects of nonpromotion to rationalize their decisions, there is no way to show conclusively that: (a) retention in itself causes improved performance; (b)
nonpromoted children would not have done as well as or better had they not been retained (Walker, 1984).

Nonpromotion Effects on Social Adjustment and Self Concept

Several researchers reported that nonpromoted students are less socially and personally adjusted, have lower self concepts and sociometric status and are more likely to drop out of school. Other investigations revealed no differences between the self concepts of nonpromoted and promoted students and still others reported that the nonpromoted students’ self concept actually improved. None of the literature, however, supported the use of retention to help behavior, attitudes or personal adjustment in students who were having academic difficulties (Leggett, 1983).

Retention has been found to have detrimental effects on the social-emotional development of nonpromoted students (Holmes, 1983; Jackson, 1975; Millaway, 1975; Axel, 1968; Goodlad, 1954; Anfinson, 1941; and Farley et al., 1933). Funk (1969) reported that children with poor self images were often emotionally devastated by retention. In addition to developing a poor self image, there was the danger of perpetuating a negative self-fulfilling prophecy on the part of the child, her/his peers, teachers, principals and parents. For retained students school
became a negative place where they may be viewed as inferior (Walker, 1984).

Frequently the literature reported that there was no difference between the affective responses of matched pairs of promoted and nonpromoted students (Laughlin, 1982; Hains, 1981; Gerstel, 1981; and Ammons, 1976). Gutierrez (1983) indicated that there was no significant difference between promoted and nonpromoted groups in mean gain scores on total self concept scores for all grades one to four. Van Zant (1982) reported that teachers do not perceive retained students as being significantly different than average students in the areas of self concept and classroom behavior and Copper (1980) reported no difference in self concept, overt behavior or teachers' perceptions of the same two groups.

Goodlad's (1954) research concluded that there was no significant difference between promoted and nonpromoted groups for total adjustment, self adjustment, and social acceptance. Anfinson (1941), after looking at matched pairs of repeaters and nonrepeaters, concluded that nonpromotion had apparently variable effects on different individuals. He recommended that blanket good or bad statements about nonpromotion be modified since poorly adjusted and well adjusted pupils were found in both the promoted and nonpromoted groups. It has not been
demonstrated that personality maladjustment was related to failure in school (Anfinson, 1941).

Goodlad (1954) reported that the whole picture of sociometric change over the school year was one of decline in desirable adjustment for the nonpromoted child and of improvement for promoted children. Goodlad concluded that there was a closer affiliation of undesirable social and personal adjustment characteristics with nonpromotion than promotion and suggested that repeating a grade is detrimental to the social and personal development of children and he questioned nonpromotion as a valid educational practice.

A few studies reported that retained students actually experience improved emotional status. Wayne (1971), in a study of high school students who were retained in elementary school, related that their autobiographies did not reflect negative attitudes toward nonpromotion (although many students had encountered initial problems and continued to experience academic failure). Worth (1960), also reported no adverse effects on the social personal development of retained third graders.

Finlayson (1977) reported that, after retention, nonpromoted first graders continued to increase their self concept scores significantly over the two year period. It seemed that nonpromotion, at the first grade level, did not
negatively affect the self concept of these primary grade students. Questionnaires prepared by Finlayson revealed that teachers perceived 96% of the nonpromoted students' self concept to remain stable or became more positive during the repeated year; they also reported that 84% of the children manifested a positive self concept in the classroom after nonpromotion. Parent questionnaires revealed that over 50% of the parents felt their first graders liked school more; went to school without complaining; were more confident and successful in school and were happier. Over 90% of the parents saw no stigma attached to nonpromotion for their children and felt that nonpromotion affected their children in a positive manner. Most parents favored nonpromotion and said that they would make the same decision again. Finlayson concluded that nonpromotion did not appear to be a practice that negatively influenced self concept.

Ames (1980) concluded that when children were required to repeat a grade because of immaturity, both parents and teachers perceived that the nonpromotion was not accompanied by emotional or social difficulties and in fact, tended to result in improved grades. Ames reported in a recent study that indicated that 65% of first- through third-grade students successfully repeated their grade as judged by teachers and parents. These same teachers also
reported that nonpromotion had met the needs of 75% of the children, had produced no emotional upset in 78%, and caused only temporary upset in 16%. Ninety-five percent of the parents who favored retention reported that their children liked school more and felt more confident and successful than they did the year before.

Leggett (1983) indicated that although some students may benefit from nonpromotion, if the goal of retention was student self improvement, the majority did not benefit particularly if the goal was having the student closely approach county grade norms (as measured on academic achievement tests). Most positive self concept results are reported in studies conducted at the primary grades (Finlayson, 1977; and Goodlad, 1954). Such data support the educational axiom that the negative effects of retention, if any, will be fewer and less serious if the retention occurs in the beginning elementary grades. Morrison and Perry (cited in Rose et al., 1983) found that in the higher elementary grades there is frequent social rejection of older age students.

Farley et al. (1933) explained that failure and repetition of work frequently are associated with social maladjustment and the development of undesirable attitudes toward school. Their study of 192 fifth-graders showed some relationship between grade progress and character
ratings. There is a probability that poor character traits are both a cause and a consequence of retention. A poor attitude toward the school or a lack of industry is frequently responsible for the repetition of a grade. Repetition may result in discouragement and a sense of failure that will breed undesirable attitudes, discourage industry and kill initiative. If grade failure and retardation have an adverse effect on character development, careful consideration must be given to every pupil failure lest character be sacrificed in order to maintain high standards of achievement (Farley et al., 1933).

School Failure

School retention and school failure were often used synonymously. They were at least seen in a causative relationship; students were retained because they failed in their school work. Thus educators labeled students as failures. How this message affected students depended on their existing identity (self concept), whether they saw themselves as successful or unsuccessful. People who felt they were failures had failure identities and behaved as failures. Therefore, Glasser (as cited in National Education Association, 1965) recommended that school professionals effect human involvement as a major part of
the educational process, for without this there would be no education.

Just as all people have a basic need for identity, they also have a basic motive of failure avoidance. The failure one fears is based on a subjective criterion, an internalized standard and therefore academic success by itself does not promote confidence in a student who clings to a low self opinion. This internal assumption comes from the societal belief that a person's worth is graded on a dimension that directly corresponds to the possession of socially valued abilities which manifest themselves as high achievement. This equation, worth equals ability, seemed to be assumed by both teachers and students and thus related implications were accepted almost without question (Beery, 1975; Covington, Spratt & Omelich, 1980).

The question is whether personal failure had beneficial or deleterious consequences on cognitive and affective development. Reinforcement principles repeatedly demonstrate that reward increases and punishment decreases the probability of future student learning (Rose et al., 1983). Ebel (1960), however, proposed that there can be no success without failure because according to principles of negative reinforcement, organisms work in order to avoid negative consequences. He reported that schools which eliminated the threat and stigma associated with failure
also removed an important incentive for work, the avoidance of failure. Current philosophies which purported that children can be taught how to succeed by failing were based on the belief that children who fail buckle down and work hard (National Educational Association, 1965).

The Child Study Association of America (1936) report contradicted Ebel's assumptions. They reported that investigations have shown that "nothing fails like failure," and that the discouragement, loss of self esteem and disgrace at home which result from failure are destructive to effort and seriously threaten the sound personality development of children. Miesel (1982) reported that children's dominant feelings vary in intensity and complexity depending on their age, grade, maturity level and frequency of failure.

Farley (as cited in Goodlad, 1954) reported that children who fail received less satisfaction from their work, tended to become easily discouraged and were frequently antagonistic. Prawat, Byers and Anderson (1983) reported that when failure was attributed to factors within oneself, such as ability or effort, one felt resignation and guilt. When failure was due to external causes affects included anger, hostility and surprise. They also concluded that these effects played an essential role, serving as the key link between thought and action; people
felt how they thought and acted on the basis of those feelings.

Robinson (1936) reported that clinical studies of children who have failed showed that there are undesirable effects upon personality development. There was a loss of self confidence, an undermining of self respect, and a feeling of insecurity and inferiority which interfered with a child's social life. Students who had been retained displayed less interest in their school work because they had done the work before and the thrill of exploring new fields was denied them. Interest was replaced with feelings of resentment against school authority and work habits were effected (Robinson, 1936).

Parent-Child School Relationships

Young children are integrally connected to their families who provide the primary shaping role models in early socialization. Therefore children cannot be cared for or educated without attention to their position as part of a family (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1983).

Quality educational programs recognized the importance of parents in the lives of children (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1983). They capitalized on the relationship between schools and
families to develop human potential. In recent decades home conditions that were conducive to learning and relationships between home and school have deteriorated although existing school/home partnerships programs continued to be effective. Walberg (cited in National Education Association, 1965) reported that the "curriculum of the home" predicted academic learning twice as well as the socio-economic status of families. In NEA Now (National Education Association, 1985) it was reported that the more interest parents showed in their child's education, the better report card grades their children received.

Lightfoot (1981) indicated that there were often contrasts between the primary relationship of parents and children and the secondary relationships of teachers and children. Parents have emotionally charged relationships with their children and treat them as special persons, however, pupils in school are necessarily treated as members of a category.

Sociologists describe clear conceptual distinctions between the structure and processes of life in families and learning in school. However, children, parents and teachers, who daily engaged in negotiations between these two spheres, did not feel that the definitional boundaries were so clearly delineated. Lightfoot (1981) concluded
that much of the anxiety between parents and teachers grows out of such ambiguities. Although parents and teachers often disagree about who has the right to govern a certain area of the child's life, usually teachers are forced to accept the parent's definition. One way of improving the home/school relationships would be to clarify areas of responsibility. Also, by providing effective modes for home/school communication, educators can begin to alleviate distrust and relieve parent's anxiety (Lightfoot, 1981).

Most interactions between parents and teachers arise out of dissatisfaction, frustration or anger on the part of the parent and/or teacher and end in the same way. Rather than search for the origins of conflict or for effective strategies for participation of parents and teachers in a collaborative task, schools develop sophisticated methods of exclusion; parents draw farther and farther away from parental responsibilities in the educational process and children fail. Education, for a majority of children, will be successful only when there is trust, accountability and responsibility shared among families, communities and schools (Lightfoot, 1981).

Extreme distrust and hostility between families and schools cause great anxiety in children and threaten a smooth and constructive transition between these two environments. Themes of possessiveness underlie much of
the friction between parents and teachers. Many parents view their relationship with their child as one of ownership and they attempt to extend the years of parental protectiveness and control. Such feelings of ownership and control are complicated by the fact that middle class and status-seeking parents recognize the need for children's successful and complete separation from them as a prelude to their future achievement in the corporate world. In today's competitive society, where learning is valued as a symbol of prestige and status, parents find it difficult to avoid pressuring their children for high achievement (Lightfoot, 1981).

Conflicts between home and school also resulted from the fact that many parents had inappropriate expectations for their children and therefore found it difficult to accept that their children had limitations. In fact most parents found it more difficult to accept their child's limitations then to accept their own (National Education Association, 1965; Miller, 1983). Parents who had been unsuccessful in school and life themselves may have accepted their children's limitations but in a destructive manner. They exuded the feeling that school and learning were beyond their capabilities, thus discouraging their children from even trying. Such adults saw school as a symbol of all the wrongs they had suffered and their
expressed hostility toward the school was reflected in their children's antagonistic and resistant attitudes toward school, attitudes which blocked learning (National Education Association, 1965). In an attempt to resolve such conflicts, family-school relationships should be triangular and address the experiences and perspectives of parents, teachers and children (Lightfoot, 1981).

Conflict resolution was particularly necessary when nonpromotion became an issue because failure undermines children's feelings of security at home. Children often felt that their parents were disappointed in their failure to gain promotion or that their parents were resentful over the disgrace of their failure. Siblings were likely to tease and/or patronize the nonpromoted child. Parents were justified in objecting to the creation of family problems when they were uninformed about the necessity of failure or its benefit for the child's academic progress and/or their personality development (Robinson, 1936).

**School Communication with Parents**

All parents need regular information regarding their child's development and needs (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1983). Merenda (1979) reported that parents placed a high priority on information about school items that relate directly to their child's
day-to-day school experiences, however, Jackson (1985) reported that parents did not receive adequate information from the school concerning academic and social/emotional behavior. Russo (1977) concluded that a discrepancy existed between the information parents desired and the information that they actually received from the school and that planned, consistent and effective communications seldom existed.

Cassidy (1976), on the other hand, did not find a wide communications gap between parents and teachers. In fact, in his study of home-school communications, he concluded that parents had a fairly good idea of their child's abilities, particularly parents from a high socio-economic status.

Although Cassidy (1976) indicated that research on parent teacher communication was severely limited, Mathis (1966) reported a high degree of interest in the topic when studying factors effecting such communications. Fox (1983), in her study of the effects of parent-teacher communications on reading achievement and attitudes, reported that the communication and subsequent parent involvement resulted in interest, enthusiasm and positive attitudes. The follow-up questionnaire indicated that the parents enjoyed helping their children at home under the guidance of the school and strongly supported the
continuation of the program. This research indicated that positive approaches to parent communication resulted in support for the school programs and improvement in the child's academic achievement.

Neidermeyer (1970), after studying the effects of home-school communications, reported that pupil performance was enhanced through the use of classroom programs that generated positive parent attitudes. Tantum (1957) reported a positive relationship between parental attitudes and acceptance and the way their children regarded themselves (as well as how they are regarded by their peers). This study indicated that an atmosphere of acceptance is so important in the formulation of the child's functioning self that teachers and educators should not only redouble their efforts to provide such an atmosphere in their own relations with children but should also help parents become more cognizant of this need.

Beery (1978) concluded that the school and in particular the school counselor must see that the personal worth of each individual is not contingent on ability (or performance) but rather that each person is valuable in her/his own right. There must be no hierarchy of personal worth. This message and the values that accompany it must go in face of a very strong opposition from within the individual, their parents, the academic system in which
they function and society as a whole. This message was particularly true for the retained student, significant adults in this student's life must cooperate to help her/him to resist internalizing the results of academic outcomes as a basic determinant of her/his self esteem (Beery, 1978).

Servetter (1972) addressed this need through a relatively uncomplicated, inexpensive technique for educators, specifically teachers and parents, to use in helping children experience success and joy in the educational milieu -- a positive message program. The use of positive messages from teachers to parents improved children's positive feelings toward themselves. The positive messages reportedly established a bond and opened lines of communication between parents and teachers. The children's feelings of success and joy in the education milieu appeared directly related to the perceptions of others. Van Sciver (1983) confirmed these findings and concluded that parents appreciated receiving "good" news from schools, even at the high school level.

Eckert (cited in National Education Association, 1965) suggested that parents' fears may be why teachers and parents did not work more closely together. Parental fears included: making a poor impression on the teacher which may in turn have a negative effect on their child;
the teacher becoming angry with them and taking it out on their child; teachers finding out about conflicts at home and blaming the parents for their child's problem; not having what they share with the teacher kept in confidence; hostility toward teachers because of their own unhappy school experiences; being criticized for their child's behavior; being asked to help their child at home, not knowing how to and thus being considered as ignorant; being criticized for things that they feel that they can do nothing about; being caught at their worst by an unscheduled home visit; and feeling that any suggestions offered to the teacher may be taken as a criticism.

One area of school communication that parents feared most was the reporting of student grades. Holliwell (1961) pointed out that very few studies had been concerned with research on parents' interpretations of and reactions to report cards. If parents were to be reasonable and just in reacting to a report card, then they must consider the factors involved with a mark.

Conklin (1970), in studying parents' perceptions of A, B, C, D, and F marks, concluded that the amount and range of variability in parents' perceptions of marks indicated a real need for improved communication regarding the aspects of pupil success which were reported to parents.
In a survey by Austin (1965), parents expressed a desire to have three basic types of information provided for them on their child's report card: how well their child is doing in relation to her/his own abilities; how well she/he compares to the other students in her/his grade level; and how well she/he is progressing toward the accomplishment of major academic and personal goals. In the hands of even the most well-meaning parent the best report card can become a lethal weapon used for bribery, cajolery and to promote competition among children. Unfortunately, parents often withdrew love and reassurance from children whose grades were low, which results in the inevitable by-product of cheating and cramming (Austin, 1965).

Not only do children and parents dread report cards but teachers are just as apprehensive. Teacher are subject to a variety of pressures regarding students' grades. One source of pressure is exerted, either directly or indirectly, by parents. Parents are extremely concerned about loss of face and social prestige in connection with their child's grades. Farwell et al. (1964) cited examples of "apple polishing" (i.e., membership in choice community organizations, dinners, being extremely friendly) used by parents to influence their child's grades or at least to cultivate the teachers innate interest in their child.
Parents may also hold up the accomplishments of other siblings or family members to influence the grades of a current student. Some parents, having ambitious goals for their children (such as admission into prestigious colleges or professions), urge teachers to be lenient in their grading procedures knowing that grades are one of the best predictors of future success.

Despite these findings, Rundberg (1979) reported that although parents considered themselves significantly more influenced by teachers, they also felt that they were equally as influential as teachers. Cates (1979) attempted to investigate this phenomenon by examining the conceptual foundation of teacher-parents communications. He reported that the credibility of the communication was based on the perceptions that the audience had about the source of a message. Favorable perceptions increased the likelihood that a message would be effective at informing and persuading the audience. Therefore if parents have a favorable perception about the teacher and the school, they would be more apt to support the school and its practices (i.e., nonpromotion).

The communication intervention that was found to have the most positive effect upon the improvement of communications with parents was person-to-person verbal conferences when an appropriate blend of one and two way
communication techniques were utilized (Russo, 1977; Rundberg, 1979; Cook, 1975). McCowen and Bryan (1955) investigated parent-teacher conferencing and reported its value as a method of communication: teachers gain a better understanding of the home and family background of the children; much is learned from parents about the child; give-and-take discussions about pertinent problems take place; parents can increase their understanding by asking questions; parents can gain a feeling of common bond with teachers and the school; and parents develop a better understanding of the child.

Robitaille (1959) reported an overwhelming acceptance of conferences as an effective means of communicating between the home and school, however, the conferences he observed included not only the parent and the teacher but the child as well. Richardson (1960) reported that home-school communications were more successful when the children themselves play an active role in the process. It was noted that when combined with a written report, this type of conferencing was superior as a method of reporting pupil progress (McCowan and Bryan, 1955; Saeli, 1974). Effects of the triangular method of conferencing included: reduction in the number of problems which result from poor mental health; helping children free themselves of negative attitudes toward school; and parents reporting that they
felt that they had a better relationship with the school (McCowan and Bryan, 1955).

Nonpromotion Communication Effects on Parents

Fait (1982) reported that teachers and parents were not well informed about retention policies and concluded that school districts needed to establish and disseminate specific written policies on nonpromotion practices. Despite a lack of knowledge about nonpromotion policies both parents and teachers considered retention a necessary educational practice in terms of academic achievement, emotional disabilities, self concept, absenteeism, grade level competency and immaturity (Fait, 1982).

Unfortunately when a child failed to be promoted schools seldom discussed, with the child or parent, the specific reasons for the retention nor why repetition of this grade would be the best solution to the problem. If some reason was sought by the parent the school usually said it was because the child did not do the work. Brown (1981) explained that there were no problem-free methods of dealing with student retention issues. No matter what method was followed some parents were inclined to oppose the idea that their child was experiencing academic difficulty. Such opposition could be alleviated if parents were made fully aware of the child's problem when it was
first recognized by the school. Parents should be informed honestly and specifically if the student is performing at or below grade level. If there was a concern about the student's lack of progress it should be discussed with the pupil personnel team, the teacher, the parent and other specialists as needed. Parents were more inclined to acquire a real sense of concern about their children's performance if they were involved in this process. The major benefit to developing and using a retention plan was that the chance of doing what was of optimum benefit for the child was greatly enhanced; students, parents and school personnel worked together, not against each other (Brown, 1981).

Hagen (1980) implemented a nonpromotion plan which contained several of the most frequently recommended components. Parents were informed at the beginning of the school year that students who were unable to complete grade level work would be considered for nonpromotion. Individual conferences were held with all parents to explain their child's progress. Curriculum needs were addressed for each child who was unable to meet grade level expectations in an attempt to assure instructional fittedness. Regular personal contact was maintained with parents of those students who were failing to do their daily work. Conferences with parents were held to discuss
the students report card grades, standardized tests scores, and teacher observations at the end of the year. Recommendations for retention were made by the teacher and in some cases by the students' parents. Written recommendations were signed by the parents. Hagen stressed that the school should be a location where a student's placement is based on where the student can work and learn best not on where it is most convenient. With this type of attitude established among those responsible for a student's education, many of the negative affects of the retention message could be avoided.

Ames (1980) reported that in most cases children's emotional reaction to being retained depended largely on the way in which parents informed them of the nonpromotion decision. She felt that children needed to be told that the nonpromotion decision was a good thing and that the fault, if any, belongs with the parent or the school. Parents also need to convey the message that nobody was mad or disappointed in the child. At the Gesell Institute it was believed that to avoid overplacement children should start school and subsequently be promoted on the basis of their developmental age rather than their age in years or their IQ. Once parents accepted this concept and supported the idea that their child needed to be emotionally and physically ready before they could succeed in school, any
feelings of failure that they or their child may have had was greatly reduced (Ames, 1980).

Ames (1980) confirmed her findings by citing a limited number of studies which reported successful nonpromotions. In one study, which questioned over 400 parents of children who had been retained, it was reported that 87% of the parents felt that the positive effects definitely outweighed the negative, 90% believed that retention was justified, 89% said that they never regretted their move, and 88% said that they would do it again. Ames believed that, if a child had no special academic or emotional problem and a placement mistake had been made, nonpromotion was a parent's best alternative and if a child must be retained the earlier in her/his school career the better.

Postman and Weingartner (1973) conceptualized the classroom as an ecological system composed of four elements: the learner, the teacher, the curriculum and the instructional strategies, all of which must be in balance for learning to occur. If there was a lack of balance among the elements of the classroom failure, "academic death" occurred. Mour (1977) extended this ecosystem to include parents as an additional element, one which had been consistently neglected in the educational research related to nonpromotion. Even though the success of any
child’s educational program would appear to require considerable understanding of and communication with the parents, Mour reported that little had been done to help school professionals understand the emotional readiness of the parents or their manner of dealing with the academic failure of their child.

To work with children who are failing, school professionals must also work with their parents and must deal with the parents at their own level of emotional readiness. If parents were not ready or willing to accept the reality that their child was failing they also were unable to implement suggestions for remedying the situation. An understanding of parents’ emotional reactions to their nonperforming child could provide an additional dimension for improved communications with and assistance for parents and their children (Mour, 1977).

Mour (1977) suggested that the emotional stages experienced by people with failing bodies are not unlike the emotional stages experienced by parents with failing children. In the Kubler-Ross (1969) model there were five stages of emotional reaction to impending death: denial; anger; bargaining; depression; and acceptance. Once acceptance was achieved, hope was the outcome. The child who was failing in school was not terminally ill in the medical sense, however "death" in the form of academic
failure, social stigma, and future limitations of learning power resulted in terminal damages (Mour, 1977).

Mour (1977) identified at least six emotional cycles which parents of nonperforming children experienced when coping with the problem: denial; recognition; anger; guilt; depression; and acceptance. Although Mour recognized that these stages were not absolute, he felt that all parents of failing children did progress through these stages at some point in time because of the strong psychological connection between parents and their ownership of a failing child (Mour, 1977).

DeRoche (1963) described his own parents denial ("not my son") of his school failure. No parent wishes to think about the heartaches and difficulties encountered in trying to educate a child who consistently fails in academic endeavors. Most parents realize that in a sense society punishes children who deviate from the norm and that they must cope with the embarrassment and ridicule attached to school failure. Rather than face years of disappointment, frustration, and fear which parents perceived in rearing a child who failed to perform academically, passivity and then denial became comforting methods of dealing psychologically with the problem (Mour, 1977).

As parents became painfully aware that their child was not progressing like other children, they were forced to
recognize the existence of a problem. The school, in an attempt to discuss the problem with the parent, was usually unable to provide adequate or absolute causes for the child's failure nor were they able to provide absolute recommendation for resolution of the problem. Because no answer can assuage the parents frustration and perceived helplessness, anger usually resulted (Mour, 1977).

Once anger and/or hostile behavior subsided parents usually experienced guilt. Guilt resulted from parents blaming themselves for their child's imperfections, their possible inability to cope with or understand their child or themselves, or because they may have been hostile toward their child. Guilt was often expressed as "overprotection" of the child or as "scapegoating." These practices allowed parents to blame the school, administration, teacher or even the child for not avoiding the failure experience (Mour, 1977).

As parents moved closer to the acceptance of the problem they often experienced depression. Part of the problem was that parents often did not know how to act in ways that supported the child's special needs, they simply accepted what they perceived to be the futility of the situation. It would seem, however, that careful communication with parents would reassure them that their desire to help is a positive action. Concerned teachers
could help most parents accept the situation and learn to deal with it in productive ways. Acceptance of the situation assisted parents in concentrating on the positive attributes of the child as well as making appropriate adjustments required by the specific needs of the individual child (Mour, 1977).

Mour (1977) made several suggestions for school professionals in relationship to the emotional stages of parents: if parents understand their psychological place in dealing with their child’s school failure, it is quite possible that they will be able to cope better; teachers and counselors need to know where the parents are in dealing with the situation so they can respond appropriately; knowledge of parental feelings in such situations can provide the school professional with an additional dimension from which to view the problem and search for possible options; understanding can help educators demonstrate to these parents that they are interested in helping them and their child (Mour, 1977).

Understanding parents affective reactions to their child’s nonpromotion experience may result in a home/school relationship that truly would be supportive of the parent and the child and the family’s attempt to cope with the academic nonperformance. Bloom (cited in Mour, 1977) suggested that when the home and the school have congruent
learning emphasis, children had little difficulty in their later school learning. Open and honest communication between teachers, school support personnel and parents of nonperforming children was a must. An understanding of parental feelings in dealing with the situation was crucial to the educator who was obliged to work with parents if the instructional program for the child was to be successful. Only through cooperation and communication will the child's potential in learning be enhanced (Mour, 1977).

Kubler-Ross (1972) reported that patients who were allowed hope and informed that they would not be deserted throughout their illness were able to arrive at a peaceful acceptance rapidly. Perhaps educators need to assure parents that they should maintain high, but realistic, hope for their nonperforming child and to assure them that the school will not desert them throughout this experience.

**SUMMARY**

In summary the research indicated that nonpromotion continues to be a widely used educational practice regardless of the verity that it failed to indicate that there were any significant benefits of retention for most students. Nonpromotion in itself has not improve the academic achievement of school children, in most cases, students who were retained make less progress than matched
groups of promoted students. Also, nonpromoted students have been shown to be less socially and personally adjusted, had lower self concepts and were more likely to drop out of school. At best there was no difference between matched pairs of promoted and nonpromoted students in self concept scores.

Attempts to investigate possible reasons why nonpromotion is such as unsuccessful practice were very limited. Parental involvement in the retention process was investigated in this review if research. Too often parents were excluded from participation in their children's education. They were uninformed about the necessity of failure, its benefit for the child's academic progress or her/his personality development. Uninformed parents provided less support for school programs however, parental support for the school and its practices increased when parents had a favorable perception about the teacher and the school. Also, student performance was enhanced through the use of classroom activities that generated positive parent attitudes and positive messages to parents improved children's positive feelings toward themselves.

A child's emotional reaction to being retained depended largely on the way in which parents informed them of the nonpromotion decision. If parents themselves were
not ready or willing to accept the reality that their child was failing they were also unable to implement suggestions for remedying the situation. Acceptance of the situation assisted parents in concentrating on the positive attributes of the child as well as making appropriate adjustments required by the specific needs of the individual child. An understanding of the parents' feelings in dealing with the situation is crucial to the educator who is obliged to work with parents if the instructional program for the child is to be successful. The present research attempted to investigate these feelings.
The present study investigated the following problem statement: What was the affective impact on parents when they were informed of the nonpromotion decision for their child? An interview survey technique was employed to examine the affective reactions of the parents of 90 children who were retained and an equal number of parents of children who had been identified as promoted low achievers in a large central Florida public school system.

Research Design

This study was a survey which used face-to-face interviews. The design for the study was ex-post-facto nonequivalent control group or quasi-experimental (Campbell and Stanley, 1963). The procedures were ex-post-facto quasi experimental because all independent variables were pre-existing and because there was no random assignment or manipulation of the independent variables. It was classified as a nonequivalent control group design because parents of the low achieving (but promoted) students served
as the control group; students were not randomly assigned to the promoted or nonpromoted groups.

Population and Sampling Procedure

Subjects for this study were selected from two populations of parents whose children attend a large central Florida public school system. One population consisted of parents of second-, third-, and fifth-grade students reported, in district school records, as retained in the spring of 1984 or the spring of 1985 (approximately 870 students). The second population consisted of parents of second-, third-, and fifth-grade students reported as low achievers who were promoted in the spring of 1984 and the spring of 1985 (approximately 3,784 students).

The elementary schools, in this public school system, were stratified by the general socio-economic status of the households within the attendance boundaries. The general socio-economic status was determined by the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunches as reported in the school district's records of the federal assistance program. The schools were rank ordered based on the percentage of their students receiving free or reduced-priced lunches. The list was then divided into three equal groups. The third that had the lowest percentage of students receiving free or reduced-priced
lunches were called high socio-economic status, the third that had the highest percentage of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunches were called low socio-economic status and the third in the middle was called the middle socio-economic status group. Five schools were randomly selected from each of the three strata. The stratified random sample was used to obtain a representative sample of parents. It was believed the results of the study were likely to be affected by the socio-economic status of the families.

Within each of the 15 selected schools the nonpromoted and low achieving promoted students were listed on individual sampling frames. Students included in the list of retentions were those students in grades two, three and five who had been retained in the spring of 1984 or the spring of 1985. Students included on the low achieving promoted list were those students in grades two, three or five who scored below the fourth stanine in one or more of the areas of language, reading or mathematics on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) administered during the 1984-1985 school year (School Board Policies, Procedures and Rules, 1978 - Appendix 1). Twelve students were randomly selected from each school; two from each grade level on the sampling frame of retained students and two from each grade level on the sampling frame of low
achieving students compiled for each school. The sampling units were the parents of the 90 randomly selected retained students and the 90 randomly selected low achieving promoted students. In order to maintain a sample of a total of 180, any parent who elected not to participate was replaced by another parent randomly selected from the appropriate sampling frame.

Several of the original sampling units had to be replaced by another parent because many of the addresses provided on the cumulative records were incorrect, either the address did not exist or a family different than the one listed in the records lived at the address. Since the researcher had no way to rectify the address errors another parent was selected from the appropriate sampling frame to replace those parents for whom correct addresses were unavailable.

Sampling units were also replaced when the original parent was not at home when the interviewer arrived. Most interviews were conducted in the afternoons, evenings, and on weekends so any parent who was not at home during those hours was excluded from the sample and replaced by another family. Interviewers were also instructed to replace sampling units if the area or residence in which they were to conduct an interview appeared threatening (i.e., beware of dog signs, locked gates, uncomfortable surroundings).
Several sampling units identified as parents of the low achieving promoted students had experienced a nonpromotion with another children in the family or had experienced a nonpromotion with the identified child but at some other grade during their school career. Since parents could not ignore previous experiences they had with nonpromotion they were encouraged to respond with their most current experiences. This unforeseen limitation caused an adjusted sample of 110 parents who had students retained in grades kindergarten through eight and 70 parents of promoted low achievers.

Obtaining Approval

In order to implement the present study, prior approval was obtained from the school system. The Associate Superintendent for Elementary Education was consulted about the implementation of the study and a letter of support was obtained.

An abstract of the proposal, a copy of the Parent Interview Guide, and a Research Request Form were submitted to the district's Department of Testing and Program Evaluation. At a meeting with the Director of Testing and Program Evaluation instrument revisions and modifications were recommended and discussed.
Revisions of the instrument and modifications in the interview procedures were completed. Approval was granted to conduct this study within the public school system. A letter of support was provided by the county indicating that the study was being conducted by a university associate with the consent of the school system. The University of Central Florida, College of Education, also provided a letter of support indicating that the present study was being conducted under its supervision. Both of the letters were used to reassure principals and parents that the study had credibility and to encourage their participation.

Instrumentation

Instrument Construction

The Parent Interview Guide (Appendix 2) constructed for use in this study, followed the developmental procedures recommended by Sudman and Bradburn (1982) and the Survey Research Center (1978). The guide was submitted to the public school system for evaluation and approval.

Using the problem statement and the study questions a list of general and specific objectives of the survey were generated. From this list the specific data needed to address the problem were specified and used as the basis
for the development of the interview guide (Survey Research Center, 1978).

Once the desired information needed was listed, a search of existing questions and scales related to interviewing parents about educational issues was conducted. A set of questions were drafted and sequenced. After the guide was formatted and coded for later analysis, several educators at the University of Central Florida and at the public school system reviewed the instrument. Revisions were made and the guide was prepared for the pilot test. Instructions were prepared and a pilot test of the guide and the interview procedures was conducted. A convenient sample of 14 parents was interviewed. For the pilot test, the interviewers and parents provided written critiques of the interview process and the guide. The interview procedure and instrument were modified accordingly. The finalized interview guide and instructions were then prepared and duplicated.

Student Records

A computer search scanned the public school system's student cumulative records for all second-, third-, and fifth-grade students in the 15 elementary schools randomly selected for the study. Students who had been retained in the 1983-84 or 1984-85 school years, or who were low
achievers but promoted, were identified. Parents' names, addresses and phone numbers were obtained from the child's basic identification computer data file.

Interviewers

Seven interviewers were trained to conduct the 180 parent interviews. Interviewers were recruited from the University of Central Florida graduate classes and the local public school. To insure that the interviewers were appropriate for this particular study each recruit was screened with a short interview.

The interviewers were given a brief presentation of the study including its procedures and methodology. A packet of relevant materials was distributed and each interviewer was trained in the interview process and the use of the Parent Interview Guide.

Interviews

The original intent of the researcher was to prepare a master schedule for the 180 interviews however, as initial contacts were made with the parents it became apparent that master scheduling would be impossible. The parents were very reluctant to schedule an appointment for an interview on the telephone, thus the researcher elected to make initial contact with parents when the interviewer arrived
at their home to conduct the interview. The study was briefly explained by the interviewer and the parent's participation was solicited. If parents were unable to complete the in-home interview at that time interviewers attempted to reschedule the interview for a more convenient time. Interviewers presented credentials identifying themselves and their relationship to this study in order to reassure parents of the legitimacy of the study.

Follow-up contacts with interviewers were made to determine if the interviews were completed or if additional parents needed to be randomly selected from the appropriate sampling frames to replace sampling units for which interviewers were unable to contact in any way.

Preparation of Data for Analysis

At the completion of the survey all interview guides were screened for completeness and numerical scores were recorded for each response. All precoded information was then transformed to a master code sheet and entered into a computer data file.

For variables based on responses to two or more items on the guide, scores were calculated employing the SPSS\textsuperscript{2} transformation statements. Scores for the following variables were calculated:
1. Evaluation of self (Question 7 -- Parents' feelings about a child's retention; Question 16 -- Who the school blames for a child's retention; Question 17 -- Who a parent blames for a child's retention; and Question 28 -- uneasiness about interview questions).

2. Affective reaction (Question 7 -- Parents' opinion about nonpromotion; Question 13 -- Parents' feelings about a child's retention; Question 14 -- Parents' emotions related to a child's nonpromotion; Question 16 -- Who the school blames for a child's retention; and Question 17 -- Who the parent blames for a child's retention).

3. Parents' perception of the school (Question 7 -- Parents' opinion about nonpromotion; Question 13 -- parents' feelings about a child's retention; Question 16 -- Who the school blames for a child's retention; and Question 17 -- Who the parents blame for a child's retention).

4. Parents' perception of the child (Question 13 -- Parents' feelings about a child's retention; Question 17 -- Who the parents blame for a child's retention; and Question 19 and Question 20 -- How parents feel their child is performing academically since nonpromotion).
5. Parents' perception of the child's emotional status
   (Question 22 -- Parents perception of their child's emotional status in relationship to being retained).

6. Parent involvement in the retention decision
   (Question 9 and 10 -- When and how were parents informed about the retention decision; Question 11 -- Parent involvement in the decision making process and Question 12 -- Alternatives to nonpromotion).

SPSS transformation statements were also used to create three new variables by converting evaluation of self, affective reaction, and parents' perception of the school into a corresponding categorical variable. The decision for transforming the scores into categories was made after the range of potential scores was determined. The range of potential scores for each variable was divided into three groups. The third having the lowest numerical values was called low, the third with the highest numerical values was called high and those in the middle third were called moderate.

Each study question was listed with the survey items employed to determine the appropriate score. From this listing an SPSS computer program was written to list the data file, the variables and their scores and to perform the necessary data analyses.
Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were generated using SPSS® program statements. Frequency distributions including the statistics of mean, standard deviation and skewness were computed for each variable where appropriate. Where appropriate, crosstabulations were generated and chi-square, statistics were calculated. For each parent group a frequency distribution for the variables evaluation of self and affective reaction were generated and the mean and standard deviation were calculated. A matrix of Pearson correlations was generated among parent involvement in the retention decision, parents' perception of the child, parents' perception of their child's emotional status, parents' perception of the school and affective reaction was generated. A multiple regression was computed with affective reaction as the dependent variable and responses to a series of questions as the independent variables. The responses to questions on the following topics served as the independent variables: time of year parents were informed about the retention, whether parent conferences were held in reference to retention, and types of parent involvement in the retention decision.
Ethnographic Analysis

Two main reasons were behind the choice of an ethnographic methodology: the limited data base upon which to formulate hypothesis in relationship to parents' affective reaction to the nonpromotion message; and a desire to seek information specific to the target population.

Data collected during the interviews was hand recorded. Time was allotted immediately after each interview in order to add necessary details to the notes. Interpretation of the data involved an organizational and an analysis phase. The data was first ordered into the three groups represented in the sample. Each group of data was analyzed separately with respect to identifying broad patterns of responses from which generalizations were then formed. The categorical responses of groups were integrated and specific categories and sub-categories of responses were established. Examples of responses were selected to represent the formulated categories.

The second phase involved identifying relationships among patterns of responses found in the established categories and formulating inferences with respect to the questions posed at the onset of the study. Generalizations concerning the participants' perceptions of the nonpromotion of elementary school children were established
and supporting examples were directly selected from the
data provided by them.

An important consideration in achieving validity and
reliability in ethnographic research stems from the fact
that the field-based researcher was using herself as an
instrument for data gathering. Consequently as an
ethnographer, the researcher had to review her biases,
prejudices, likes and dislikes relevant to the group being
studied at the beginning of the study, at several times
during the study and again at the end of the study. Any
findings resulting from this review were reported during
the data analysis.

Reliability and Validity

The internal consistency reliability was determined
for the scores calculated from several variables. A split-
half strategy was used to determine reliability for those
scales created from the answers to four or more questions.
Scale items were randomly assigned to half-scales, scores
were then calculated for each of the half-scales and the
two sets of scores were correlated (Chapter 4). The nature
of the study precluded repeated interviews therefore a
test-retest strategy was not possible.

 Interrater reliability was assessed by looking for
variability in scale scores associated with interviewers
since it was not possible to determine interrater reliability by pairing interviewers to record the same interviews. In order to accomplish this assessment a one-way ANOVA for each of the two key variables (affective reaction scores and self-evaluation scores) was conducted using interviewer as the independent variable (Chapter 4).

To determine the extent to which the items on the survey instrument had content validity a panel of four educational experts reviewed each item and its use in computing scores for the major variables. The panel included public school educators and administrators presently involved with the promotion policies of elementary school students. The panel reported the extent to which they judged the survey instrument and the scoring procedure to be appropriate for the study and for measuring the constructs of the study (Chapter 4).
CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate the affective impact on parents when they were informed of a nonpromotion decision for their child. One hundred eighty in-home interviews were conducted to explore this purpose. Data collected during the 180 interviews and were analyzed to address related constructs: affective reaction to student nonpromotion; parents' self evaluation as a reflection of their child's nonpromotion; perceived blame for student nonpromotion; parents' perception of the school, their child, their child's emotional status, and parent's reported interaction with their child; school strategies for informing parents about nonpromotion decisions; and parental involvement in nonpromotion decisions.

All 180 parents interviewed had children attending the school system in which the study was conducted. The final sample was composed of 110 parents (61%) whose children had been retained, 37 parents (21%) who responded about a
retained student from another family; a friend or relative's experiences with nonpromotion and 33 parents (18%) who responded as they felt most parents would react to a nonpromotion decision for their child.

There was no apparent reason to believe that the parents whose children attended this large central Florida public school system were any different from the national group of parents whose children attend public school. However, in order to explore the possibility that a difference may exist three questions were borrowed from the Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public School published in the Phi Delta Kappan (Gallup, 1986). When asked to grade the public schools with either A, B, C, D or FAIL, 57% of the sample interviewed rated the local schools as either A or B. Nationally 55% of parents whose children attend public schools rated local schools with an A or B as reported in the 18th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools (Gallup, 1986). Ratings given to local public schools by three different groups: the American public in general; a national sample of parents whose children attend public schools; the present study's sample of parents whose children attend public schools are displayed on Table 1.

Respondents were also asked to rate teachers and administrators on the A-F scale. These ratings again
TABLE 1

QUESTION: STUDENTS ARE OFTEN GIVEN THE GRADES A, B, C, D, AND FAIL TO DENOTE THE QUALITY OF THEIR WORK. SUPPOSE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS THEMSELVES, IN THIS COMMUNITY, WERE GRADED IN THE SAME WAY. WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS HERE -- A, B, C, D, OR FAIL?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S. Public %#</th>
<th>Public School Parents Nationally %#</th>
<th>Public School Parents Study Sample %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A + B</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Statistics provided by the 18th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitude Toward the Public Schools (Gallup, 1986)
corresponded with the national data. Sixty-four percent of the local parents rated teachers A or B and 66% rated administrators as A or B. Nationally 60% of the public school parents rated teachers in local schools with an A or B and 63% of the nation’s public school parents rated principals as A or B. A summary of the overall percentages is displayed on Table 2.

As shown on Table 2, the ratings given by the parents in the study tend to be slightly higher than those given nationally by public school parents and more closely resemble those provided by the national sample of public school parents responding specifically for the school that their oldest child attends. Although the question was not worded as such, verbal comments made during the interviews, such as; "I only know about the schools that my children attend," indicated that many parents surveyed locally were indeed responding with ratings for the schools that their children were presently attending rather than for the district’s schools in general.

Sample

The original intent of the sampling process was to interview 90 parents of children identified as having been retained in the second-, third-, or fifth-grade during the
### TABLE 2

**HOW PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IS RATED -- A + B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Public</th>
<th>Public School Parents Nationally</th>
<th>Public School Parents Study Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%#</td>
<td>%#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Public Schools**

- **Locally (all school in community)**: 41% U.S., 55% parents nationally, 57% study sample
- **That oldest child attends**: 65% study sample

**Public School Teachers**

- **In Local Schools**: 48% U.S., 60% parents nationally, 64% study sample
- **In school oldest child attends**: 65% study sample

**Public School Principals And Administrators**

- **In Local Schools**: 42% U.S., 56% parents nationally, 66% study sample
- **In school oldest child attends**: 63% study sample

# Statistics provided by the 18th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools (Gallup, 1986)
1983-84 or the 1984-85 school years and 90 parents of children who had been identified as low achievers. However, unforeseen limitations (chapters 1 and 3) caused an adjusted sample of 110 parents (61%) who had students retained and 70 parents (39%) of promoted low achievers. Responses given by four parents were omitted during some analyses because the retentions on which they reported occurred at kindergarten, seventh or eighth grade. The omitted responses were treated as missing data. The responses from 176 parent interviews were compiled and analyzed to investigate parental reactions to nonpromotion in the elementary school.

Twenty-five or approximately 13.9% of the interviews were with male parents; 146 or approximately 81.1% were with female parents; and 9 or approximately 5.0% of the interviews were conducted with both male and female parents. Sixty or approximately 33.3% of the respondents were black; 99 or approximately 55.0% were white; 16 or approximately 8.9% were Hispanic; 4 or approximately 2.2% were Asian and 1 or approximately .4% was American Indian. As reported by respondents, 46 or approximately 25.6% of the households were headed by a female only; 5 or approximately 2.8% were headed by a male only; 120 or approximately 66.7% were headed by both a mother and a
father and 9 or approximately 5.0% were headed by other adults.

The socio-economic status of the respondents was determined by their 1985 total family income as reported during the interview. The survey included 12 categories from which the respondents could choose (Appendix 2). In order to investigate if this study's sample was representative of the county population, the socio-economic status of the sample was compared to the socio-economic status of this central Florida county. To facilitate this investigation the 12 categories were collapsed into 6 (Under $5,000 and $5,000 - $9,999 were collapsed, $10,000 - $14,999 and $15,000 - $19,999 were collapsed, $20,000 - $24,999 and $25,000 - $29,999 were collapsed and $50,000 - $59,999, $60,000 - $69,999, $70,000 - $79,999 and $80,000 and over were collapsed). Eight families chose not to respond to the income question. Their failures to respond were treated as missing data. Table 3 summarizes the socio-economic status for the 172 families responding to this question and for the county's general population. County statistics were taken from data collected during the 1980 census, as reported by Florida Applied Demographics (1983).

This comparison indicated that the study's sample was a fairly accurate representation of the county except
TABLE 3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS:
TOTAL FAMILY INCOME AS REPORTED BY PARENTS DURING INTERVIEWS AND FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly Income</th>
<th>Study Sample</th>
<th>County##</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>(%)#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 +</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000 - 49,999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000 - 39,999</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 - 29,999</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 - 19,999</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Valid percentage, adjusted for missing data
## Statistics provided by the 1980 census (Florida Applied Demographics, 1983)
perhaps at the lower socio-economic status of under $9,999. Any discrepancy between the sample's and the county's socio-economic levels may have resulted from the fact that the county statistics included all persons within an economic group not just families that have children in the public schools.

**Analysis Of Study Questions**

**STUDY QUESTION 1:** To what extent did parents initially receive the retention message as an evaluation of themselves?

Self-evaluation scores were generated to determine the extent to which parents received the retention message as an evaluation of themselves. The self-evaluation scores were found by combining the responses to 10 questions on the Parent Interview Guide (Questions 13 A, C, D, F, & I, 14 E & F, 16 E, 17 E, 28 C - Appendix 2). The 10 responses included the extent to which parents' had a variety of feelings as a result of their child's retention (e.g., The school thinks I'm a bad parent, Why does this have to happen to me?, What have I done wrong?), parents' feelings of embarassment and guilt as a result of their child's nonpromotion, extent to which the parent felt that the school blames them for their child's nonpromotion and the extent to which the parents felt they are to blame for
their child's nonpromotion, and the extent of uneasiness that parents felt answering questions about their child's retention or promotion. The self-evaluation score (SEVAL) had a potential range of 0 to 38.

For the most part the SEVAL scores for the total sample were low (mean = 11.4, S.D. = 10.4). There was little evidence to indicate that parents perceived the retention as an evaluation of themselves as reflected in the low scores. However, when the sample waspartitioned into three groups the scores indicated a large difference in the response patterns. Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics of the self-evaluation scores for Group 1 - Parents of retained children; Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family; Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general, and for the total sample.

There was a substantial difference between the means of the SEVAL responses reported by Group 1 (mean = 7.6) and those reported by Groups 2 (mean = 16.4) and 3 (mean = 18.6). The effect size is the ratio of the difference between two means to the standard deviation. Since the difference between the mean of Group 1 and the means of the other two groups were 8.8 and 11.0 respectively and the common standard deviation was 10.4 the two effect sizes were near 1.0. Because these can be considered as large
TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF SELF EVALUATION SCORES FOR EACH PARENT GROUP
AND FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1#</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children
Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family
Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
effect sizes a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of SEVAL scores by parent groups was computed to determine if the group mean differences were statistically significant (Table 5). The resulting F ratio indicated at least one of the differences between the means of SEVAL scores was statistically significant (p < .01).

To further analyze the differences between the three means of SEVAL scores, orthogonal contrasts were computed for the three group means (Table 6). Orthogonal contrasts are a set of comparisons between group means that are mathematically independent and require no adjustment for Type I error rate (Keppel, 1973). There was no statistically significant difference between the mean of Group 2 and the mean of Group 3. The difference between the mean of Group 1 and an average of the means for Group 2 and 3 was statistically significant at the .01 level.

There are two interpretations for these findings. One explanation is that the responses of the parents in groups 2 and 3 were more realistic than those of parents in Group 1. If group 1 parents were somewhat threatened by the interview items, they would have tended to provide the socially acceptable answers (Sudman & Bradburn, 1982). Such an interpretation supports the idea that, in general, parents receive the retention message as a negative evaluation of themselves. A second explanation is that
### TABLE 5

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF SELF EVALUATION SCORES BY THREE PARENT GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M.S.</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups #</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2130.9</td>
<td>25.2**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01**

### TABLE 6

**ORTHOGONAL CONTRASTS BETWEEN SELF EVALUATION SCORES OF THREE PARENT GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrast</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>t Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrast 1 - Group 2 vs. Group 3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>&lt;.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast 2 - Group 1 vs. Groups 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
parents do not receive the retention message as a negative message about themselves. That is, although others may believe that parents perceive their child’s lack of success as a personal attack (Farwell, Nelson & Thompson, 1964; Mour, 1977) the perception is wrong.

In order to facilitate further investigation of parents’ self-evaluation scores, the scores were recoded into three categories - low level of self evaluation (scores 0 to 5), moderate level of self evaluation (scores 6 to 15) and high level of self evaluation (scores 16 to 38). The recoded parent evaluation scores for Group 1 (parents of retained children) and Group 2 (parents responding about their observations of another family) were crosstabulated with the grade at which the student was retained and Chi Square statistics were generated for both groups. These analyses provided no evidence to indicate a significant relationship between the grade level at which a student was retained and parents’ self evaluation. The grade level at which a student was retained was unrelated to parents’ self evaluation scores regardless of whether the parents had experienced the nonpromotion of their own child (Table 7) or whether they had responded about another family’s experiences with retention (Table 8).
TABLE 7

CROSSTABULATION OF GRADE AT WHICH A STUDENT WAS RETAINED BY LEVEL OF PARENT SELF EVALUATION SCORES (GROUP 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Parent Self Evaluation</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(48)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,5,6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(66)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Column Total | 55 | 31 | 18 | 104# (100) |

\[ X^2_{(6)} = 6.59, \quad p < .36 \]

# 6 parent responses dealt with grades K, 7 or 8 and were excluded.
TABLE 8

CROSSTABULATION OF GRADE AT WHICH A STUDENT WAS RETAINED BY LEVEL OF PARENT SELF EVALUATION SCORES (GROUP 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Parent Self Evaluation</th>
<th>Low (N (%))</th>
<th>Moderate (N (%))</th>
<th>High (N (%))</th>
<th>Row Total (N (%))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (27)</td>
<td>3 (27)</td>
<td>5 (46)</td>
<td>11 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 (64)</td>
<td>4 (36)</td>
<td>11 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (25)</td>
<td>3 (75)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,5,6</td>
<td>1 (11)</td>
<td>3 (33)</td>
<td>5 (56)</td>
<td>9 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35# (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2_{(6)} = 7.46, \quad p < .28 \]

# 2 parent responses dealt with grades K, 7 or 8 and were excluded.
STUDY QUESTIONS 2 and 3:

2. What was the level of the parents' affective reaction to the decision to retain their child?

3. How did the affective reaction to retention differ among three parent groups: parents whose children were actually retained; parents who reported their perception of another family's experiences with retention and parents who reported with their perceptions of the general public's experiences with nonpromotion?

Affective reaction scores (ART) were generated to determine the parents' affective reaction to the retention decision. The affective reaction scores were found by combining the responses to 30 questions on the Parent Interview Guide (Questions 7, 13 A-N, 14 A-F, 16 A-E, 17 A,B,C, & E in Appendix). The 30 responses included parents' feelings about nonpromotion in general, the extent to which parents had a variety of feelings as a result of their child's retention (e.g., The school thinks I'm a bad parent, The school is doing what is best for my child, Now my child will be able to catch up, It's a bad school, The school won't listen to me, The teacher doesn't like my child. It's my child's fault.), parents' feelings of anger, fear, disappointment, sadness, embarrassment and guilt as a result of their child's nonpromotion, on whom or what the parents think the school blames and on whom or
that the parents blame for the child's nonpromotion (the school programs, the principal, the teacher, the parents or the child). The affective reaction scores had a potential range of 13 to 116 with the lower scores meaning more positive affective reaction and higher scores meaning more negative reaction. Table 9 shows that the ART scores for the total sample were slightly more positive than negative (mean = 56.2, standard deviation = 23.8). This evidence indicated that the level of parents' affective reaction to the nonpromotion decision was fairly neutral. However when the sample was separated into the three parent groups the scores indicated a large difference in the response patterns. Table 9 provides the descriptive statistics for affective reaction scores for Group 1 - Parents of retained children; Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family; Group 3 Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general, and for the total sample.

There was a substantial difference between the means of ART responses reported by Group 1 (mean = 49.9) and those reported by Groups 2 (mean = 66.1) and 3 (mean = 66.0). Since the effect size (the ratio of the difference between two means to the standard deviation) as near .67, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of ART scores by groups was computed to determine if the group mean
# TABLE 9

**COMPARISON OF AFFECTIVE REACTION SCORES FOR EACH PARENT GROUP AND FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1#</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
differences were statistically significant (Table 10). The resulting F ratio indicated that at least one of the differences between the means of ART scores was statistically significant.

To further analyze the difference between the ART scores, orthogonal contrasts were computed for the three group means (Table 11). There was no statistically significant difference between the mean of Group 2 and the mean of Group 3. The difference between the mean of Group 1 and an average of the means of Group 2 and Group 3 was statistically significant at the .01 level.

Again there were two possible interpretations for these findings. One explanation was that the responses by parents in Group 2 and 3 were more realistic than those in group 1. If Group 1 parents felt threatened by the interview they would have tended to provide the more socially acceptable answers (Sudman & Bradburn, 1982). This explanation supports the idea that, in general, parents affective reaction to their child’s nonpromotion is moderately negative.

The second interpretation was that parents who have actually experienced a retention are more positive about the experience than parents who have not had first hand experiences with nonpromotion. That is, the system has
TABLE 10

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF AFFECTIVE REACTION SCORES BY THREE PARENT GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M.S.</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups#</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5582.8</td>
<td>11.0 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>509.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

TABLE 11

ORTHOGONAL CONTRASTS BETWEEN AFFECTIVE REACTION SCORES OF THREE PARENT GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrast</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>t Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Group 2 vs. Group 3</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>&lt;.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Group 1 vs. Groups 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
explained the nonpromotion alternative to parents in such a way that those parents feel or rationalize that the best educational choice was made for their child and therefore feel moderately positive about the retention decision; whereas a friend, a relative and the general public views retention as a negative experience.

STUDY QUESTION 4: How did the child's grade level relate to the parents' affective reaction to their child's retention?

In order to facilitate further investigation of parents' affective reaction scores, the scores were recoded into three categories - positive (scores 0 to 38), neutral (scores 39 to 74) and negative (scores 75 to 116). The recoded affective reaction scores for Group 1 (parents of retained children) and Group 2 (parents responding about their observations of another family) were crosstabulated with the grade at which the student was retained and Chi Square statistics were generated for both groups. These analyses provided no evidence to indicate a significant relationship between the grade level at which a student was retained and parent affective reaction scores. The grade level at which a student was retained appeared to be unrelated to parents' affective reaction scores regardless
of whether the parents had experienced a nonpromotion of their own child (Table 12) or whether they had responded about another family's experiences with retention (Table 13).

STUDY QUESTION 5: Was the level of the parents' affective reaction related to their perception of the school, their child, their child's emotional status and the interaction between themselves and their child?

Parents' perception of the school scores (PPSCH), Parents' perception of their child scores (PPCH), Parents' perception of their child's emotional status scores (PPCHE) and parents' perception of their interaction with their child as a result of the retention scores (PC) were generated to examine the relationship between these variables and parents' affective reaction scores (ART).

Parents' perception of the school scores were found by combining the responses to 16 questions on the Parent Interview Guide (questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 B, J, L, M & N, 16 D & E, 17 A-C - Appendix 2). The 16 responses included the grade parents would give the public school, its teachers and administrators, messages parents expected to receive from the school, the frequency with which parents felt the school really cares and really
TABLE 12

CROSSTABULATION OF GRADE AT WHICH A STUDENT WAS RETAINED BY LEVEL OF PARENT AFFECTIVE REACTION SCORES (GROUP 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Parent Affective Reaction</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>16 (48)</td>
<td>15 (46)</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>9 (36)</td>
<td>10 (40)</td>
<td>6 (24)</td>
<td>25 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>6 (24)</td>
<td>15 (60)</td>
<td>4 (16)</td>
<td>25 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>7 (33)</td>
<td>10 (48)</td>
<td>4 (19)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>104#(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2_{(6)} = 6.81, \quad p < .3 \]

# 6 parent responses dealt with grades K, 7 or 8 and were excluded
TABLE 13

CROSSTABULATION OF GRADE AT WHICH A STUDENT WAS RETAINED BY LEVEL OF PARENT AFFECTIVE REACTION SCORES (GROUP 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Parent Affective Reaction</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>4 (36)</td>
<td>3 (27)</td>
<td>4 (36)</td>
<td>11 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>1 (10)</td>
<td>5 (45)</td>
<td>5 (45)</td>
<td>11 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>1 (25)</td>
<td>3 (75)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5, 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 (67)</td>
<td>3 (33)</td>
<td>9 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35# (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2(6) = 8.50, \quad p < .20 \]

# 2 parent responses dealt with grades K, 7 or 8 and were excluded
doesn't care about their child, the extent to which parents had a variety of feelings as a result of their child's retention (e.g., It's a bad school, They won't listen to me, It's the school fault, they don't know how to teach), on whom or what parents think the school blames and on whom or what the parents blame for the child's nonpromotion.

For parent perception of the school scores a lower scores indicated a more positive perception of the school and a higher score indicated a more negative perception of the school.

Parents' perception of their child scores were found by combining the responses to six questions on the guide (Questions 13 G, H, & O, 17 D, 19, 20 - Appendix 2). The six responses included the extent to which parents had a variety of feelings as a result of their child's retention (e.g., Now my child will be able to catch up, It's my child's fault), the extent to which parents blame their child for her/his retention and how parents thought their child performed academically immediately following and a year following the nonpromotion. For parents' perception of their child scores a lower score indicated a more negative perception and a higher score indicated a more positive perception of the child.

Parents' perception of their child's emotional status scores were found by combining the responses to four
questions on the Interview Guide (Question 22 A-D - Appendix 2). These four responses included parents perception of their child's immediate emotions as a result of her/his retention. For parents' perception of their child's emotional status a lower score indicated a more negative perception and a higher score indicated a more positive perception of the child's emotional status.

Parents' perception of their interaction with their child as a result of the nonpromotion scores were found by parents' response to Question 21 on the Parent Interview Guide (Appendix 2). Question 21 asked parents to describe the interaction between themselves and their child. For parents' perception of their interaction with their child as a result of the nonpromotion scores a lower score indicated a more negative perception and a higher score indicated a more positive perception of the interaction.

In order to examine the relationship between the scores for PPSCH, PPCH, PPCHE and PC and affective reaction scores Pearson Product Moment Correlations were calculated. Table 14 presents the correlation for the total sample (n = 180) and for each parent group. Correlation coefficients revealed a high positive relationship (r = .81, p < .01) between affective reaction scores and PPSCH. Parents with a more positive perception of the school had a more positive affective reaction to the retention decision. A
TABLE 14

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFFECTIVE REACTION SCORES (ART) AND PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE SCHOOL (PPSCH), PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR CHILD (PPCH), PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR CHILD’S EMOTIONAL STATUS (PPCHE) AND PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR INTERACTION WITH THEIR CHILD AS A RESULT OF THE NONPROMOTION DECISION (PC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample: r =</th>
<th>Group 1: r =</th>
<th>Group 2: r =</th>
<th>Group 3: r =</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 180</td>
<td>n = 110</td>
<td>n = 37</td>
<td>n = 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PPSCH</td>
<td>PPCH</td>
<td>PPCHE</td>
<td>PC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>.81**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01  * p < .05
moderately negative relationship was revealed between affective reaction scores and both PPCH ($r = -.29, p < .01$) and PPCHE ($r = -.33, p < .01$). Parents with more positive perceptions of their child and their child's emotional status had more negative affective reactions. This analysis provided no evidence to indicate a significant relationship between affective reaction scores and parents' perception of their interaction with their child as a result of the nonpromotion.

The correlation coefficients for Group 1 ($n = 110$), parents of retained children, were very similar to those revealed for the entire sample. A high positive relationship ($r = .84, p < .01$) between ART and PPSCH; a moderately negative relationship between ART and both PPCH ($r = -.31, p < .01$) and PPCHE ($r = -.31, p < .01$) and no significant relationship between ART and PC.

Coefficients for Group 2 ($n = 37$), parents responding about observations of another family were also very similar to those for Group 1 and the total sample. A high positive relationship between ART and PPSCH ($r = .82, p < .01$); a moderately negative relationship between ART and both PPCH ($r = -.42, p < .05$) and PPCHE ($r = -.34, p < .05$) and no significant relationship between ART and PC.

Coefficients for Group 3 ($n = 33$), parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general, were only
statistically significant for the high positive relationship between ART and PPSCH \((r = .82, p < .01)\).

These findings support the idea that in school systems where positive approaches to parent communication are encouraged parents are more likely to support school programs (Fox, 1983). That is, parents who had positive feelings about their child's school were more inclined to believe that the school would do what was best for their child. It also reinforces the idea that parents who were very supportive of their child found it difficult to accept their child's lack of success or that they were cognizant of their child's needs and realized that retention would not be what was best for their child.

One hundred twenty nine or approximately 71.7% of all parents interviewed reported that the interaction between themselves and their child did not change as a result of the nonpromotion. Seventeen or approximately 9.5% reported that their interaction with their child was worse or much worse as a result of the retention and 34 or 28.8% felt the interaction was better or much better as a result of the retention. However in all cases the parents' perception of their interaction with their child as a result of the retention scores appeared to be unrelated to parents' affective reaction scores.
STUDY QUESTION 6: How did the school’s strategy for informing parents of their child’s actual or potential retention affect the parents’ affective response to the retention decision?

One hundred sixty or approximately 88.9% of the total sample were first informed of the possibility that their child would be retained during the second half of the school year (February to May). Twenty or approximately 11.1% of the total sample was first informed about the child’s nonpromotion during the first half of the year (August to January).

Eighty-eight or 49% of the total sample were informed about a child's retention during a parent conference and 92 or 51% were not. Seventy eight or approximately 43.3% were informed by a letter, 8 or approximately 4.4% were informed by a phone call, 1 or approximately .6% were told by their child (who was told by the teacher) and 3 or approximately 1.7% were informed in some other manner.

In order to facilitate further investigation of parents' affective reaction scores, the scores were recoded into three categories -- positive (scores 0 to 38), neutral (scores 39 to 74) and negative (scores 75 to 116). The recoded affective reaction scores for the total sample and for each of the three parent groups were crosstabulated with the time of year and how parents were first informed.
of the possibility that their child would be retained. Chi-square statistics were generated for all groups.

These analyses provided little evidence to indicate a significant relationship between the school's strategies for informing parents of their child's actual or potential retention and the parents' affective response to the retention decision (Table 15). The time of year in which the parent was informed about their child's nonpromotion appeared to be unrelated to parents' affective reaction scores regardless of whether the parent had experienced a nonpromotion of their own child, were responding for a friend or relative or whether they were responding in general (Table 16, 17 & 18).

STUDY QUESTION 7: Was the extent of parent involvement in the retention decision related to the parents' affective reaction to their child's nonpromotion?

Parents' involvement in the retention decision scores (PINVD) were found by combining responses to 8 questions on the Parent Interview Guide (questions 9, 10, 11 A - E, 12 - Appendix 2). The eight responses included the time of year parents were first informed of the possibility that their child would be retained, how parents were initially informed that their child would be retained, and how parents participated in the nonpromotion decision-making
TABLE 15

CROSSTABULATION OF TIME OF YEAR IN WHICH PARENTS WERE INFORMED ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION AND THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGY FOR INFORMING PARENTS OF THEIR CHILD'S RETENTION BY THE LEVEL OF PARENTS' AFFECTIVE REACTION (TOTAL SAMPLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Informed at Conference</th>
<th>Time of Year Informed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>22(42)</td>
<td>31(58)</td>
<td>53(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>41(48)</td>
<td>44(52)</td>
<td>85(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>25(60)</td>
<td>17(40)</td>
<td>42(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                |      |      |       |        |        |       |
| Column Total   | 88   | 92   | 180(100) | 160   | 20   | 180(100) |

Conference - $\chi^2(2) = 3.07$, $p < .22$

Time - $\chi^2(2) = 2.67$, $p < .26$
TABLE 16

CROSSTABULATION OF TIME OF YEAR IN WHICH PARENTS WERE INFORMED ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION AND THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGY FOR INFORMING PARENTS OF THEIR CHILD'S RETENTION BY THE LEVEL OF PARENTS' AFFECTIVE REACTION (GROUP 1)

Group 1 Parents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informed at Conference</th>
<th>Time of Year Informed</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>to Jan.</td>
<td>to May</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTG</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>18(43)</td>
<td>24(57)</td>
<td>42(100)</td>
<td>36(86)</td>
<td>6(14)</td>
<td>42(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>25(49)</td>
<td>26(51)</td>
<td>51(100)</td>
<td>46(90)</td>
<td>5(10)</td>
<td>51(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>9(53)</td>
<td>8(47)</td>
<td>17(100)</td>
<td>16(94)</td>
<td>1(6)</td>
<td>17(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column Total</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>110(100)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>110(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conference \( - X^2_{(2)} = .61, \ p < .73 \)

Time \( - X^2_{(2)} = 1.00, \ p < .61 \)
TABLE 17

CROSSTABULATION OF TIME OF YEAR IN WHICH PARENTS WERE INFORMED ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION AND THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGY FOR INFORMING PARENTS OF THEIR CHILD'S RETENTION BY THE LEVEL OF PARENTS' AFFECTIVE REACTION (GROUP 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Informed at Conference</th>
<th>Time of Year Informed</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>No (%)</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Aug. to Jan. (%)</td>
<td>Feb. to May (%)</td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>2(33)</td>
<td>4(67)</td>
<td>6(100)</td>
<td>5(83)</td>
<td>1(17)</td>
<td>6(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10(53)</td>
<td>9(47)</td>
<td>19(100)</td>
<td>17(90)</td>
<td>2(10)</td>
<td>19(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>8(67)</td>
<td>4(33)</td>
<td>12(100)</td>
<td>12(100)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37(100)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conference - $X^2_{(2)} = 1.82, \ p < .40$

Time - $X^2_{(2)} = 1.80, \ p < .41$
TABLE 18

CROSSTABULATION OF TIME OF YEAR IN WHICH PARENTS WERE INFORMED ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION AND THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGY FOR INFORMING PARENTS OF THEIR CHILD'S RETENTION BY THE LEVEL OF PARENTS' AFFECTIVE REACTION (GROUP 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (N)</td>
<td>No (N)</td>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>Yes (N)</td>
<td>No (N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>2(40)</td>
<td>3(60)</td>
<td>5(100)</td>
<td>3(60)</td>
<td>2(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6(40)</td>
<td>9(60)</td>
<td>15(100)</td>
<td>15(100)</td>
<td>15(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>8(62)</td>
<td>5(38)</td>
<td>13(100)</td>
<td>10(77)</td>
<td>3(23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Column Total      | 16 | 17 | 13(100) | 28 | 5 | 33(100) |

Conference - \( X^2_{(2)} = 1.46, \quad p < .48 \)

Time - \( X^2_{(2)} = 5.72, \quad p < .06 \)
process (e.g., did parents go to more than one conference, were parents given the opportunity to express an opinion about whether their child should or should not repeat a grade, were parents given the opportunity to make the final decision about their child’s nonpromotion). In order to examine the relationship between the PINVD scores and affective reaction scores a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated. Table 19 represents this relationship for the total sample (n = 180) and each parent group. The correlation coefficients revealed a moderately negative relationship (r = -.23, p < .01) between ART scores and parent involvement in the retention decision scores. Since these two scores were scaled in the opposite direction, parents who perceived themselves to have lower levels of involvement in the retention decision, had more negative affective reactions to the nonpromotion.

The correlation coefficients for Group 1 (n = 110), parents of retained children, were very similar to those for the total sample. A moderately negative relationship (r = -.28, p < .01) between ART and PINVD scores. Correlation coefficients for Group 2 (n = 37), parents answering for a friend or relative, indicated that there was also a low negative relationship (r = -.31, p < .05) between the ART and PINVD scores. Coefficients for Group 3
## TABLE 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Between Affective Reaction Scores (ART) and Parents' Involvement in the Retention Decision Scores (PINVD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sample: (r = )</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1: (r = )</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2: (r = )</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 3: (r = )</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01      * p < .05
(n = 33), parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general, indicated that there was no significant relationship found between ART and PINVD scores (r = -.15, p < .20) for parents answering in general.

These findings provided limited support for the idea that parents need to perceive that they are included in the nonpromotion decision if they are expected to support the decision to retain their child.

STUDY QUESTION 8: How did the affective responses to a child's retention differ between parents who were themselves retained in school and parents who were themselves never retained in school?

In order to facilitate further investigation of parents' affective reaction scores, the scores were recoded into three categories -- positive (scores 0 to 38), neutral (scores 39 to 74) and negative (scores 75 to 116). The recoded affective reaction scores for Group 1, parents of retained children and Group 2, parents responding about their observations of another family, were crosstabulated with the number of parents who had themselves been retained in elementary school and with the number of parents who had not been retained while they were in elementary school. Most of the interviews were conducted with just one parent so the question, "Were you, yourself, ever required to
repeat a grade during elementary school?" was asked about the respondent first and then the respondent was asked to answer for their spouse (if they were from a two-parent family and if the spouse was not present during the interview). For this reason the data for parent and spouse were analyzed separately, and crosstabulations and chi square statistics were generated for both groups. These analyses provided no evidence to indicate a significant relationship between these two variables. The fact that a child's parent had been retained while they attended elementary school appeared to be unrelated to parents' affective reaction scores (Table 20 and Table 21).

STUDY QUESTION 9: On whom did parents place the blame of their child's nonpromotion?

Frequency distributions were generated for each blame variable. Table 22 summarizes the information that indicates on whom or what the parents placed the blame for their child's nonpromotion.

One hundred twenty-six parents or approximately 70% blamed their child for her/his retention to some extent. Ninety-nine or approximately 55% blamed their child moderately to very high. Eighty-seven parents or approximately 49% blamed the teacher for their child's
### TABLE 20

CROSSTABULATION OF PARENTS' AFFECTIVE REACTIONS SCORES BY PARENTS' OWN RETENTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Parents' Affective Reaction</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Row</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained Parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10 (26)</td>
<td>20 (51)</td>
<td>9 (23)</td>
<td>39 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42 (31)</td>
<td>60 (45)</td>
<td>32 (24)</td>
<td>134 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>173# (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2_{(2)} = 0.61, \quad p < 0.74 \]

# 7 respondents did not know if the parent had been retained while in school
TABLE 21

CROSSTABULATIONS OF PARENTS' AFFECTIVE REACTIONS SCORES BY SPOUSE'S RETENTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Parents' Affective Reaction</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained Parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 (31)</td>
<td>15 (58)</td>
<td>3 (11)</td>
<td>26 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27 (25)</td>
<td>46 (44)</td>
<td>33 (31)</td>
<td>106 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>132# (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2(2) = 4.08, \quad p < .13 \]

# 48 respondents did not know if their spouse had repeated a grade while in elementary school or they were single parent families.
### TABLE 22

ON WHOM PARENTS PLACE THE BLAME FOR THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>v. high</th>
<th>high</th>
<th>mod.</th>
<th>low</th>
<th>v. low</th>
<th>none</th>
<th>row total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Blames:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Prog.</td>
<td>15 (8)</td>
<td>20 (11)</td>
<td>27 (15)</td>
<td>6 (3)</td>
<td>8 (5)</td>
<td>104 (58)</td>
<td>180 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>7 (4)</td>
<td>8 (4)</td>
<td>13 (7)</td>
<td>8 (4)</td>
<td>7 (4)</td>
<td>137 (76)</td>
<td>180 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach.</td>
<td>27 (15)</td>
<td>21 (12)</td>
<td>28 (16)</td>
<td>6 (3)</td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
<td>93 (52)</td>
<td>180 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their Child</td>
<td>12 (7)</td>
<td>31 (17)</td>
<td>56 (31)</td>
<td>15 (8)</td>
<td>12 (7)</td>
<td>54 (30)</td>
<td>180 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themselves</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>16 (9)</td>
<td>27 (15)</td>
<td>11 (6)</td>
<td>18 (10)</td>
<td>107 (59)</td>
<td>180 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Column Total   | 62     | 96    | 151   | 46   | 50     | 495    | 900       |
retention. Seventy-six or approximately 43% blamed the teacher moderately to very high. Seventy-six or approximately 42% blamed the school programs for their child’s nonpromotion and 62 or approximately 34% blamed the school programs moderately to very high. Seventy-three or approximately 41% blamed themselves for their child’s nonpromotion. Forty-four or approximately 25% blamed themselves to a moderate or very high extent. Only 43 or approximately 23% of the parents blamed the principal for their child’s nonpromotion and only 28 or approximately 15% blamed the principal moderately to very high.

In order to facilitate further investigation of parental blame the scores were recoded into four categories -- high (collapses very high and high); moderate; low (collapses very low and low); and not at all. The recoded parental blame scores were crosstabulated with the three parent groups (Group 1 -- Parents of retained children; Group 2 -- Parents responding about their observations of another family; Group 3 -- Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general) and chi square statistics were generated.

The analysis for the extent to which the three parent groups blamed the school programs for their child’s retention provided evidence that indicated a significant relationship ($X^2(6) = 27.30$, $p < .01$). Parents of a
retained child tended to blame the school programs less than parents who answered for another family or those who answered in general (Table 23).

There was also a significant relationship between the three parent groups and the extent to which parents blamed the principal for their child's nonpromotion ($X^2_{(6)} = 12.70$, $p < .05$). Group 1 parents tended to blame the principal less than either Group 2 or Group 3 parents (Table 24). Parents who had actually experienced a child's retention did not see the principal nor the school programs as having had a major influence on the decision to retain their child. Either the principal did not take an active role in the decision making process or she/he did not accept responsibility for the final decision. Likewise the school programs may not have been discussed in relationship to the retention decision nor seen as something that could have been adapted to increase the child's successful experiences in school.

Tables 25 and 26 display that there was no evidence of a significant relationship between the three parent groups and the extent to which parents blamed the teacher or the child for the nonpromotion ($X^2_{(6)} = 10.17$, $p < .12$), ($X^2_{(6)} = 8.60$, $p < .20$). All three parent groups tended to blame the teacher and their child more than they blamed the school program, the principal or themselves.
TABLE 23

EXTENT TO WHICH EACH PARENT GROUP BLAMED THE SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent Group#

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>17 (16)</td>
<td>13 (35)</td>
<td>5 (15)</td>
<td>110 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 (8)</td>
<td>7 (19)</td>
<td>11 (33)</td>
<td>37 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (6)</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
<td>5 (15)</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77 (70)</td>
<td>15 (41)</td>
<td>12 (37)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Column Totals 35 27 14 104 180 (100)

\[ \chi^2(6) = 27.30, \ p < .01 \]

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
**TABLE 24**

**EXTENT TO WHICH EACH PARENT GROUP BLAMED THE PRINCIPAL FOR THEIR CHILD’S NONPROMOTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Group#</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 (7)</td>
<td>7 (6)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>91 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 (11)</td>
<td>4 (11)</td>
<td>4 (11)</td>
<td>25 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 (9)</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>7 (21)</td>
<td>21 (64)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Column Totals | 15 | 13 | 15 | 137 | 180 (100) |

\[ X^2_{(6)} = 12.70, \ p < .05 \]

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
TABLE 25

EXTENT TO WHICH EACH PARENT GROUP BLAMED THE TEACHER FOR THEIR CHILD’S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Group#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28 (26)</td>
<td>11 (10)</td>
<td>6 (5)</td>
<td>65 (59)</td>
<td>110 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12 (32)</td>
<td>8 (22)</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
<td>15 (41)</td>
<td>37 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 (24)</td>
<td>9 (27)</td>
<td>3 (9)</td>
<td>13 (40)</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>180 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2_{(6)} = 10.17, \quad p < .12 \]

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
### TABLE 26

**EXTENT TO WHICH EACH PARENT GROUP BLAMED THEIR CHILD FOR HER/HIS NONPROMOTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>High (N)</th>
<th>Moderate (N)</th>
<th>Low (N)</th>
<th>None (N)</th>
<th>Row Total (%N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Group#</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27 (24)</td>
<td>37 (34)</td>
<td>10 (9)</td>
<td>36 (33)</td>
<td>110 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 (24)</td>
<td>11 (30)</td>
<td>9 (24)</td>
<td>8 (22)</td>
<td>37 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7 (21)</td>
<td>8 (24)</td>
<td>8 (24)</td>
<td>10 (31)</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Column Totals</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$$X^2_{(6)} = 8.60, \ p < .20$$

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

# Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

# Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
The analysis for the extent to which the three parent groups blamed themselves their child's retention provided evidence to indicate a significant relationship \(X^2(6) = 22.34, p < .01\). Parents of a retained child tended to blame themselves less than parents who answered for another family or those who answered in general (Table 27).

STUDY QUESTION 10: How did family socio-economic status relate to the parents' affective reaction to school retention, their evaluation of themselves, whom they blame for their child's retention and their involvement in the retention decision?

In order to facilitate further investigation, socio-economic status (determined by total family income reported during the interview) was recoded into five categories and parents' affective reaction scores were recoded into three categories -- positive (scores 0 to 38), neutral (scores 39 to 74) and negative scores (75 to 116). The recoded socio-economic status categories were crosstabulated with the affective reaction scores and chi square statistics were generated. These analyses indicated that parents' affective reaction scores were unrelated to their families' socio-economic status (Table 28).

To investigate the relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and parents evaluation of themselves the
TABLE 27

EXTENT TO WHICH EACH PARENT GROUP BLAMED THEMSELVES FOR THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>High (N)</th>
<th>Moderate (N)</th>
<th>Low (N)</th>
<th>None (N)</th>
<th>Row Total (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Group #</td>
<td>(% )</td>
<td>(% )</td>
<td>(% )</td>
<td>(% )</td>
<td>(% )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>12 (11)</td>
<td>16 (15)</td>
<td>78 (70)</td>
<td>110 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 (16)</td>
<td>8 (21)</td>
<td>5 (14)</td>
<td>18 (49)</td>
<td>37 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7 (21)</td>
<td>7 (21)</td>
<td>8 (25)</td>
<td>11 (33)</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>180 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[X^2(6) = 22.34, \ p < .01\]

# Group 1 - Parents of retained children

Group 2 - Parents responding about their observations of another family

Group 3 - Parents responding about their perceptions of parents in general
TABLE 28

PARENTS’ AFFECTIVE REACTION SCORES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,000-69,999</td>
<td>5 (24)</td>
<td>9 (43)</td>
<td>7 (33)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000-39,999</td>
<td>11 (25)</td>
<td>24 (53)</td>
<td>10 (22)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-24,999</td>
<td>12 (30)</td>
<td>21 (53)</td>
<td>7 (17)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>10 (30)</td>
<td>11 (32)</td>
<td>13 (38)</td>
<td>34 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>13 (41)</td>
<td>16 (50)</td>
<td>3 (9)</td>
<td>32 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Column Totals: 51 81 40 172#

\[ X^2_{(8)} = 11.72, \quad p < .16 \]

# 8 parents did not respond to the income question
recoded socio-economic status categories were
crosstabulated with the three levels of parent's self
evaluation scores (low -- scores 0 to 5; moderate -- scores
6 to 15; high -- scores 16 to 38) and Chi Square statistics
were generated. These analysis indicated that parents'
self-evaluation scores were unrelated to their families
socio-economic status (Table 29).

The five categories of socio-economic status were also
crosstabulated with the extent to which parents blamed the
school programs, the principal, the teacher, their child
and themselves for their child's nonpromotion. Chi square
statistics were generated for each crosstabulation. To
facilitate this investigation the parental blame scores
were recoded into four categories: high, moderate, low and
not at all.

The analysis for socio-economic status by the extent
to which parents blamed the school programs for their
child's retention provided evidence that indicated a
significant relationship ($X^2_{12} = 22.03, p < .04$). Parents
from a higher socio-economic status tended to blame the
school programs to a higher extent than those parents with
a lower reported socio-economic status (Table 30).

The analysis for socio-economic status by the extent
to which parents blamed the principal for their child's
Table 29
PARENTS' SELF EVALUATION SCORES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,000-69,999</td>
<td>7 (33)</td>
<td>4 (19)</td>
<td>10 (48)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000-39,999</td>
<td>14 (31)</td>
<td>19 (42)</td>
<td>12 (27)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-24,999</td>
<td>16 (40)</td>
<td>13 (32)</td>
<td>11 (28)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>13 (38)</td>
<td>9 (27)</td>
<td>12 (35)</td>
<td>34 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>14 (44)</td>
<td>10 (31)</td>
<td>8 (25)</td>
<td>32 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>172# (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2_{(8)} = 6.79, \quad p < .56 \]

# 8 parents did not respond to the income question
TABLE 30

CROSSTABULATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS BLAMED THE SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-69,999</td>
<td>5 (23)</td>
<td>6 (29)</td>
<td>4 (19)</td>
<td>6 (29)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>10 (22)</td>
<td>5 (11)</td>
<td>5 (11)</td>
<td>25 (56)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>6 (15)</td>
<td>7 (17)</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
<td>25 (63)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>9 (26)</td>
<td>5 (15)</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>18 (53)</td>
<td>34 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>5 (16)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>26 (81)</td>
<td>32 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Column Totals</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>172# (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2_{(12)} = 22.03, \ p < .04 \]

# 8 parents did not respond to the income question
nonpromotion provided evidence that indicated a significant relationship \(X^2_{(12)} = 22.12, p < .04\). Parents from a higher socio-economic status tended to blame the principal to a higher extent than parents reported to have a lower socio-economic status (Table 31).

The analysis for socio-economic status by the extent to which parents blamed the teacher for their child's nonpromotion provided no evidence to indicate a significant relationship \(X^2_{(12)} = 8.50, p < .75\) between these two variables. Parents reported socio-economic status appeared to be unrelated to the extent to which they blamed the teacher for their child's retention (Table 32).

To investigate the relationship between socio-economic status and the extent to which parents blamed the child for her/his retention the blame scores were recoded into four categories: not at all and very low were collapsed to form very low; low; high and moderate were collapsed to form high; very high. These four categories were crosstabulated with the recorded socio-economic status scores. This analysis provided evidence that indicated a significant relationship \(X^2_{(12)} = 28.10, p < .01\). Parents with a reported yearly income of $25,000 to $39,999 tended to blame their child to a greater extent than parent in the other socio-economic levels. Parents with a reported yearly income of $10,000 to $14,999 tended to blame their
TABLE 31
CROSSTABULATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS BLAMED THE PRINCIPAL FOR THEIR CHILD'S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High (%)</td>
<td>Moderate (%)</td>
<td>Low (%)</td>
<td>Not At All (%)</td>
<td>Row Totals (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Incomes</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-69,999</td>
<td>2 (10)</td>
<td>5 (24)</td>
<td>3 (14)</td>
<td>11 (52)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>39 (87)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>3 (8)</td>
<td>3 (8)</td>
<td>6 (15)</td>
<td>28 (70)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>5 (15)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>26 (76)</td>
<td>34 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>28 (88)</td>
<td>32 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Column Totals | 15 | 12 | 13 | 132 | 172# (100) |

\[ X^2_{(12)} = 22.12, \ p < .04 \]

# 8 parents did not respond to the income question
TABLE 32
CROSSTABULATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS BLAMED THE TEACHER FOR THEIR CHILD’S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of blame</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N ( %)</td>
<td>N ( %)</td>
<td>N ( %)</td>
<td>N ( %)</td>
<td>N ( %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5 (24)</td>
<td>4 (19)</td>
<td>2 (9)</td>
<td>10 (48)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10 (22)</td>
<td>6 (13)</td>
<td>4 (9)</td>
<td>25 (56)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>11 (28)</td>
<td>7 (17)</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
<td>19 (48)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>11 (32)</td>
<td>7 (21)</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>14 (41)</td>
<td>34 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row totals</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
<td>34 (100)</td>
<td>172# (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Column total: 44 27 11 90 172#

\[ X^2_{(12)} = 8.50, \quad p < .75 \]

# 8 parents did not respond to the income question
child to a lesser extent than the other parents (Table 33).

The analysis for socio-economic status by the extent to which parents blamed themselves for their child’s nonpromotion provided no evidence to indicate a significant relationship \(X^2_{(12)} = 14.30, \ p < .28\). Parents reported socio-economic status appeared to be unrelated to the extent to which they blamed themselves for their child’s nonpromotion (Table 34).

In order to examine the relationship between socio-economic status and parents’ perception of their involvement in the retention decision the recoded socio-economic status categories were crosstabulated with the parents involvement (PINVD) scores (Study Question 7) and Chi Square statistics were generated. To facilitate this investigation the PINVD scores were recoded into seven levels (the lowest scores of 0 and 1 were collapsed into 1 and the highest scores of 7 and 8 were collapsed into 7). This analysis provided evidence that indicated a significant relationship between parental involvement in the retention decision and the parents’ reported socio-economic status \(X^2_{(24)} = 36.34, \ p < .05\). The nature of relationship is complex. Parents in the lowest socio-economic status (incomes under $9,999) perceived the lowest levels of involvement while parents in the next two
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>V. High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>V. Low</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,000-69,999</td>
<td>5 (23)</td>
<td>4 (19)</td>
<td>6 (29)</td>
<td>6 (29)</td>
<td>21 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>22 (49)</td>
<td>9 (20)</td>
<td>9 (20)</td>
<td>5 (11)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>10 (25)</td>
<td>5 (13)</td>
<td>19 (47)</td>
<td>6 (15)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>6 (18)</td>
<td>3 (9)</td>
<td>13 (38)</td>
<td>12 (35)</td>
<td>34 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>10 (31)</td>
<td>4 (12)</td>
<td>5 (16)</td>
<td>13 (41)</td>
<td>32 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Column Totals  53  25  52  42  172# (100)

\[ X^2_{(12)} = 28.10, \ p < .01 \]

# 8 parents did not respond to the income question
### TABLE 34
CROSSTABULATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS BLAMED THE THEMSELVES FOR THEIR CHILD’S NONPROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Blame</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Not At All</td>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-69,999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2_{(12)} = 14.30, \quad p < .28 \]

*# 8 parents did not respond to the income question*
categories (incomes from $10,000 - $24,999) perceived the highest level of involvement. The two highest income levels ($25,000 - $69,999) reported a level of involvement approximately mid-way between the other two groups. Except for the lowest income group, the parents from each of the categories most frequently reported a moderate level of involvement (Table 35).

**Ethnographic Analysis**

The use of a face-to-face interview provided the opportunity for participant observation and conversations which provided an effective supplementary technique for evaluation. It provided a means for gathering data not readily obtained by the interview questions themselves and in addition it provided a context for interpreting some otherwise ambiguous findings (Dobbert, 1982). The open-ended informant response method provided a more intensive understanding of the nonpromotion message's affective impact on parents than would have been uncovered by using just the survey analysis. The parents in the study provided key insights into the nature of the affective impacts of nonpromotion messages on parents and into the concerns and worries of the parents whose children attend public school. This type of information adds heightened
TABLE 35

CROSSTABULATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS BY PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE RETENTION DECISION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Perceived Involvement</th>
<th>High 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Moderate 4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Low 7</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-69,999</td>
<td>2(10)</td>
<td>1(4)</td>
<td>9(43)</td>
<td>3(14)</td>
<td>2(10)</td>
<td>4(19)</td>
<td>21(100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000-39,999</td>
<td>2(5)</td>
<td>6(13)</td>
<td>11(24)</td>
<td>10(22)</td>
<td>4(9)</td>
<td>5(11)</td>
<td>7(16)</td>
<td>45(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-24,999</td>
<td>6(15)</td>
<td>5(13)</td>
<td>9(22)</td>
<td>6(15)</td>
<td>5(13)</td>
<td>5(13)</td>
<td>4(10)</td>
<td>40(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>4(12)</td>
<td>6(18)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8(23)</td>
<td>7(20)</td>
<td>3(9)</td>
<td>6(18)</td>
<td>34(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>1(3)</td>
<td>1(3)</td>
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| Column Total                    | 15    | 19 | 34 | 32  | 19 | 23 | 30    | 172#(100) |

\[ X^2_{(24)} = 36.34, \quad p < .05 \]

# 8 parents did not respond to the income question
awareness of the responsibilities that the public school has toward parents.

A modified ethnoscientific approach was employed to develop an ethnograph in an attempt to obtain humanistic data -- nonpromotion from an insiders (parents) point of view and to reveal some general facts about the social, cultural organization being observed. The parents' responses were studied to identify common feelings and issues related to student nonpromotion.

The ultimate goal was to present the parents' experiences with nonpromotion as it appeared to the parents themselves and to explore the ethnographic material for its implications to program planning, curriculum changes and policy development. The major aim of this ethnographic research was to produce a picture of parents feelings about nonpromotion of students that was not biased by judgments based upon the value system of the researcher. It was recognized, however, that the researcher was using herself as an instrument for data gathering and could influence the interpretation of the results.

Because ethnoscientists attempt to make a distinction between the perspective of the persons outside the culture and the perspective of the persons inside the culture (Dobbert, 1982), field notes were carefully recorded during the parent interviews. Unsolicited comments, made by
parents during the interview were kept in writing in order to present the culture as it appeared to the participants and to examine how nonpromotion was experienced from the perspective of those inside the culture.

The field notes were compiled and analyzed. Key words which indicated categories of responses, including parents feelings, were recorded. The search for patterns and their meanings was then the central operation of the ethnographic research process. A pattern was inferred from observation of behaviors and conservations; it was inferred from recurrences. There was a great deal of overlap among the responses recorded for the three parent groups (parents of retained children, parents responding for another family, and parents responding in general). Similar comments describing experiences with nonpromotion were found in all groups.

The parent sample interviewed were predominantly women (81%). When men were contacted for the interview, in most cases, they would refer to their spouse to address the survey questions which related directly to their child's nonpromotion. School affairs were definitely seen as a responsibility of the matriarch.

For the purpose of this study the nonpromotion messages' affective impact on parents was defined as scores derived from responses reported during the parent interview
which reflected the parents emotional responses to their child's nonpromotion. Affective reactions referred to those reactions pertaining to or resulting from emotions or feelings rather than from thoughts (Morris, 1976). The patterns derived from the interview data related to the nature of the affective impact of the nonpromotion message on parents and the concerns of parents whose children attend public school. Parental comments recorded during the interviews revealed the following:

1. Parents expressed empathy for the retained child's negative feelings.
2. Parents who had been retained during their own elementary school career showed discomfort from a life-long negative impact of nonpromotion.
3. Parents defended nonpromotion as a necessary educational practice.
4. Parents often expressed reluctance and compliance as an immediate response to retention.
5. Parents indicated a concern for the welfare of the child and recognized the importance of a good education.
6. Parents expressed a desire to do what's best in relationship to the retention decision.
7. Parents revealed a lack of understanding of nonpromotion policies.
8. School personnel justified the necessity of student retention.

9. Parents conveyed a belief that the school knows what is best for a child's education.

10. Parents indicated a need to rationalize the nonpromotion decision.

11. Parents revealed a dissatisfaction with the results of the nonpromotion.

12. Parents expressed a great deal of concern for the schools that their children attend.

Two important generalizations were drawn from patterns established with respect to the participants perception of nonpromotion. First, the affective impacts of nonpromotion were complexly interrelated. While the affective impacts identified by participants were distinguishable as categories, they involved interrelated factors. For example, a parent who had a bad experience herself as a nonpromoted student agreed with the school that her child was having problems with reading but she did not think retention was the answer. She knew the child was having difficulty with reading and wanted to help but realized the child was almost an year older than most of the other children. It was difficult to determine a clear hierarchy of affective impacts due to the likely presence of three or more impacts in the nonpromotion situation.
Second, affective impacts were created by the situation as screened through the value orientation of the parents. Most impacts involved both situational and value-related factors. A parent who believed a good education was very important for her child but did not think that the school was doing what was best for her child, moved her child to three different schools until she found one that would work with her son as she felt that they should.

The 12 patterns established and these two generalizations formed a working definition of affective impact: A complexity of feelings in reaction to a specific situation which are influenced by the parents' value-orientation.

All parents were able to empathize with their retained child's or the nonpromoted student's feelings and described the negative feelings they felt the child may have experienced ("I was sad for my child," "I was embarrassed for my child," "He was angry and embarrassed at first," "Child was really upset at first, he's still angry but now he has a little better attitude toward school," "My daughter was very disappointed at my decision to retain her," "No child feels good about himself if he is left back," "Child was negative toward himself at first, but he adjusted to it," "He was confused, why was he in the same grade again").
Some parents displayed discomfort when asked to record their own personal experiences with retention, when they themselves were retained in elementary school. Looking nervously at their children, changing the tone of their voice or whispering responses and comments such as "I remember when I was retained" and "Get out of here so I can talk to this lady" indicated that being retained in elementary school leaves a life-long (negative) impression on students.

Even though parents expressed negative feelings that they felt their children experienced, all three groups of parents defended the use of nonpromotion as a "necessary" practice for students unable to do the grade level work ("She wasn't ready," "We agreed to hold our children back, we felt they needed it," "He didn't know the stuff, he couldn't do the work," "She was too young," "He was too immature to go on," "She was having problems with reading and spelling," "The teacher said he could go on, but the missed skills would harm him later on," "The school said if he proceeded he would have difficulty so they suggested he be left back," "He had low CTBS scores," "We understood the need for retention, he was a premature baby and the doctor said he would be delayed").

When parents were first informed about their child's possible retention they often expressed reluctance ("We
didn't want to accept our child's retention," "At first, I didn't think the school was doing what was best for her, until the school explained it," "We felt guilty at first," "I was hurt," "I was frustrated and I was mad," "The information was sudden and shocking, the school just called and told me about the retention and not what he had done," "We were apprehensive") and sometimes compliance ("It's not what I want but it's what is best for her," "I saw it coming," "Sometimes I felt like a number, like in an institution," "The schools don't care").

Repeatedly parents displayed caring for their children and a desire for their children to do well in school. This supports the importance that American parents place on their children and on education. Parents frequently expressed their concern for their child's welfare in all areas of development ("We just want our child to be normal or average, happy and content," "We made the decision, the school said if he proceeded he would have difficulty, so the school suggested that he be left back," "Retention is okay if it is needed for the welfare of the child"). At the same time parents stressed their desire for their child to do well in school; knowing that a good education is necessary for a successful future ("We feared that he wouldn't catch up," "I don't care if he is 90, he will
finish high school," "I am concerned about the school preparing my son for the future [as a jet pilot]").

Because parents sincerely care about their children and their children's education it was important for them to do what was best for their child in relationship to nonpromotion ("I requested the retention because my child was small and socially immature," "I requested the retention because my child had low CTBS scores," "My child was retained for medical reasons, I agreed right away," "It's what is best for my child, she wasn't ready").

At the same time many parents indicated a lack of understanding as to why their child was being retained. Conflicting statements and complaints also indicated that there was a lack of nonpromotion policy in this school district, nonpromotion policies were not consistently implemented in the schools or the parents were not made aware of the nonpromotion policies ("We just wanted to know why," "My child had okay grades but was still retained," "My child got Cs on his report card and he was recommended for retention. This made my child and I hate the school," "My child did well in math but poorly in reading, I felt he should go on and just be tutored (during the school day not after school) in reading," "I was angry because the teacher did not teach my child, she should have taught her like the others," "Even when parents are given an alternative to
retention they retain the child anyway," "Most teachers pass children when they shouldn’t," "The teacher should have known what to do earlier in the year," "I would have helped if I knew about the problem and what to do to help," "The teacher told me my daughter was being retained because she had a poor teacher," "I didn’t think that he was behind").

However, after attending conferences and listening to school personnel discuss the need for the child to be retained, parents were intimidated and agreed to the nonpromotion, even though the majority of responses related to why the child repeated were contradictory to what an overwhelming majority of the research reveals about the affects of nonpromotion ("My child was having problems with reading and spelling," "My child was hyperactive," "My child didn’t learn anything in kindergarten so when we moved to a new school she had to be retained," "The school blamed the new reading program," "The textbooks and curriculum are too complex for elementary children," "My child wasn’t ready, not mature enough," "He was a slow learner," "I retained my child because of reading," "My child didn’t know the right stuff, he couldn’t do the work."

Parents basically believed that the school knew what was best for their child’s education (i.e., "We agreed with
the school's decision, we felt the school would do what's best for her," "The school said if our child proceeded he would have difficulty so they suggested he be left back, so we made the decision to retain him," "The school said this [retention] is what is best, so I did it," "The school did all they could for our daughter, she just would not do what she was told") and that a quality education is important, so they made what they are lead to believe was the best decision for their child's future. The use of parental contact did seem to have a positive influence on the parents acceptance and support of the nonpromotion.

Every parent hoped that their child would improve academically as a result of the retention and even though every student identified in this study was either a low achiever or had been retained, the parents frequently expressed satisfaction with the decision to retain their child ("My child is doing fine now," "My child needed more time and he did catch up, now he has a B average," "My child's grades were unchanged but his interest in school was higher," "My child caught up with his peers," "My child did catch up," "My child was too young," "My child's attitude improved in response to the retention," "Retention was very beneficial for my child, she thought retention could never happen to her, now that it has, her attitude
has greatly improved and she has continued to do well ever since").

Some parents did not feel the need to rationalize the decision and expressed dissatisfaction with their child’s progress as a result of the nonpromotion (“My child did better but even after the retention he is still a slow learner and not on grade level,” “We were mad about the retention,” “We blamed everyone for the retention and still do,” “The teacher should have known what to do earlier in the year,” “He is still not doing well in school,” “He had more behavior problems the year following the retention,” “Retention breaks the child’s morale, it kills alot of his ambition, some children just quit,” “My child needs not to be retained, that is bad emotionally, but he does need extra help next year,” “I felt retention was no benefit for my child, he’s a C student and always will be,” “My child’s math grade dropped from an A to a B,” “My daughter had worse grade the second year in fifth grade but she was passed on anyway,” “My child did better in some areas only,” “My child was retained two times and still has problems,” “She felt she can’t learn so why should she try, she is also bigger than all the other children”).

Regardless of the parent’s involvement with retention or their feelings about it, all parents displayed a genuine concern for the school their children attended. Some
parents enjoyed the opportunity to discuss their child's school in a nonthreatening atmosphere ("I felt uncomfortable at school, unless your child's an A student or you're very rich the principal nor the teachers are interested in you," "Elementary schools care about the children, seventh grade on up the students are just a number," "We tried for a year to have a conference, when we did the people who needed to be there couldn't be found, our child wasn't retested," "I was angry because the teacher did not teach my child, she should have taught her like the others," "We were not given the opportunity to decide for ourselves whether the child should or shouldn't be retained and we did not like it," "Parents think that they are excluded from involvement in the retention decision but the teachers don't, the teachers think the parents are involved," "It's the school's fault, after 12 years somebody should have said something," "I'm glad to have the opportunity to talk about my child's school," "The teacher expected too much from my son and faulted him for everything. Also, the teacher didn't believe him. He was told to report to the teacher about things happening to him and then when he did try to report to the teacher she would say, 'go sit down'. The principal told the teacher that my son's problems were from his home not from school. The teacher had the nerve to tell me that I didn't care about
my child," "We felt like a student at the conference, the teacher treated us like children. The teacher said 'Your son is disrupting me so I can't teach what I have to, what can I do?' I [mom] wanted to say 'I can't get him to bed, what can I do?'," "It's not the school that won't listen, it's the teachers, they won't listen to the parents. We felt that our son was having problems (and being considered for retention) because he had three bad teachers in a row, whereas our daughter had a great kindergarten teacher and is being tested for the gifted program," "We felt the teachers should be more honest with parents and much more humanistic"). Others took advantage of an independent third party to voice concerns and often complaints about the school system in general ("Principals don't know or practice sound educational practices, they appease parents rather than discuss educational practices," "Florida is the worse state for school transportation," "The school gives tons of homework," "It's not a bad school, it's bad teachers," "Parents get mad with teachers because they have no contact with them," "The people in the schools are good, the system is bad," "The schools must do something about the lice problem," "The schools don't make children work hard or be disciplined or study; students should do more homework," "Schools want to do what is right for children; but they don't," "It's the teachers fault", "teachers make
the difference," "Parents never deal with the principal, I feel they should have more contact," "Students shouldn’t have a B in math if they don’t know their number facts," "The classes are too large," "The teachers hands are tied by the school board," "The schools are trying to do too much, they should teach the basics first"). Some parents just wanted to praise the system for a job well done ("The schools are real good, the teachers are excellent, and the principals are very good," "You won’t catch me saying anything bad about the schools," "I’m in favor of the schools coming out to talk to parents because I can’t come in, I don’t know much about reading or writing but I’m not stupid," "I know it sounds like I’m going on about the principal but he is wonderful," "The teachers will listen and they will call parents," "The schools were very open to parents suggestions," "We were pleased with the school, they contacted us frequently about our child’s progress," "Public schools care more about children than private schools do"). No parent thought that the school system should be closed down and only two mentioned moving their children to private schools. Whether the comments were negative or positive all parents were really just concerned about the school system being the best it can be so that their child would receive the best possible education.
In conclusion it should be emphasized that this analysis was based on an emic view of several persons who happened to be chosen to represent an American subculture. This emic view might not be representative of all parents or of any specific group of parents but it does reflect the social and cultural interrelation between these parents and the whole cultural pattern of an American society. It permits an analyst to make some beginning hypotheses about the wider society.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

To investigate the internal consistency reliability of the scales a split-half analysis was completed. The items in a scale were randomly assigned to half-scales. A score was calculated for each half-scale and then the two sets of scores were correlated. Using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy or adjusted formula, reliability estimates were calculated for each scale.

The split-half internal consistency reliability estimate was .92 for the affective reaction scale, .87 for the parents' self evaluation scale, and .90 for the parents' perception of the school scale. These reliability estimates suggested a high amount of internal consistency. A split-half internal consistency reliability estimate of .43 was attained for parents' perception of their
involvement in the retention decision scale. This lower estimate of reliability was due to two factors; there was a very small number of items (eight) included in this scale and there was little variability in parent involvement scores. Scales with a small number of items and little variability most always result in low reliability.

In addition to looking at the internal consistency reliability of the scales it is important, when using interviewing data, to assess interrater reliability. Because it was not possible to pair interviewers to record the same interviews to determine interrater reliability, an effort was made to investigate reliability by looking for variability in scale scores associated with the interviewers. Reliability is defined in terms of the proportion of the total variability that is explained by factors other than error. In interrater reliability the error is introduced by rater bias. Thus interrater reliability can be defined as the proportion of the total variability associated with factors other than interviewers. In order to accomplish this assessment a one-way ANOVA for each of the two dependent variables (affective reaction scores and self-evaluation scores) was conducted using interviewer as the independent variable.

If a high proportion of total variance in scale scores is associated with interviewers, low interrater reliability
is indicated. On the other hand, if a small proportion of the total variance of the scale scores is associated with interviewer, a high interrater reliability is indicated.

The procedure described by Keppel (1973) was used to complete a variance component analyses. Component analysis involves a calculation of the proportion of the total variance in the dependent measure that is accounted for by the independent variable. For affective reaction the F ratio was less than 1.0. The estimate of the proportion of the total variance in affective reaction scores associated with the difference between interviewers was less than 1%. These results indicated a consistancy across the interviewers and suggested high interrater reliability.

The analysis of parents' self evaluation scores resulted in an F-ratio of approximately 4.22. The estimate of the proportion of total variance accounted for by the interviewers was near 10%. The results suggested that interviewers may have differentially effected parents' responses. However the effect was small. The F-ratio for the ANOVA was statistically significant. Ninety percent of the total variability was associated with factors other than interviewers. The interrater reliability for parents' self evaluation approached .90.

To investigate the content validity of the survey instrument, four educational experts were asked to evaluate
the degree to which each item related to the scale construct. Raters were instructed to use a scale from 0 (not at all) to 5 (very high). Sixty-six percent of the items were rated either a 3, 4 or 5 (moderate, high or very high). Thirty-five percent of the items were rated with 4 or 5. Thirty-five percent of the items were given at least one rating of 0, 1 or 2 (not at all, very low, or low) but no item had a majority of such ratings. These rating indicated an acceptable level of content validity.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary Description of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate parents' affective reactions to nonpromotion. One hundred eighty in-home interviews were conducted with parents of children who had been retained or who were low achievers in elementary school. The intent was to look closely at parents' reactions to their child's nonpromotion to provide information relevant to the promotion process. It was intended to identify whether parents more often have a negative affective reaction to their child's nonpromotion and whether their reactions were related to their involvement in the retention decision, their perception of the school, and their perception of their child. It was also intended to determine on whom the parents placed the blame for their child's nonpromotion.

A secondary purpose of the study to provide insight into the nature of the affective impact of the nonpromotion message on parents and into the concerns of the parents whose children attend public school. Field notes were
recorded during the 180 interviews to explore this purpose. It was anticipated by the researcher that parents would provide valuable information relevant to the nonpromotion of elementary school students. It was desired that specific response patterns would emerge as the data were compiled and analyzed such that generalizations could be drawn with respect to the participants' perception of nonpromotion.

The study was conducted with parents of students attending a large public school district located in central Florida. All elementary schools within the district were stratified by socio-economic status. Five school were randomly selected from each socio-economic level (high, middle, low). Within the 15 selected schools the nonpromoted and low achieving promoted students were listed on individual sampling frames. Twelve students were randomly selected from each school (six nonpromoted students and six low achieving but promoted students). The sampling units were the parents of the 90 randomly selected retained students and the 90 randomly selected low achieving promoted students. The parents were interviewed in their homes by persons trained to complete the interview guide (Appendix 2) which had been prepared by the researcher.

Responses related to public schools in general were investigated to determine if the sample was representative
of a larger population. Comparisons made to public school parents nationally as reported in the annual Gallup Poll (tables 1 and 2) indicated that this sample was not uniquely different from the general population of parents whose children attended public school (i.e., nationally 55% of public school parents rated local public schools with an A or B, 57% of the study's public school parents rated the schools A or B). To further investigate the representative nature of the sample these parents' socio-economic status was compared to the socio-economic status of the entire county's population (Table 3). In most income brackets there was less than a 5% difference between the socio-economic status of the sample and the county in general.

Data needed to fulfill the purposes of the study were collected through the interview guide and from the field notes recorded during the parent interviews. Data from the interview guide were compiled and an SPSS computer program was written to perform the necessary data analysis (frequency distributions, crosstabulations, chi squares, Pearson correlations, and analyses of variance). An ethnographic analysis was implemented to analyze the field notes in an attempt to reveal some general facts about the cultural organization being observed.
Overview of the Data Analysis

The primary findings were related directly to the specific questions addressed by this study. The primary findings were as follows:

1. There was little evidence to indicate that parents perceived the retention as an evaluation of themselves. However, when the sample was partitioned into three parent groups the scores indicated a large difference in the response patterns. Parents of retained children tended to perceive the retention as an evaluation of themselves less than parents who answered for another family or parents who answered in general.

2. The grade level at which a student was retained was unrelated to parents' self evaluation scores.

3. The level of parents' affective reaction to the nonpromotion was fairly neutral. However, when the sample was separated into the three parent groups the scores indicated a large difference in the response patterns. Parents of nonpromoted students tended to have a more positive affective reaction to the nonpromotion than parents who answered for another family or parents who answered in general.

4. There was no evidence to indicate a significant relationship between the grade level at which a student was retained and parents' affective reaction scores.
5. Parents with a more positive perception of the school had a more positive affective reaction to the retention decision.

6. Parents with a more positive perception of their child and their child's emotional status had a more negative affective reaction to the retention decision.

7. There was no evidence to indicate a significant relationship between parents' perception of their interaction with their child as a result of the nonpromotion and their affective reaction to the retention decision.

8. There was no evidence to indicate a significant relationship between the school's strategy for informing parents of their child's actual or potential retention and the parents' affective reaction to the retention decision. The relationship was, however, affected by the fact that there was very little variability in the school's strategy for informing parents about their child's nonpromotion.

9. Parents who perceived themselves to have lower levels of involvement in the retention decision had more negative affective reactions to the nonpromotion.

10. The fact that a child's parent had been retained while she/he attended elementary school was unrelated to that parent's affective reaction score.
11. Parents of retained children tended to blame the school programs for their child's nonpromotion less than parents who answered for another family or those parents who answered in general.

12. Parents who had actually experienced a child's retention tended to blame the principal less than parents who answered for another family or parents who answered in general.

13. All three parent groups tended to blame the teacher and the child more than they blamed the school programs, the principal or themselves.

14. Parents of a retained child tended to blame themselves less than parents who answered for another family or those who answered in general.

15. Parents' affective reaction scores and their self evaluation scores were unrelated to their family's socio-economic status.

16. Parents from a higher socio-economic status tended to blame the school programs and the principal to a higher extent than parents from a lower socio-economic status.

17. Parents reported socio-economic status was unrelated to the extent to which they blamed the teacher for their child's retention.
18. Parents with a reported yearly income of $25,000 to $39,999 tended to blame their child to a greater extent than parents in other socio-economic levels. Parents with a reported yearly income of $10,000 to $14,999 tended to blame their child to a lesser extent than parents in the other socio-economic levels.

19. A relationship existed between parents' perceived involvement in the retention decision and the parents' reported socio-economic status. The nature of this relationship was complex.

Secondary Findings of the Study

The secondary findings were related to the nature of the affective impact of the nonpromotion message on parents and the concerns of parents whose children attend public school. A study of the parents' comments recorded during the interviews revealed the following:

1. Parents expressed empathy for the retained child's negative feelings.

2. Parents who had been retained during their own elementary school career showed discomfort from a life-long negative impact of nonpromotion.

3. Parents defended nonpromotion as a necessary educational practice.
4. Parents often expressed reluctance and compliance as an immediate response to retention.

5. Parents indicated a concern for the welfare of the child and recognized the importance of a good education.

6. Parents expressed a desire to do what's best in relationship to the retention decision.

7. Parents revealed a lack of understanding of nonpromotion policies.

8. School personnel justified the necessity of student retention.

9. Parents conveyed a belief that the school knows what is best for a child's education.

10. Parents indicated a need to rationalize the nonpromotion decision.

11. Parents revealed a dissatisfaction with the results of the nonpromotion.

12. Parent expressed a great deal of concern for the schools that their children attend.

Two important generalizations were drawn from the patterns which resulted from the analysis of the participants' perception of nonpromotion:

1. The affective impacts to nonpromotion were complexly interrelated.

2. Affective impacts were created from the situation and from the value orientation of the parents.
Discussion and Conclusions

The literature review suggested that current trends toward educational accountability, the use of minimum competency testing and a resurgence of the grade standard theory of education have increased the use of nonpromotion policies (Trotter, 1982; Rose, Medway, Cadwell & Marcus, 1983). At the same time most of the data collected over the past 70 years failed to evince any significant benefit of nonpromotion for the majority of students (Rose et al., 1983). Most studies reported that nonpromotion had a harmful influence on the majority of students (Aebersold, 1983). Assuming the accuracy of these findings it behooves educators to investigate the variables which may affect the lack of success of retention practices.

One variable which may affect a student's success or lack of success with nonpromotion may be parental involvement in the promotion process. Neidermeyer (1970) reported that pupil performance was enhanced through the use of classroom programs that generated positive parent attitudes. If parental attitudes towards the promotion process affect the subsequent success or lack of success of their child's educational experience then school personnel need to investigate these relationships. An initial step in this type of investigation is to determine what the affective impact on parents was when they were informed of
the nonpromotion decision for their child. One hundred eighty in-home parent interviews were completed during the present study to explore parental reactions to the nonpromotion message.

The exploratory analysis compiled in this research provided basic information that can help build a conceptual framework that may explain parental affective reactions to their child's nonpromotion. An emerging concept was that the school's strategy for working with parents had an influence on the parents' reaction to their child's nonpromotion. Parents' compliance with the need for nonpromotion seemed to be influenced by what the school personnel said about their child's need for nonpromotion rather than a personal response to what they felt would be best for their child's future. Parent compliance was expressed by statements such as: "The school said this [retention] is what is best, so I did it"; "At first I didn't think the school was doing what was best for her, until the school explained it"; and "It's not what I wanted but it's what's best for her.

The influence of the school on the parents' compliance was evidenced in the data for both the self-evaluation scores and the affective reaction scores. In both of these analyses the parents who had actually experienced a child's nonpromotion reacted more positively than either the
parents who answered for another family or those answering in general (tables 4 and 9). Schools either failed to inform or misinformed parents about the effects of nonpromotion. Parents tended to make the decision about their child's nonpromotion for the wrong reasons. Fifty percent of the sample reported that if their child was retained, she/he would have the opportunity to be at the top of their new class and 83% reported that if their child was retained she/he would at least be able to catch up. Parents tended to support the decision regardless of the fact that their child was still a low achiever or did no better the second year or in subsequent years as a result of the nonpromotion.

Due to the school's strategy for working with parents, the parents' affective reaction to nonpromotion was less negative then expected. Parents did what the school told them to do. They believed that the school provided them with accurate information and nonpromotion was the best thing for their child. Parents complied with and rationalized the decision.

The parents provided important information which schools should consider when developing or implementing new promotion policies. Many parents expressed a desire to be informed about their child's possible nonpromotion earlier in the school year. A typical comment was "I would have
Almost 90% of this study's sample was first informed about their child's possible retention during the second half of the school year. Parents not only expressed a need to be informed about a possible retention earlier in the school year but also to be given specific strategies (including activities and materials) to help their child. It was as if parents desired to have an individual education plan established for each at-risk child. The specific promotion-nonpromotion criteria need to be explained to parents so that they know exactly what their child's deficits are and what exactly the child must accomplish in order to be considered for promotion. Such a plan or one similar to that recommended by Hagens (1980) would more closely resemble a school where a child's placement is based on a child's capacity to work and learn best not on teacher or school convenience.

Parents also want to be accurately informed about their child's progress. As Russo (1977) reported, there is often a discrepancy between the information parents desire and the information they receive from the school. Only 49% of this study's sample reported that they were informed about the retention during a conference. The other 51% of the parent group reported that they were informed either in a letter or by a phone. The method of school-parent
communication has been found elsewhere to be a critical factor in the subsequent parent-school relationships. The most positive effect upon communications with parents was reported to be person-to-person verbal conferences (Russo, 1977; Rundberg, 1979; Cook, 1975). Staff members ought to meet with parents to explain why their child is being considered for retention, what alternatives there are to the retention and what the parent can do to help their child. Brown's (1981) investigation of retention procedures revealed that parents were more inclined to acquire a real sense of concern about their child's performance if they were involved in the decision-making process. Parents must be included in the decision-making process if they are expected to support promotion-nonpromotion decisions.

Although the intent of this research was to identify whether parents more often have a negative affective reaction to their child's nonpromotion the data compiled from the total sample actually provided evidence that indicated the level of parents' affective reaction to nonpromotion was fairly neutral (mean = 56.2). However responses from parents who were not directly involved with their own child's nonpromotion were significantly different than responses from parents who had experienced a retention. The parents not directly involved with a
retention tended to reveal more negative feelings about retention (Group 2 mean = 66.1 and Group 3 mean = 66.0) than parents who had actually experienced a retention (Group 1 mean = 49.9). The ethnographic analysis, however, revealed that all three parent groups, in general, viewed nonpromotion as a negative experience ("I was embarrassed for my child," "I remember when I was retained," and "I was frustrated and I was mad").

The differences in the feelings among the three parent groups revealed in the data analysis may have resulted from their involvement with the school. That is, even though the parents may have had negative feelings about their child's nonpromotion, the school system's personnel had explained the nonpromotion alternative in such a way that it led parents to believe that they had made the appropriate choice for their child. As Ames (1980) reported once parents accept the concept of nonpromotion and support the idea that their child needs to be emotionally and physically ready before they can succeed in school any feelings of failure that they or their child may have had were greatly reduced. For this reason parents of retained children may have felt more positive about the retention decision than friends, relatives and the general public who continued to view retention as a negative experience. Also it may have been too painful for
some of these parents to accept that they had made an inappropriate choice, especially one of such importance. Such decisions often affected their child's entire school career. Several parents did admit that their nonpromoted child was still having trouble in school. Some typical comments were: "my daughter had worse grades the second year in fifth grade but she was passed anyway," "my child was retained two times and still has problems," and "he is still not doing well in school."

Parents' perception of their involvement in the retention decision was related to their affective reaction to the nonpromotion decision. Parents who perceived themselves to have lower levels of involvement in the retention decision had more negative affective reactions to the nonpromotion ($r = -.23, p < .01$). Many parents felt that they were just told that their child would be retained and that it did not matter what they said or felt about the situation. For example, "We were not given the opportunity to decide for ourselves whether the child should or shouldn't be retained and we did not like it."

Parents' affective reactions to nonpromotion were strongly related to their perception of the school ($r = .81, p < .01$). Parents with a more positive perception of the school had a more positive affective reaction to the retention decision. These findings are interesting in
light of the literature that reports the idea that when positive approaches to parent communication are encouraged, parents are more likely to support school programs (Fox, 1983). The finding also relates to the parents' belief in the schools' provision of accurate information. The credibility of a communication is influenced by the perception that the audience has about the source of the message. Favorable perceptions increase the likelihood that a message will be effective at informing and persuading the audience (Cates, 1979). Therefore, if parents have a positive attitude toward the school that their child attends, they will be more likely to believe that the school will do what is right for their child.

On the other hand, parents with a more positive perception of their child and their child's emotional status tended to have more negative affective reactions to nonpromotion ($r = -.29, p < .01; r = -.33, p < .01$). Parents who were very supportive of their child found it difficult to accept their child's lack of success. In fact, most parents find it more difficult to accept their child's limitations than their own (National Education Association, 1965; Miller, 1983). These parents at least did not see retention as the best educational alternative for their child. These parents were perhaps more cognizant of their
child's particular needs and realized that nonpromotion would not fulfill those needs.

In general parents tended to blame their child (70%) and/or the teacher (49%) for the nonpromotion. They felt that the child wasn't doing what was expected. Typical comments were: "He didn't know the stuff. He couldn't do the work." and "He as too immature to go on." Many parents reported that the teacher, if anyone, could have prevented the nonpromotion. They indicated that if the teacher had used different intervention strategies or if the teacher had informed the parents earlier in the year the retention might have been avoided. Common statements were: "I was angry because the teacher did not teach my child, she should have taught her like the others," "The teacher should have known what do to earlier in the year," and "I would have helped if I knew about the problem and what to do to help."

Less than half of the sample blamed the school programs (42%) or the principal (41%) for the retention and only 25% of the parents blamed themselves for the retention. There was no statistically significant difference between the three parent groups on whether to blame the child or the teacher. There was a statistically significant difference between the three group mean blame scores related to the school programs, the principal, and
the parent themselves. Parents who had actually experienced a nonpromotion tended to blame these three sources less than parents who answered for another family or those who answered in general. It appeared that parents in general expected school programs and the principal to play a significant role in the nonpromotion. Parents who had actually experienced a child's nonpromotion had gained a more realistic expectation.

Parents were very concerned about their child's education and expressed several concerns about the school system in general. They were concerned about schools preparing their children for the future ("I am concerned about the school preparing my son for the future [as a jet pilot]"). Parents also expressed a need to better understand school policies especially in relationship to retention. This lack of understanding was indicated by such statements as "My child had okay grades but was still retained," and "Even when parents were given an alternative to retention they retain the child anyway". Fait (1982) also found that parents were not well informed about retention policies and recommended that school districts establish specific written policies on nonpromotion practices.

Parents discussed several problems that they had encountered while trying to become involved in their
child’s education. The following comments are examples of those discussions: "I felt uncomfortable at school," "We tried for a year to have a conference," "The teacher expected too much from my son and faulted the child for everything," "We felt like a student at the conference, the teacher treated us like children," "It’s not the school that won’t listen, it’s the teachers, they won’t listen to parents," and "We felt the teachers should be more honest with parents and much more humanistic". Parents also voiced general concerns about the schools their children attend such as "Florida is the worse state for transportation," "The schools must do something about the lice problem," "The classes are too large," and "The schools are trying to do too much, they should teach the basics first." Lightfoot (1981) reported that such interactions between parents and teachers arise out of dissatisfaction, frustration and anger. Lightfoot also reported that, rather than search for the origins of such conflicts, schools develop sophisticated methods of exclusion which often result in the parents drawing farther away from their responsibility in the educational process.

The exploratory data analyzed by this study provided some insight into parents’ emotional readiness and reactions to the academic failure of their child and provided some additional dimensions for improved parent-
school communications. As Mour (1977) pointed out parents of failing children progress through several emotional cycles (i.e., denial, anger, guilt, depression, acceptance). Comments such as "We didn't want to accept our child's retention," "I was frustrated and I was mad," "We felt guilty at first," "I was sad for my child," and "We agreed with the school's decision, we felt the school would do what's best for her," demonstrated that the parents in this study experienced each of the emotions.

Mour (1977) suggested that information on parents' emotional status in reaction to nonpromotion could be used to help parents deal with their child's school failure. Mour also reported that an understanding of parental feelings is crucial if instructional programs for children are to be successful. Although this study did not reveal that parents perceive their child's retention as a message about parenting failure it did indicate a need for open and honest communication and cooperation between parents and educators. The use of parental contact had a positive influence on the parents' acceptance and support of the nonpromotion decision. If schools continue to recommend nonpromotion as a viable educational alternative and expect parents to support such decisions then they must also implement strategies to enhance parents' positive perceptions of the school.
**Recommendations**

Based on the research, observations, conclusions and limitations of this study several recommendations are submitted.

If school districts plan to continue using nonpromotion the following recommendations should be considered:

1. The school should accurately inform all of their personnel about the effects of nonpromotion. Because it was apparent that the schools gave parents misinformation or at least misleading information it is important that the schools provide accurate data on the effects of nonpromotion to all persons involved in the nonpromotion decision-making process.

2. Parents should be informed about their child's potential retention as early in the school year as possible (preferably during the first half of the school year).

3. Schools should discontinue the use of a letter for an initial contact about a student's potential retention. Teachers should meet with the parents during a conference either at the school or at the student's home. Teachers should give parents honest feedback about the child's progress and should provide alternatives for dealing with low achieving students. The focus of the early conferences should be on how to avoid the nonpromotion.
4. Schools should strive to maintain a positive communication network (while at the same time discourage negative communications) with parents to enhance their support for the school and the school's programs since parents with a more positive perception of the school had a more positive affective reaction to the retention decision.

5. School personnel need to stress to parents that a child's academic progress is not a statement about the "goodness or badness" of the child nor an indication of their parenting skills. In most cases it is not the child who is to blame for their low achievement but more often the result of a mismatch between school programs (curriculum and activities) and the child's ability level.

6. Since parents tended to blame the teacher and the child more than other variables, schools should make every effort not to place a retained child in a class with the teacher she/he had the previous year.

7. Based on updated information, school districts need to develop specific policies and guidelines for student promotion and nonpromotion.
Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study and related research indicate that there is a need for additional investigation of the factors associated with nonpromotion. The following are recommendations for such research:

1. Since this study investigated just one aspect of a very complex problem -- why does nonpromotion fail to produce its intended results -- additional factors and their relationship to nonpromotion need to be investigated. Some of the other factors that need study are classroom variables and include: teachers' acceptance of the child, instructional fittedness, and peer acceptance of child.

2. If a study of the nonpromotion message's affective impact on parents is replicated the following items need to be considered:
   a. Make comparisons between school districts that retain larger proportions of students with those that retain a smaller proportion of students.
   b. Interview parents in more of a counseling atmosphere.
   c. Refine the survey guide.
   d. Increase the sample size in the low-achiever group.
3. If the strategies suggested in this study are implemented, the impact of parent reactions and subsequent student achievement need to be investigated.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

School Board Policies, Procedures and Rules, 1978
Pupil Progression - Elementary

The requirements for pupil progression for the elementary schools shall provide for the continuous progress of all students.

Promotion from Grades K - 6

Promotion from grades K - 6 will be determined by the progress a student makes toward the mastery of school objectives with special emphasis placed upon the mastery of basic skills. Stanine scores for reading, language, and mathematics on an approved standardized test for each grade, K - 6, will serve as guidelines for monitoring student progress annually. Students who score below the fourth stanine in one or more of these areas will be considered as a candidate for possible retention.

A student will be expected to achieve at or above the fourth stanine in reading, language, and mathematics on an approved standardized test and in addition, in grades 3 and 5 to meet the minimum standards on the State-Wide Assessment Test prescribed by the State Department of Education. Promotion from grades 3 to grade 4 will be based on compliance with the Florida Primary Education Program.

Retention shall not be automatic for any student. A placement committee consisting of the Principal, the classroom teacher, and any other personnel designated by the Principal will consider matters of retention and potential administrative promotions. Consideration of administrative promotion shall be based on such factors as physical size, emotional and social readiness, extensive absences due to illnesses, previous retention, a first language other than English, participation in alternative programs, and parental attitudes. The Principal has the responsibility for all final decisions regarding retention and administrative promotion.

Retention of a student shall be limited to two years in the elementary grades. Additional retention may be considered by a placement committee consisting of the Principal, the classroom teacher, and any other personnel designated by the Principal where social and intellectual readiness and physical size warrant special consideration.
The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student not making adequate progress must be notified in writing by the end of the first bi-quinmester if teacher judgement indicates the student may not be meeting standards.
APPENDIX 2

Parent Interview Guide
Hello! I'm ___________________ from the University of Central Florida. Are you ___________________? We are conducting a survey of parents' reactions to the public elementary schools in this county. We would like to interview you about your opinions and other matters related to the schools.

The survey is being supervised by the University of Central Florida and has been reviewed and approved by the ___ (name of school district). All information provided will remain confidential.
FIRST I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN GENERAL.

1. Students are often given the grade A, B, C, D or FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the (name of school system) were graded in the same way. In general, what grade would you give the public schools A, B, C, D or FAIL?

A (1)   B (2)   C (3)   D (4)   FAIL (5)   5

2. In general, what grade would you give the teachers in the public schools?

A (1)   B (2)   C (3)   D (4)   FAIL (5)   6

3. In general, what grade would you give the principals and administrators?

A (1)   B (2)   C (3)   D (4)   FAIL (5)   7
NOW I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MESSAGES THAT YOU RECEIVE FROM YOUR CHILD'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

4. If you received a phone call or a written note from the school, what would you most expect to hear or read?
   A. Good news about ____________________________
      (Behavior = 1; Achievement = 2; Health = 3)
   B. Bad news about ____________________________
      (Health = 5; Achievement = 6; Behavior = 7)
   C. Neutral information about _______________________
      (4)
   D. Unsure ____________________________
      (4)

5. How often have you felt that the school really cares about your child?
   A (1). Very frequently  D (4). Infrequently
   B (2). Frequently  E (5). Never
   C (3). Several times  10
6. How often have you felt that the school really doesn't care about your child?

A (5). Very frequently  
B (4). Frequently  
C (3). Several times  
D (2). Infrequently  
E (1). Never

NOW I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT A FEW OF THE CURRENT PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS.

7. Nonpromotion is the term used when a child is left back or repeats a grade in elementary school. Most elementary schools use the practice of nonpromotion for a variety of reasons. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the use of nonpromotion in the elementary school?

A (1). Strongly approve  
B (2). Approve  
C (3). Undecided  
D (4). Disapprove  
E (5). Strongly disapprove

8. How many, if any, of your children have been required to repeat a grade in elementary school?  

Which grades?___________________________________________
IF APPROPRIATE, ENCOURAGE PARENT TO FOCUS ON EITHER THEIR SECOND, THIRD OR FIFTH GRADE CHILD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE INTERVIEW.

Grade of child on which parent will focus for the remainder of the interview (no response = 0). _____

IF PARENT HAS HAD A CHILD RETAINED CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 9 ON A WHITE QUESTIONNAIRE (SURVEY FORM A); IF THE PARENT HAS NOT HAD A CHILD RETAINED CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 8A ON THE NEXT PAGE.

8A. Although you yourself have not had any children retained, most of us do know a friend or relative that has had a child repeat a grade in elementary school (other than kindergarten). Can you think of one such family?

A (1). Yes  B (2). No  (No response = 0)

IF YES CONTINUE WITH 8B AND ALL OTHER "B" QUESTIONS ON A YELLOW QUESTIONNAIRE (SURVEY FORM A); IF NO GO ON TO 8C AND ALL OTHER "C" QUESTIONS ON A GREEN QUESTIONNAIRE (SURVEY FORM C).
9. When were you first informed of the possibility that your child would be retained?
A (2). During the first half of the school year (Aug. - Jan.)
B (1). During the second half of the school year (Feb. - May)

10. The most common method of initially informing parents of their child’s retention is a conference. Were you initially informed about the possibility that your child would be retained at a parent conference?
A (2). Yes B (1). No
IF YES ASK, who attended the conference?

Mother? yes (1) no (2) no response (0) 24
Father? yes (1) no (2) no response (0) 25
Child? yes (1) no (2) no response (0) 26
Principal? yes (1) no (2) no response (0) 27
Teacher? yes (1) no (2) no response (0) 28
Counselor? yes (1) no (2) no response (0) 29
Social Worker? yes (1) no (2) no response (0) 30
Others? (please specify) no response (0) 31

IF NO SAY would you please specify how you were initially informed about your child's possible retention. __________

(no response = 0; letter = 1; phone call = 2; other = 3) 32
11. Parents can be involved in the nonpromotion decision in many different ways. I'm going to read a list of different ways parents participate in the nonpromotion decision-making process. Tell me which apply to you (yes/no).

A. Did you go to more than one conference with the teacher to discuss your child's possible nonpromotion and other options? yes (2) no (1) 35

IF YES ASK, as best you can remember, how many conferences did you attend? __________

B. As the nonpromotion of your child was being considered, were you given the opportunity to express an opinion about whether your child should be held back? yes (2) no (1) 36

C. Was your child given the opportunity to express an opinion about whether she/he would be held back? yes (2) no (1) 37
D. Were you given the opportunity to decide for yourself whether your child should or should not repeat the grade?  

yes (2)  no (1)  

38

E. Did you think that you were excluded from involvement in the nonpromotion decision - that you were just informed that your child would be retained?  

yes (1)  no (2)  

39

12. Where you given any alternatives to your child repeating the grade?  

A (2)  Yes  B (1)  No  

40

IF YES, ASK RESPONDENT TO PLEASE SPECIFY THE ALTERNATIVES PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL. ____________________________  

(No response = 0; Exceptional Ed. Class Placement = 1; Make-up Work = 2; Regular Attendance = 3; Summer School= 4)  

42
NOW I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS AS A RESULT OF YOUR CHILD BEING RETAINED.

13. Parents often have a variety of feelings as a result of their child's retention. Indicate how each of the following reflects your feelings when you were informed that your child was being considered for retention.

ASK RESPONDENT TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THE FEELING AS VERY STRONG (vs), STRONG (s), MODERATE (m), WEAK (w), VERY WEAK (vw) OR NOT AT ALL (n).

DID YOU THINK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>extent of feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. They think that I'm (we're) a bad parent(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>extent of feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. The school is doing what is best for my (our) child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>extent of feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Why does this have to happen to me (us)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DID YOU THINK:

D. What have I (we) done wrong? vs s m w vw n
   5 4 3 2 1 0
   46

E. My (Our) child needs more time. vs s m w vw n
   0 1 2 3 4 5
   47

F. I (We) don't need anyone to tell me (us) what is best for my (our) child. vs s m w vw n
   5 4 3 2 1 0
   48

G. At least now my (our) child will have the opportunity to be at the top of the class. vs s m w vw n
   5 4 3 2 1 0
   49

H. Now my (our) child will be able to catch up. vs s m w vw n
   5 4 3 2 1 0
   51
**DID YOU THINK:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentiment</th>
<th>vs</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>w</th>
<th>vw</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. They (school people) think I'm (we) not (aren't) very smart.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. It's a bad school.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. It isn't right or fair.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. They won't listen to me (us).</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. The teacher doesn’t like my (our) child. The teacher is trying to hurt her/him or pick on her/him.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DID YOU THINK:

N. It's the school's fault. vs They don't know how to
They don't know how to teach. 5 4 3 2 1 0

0. It's my (our) child's fault. 0 1 2 3 4 5

14. It is natural for parents to have a variety of feelings about their child's nonpromotion. Parents may get upset when they hear that their child is being considered for nonpromotion. Please indicate how each of the following emotions describes the immediate feelings you had about your child's nonpromotion.

ASK RESPONDENT TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF EACH EMOTION AS VERY HIGH (vh), HIGH (h), MODERATE (m), LOW (l), VERY LOW (vl) OR NOT AT ALL (n).

A. Anger

extent of immediate emotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>vh</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>vl</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

199
15. Feelings often change over time. I'm going to go back over the list of feelings, tell me if any of these emotions have changed.

**IF THE ANSWER IF YES, ASK THE RESPONDENT TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THE EMOTION AS MORE (m) OR LESS (1).**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Changed</th>
<th>Extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Anger</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Fear</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Disappointment</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Sadness</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Embarassment</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Guilt</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no (0)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Parents often believe that the school places the blame for a child’s nonpromotion on a specific thing. To what extent do you think the school blamed each of the following for your child’s nonpromotion?

ASK RESPONDENTS TO INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT THEY THINK THE SCHOOL BLAMED EACH OF THE THINGS MENTIONED AS VERY HIGH (vh), HIGH (h), MODERATE (m), LOW (l), VERY LOW (vl) OR NOT AT ALL (n).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>extent of blame</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The school programs</td>
<td>vh</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>vl</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The principal</td>
<td>vh</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>vl</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The teacher</td>
<td>vh</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>vl</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The child</td>
<td>vh</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>vl</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. You, the parent(s)</td>
<td>vh</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>vl</td>
<td>n</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(No response = 0)
17. Parents often place blame for their child’s nonpromotion. To what extent did you originally blame each of the following for your child’s nonpromotion?

ASK RESPONDENTS TO INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT THEY BLAMED EACH THING MENTIONED AS VERY HIGH (vh), HIGH (h), MODERATE (m), LOW (l), VERY LOW (vl) OR NOT AT ALL (n).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>extent of blame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The school programs</td>
<td>vh h m l vl n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The principal</td>
<td>vh h m l vl n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The teacher</td>
<td>vh h m l vl n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The child</td>
<td>vh h m l vl n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. Feelings can change over time. I'm going to go back over the list. Tell me if you have changed your mind about who or what you blame for your child's nonpromotion?

IF ANSWER IS YES, ASK RESPONDENTS TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THEIR PRESENT FEELINGS OF BLAME AS MORE (M) OR LESS (L).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>changed blame</th>
<th>extent of blame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The school programs</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The principal</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The teacher</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The child</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. How do you think your child performed, academically, the year immediately following her/his retention?

A (5). Much better
B (4). Better
C (3). No change
D (2). Worse
E (1). Much worse

20. How do you think your child is doing in school now, in terms of academic performance?

A (5). Much better
B (4). Better
C (3). No change
D (2). Worse
E (1). Much worse
21. Did the fact of the retention change the interaction between you and your child? Indicate which of the following best describes the interaction between you and your child as a result of her/his retention.

A (5). Much better
B (4). Better
C (3). About the same
D (2). Worse
E (1). Much worse

22. Nonpromotion can have a variety of effects on a child. Indicate how each of the following describes your child's immediate emotions as a result of her/his retention.

ASK RESPONDENT TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THAT EMOTION AS VERY HIGH (vh), HIGH (h), MODERATE (m), LOW (l), VERY LOW (vl) OR NOT AT ALL (n).

extent of emotion

A. A positive attitude toward school. vh h m l vl n
5 4 3 2 1 0

B. A negative attitude toward school. vh h m l vl n
0 1 2 3 4 5
C. A positive feeling about herself/himself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>extent of emotion</th>
<th>vh</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>vl</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. A negative feeling about herself/himself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>extent of emotion</th>
<th>vh</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>vl</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. A child's feelings can change over time. I'm going to go back over the list. Tell me if you think any of your child's emotions have changed as a result of her/his retention.

ASK RESPONDENT TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THEIR CHILD'S PRESENT FEELINGS AS MORE (m) OR LESS (l).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>feeling</th>
<th>extent of feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. A positive attitude toward school.</td>
<td>yes no (0) m (1) l (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. A negative attitude toward school.</td>
<td>yes no (0) m (1) l (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. With which ethnic or racial group do you most identify?

A (1). Black  D (4). Asian
B (2). White  E (5). American Indian
C (3). Hispanic

26. Were you, yourself, ever required to repeat a grade during elementary school?

A (1). Yes  B (2). No

IF APPROPRIATE ASK:

To the best of your knowledge, was your spouse ever required to repeat a grade during elementary school?

A (1). Yes  B (2). No
feeling extent of feeling

C. A positive feeling
   about herself/himself. yes no (0) m (1) l (2)
   
   D. A negative feeling
   about herself/himself. yes no (0) m (1) l (2)

NOW I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

24. Who is the head of this household?

A (1). Mother only  C (3). Mother and Father
B (2). Father only   D (4). Other

PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER THE RESPONDENT IS A MALE OR A FEMALE.

Male (1)  Female (2)
27. Which letter below best represents your total family income, including all regular wage earners, in 1985 before taxes?

Approximate salaries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Hourly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (01)</td>
<td>Under $5000</td>
<td>$417.00</td>
<td>$96.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (02)</td>
<td>$5,000 to $9999</td>
<td>$625.00</td>
<td>$144.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (03)</td>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td>$1042.00</td>
<td>$240.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (04)</td>
<td>$15,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>$1458.00</td>
<td>$337.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (05)</td>
<td>$20,000 to $24,999</td>
<td>$1875.00</td>
<td>$433.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (06)</td>
<td>$25,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>$2292.00</td>
<td>$529.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G (07)</td>
<td>$30,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>$2917.00</td>
<td>$673.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H (08)</td>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>$3750.00</td>
<td>$865.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (09)</td>
<td>$50,000 to $59,999</td>
<td>$4583.00</td>
<td>$1058.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J (10)</td>
<td>$60,000 to $69,999</td>
<td>$5417.00</td>
<td>$1250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K (11)</td>
<td>$70,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>$6250.00</td>
<td>$1442.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L (12)</td>
<td>$80,000 and over</td>
<td>$6667.00</td>
<td>$1538.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M (13)</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOW THAT WE ARE ALMOST THROUGH WITH THIS INTERVIEW, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW SOME OF YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT IT.

28. Questions sometimes make you feel uncomfortable. I'd like your opinions about some of the questions in this interview. As I mention groups of questions, please tell me how uneasy those questions made you feel.

ASK RESPONDENT TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THEIR UNEASINESS AS VERY HIGH (vh), HIGH (h), MODERATE (m), LOW (l), VERY LOW (vl) OR NOT AT ALL (n).

How about the questions on:

A. General impressions of public schools.

extent of uneasiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vh</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>vl</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50

B. Messages received from schools.

extent of uneasiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vh</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>vl</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51
C. Information about student retention and promotion.

D. Information about your family.

THANK YOU!

TIME SURVEY ENDED ____________________________________________

INTERVIEWER’S SIGNATURE ______________________________________
LIST OF REFERENCES


Hagen, J. M. (1980). I kept 8 students back... and I'm still alive to tell about it. Teacher, 98 (1), 47-49.


