

**PARENTAL AUTHORITY PERSPECTIVES OF  
GRADE ONE PARENTS**

*by*

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## DECLARATION

"I declare that this dissertation '*Parental authority perspectives of grade one parents*' represents my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references."

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'T. Venketsamy', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

**T. VENKETSAMY**

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents for their arduous support to my academic career.

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## SUMMARY

The aim of this investigation was to establish the parental authority perspectives of grade one parents by means of a literature and empirical study.

As introduction the life-world of the grade one child was reviewed. Life-world is the world in which people conduct both a way of life and mode of being and can be represented as a network of relationships with himself, others, objects and ideas and God. This *Gestalt* of meaningful relationships makes up the individual's life-world. The grade one child's self-image, the outcome of the relationships with himself, is formed mainly through his relations with people and objects and strongly influences the quality of these relationships. The relationship with parents is qualified by love which implies mutual knowledge, care, trust and authority. Parents who educate their children according to strict, but fair authority, give them security and diminish doubt and anxiety.

The different authority styles of parents were discussed. Some parents adopt an authoritarian parenting style whereby they are the ones in control and decide on all activities and procedures for the children. On the other extreme, parents exert a permissive style of exercising authority which allows the child total freedom to do what he pleases with very little or no discipline and punishment. The most accountable parenting style seems to be exercised by democratic parents. These parents set broad limits, give

advice, encourage their children, allow for open communication between parent and child and exercise authority positively.

For the purpose of the empirical investigation a self-structured questionnaire was utilized. An analysis was done of 80 questionnaires completed by the parents of grade one children attending schools in Umkomaas. The data thus obtained was processed and interpreted by means of descriptive statistics.

In conclusion, a summary and findings emanating from the literature study and the descriptive statistics were presented. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made:

- . The re-assertion of parents as authoritative figures.
- . Guidance and involvement programmes for parents.
- . That further research must be done regarding the parental authority perspectives of grade one parents.



## OPSOMMING

Hierdie ondersoek was daarop gerig om die gesagperspektief van ouers met kinders in graad een, met behulp van 'n literatuur en empiriese studie, vas te stel.

Ter inleiding is die leefwêreld van die kind in graad een in oënskou geneem. Leefwêreld is 'n wêreld waarin mense 'n lewenswyse asook 'n bestaanswyse voer en kan as 'n netwerk van relasies met homself, ander, objekte en idees, en God voorgestel word. Hierdie *Gestalt* van betekenisvolle relasies wat die individu konstitueer, vorm sy leefwereld. Die kind se selfkonsep, wat die uitkoms van sy relasie met homself is, word grootliks gevorm deur sy relasies met mense en objekte. Die selfkonsep oefen 'n sterk invloed op die kwaliteit van alle relasies uit. Die kind se relasie met sy ouers word gekwalifiseer deur liefde wat onder meer wedersydse kennis, sorg, vertrouë en gesag impliseer. Ouers wat die kind onder streng maar regverdige gesag opvoed, gee aan die kind sekerheid wat twyfel en angs verminder.

Die verskillende wyses waarop ouers gesag toepas, is bespreek. Sommige ouers handhaaf 'n outoritêre opvoedingstyl waar hulle in beheer is, en in al dié aktiwiteite en handeling van hulle kinders die finale sê het. Aan die ander uiterste is daar die ouers wat 'n permissiewe styl handhaaf in die toepassing van gesag en die kinders algehele vryheid toegelaat word om te

doen wat hulle wil met baie min of geen dissipline en straf nie. Die mees verantwoordbare opvoedingstyl blyk die van demokratiese ouers te wees. Hierdie ouers stel duidelike perke aan die kind, gee die nodige advies en aanmoediging, is beskikbaar vir gesprekvoering met hulle kinders en pas gesag toe wat positiewe gevolge sal hê.

In die empiriese ondersoek is gebruik gemaak van 'n selfgestruktureerde vraelys as meetinstrument. Die vraelys is deur ouers in Umkomaas, met kinders in graad een, voltooi. 'n Ontleding is daarna gemaak van die 80 voltooide vraelyste, en die gegewens daaruit verkry is verwerk en geïnterpreteer met behulp van frekwensie tabelle en beskrywende statistiek.

Ten slotte is 'n opsomming en sekere bevindings, voortspruitend uit die literatuurstudie en die beskrywende statistiek, aangebied. Na aanleiding van hierdie bevindings word die volgende aanbevelings gemaak:

Gesinne moet aangemoedig en ondersteun word om die ouers as gesagsfigure in ere te herstel.

Begeleidings- en betrokkenheidsprogramme vir ouers moet ingestel word.

Verdere navorsing rakende die gesagsperspektief van graad een ouers moet onderneem word.

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## CHAPTER 1

### ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Why does Brandon hit and bite the nearest person when he cannot finish a jigsaw puzzle? What makes Shanon sit with the puzzle for an hour until he solves it? Why does Luke-Atreyu walk away from it after a minute? In short, why are children so different in their responses to the same task? What makes them turn out the way they do? One effort to answer these questions relates to different authoritative styles of parenting to the child.

The exercising of parental authority, according to Vrey (1990: 98), is one of the qualitative determiners of parent-child-relationships. Griessel (1988: 15 ) states that the aim of all education is responsible adulthood. This aim can only be achieved through the sympathetic authoritative guidance from an adult to whom the child entrusts himself (Oberholzer, Van Rensburg, Gerber, Barnard & Moller, 1990: 86).

If we observe parents and children together, we may notice that parents guide their children and that this guidance is accompanied by understanding, trust and the acceptance of authority (Botha, 1990: 24). According to Griessel (1988: 62) the relationship of understanding , trust and authority between the parent (primary educator) and the child cannot

be seen as separate components. As the sympathetic authoritative leader he must possess sound knowledge of how to use his knowledge to provide support for each individual child in his uniqueness. The exercising of authority must take place with due consideration of the childlike nature of the child - the child must be understood from this special situatedness.

Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 27) are of the opinion that "without authority there cannot be an educational situation, for education implies an authority relationship." Langeveld (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988: 27) maintains that the establishment of authority is one of the major criterias of education and every educative action without authority, along with sympathetic authoritative guidance can never lead to the attainment of adulthood. Although children appear to reach adulthood a little sooner, the biggest change is observable in the relationship of authority and the socialization of young people (Oberholzer, Van Rensburg, Gerber, Barnard & Moller, 1990: 86).

According to Ferreira (1994: 59) educators are entrusted with educational authority. A relationship of authority unfolds from the educational relationship between parent and child. The child is addressed by the parents, who, according to Oberholzer, Gerber, Van Rensburg, Barnard & Moller (1988: 86), are also subjected to the authority of norms, and accompany the child in the hope that the child will accept the authority of norms which summons him to human dignity. The acceptance of authority poses no problem for the child. It is embedded in the relationship of trust.

The child is prepared to allow himself "to be told" by the person to whom he entrusts himself or with whom he feels secure. The child recognizes the primary educator's authority because of his respect for him.

## 1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The problem to be investigated in this study revolves around the authority perspectives of grade one parents and the effect thereof on the child. The extent to which parental authority should be imposed upon the grade one child will be looked into.

According to Verster, Theron & Van Zyl (1982: 117) the parents as the primary educators constitute the nucleus of the total life-world in which the child is situated. In the family the child first experiences a scale of value priorities which will help him to shape his eventual attitude to life. The family constitutes the foundation not only of the child's immediate life-world, but also of the social and educational structures within which he grows. If family functions such as loving acceptance, consistency, positive support, a maintenance of the balance between freedom and authority, and an introduction to values were to disappear, their lack could cause permanent harm to the child's evolvment towards adulthood.

Verster, Theron and Van Zyl (1982: 92) maintain that, in the past, the importance of the relationship of understanding, authority and trust between parents (primary educators) and children were not always

perceived. It is however a vital ingredient for an adequate parent-child-relationship.

The twentieth century, with its dynamic, rapidly changing society has also resulted in changing demands on the parents as educators. Although the parents inalienably bear the responsibility as the primary educators of their child, the pressures of the modern world have resulted for example in the parents being less able to cope alone with this task. The school, and particularly the teacher have in this respect assumed the responsibility of being parent substitutes - in *loco-parentis*.

An educational relationship exists between the parent (educator) and the child. According to Griessel (1988: 55) this is a binding relationship, based on the principles of understanding (knowing), trust and authority. The parent and child must know and trust each other. It is through the relationship of knowing and the relationship of trust that authority can be maintained. The authority relationship is fundamental to the disciplining of the child, and is rooted in the child's acceptance of authority because of his need for support (Griessel, 1988:57-58).

The relationship of trust, understanding and authority are closely related to each other. The relationship of authority is a prerequisite for supporting a child to responsible adulthood and the relationship of knowing offers the child the possibility of obtaining, through exploration and understanding, a firm grasp on the world and life (Griessel, 1988: 58).

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In essence the problem that will be investigated in this study pertains to parents' perspectives of exercising authority over their grade one children and some of the questions that require answers are:

- What are the aspects for the relationship of authority?
- What is the influence of the various authority styles of parents on the grade one child?
- Of what significance is the relationship of understanding and trust to the relationship of authority.

### 1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS

For the sake of clarity, it is essential that certain relevant concepts be clearly defined. Regarding the gender issue it must be noted that when reference is made to a child as "his" (male) it also implies "her" (female).

#### 1.4.1 Parents

Sykes (1982: 744) defines a parent as "one who has begotten or borne an off-spring. A parent is the legally recognized father or mother of a person." According to Wolfendale (1993: 20) when a child is born to a



man and woman they become parents and they accept educational responsibility for the child. The child, being helpless and dependent, appeals to the parents to act as natural helpers and educators who have authority over them. This results in parents accepting a particular responsibility for the well being of their child, his care, protection and safety, his development and growth towards adulthood.

Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 3) view the parents as primary educators and that they have the greatest share in the child's education and quality of his becoming an adult. Vrey (1990:173) sees the parents as people who have authority and ideally provide the secure basis from which the child initiates other relationships. The child depends on his parents and is strongly influenced by them.

#### 1.4.2 Discipline

Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 62) define discipline as "the system by which order is maintained, in the home, school and in the community." One of the pre-requisites for all children is that they learn how to behave at home and in school and in the community. Whether they like it or not they have to adhere to the family's or school's code of conduct which should always be spelt out clearly and consistently and fairly upheld. The child soon learns that certain behaviours are permissible in one situation but not in another."

Discipline, according to Sykes (1982:439) is a systematic training in obedience to regulations and authority; the state of improved behaviour resulting from such training or conditions; punishment or chastisement.

Hurlock ( 1985: 392) maintains that discipline basically means subjection to authority, implying obedience to orders and instructions. Discipline also includes the punishment given to induce compliance, "discipline" as being synonymous to "punishment". According to this concept, discipline is used only when the child violates the rules and regulations set down by parents or adults in charge. Discipline is society's way of teaching the child moral behaviour approved by the group or community (Kok, 1996). The goal of all discipline is to mold behaviour so that it will conform to the roles prescribed by the cultural group with which the individual is identified. Specific methods are used to teach children how to behave in a way that conforms to the standards of the particular group. Read, Gardner & Mahler (1987:107) state that discipline refers to actions adults take to help a child change his behaviour.

#### 1.4.3 Authority

Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988:27) state that authority is the power one has to enforce obedience, to command and to make the ultimate decision. Educators, parents and teachers are in positions of authority over the child and because of the educators experience they are placed in positions which the child usually accepts. Primary educators

themselves acknowledge the authority of norms and values and endeavour to pass this on to the child. Freedom supplements authority, as a person who is free subjects himself to authority or is free to reject authority. Freedom thus implies responsibility. Authority can be autocratic, democratic or permissive. Giddens (McLaughlin, 1991:192) states that authority is essentially a grant to exercise power.

Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994:318-319) state freedom and authority cannot be considered as separate concepts. As soon as they are separated or when either one is accorded absolute value, the result is either tyranny and coercion or a denial of all authority inevitably degenerating into lawlessness and licentiousness; human freedom must be a responsible freedom. Man is entitled to the same amount of freedom for which he is willing to accept responsibility and authority. Freedom is voluntary acquiescence to acknowledged authority. The source of authority should not be associated with a person, but with moral forces such as rule of conduct, enduring spiritual value, respect for humanity, traditions, society, norms and laws (Hlatshwayo, 1992:12). Authority is not alien to man's nature, indeed it is characteristic of man that to secure his position, he is eagerly looking for a guiding authority to place demands on him, expect things from him, lay claims on his loyalty and service, exact obedience from him and control his life. In so far as man responds, he realizes authentic freedom.

#### 1.4.4 The grade one child

According to Vrey (1990: 85) and Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 31) the child between the ages of 5 and 6 years is the grade one child who has entered school for the first time. This child moves away from the sheltering home and the ever present mother to the peer group and the community. The child enters a world where the criteria for acceptance are physical abilities and neuro-muscular skills. The child also enters the rational world. This child is expected to understand, because concepts, symbols, logical systems and the modes of communication of the adult world are presented to him, albeit in a simplified form. Vrey (Vorster & Meillon, 1991: 67) states that the grade one child is generally recognized to be an individual who is independent enough to move beyond the protection and safety of the home, to become involved with his peer group and adult activities

This period begins when the child goes to school. From the door of home to the door of school -what momentous steps! They are taken, to be sure, in a mixture of "giant" and "baby" strides and not without looking backwards to the well known walls of home. But they mark a real transition. This is a momentous experience not only for the child but for the parent too: "And I take him to school and see how he storms up the steps without so much as turning his head to look back at me" (Kokot, Lessing, Prinsloo, Van den Aardweg, Vorster & Oosthuizen, 1988:96).

#### 1.4.5 Perspective

Allen (1991: 888) defines "perspective" as a mental view of the relative importance of things (keep the right perspective - correctly regarded in terms of relative importance).

Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, (1994: 482) define the term "perspective" as follows " ....to continue looking until the object viewed is clear, bright and transparent." Once education as an interhuman phenomenon begins to interest the investigator, he can no longer remain an uninterested and aloof onlooker - he must view the education phenomenon from a particular perspective.

#### 1.4.6 Theory of authority

Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994: 554) describe the concept "theory" as a plan or scheme existing in the mind only but based on principles verifiable by experiment and observation; a proposed explanation designed on account for any phenomenon.

Authority means having the power to enforce obedience, discipline, to command and to make the ultimate decision. This however places parents and teachers in a position of authority over their children (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988: 26-27). Every individual is entitled to the same amount of freedom for which he is willing to accept

responsibility and authority. Authority cannot be imposed on children, but can be acquired or developed through interaction between the parent and the child in a spirit of mutual trust, respect and understanding. The parent, as a symbol of authority, has to display certain qualities in his interpersonal relationship or contact with the child, in order to get him to accept and respect his authority (Kok & Myburgh, 1995: 35-36).

Parents are not vested with authority merely on account of their status, but on account of the fact that they represent accepted principles, norms and values (Du Plooy & Kilian, 1985: 123). Without some kind of authority there can be no discipline. By virtue of the authority vested in the parents, they have the power to direct, to speak to and address their children. The children in turn must be prepared to obey and succumb themselves.

The above theory forms the foundation on which this study is based.

## 1.5 AIM OF THIS STUDY

The aims of this study are:

- To pursue a study of relevant literature in order to establish parental authority perspectives of their grade one children.
- To undertake an empirical investigation with regards to parental authority perspectives of their grade one children.

- To provide certain recommendations and guidelines so that accountable support can be rendered to parents who experience problems regarding the exercising of authority.

## 1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

Research with regard to this study will be conducted as follows:

- A literature study of available, relevant literature.
- An empirical survey comprising a structured questionnaire to be completed by parents of children in grade one.

## 1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 will focus on the life-world of the child in grade one.

In Chapter 3 authority styles of parents will be discussed.

In chapter 4 the planning of the research will be explained.

Chapter 5 will be the presentation and analysis of the research data.

A summary of the study and recommendations will be offered in chapter 6.

## 1.8 SUMMARY

An exposition of the problem, statement of the problem and the aims of this study are given in this chapter. The method of research is explained and certain relevant concepts are elucidated. Finally, the further course of this study is set out.



## CHAPTER 2

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE LIFE - WORLD OF THE GRADE ONE CHILD

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Every persons life-world is made up of other people, objects and ideas. Because the child is a situational being he is in relationship with people, objects and ideas in the life-world. The child constantly interacts with these aspects of reality and we can therefore speak of a contact. The child's interaction with aspects of reality is implied by the term "relationships" (Kokot *et al.*, 1988: 1-2). A relationship is the dynamic, interactive, truly human stand or alignment with another person or objects, whereby bipolar association or interruption is established and mutual influence is realised (Le Roux, 1992: 14). Relationships are supremely important because it is through interacting with reality that the child orientates himself to his life-world. The "I-you" relationship is one of the most fundamental relationships in a child's ( human being's) existence; it is basic to all social life and to all child rearing/education ( Le Roux, 1993: 9). Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 27) also agree that relationships are very important and that a relationship is a particular mode in which persons, things, ideas, self and God are mutually connected.

Every child is an indissoluble part of his life-world. This means that no child should be considered in isolation, but always in "context", in a situation ( the totality of meaningful relationships at that moment). These relationships play an important, although sometimes unobtrusive, part in every situation (Vorster & Meillon, 1991: 12).

If a parent (educator) really wants to understand a child, he needs as much insight as possible into the child's relationships. According to Vorster & Meillon (1991: 12) the following primary relationships can be distinguished:

- The child's relationship with himself (subjective relationship).
- The child's relationship with other people (intersubjective or social relationship).
- The child's relationship with other/God (transcendental relationship).
- The child's relationship with things, ideas (objective relationship).

Vorster & Meillon (1991: 12) and Kokot *et al.* (1988: 2) agree that a relationship is formed when the child becomes aware of an aspect of reality, explores it and finally attributes personal meaning to it. It is by forming relationships that he comes to understand his world. Nel &

Urbani (1990: 6) maintain that on account of man's intentionality, his openness and his freedom of choice Man does not react to stimuli but takes the initiative in establishing relationships between himself and his surrounding world. By doing this man establishes his own subjective life-world which forms the basis of his self concept. Man cannot be situated in any other way than by being in a relationship. Du Plooy, Griessel & Oberhozer (1987: 89) agree that man cannot go out into the life-world without entering into a relationship.

Vrey (1990: 20) explains the formation of relationships in terms of the concept of polarity. He states that the referents in the relationship are two poles, with the child at one, and the particular aspect of reality at the other. This relationship or mutual interaction, according to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 27) and Vorster & Meillon (1991: 13), can manifest itself in an attraction to or a repulsion of the poles, in an acceptance or a rejection, friendliness or unfriendliness, which draws the two referents together or which drives them apart. Relationships are therefore experienced as pleasant or unpleasant and is then either encouraged or avoided.

The success of any relationship depends on the people involved in that relationship. This implies that parents as educators are interested in the relations of their children. This relationship between parent and children can be fruitfully realized through sympathetic understanding, trust and authority (Tutorial Letter, 1983: 4).

Du Plooy & Kilian (1985: 69-73) state that the relation of understanding is a relation of mutual understanding. Both the parent and the child must understand (know) each other so that the child will be able to entrust himself to the parent as his educator. According to De Witt & Booysen (1995b: 169) the relationship of knowing comprises more than a mere understanding of each other by parent and child. It also implies understanding with a view to coming to grips with reality. In this respect the relationship of knowing also remains an exploratory relationship in the educative situation and the educator must assist the child in this respect.

The child is en route to adulthood and is still engaged in exploring an open world. He must have the confidence to venture into the unknown. Within the safe space of the pedagogic encounter, adult and child are in a special relationship of trust. In the absence of a loving space for encounter the child lacks the courage and confidence to explore the world and to transform it gradually into a familiar and sheltered place. Trust is therefore characteristic of the child's way of being in the world. According to Landman, Van Rensburg & Landman (De Witt & Booysen, 1995b: 169) the essences of the relationship of trust are faith, acceptance, expectation and entrustment.

Oberholzer & Langeveld (Tutorial Letter, 1983: 6) maintain that the child longs for sympathetic authoritative guidance. They believe that education without authority is impossible. Because the child knows and trusts the adult he will entrust himself to the authoritative guidance of the adult

figure. The relationship of authority is rooted in the child's acceptance of authority and the parent's essential assistance of the child. In the relationship of authority the adult displays evidence of the fact that he not only has authority, but also accepts the authority of certain norms. The relationship of knowing and the relationship of trust are preconditions for the existence of the relationship of authority (De Witt & Booysen, 1995b: 170).

Owing to the course of the child's development, relationships formed during the primary school years are extremely dynamic. The manner in which the child forms relationships and also the intensity and emotionality of these relationships will change rapidly as he gains an increasing understanding of his world (Vrey, 1990 : 21).

According to Vrey (1990: 78) the material characteristics of the encounter between the child and other people include the following:

- The child approaches other individuals physically.
- It is important that the child's behaviour should be in line with accepted social norms.
- The child's willingness to co-operate and share play a meaningful role in his social interaction with others.

- The child's eagerness to be accepted facilitates his encounters and interaction with others.
- The child's language capability becomes increasingly important as a means of communication.

According to Kruger (1989: 335), the child still has a deep emotional bond with his world. He gradually leaves the safe haven of the family and begins to form/establish relationships with the world around him. Mwamwenda (1995: 49) states that the child's relationship goes beyond his immediate family, extending to people in the neighbourhood as well as ideas, things, problems and roles.

## 2.2 THE CONCEPT LIFE-WORLD

According to Vrey (1990: 15) life-world is the Gestalt of the individual person's meaningful relationships. One's life-world includes all the people, objects, ideas, systems, forces, attitudes, the self and everything to which one has understandably attributed meaning. Pillay (1995: 9) maintains that by establishing the network of relationships the child constitutes a life-world that forms his psychological space and reality to which he is oriented.

Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994: 435) define life-world as follows: ".... daily life, this is the world in which people conduct both a

way of life and a mode of being. It is a 'life-reality' in contrast to 'non-reality' (physical and chemical) and the 'non human life reality' (plants - animals). The life-world includes, among other things, the education reality, the social reality, the life-world of the deaf, the young child, the adolescent, the adult, etc. All these are embedded in the (big) encircling reality. 'World', in turn is what I understand of the life-world, non-living and non-human life-reality, attribute meaning to carry into my life-world, a world as significant for me. "World" is also the horizon of comprehensibilities. The more things I understand the bigger the horizon of my world becomes."

The concept "world" must not be interpreted in the geographical sense alone. Being in the world, man is constantly obliged to give meaning to it, to enlarge the horizon of the world in which he lives by constituting his own, personal life-world as a meaningful and secure space. The relationship between human being and world is a basic one. It is a dialectic relationship that is a fruitful, ongoing dialogue between man and the world. As a world to live in, it is a world of significance which man must explore: it can open and continually change. The child must live in this world as an adult, but in order to do so the child needs the support of an adult whom he knows and trusts (Griessel, 1988: 14-15).

According to Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 9) a child's life-world includes everything to which he attributes meaning (including the self) and which he understands. A child's life-world has an ever widening horizon. It is a



personal life-world, and it is impossible to constitute a life-world without personal experience, personal involvement and the attachment of meaning by the child himself.

Griessel, Fourie, Visser, Sohng & Stone (1976: 59) state that if the child experiences the life-world of the adult as one of worry, doubt, uncertainty, insincerity and threat, he is not only probably handicapped in his progress but may adopt a negative attitude. The child must eventually live in the world as an adult, but in order to do so the child requires the sympathetic authoritative guidance of an adult whom he can trust. Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 9) state that teachers, parents and other adults must meet the child on his journey and accompany and aid him, since a child can only become what he ought to become through the guidance of parents and educators.

The experience of childhood is unique for each child. Just as each child is unique so too is the life-world of each child. The child's life-world includes everything that has meaning for him or her, not only the child's geographical world but all the child's relationships with objects, ideas, people and even himself or herself. The child's relationships may be interdependent and interactive, they are always dynamic and ever increasing and changing as the child relates to them in his life-world (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988: 141). Kurth-Schai (1991: 201) states that the world construction of the child is no homogeneous model even within a given society, for differences in social class, race and sex

often entail differences in opportunity, in freedom and in expectations. Such differences make different childhoods for different children.

The child must orientate himself in his life-world and attribute meaning to his life-world. According to Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 15) no one can do this on behalf of the child or for the child. He himself becomes involved in situations and events because he wants to. He himself experiences the world as a result of his involvement in it and he himself gives meaning to the relationships which he forms with the world. Vrey (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991: 15) states that no two children have the same life-world. The child's life-world is that part of reality which he knows and understands, just as he knows and understands the world in which he is oriented.

Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 141) agree that a child without a life-world is inconceivable and from birth the child is dynamically involved in his or her life-world. Vrey (1990: 15 , 122) further maintains that a life-world is not conceivable apart from a person, since it is the totality of meanings discovered or assigned by a person. The horizons of a child's life-world at a given time encloses the relevant relations that have been established. The child is orientated towards anything with which a meaningful relation has been formed.

### 2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GRADE ONE CHILD

The child in grade one has all kinds of potential abilities and possibilities needed to progress on his journey to adulthood. He moves progressively out of the protective, safe haven of the family and ventures into the unfamiliar world. He already possess a great deal of independence and shows signs of a quest for knowledge and an urge to complete given tasks. His need for friends increasingly impels him to form consistent relationships. He has a good command of the language and this enables him to communicate meaningfully with people (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991: 103-4).

During this period the parent /educator, according to Hurlock (Vorster & Meillon, 1991: 68), collaborating with the child in order to lead him into adulthood, should help the child to:

- learn the physical skills necessary for ordinary games;
- learn behaviour appropriate to his sex;
- develop fundamental skills in reading , writing and arithmetic;
- develop the concepts necessary for everyday living;
- develop a conscience, sound morals and a system of values; and

- develop positive attitudes towards social and other groups .

Vrey (1990: 86) maintains that "....in the child of six years we recognize new drives and hankerings that direct him in his self development. He wants to play with friends." He further emphasizes that the child who goes to school at the age of six gradually plays more with friends. He is accepted in the age group if he can conform.

The language competence of the child, is such that he can communicate. The child can listen, understand the instruction and follow the story. When going to school he already possesses a certain general knowledge and a wide variety of concepts and functions (Vrey, 1990: 86).

In the child's search for meaning he has to begin by discovering "who" and "what" he is. The child's main task is to discover and assign meaning to everything he is involved with. In this manner relations are formed and a life world is established ( Vrey, 1990: 87). By the time the child enters the grade one class it becomes observable that all semblances of the babyhood physique are gone. The child's physical development gives way to a more slender appearance (Hamachek, 1990: 78). According to Vorster & Meillon (1991: 68) the child regards his body as something that enables him to be active; to run, climb, scramble and so on. In this way he explores his environment, makes discoveries, attributes meanings and forms a self-concept. His physical development gradually continues, marked by an increase in height and mass.

There is also a definite improvement in coordination, manifested by the ability to write, run, jump, play ball and ride a bicycle. The child, according to Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 106) is physically active during this period. Riggs (1980: 56) observed that boys often do more running than girls. There are very little differences between the physical drives and abilities between boys and girls during the junior primary phase (Vorster & Meillon, 1991: 68; Vrey, 1990:89). Since children are away from their families for increasingly longer periods of time, they invest themselves in a broader range of peer relationships. Social relationships tend to be activity oriented at this stage. Children relate better when there is something specific and concrete to do, and this gives them an outlet for their enormous energy reserves along with a focus for their social interactions (Hamachek, 1990: 85, 87).

According to Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 107) the grade one child's health is generally better than the preschool child. His immunity matures functionally during the junior primary phase and his body fights illness more efficiently. Childhood ailments do occur.

The child who is between the ages of 5 and 7 is still emotionally vulnerable. Erikson ( Hamachek, 1990: 86) describes this period as a time for developing a sense of industry or feelings of inferiority. This is a time when children uncritically absorb what they experience, see and hear. The child does not only obtain deeper insight into his own feelings but also learns to understand the feelings of other children (Du Toit & Kruger,

1991: 120) . Vander Zanden (Louw, 1992: 346) points out that children's understanding of emotional experiences change noticeably. They increasingly attribute emotions to internal causes, they become aware of social rules governing the expression of emotions and they learn to "read" facial expressions with greater accuracy. According to Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 121) in contrast with the ego centrism of the younger child, the school beginner (grade one child) already shows a sensitivity for other people's feelings, attitudes and needs. The child is willing to venture to establish social relationships.

Seifret (Mwamwenda, 1995: 95) states that the child is still at the stage of concrete operations, which means that they are capable of logical thought about concrete problems, objects and events. According to Vorster & Meillon (1991: 69) the child is still principally concerned with concrete, perceptible things. They are not at ease with symbolic and abstract concepts. Concept formation seems to develop more freely if the child has a wealth of experience.

Visser, Engelbrecht, Le Roux, Lessing, Roets, Van der Merwe & Roux (1993: 152) state that the child between the ages of 5 to 7, builds on objects to form concepts and on concepts to form classes of concepts. He does this by grouping things together, regrouping them, naming them and continuing to explore. The child is able to make some observation about the world around him. Although his thinking begins to take on quite a

logical character, he still depends on interacting with the concrete world and it is still different from adult thought in many interesting respects.

Ginsburg & Opper (1979: 111) maintain that as the child grows older and comes into contact with opposing points of view and varied social institution, his thought goes through a process of decentration. In speech, he considers both what he wants to express and the listener's needs. In games, he considers the other's interests as well as his own, and is willing to modify and follow rules. In moral judgment, he considers both the outcomes of a person's behaviour and its intent.

According Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 128) and Gobbel (1986:6) God is seen as a human and He is seen as an omnipotent being to whom his parents, too, owe obedience. Grade one children do not have the tools, either intellectually, emotionally or experientially to understand God.

Although the child begins to move increasingly outside the safe family circle, his parents remain his primary supporters. Parental encouragement, support, love and guidance are therefore crucially important to the unfolding of his personality . The child's parental loving support is the basis on which all other relationships are formed (Pringle, 1974: 35 ; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1986: 77).

## 2.4 RELATIONSHIPS OF THE GRADE ONE CHILD

The young child seeks and explores new relationships with the framework of expectations for self and others that emerges from the primary relationship (Erwin, 1993: 1). A fact of being which plays a determining role in the acquisition of an own identity, is the special relationship the young child has from an early age with other people who share his living space. So, for instance, he has a special relationship with his parents. The early bond or attachment of a child to a parent or primary caregiver exerts a major influence on later relationships. It is on the foundation of this primary relationship that the conduct and expectations of all other relationships are built. As the child grows older other people, too, start playing a part in his life. These "others" in the child's life-world eventually determine how he will experience the "self" (De Witt & Booyesen, 1995b: 118 ; Erwin, 1993: 1).

### 2.4.1 Relationship with the self

Vrey (1990: 112) is of the opinion that apart from all the things the child has to get to know in his life-world such as people, with their changing attitudes, behaviour and language, the child also has to get to know himself. Coleman (1979: 26) maintains that by attributing meaning to himself, the child also gets to know himself. Thus he forms his self identity. The child gets to know himself through recognition and also in his relations with things and people. He applies subjective criteria to these



relations for judging his own success (Vrey, 1990: 112). Being firmly convinced that he is a person on his own, the child must now find out what kind of person he may become. This can only be done through his relationships with others (Erikson, 1983: 115).

De Witt & Booysen (1995a: 14) and Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 23) state that it is only after the child has built up relationships with objects and things, and especially relationships within the family circle, that a fairly well-defined, self - identity develops - he discovers himself . According to Hendrick (1988: 126) the young child's feelings of self esteem come from the people around him. Parents are very significant influences. As the child moves out into the larger world, the opinions of other adults, teachers and peers become more important.

According to Hurlock (1980: 141) the young child's environment is generally limited to the members of his immediate family. Thus it is not surprising that the family becomes a vehicle for shaping the self-concept/image during these formative years. Feeney, Christensen & Moravchik (1987: 180-181) say that as children grow and develop, they not only form concepts about the world and how it works, but they also form concepts about themselves.

Meyer, Moore & Viljoen (1993: 376 - 377) state that unlike plants and animals, man has the ability to be aware of his experience and to evaluate them. Each person therefore develops a specific view of himself called the

"self concept". Barker (1996: 17) states that the self concept is the core of someone's personality, it is highly personal and significant to the person concerned and therefore the person (child) will do everything in his power to defend it . It is based on their own perceptions as well as what others tell them (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988: 84; Feeney, Christensen & Moravchik, 1987: 180). Mwamwenda (1995: 363) is of the opinion that the self-concept is a person's way of perceiving himself and may be either positive or negative.

Vrey (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991: 14 , 22) says that the self-concept is also the criterion whereby the individual differentiates, attributes meanings, evaluates, anticipates and behaves. Every child should (with the support and guidance of his parents/educators) form a realistic positive self-concept. This self-concept also determines not only with whom and with what the child forms relationships, but also the quality of the relationships formed.

Vrey (1990: 25) maintains that by comparing himself with his peers, with their achievements in handling natural or cultural objects, the child evaluates himself and his abilities in relation to the norms. Hurlock (1980: 141) maintains that how parents feel about their children's appearance, their abilities and their achievements have a marked influence on how the children feel about themselves. The child training method used in the home is important in shaping the young child's developing concept of self.

Strict authoritarian discipline, accompanied by frequent and harsh corporal punishment, tends to build up resentments against all persons in authority.

Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 14 , 22) state that the child is always actively busy exploring his world. His actions elicit positive reactions such as approval or negative reactions such as disapproval from other people who are important to him. Under the influence of feedback received from significant others and by comparing himself with others, he evaluates himself (physical self) on the basis of subjective norms and standards. Hence his self - concept with regard to his physical self unfolds as the relationship with himself is conceptualized by him. Positive feedback and the concomitant experience of success results in a positive evaluation of himself and a negative feedback and the concomitant experience of failure results in a negative evaluation of himself. As a result the child's self-concept as far as his relationship with himself is concerned unfolds with the polarity effect of self-acceptance (I like myself) or of self-rejection (I do not like myself).

Weitz (1991: 8) maintains that a positive self-image starts with a positive body image. The role played by the parents as primary educators in fostering a better understanding of both the anatomy and physiology of the human body is thus important. By means of his body, the child is able to explore his environment and to make social contact with other people both within and outside the family.

Pillari (1988: 163) states that the child's interaction with adults and peers provides him with clues of his worth, or success. Constant interaction with others teach the child what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Yeats (1991: 55) states that on the basis of responses the child receives, he learns to understand who he is and how valued he can be. If children are accepted, approved of, and respected for what they are, they have a good chance of acquiring attitudes of self-esteem and self -acceptance. But if significant people in their lives belittle, blame and reject them, they are likely to develop unfavourable self-attitudes. Yeats (1991: 56) further maintains that most of the child's ideas about himself are developed in the home. They form impressions of themselves from what parents say or do not say. If parents constantly tell the child that he is stupid or lazy, he will soon believe it, and even worse, he will start acting stupid or lazy. Milburne (1983: 30) is of the opinion that often a child with low self -esteem will cause a child to misbehave. Children who feel inferior to others ( parents or peers) will often resort to trickery or force to achieve a sense of superiority. According to Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 23) the child who feels safe and secure and who has a positive self concept, is the one who will have the self confidence to venture, to go out into the world, and to conquer it.

If generalized self-esteem is to be enhanced and maintained, children need parents (teachers) who are accepting, who make them feel secure, who have realistic and clear behavioural expectations, and who encourage independence and responsibility (Samuels, 1977: 184).

## 2.4.2 Relationship with others

### (1) Relationship with parents

Hurlock (1980: 138) emphasizes the importance of the parent-child relationship by saying the most important condition influencing the kind of adjustment young children will make, both personal and social, is the type of parent-child relationship there is during the childhood years. A healthy parent-child relationship is characterised by love, security, frankness, trust and respect. Child and parents are empathetically involved with each other and the polarity effect of this sound relationship is manifested in closeness (De Witt & Booyesen, 1995a : 13 ; Dreyer & Duminy 1993: 43).

Rapoport (1980: 24) states that the child's world begins in the home and parents have a vital role to play in the child's development as a being who needs to become socialised. Le Roux (1993: 85) maintains that the home should be a haven for the child, a place where he can experience acceptance, respect, positive regard, love and consideration. It is in the home that the child learns respect for other people, objects, values and for himself. It is within this safe and secure haven that the child learns to be an integrated human being. In the home the child's physical and emotional needs are met by his parents, as well as his higher order needs, for example: the need to belong to the family and community; to be valued by others and by himself and to succeed in realizing his potential. Once the

child feels safe and secure within the parental home, the forming of relationships became more positive with members of the family.

Vrey ( Du Toit & Kruger, 1991: 121-122) mentions the following requirements for a loving relationship between parent and child:

- knowledge;
- care;
- respect;
- responsibility; and
- trust.

According to Du Plooy, Griessel & Oberholzer (1987: 98-99) and Vrey (1990: 94) man in his human form of existence can be qualified as someone with the will to know. He applies himself to entering into relationships between himself and people . In the relationships between the parent and the child, the parent and child should know each other, that is that they should have a good knowledge of each other as unique individuals. The parent should know the child's needs, his yearnings and his wants. By means of his involvement with the child he should create the kind of atmosphere in which the child will have the freedom to discuss matters confidently.

According to Rogers & Webb (1991: 176) care implies far more than the mere provision of food and clothing. Care implies that parents want to share the child's joys and sorrows. An ethic of care emphasizes

responsibility and relationships, not right and rules. It does not establish guiding principles to follow but instead encourages good works. The parent increasingly stands back and permits the child the chance to see to his own concerns. Parental care is not diminished, but becomes more reserved. Gunter (1995: 40) is of the opinion that the love between parent and child also requires mutual respect. The parent should accept the child as he is, recognise his uniqueness and respect his integrity. Caring parents create an atmosphere of trust and respect in their relationship with their children. To care for others means fostering each individual growth and self actualization.

Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 122) maintain that although the parent-child relationship is characterised by a process of emancipation, the parent should still assume full responsibility for the child's welfare and education. It also implies that the parent will respond to the child's cry of distress and attend to his needs. Rogers & Webb (1991: 176) maintain that nurturing parents help fulfill a child's basic needs for security and attachment by considering what is best for the child.

Du Plooy, Griessel & Oberholzer (1987: 95) emphasise the fact that there should be mutual trust between parent and child. The child lives in complete trust that his parents will care for him, likewise the parent should trust the child's abilities.

The child's relationship with the parents is both cognitive and affective. A child and mother (poles) get to know each other and the relationship is characterised as pleasant or unpleasant, affection, care, feeding or the neglect of these things. As the child grows he experiences the activities composing this relationship as acceptance or rejection (Vrey, 1990: 22). Relationships with other members of the family gradually develops. At first the child needs to achieve a happy, easy natural relationship with the parents (Heasman, 1978: 28).

Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 121) say that although the child begins to move increasingly outside the same haven of the family, his parents still remain his primary supporters. Parental encouragement, support, love and sympathetic authoritative guidance are of vital importance to the unfolding of the child's personality. In spite of their powerful influence on his life, his relationship with his parents as primary educators are characterised by a clear process of emancipation and the freedom of individual choice (Gunter, 1995: 93).

According to Vrey (1990: 95) the child in grade one does not want to be cuddled on the parents lap or to be kissed by the parents in the presence of his peers as the child finds it embarrassing. The parent who knows this, is not concerned. He knows that the child is struggling with his own emancipation and his identification with his peer group. This does not mean that the child does not need parental support. Lee (1990: 130) agrees that children need both parents for a good many years, and at this



age (5 - 7 years), they need their parents more than ever. They need caring adults with whom they can share their thoughts. They need reassurance that they are loved . They need help understanding the rules of the adult world.

Fogel & Melson (1988: 435) observed that one of the basic changes occurring in the parent-child-relationship during the grade one phase is that parents and children spend less time together than they did in earlier years. Research, according to Hill & Stafford (Papalia & Olds, 1993: 454) has shown that parents spend less time in caretaking, teaching, reading and talking and playing with children after the age of 5 years than they did with preschoolers, however when parents and children are together, there is evidence that they devote a greater proportion of their time to social interaction.

Heasman (1978: 30) states that as the child grows up, parents need to loosen their control gradually and help him to become more independent. This means helping the child to stand on his own two feet so that he can leave the security of the family environment and forge ahead himself. Train (1995: 46) emphasises the fact that it is the family that can provide children with this sense of security and belonging, which is a prerequisite for the child venturing into the unknown.

## (2) Relationship with peers

Perry & Bussey (1984: 294) define the peer group as follows; ".... a child's peers may be thought of as the child's social equals - other children who interact with the child at a similar level of complexity and who usually, but not necessarily, are similar in age to the child."

In all societies children are exposed to other people and peers, and their relationships with others contribute to their development (Wick & Israel, 1991: 29).

According to Fogel & Melson (1988: 332 , 448) young children are most likely to form attachments with their parents before they develop ties with other children outside the family. It is thus possible that the quality of these relationships might affect socialisations with peers. Although families remain the most important influences upon the child, children entering school spend more time away from home with other children. Their relations with other children assume greater importance . Questions that occupy their minds are:

- Do other kids like me?
- Who are my friends?
- Am I part of the group?

Peer groups, according to Papalia & Olds (1993: 449) and Berns (1985: 45) form naturally among children who live near each other or go to school together. Children find their playmates more frequently among the groups in which they interact (Musgrove, 1979: 47). These peer groups which comprise of individuals who are approximately the same age and social status tend to have common interests. Le Roux (1992: 13) sees the peer group functioning as a mini society and, by means of a common code of conduct, meaningfully influencing the norms and values and behavioural patterns of its' members. Gordon (1975: 167) maintains that the peer group is a society of people on par with each other. Needs for acceptance, belonging, and experiencing are all provided and it is only in the peer society that the child can meet these needs as an equal.

During the primary school year the child's egocentric, individual play is replaced by group play. The child's circle of friends broadens accordingly and time spent together in the company of friends become very important to him. The child does everything he can to be accepted and increasingly identifies himself with the groups ideas and values (Pillari, 1988: 155). According to Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 112-113) and Griessel, Fourie, Visser, Sohngé & Stone (1976: 324) the child forms groups of fours or five initially. This grouping of friends takes place in a very unstructured and informal way. Children join a group voluntarily and leave it as soon as they become dissatisfied with interaction or play.

Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 43) and Berns (1985: 220) maintain that the relationship with the peer group is extremely important to the child. The peer group is attractive because it provides opportunities for greater independence than does the family. In it children can say what they feel without being told "you shouldn't say things like that " or they can make suggestions without being told "you are too young to do that." Berns (1985: 221) further emphasises that the peer group provides companionship and approval in addition to a sense of belonging. Companionship and approval from friends leads to increased self-esteem and provides models with whom to identify.

According to Gordon (1975: 175), Vrey (1990: 113) and Berns (1985: 45) the peer group fulfills the following important functions in the child's total development:

- It provides a bridge for gradual emancipation from the parents.
- The peer group now offers the child the security he previously experienced in the safe haven of the parental home. The child shifts his security base gradually from the parental home to the peer group.
- The peer group is a group of equals. Thus the child can give his opinions within the group and hold his own, in contrast to the subordinate role in the parent-child relationship.

- If he is accepted by the peer group, a positive self-concept is formed which leads to self-acceptance.
- Demands made on the child by the peer group are at his level of competence because he is in the company of equals.
- It enables the child to achieve in all the developmental domains and especially benefits his personality development.
- The peer group fulfills the child's need for camaraderie and friendship.
- The peer group gives the child the opportunity to practice social skills and to experiment with new ideas, behaviours and attitudes.
- It provides an informal source of knowledge and helps the child to adapt to social rules and regulations.

The peer group also exerts a strong influence on the ideas and behaviours of those who need social approval and fear rejection. The peer group exerts control by simply refusing to include those who don't conform to the values or rules of the group. According to Bronfenbrenner (Bems, 1985: 45-46) the effect of a peer group on the child depends on the attitude and activities which prevail in the peer group.

Hartup (Wick & Israel, 1991: 29) maintains that some children are more accepted and popular with their peers than others. This favoured position is related to their being socially competent, friendly, intelligent and attractive. On the other hand, rejection is related to aggression, non compliance, snobbishness and disruptive actions. Poor peer relations are linked to both childhood and later behaviour problems in complex ways.

The relation to the peer groups, with its quality of positive polarisation, is a *sine qua non* for a child's emancipation (Vrey, 1990: 24). Harper & Huie (Wick & Israel, 1991: 29) state that because so many parents are working outside the home, children spend much time with peers and their influence is tremendous on the young child. Mwamwenda (1995: 56) states that although peers are extremely important to the social development of the child, the parents are still the most important agent in the child's socialization.

#### 2.4.3 Relationship with objects and ideas.

The child does not only discover himself in this world through his own body and through others, but he also comes into contact with objects, things and ideas to which he must attach meaning (Dreyer & Duminy, 1993: 42). While involved with them, the child attributes meaning to them and enters into relationships with them. Polarity in these relationships comes to the fore in the following instances: "the flower is pretty" and "I do not like mathematics". These relationships are also

extended, adapted and refined during involvement, through meaning attribution, assimilation and accommodation, with the child's understanding of and orientation towards ideas and objects in his world (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991: 14).

Vrey (1990: 106) states that relations are formed by the assignment of meaning. Assigning meaning, according to Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 42) is closely related to the cognitive development of the child. The child's cognitive development is characterised by intuitive thinking. This phase is not regarded as a stage of accelerated cognitive development, but as a period of consolidation. It is described as a period of extension and is called the phase of horizontal decalage (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991: 80).

The child in grade one is introduced to concepts such as number, length, mass, etc. He is dominated by his perceptions, he thinks as he perceives. The child gradually becomes able to develop categories and to recognize both likenesses and differences (Dreyer & Duminy, 1993: 42).

Ginsburg & Oppen (1979: 128 : 139) maintain that according to Piaget, the child in grade one (between the ages of 5 and 7) is concerned with grouping single characteristics or objects and things into categories. The child is able to generalise only from concrete situations. He is able to classify objects or things according to a common criterium for example "all are big, or all are small". This takes place to a large extent by means of manipulation and an understanding of the ideas. Since the child is able

to communicate effectively, his interest in intellectual activities brings him into contact with many new situations.

Vrey (1990: 112) states that each time the child assigns meaning to a object or idea he experiences success and satisfaction. These experiences give a unique character to the meaning he assigns to components of the situation or the situation as a whole.

#### 2.4.4 Relationship with God

The child in grade one shows an interest in moral codes and in such matters as "fairness" in society. The child knows the difference between right and wrong, and knows what is implied by authority and punishment. All of these aid in the child's concept of the highest authority, God (Dreyer & Duminy, 1993: 44).

Vrey (1990: 119) states that the child's relationship with God is of a religious nature. The child cannot give meaning to religion on his own, although by the time he goes to school, he has already given thought to life and death and life hereafter.

According to Gobbel (1986: 6) children do not have the tools, either intellectually, emotionally or experientially to understand God and therefore a child identifies his parent with God. Landman, Van Zyl, Swart & Van Zyl (1975: 88) maintain that the child still depends on his parents



to fulfill his need for a secure life-world. To him they are all-powerful and take the place of God. By noticing his parents praying, the child comes to realise that there is Someone more powerful than his parents.

De Witt & Booysen ( 1995a: 14) and Dreyer & Duminy (1993: 44) state that the possibility of developing a religious attitude is closely related to the quality of the parent's religion. In a climate of love, the parent's life embodies the meaning religion has for him. The parents do not have to teach him to pray, the child sees them pray. He sees the relation between their religious profession and their lives. Thus an attitude develops which is indispensable for a religious relation.

Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 128) mention that since the child is in the pre-operational and concrete operational phase of his cognitive development, his moral-religious experience still rests on concrete and realistic grounds. To the child in grade one God has human characteristics and He is seen as an omnipotent being to whom his parents, too, owe obedience.

Roux & Pulles (Van Staden, 1984: 27) agree that the child's concept of God denotes how he thinks of Him and the image that they have formed of Him. Van Staden (1984: 27) states that although the grade one child's concept of God is difficult to ascertain it is mainly characterised by the following:

- The child visualises God in a particular way. He thus forms a concrete image of God, as for example, a fatherly, venerable old man with a beard, sitting on a throne. They know that God lives in heaven ("somewhere in the sky"), but to him this simply means that it is difficult to make physical contact with him.
- The grade one child assigns human qualities to God. He visualises God as a human because of his inability to think in abstract terms. He assigns human qualities to God, for example anger, fatigue and loneliness and sometimes even fallibility.
- The grade one child's concept of God is based on his relationship with their parents. Since the young child often views God in the same way that he view his parents, it is important that the relationship between parents and children be consistent with Christian norms.
- God is almighty. The child recognises God's omnipotence. He believes that God is more powerful than human beings and that He is even able to do things that their own parents are incapable of.

Since God is not physically present in the child's life, it is the task of parents/educators to help him establish a relationship with God. The concept of God that children form will depend on how He is presented to them by the parents/educators. If the parents life does not bear witness to

God's existence the child will not be able to establish a relationship with God (Van Staden, 1984: 20).

According to Prins (1982: 74) the idea of God should not be presented to the child in such a way that the child begins to feel threatened by Him. By presenting God as an ogre who is constantly looking for a transgressor to punish, the parent would be instilling a fear of God in the child instead of a love for Him. Tkach (1993: 13) says that parents should teach the child that God has high standards. They ought to show children that God teaches respect for authority, not contempt, and that God expects us to tell the truth, not lie. It is the task of parents to supply the grade one child with a stable religious background so that the child will have a sound frame of reference against which he can make the many choices with which he will be confronted during the secondary school period (Dobson, 1982: 41).

## 2.5 SUMMARY

The child in grade one, who has started school for the first time has entered the most significant time of his life. It is here that the first impressions become lasting impressions. Matters that go wrong during this period may affect the total school career of the child. Because the grade one child has ventured outside the safe haven of the home he is intensely interested in everything the life-world outside the home has to offer.

This is truly the beginning years of formal learning for the young child. It is in this life-world the child continues to build up relations with others, with his material environment and with himself, others, objects and ideas and God. The peer group plays a significant role, especially in the development of the child's self-concept.

If the child is confronted with situations that are positive, then the child will develop relationships with trust and allow adult authority to guide him towards responsible adulthood. If the child is confronted with negative situations, then a poor self concept is formed and the child will find difficulty in forming meaningful relationships with others in his life-world.

The manner in which the grade one child forms relationships depends on the parenting styles which will be the focus of the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER 3

### AUTHORITY STYLES OF PARENTS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The exercise of parental authority consists in the parent's way (style) of creating a specific order in the lives of their children. To a great extent parental authority (discipline) is a manifestation of parent's attitude towards their children (Cronje, Van der Walt, Retief & Naude, 1987: 104). Parents have the 'power' to exercise authority. Within the home parents see themselves as having authority status over their children (Peters; 1980: 39). It is created in the presence of two individuals, one of whom is in need of support (child) and at least one who is capable of providing support (parent) ( Ferreira, 1994: 111).

Both parents, according to Prinsloo & Beckman (1988: 52), have parental authority and this concept includes guardianship, custody and control. Parental authority cannot be abandoned. It cannot be waived because public opinion always take for granted that parents exercise authority over their children. Farmer (1982: 111) states that early and strict parental discipline is thought by some writers to promote a strong conscience, useful in maintaining social order.

In this chapter attention will be given to authority styles of parents and the influence thereof on the child.

### 3.2 PARENTING STYLES

Parenting styles, according to Gouws & Kruger (1994: 111) can be represented on two pairs of continua, or in terms of two pairs of characteristics that constitute opposite poles in each case, namely accepting/rejecting and lenient/demanding styles. At one end of the accepting/rejecting continuum are parents who are warm, approving and responsive to their children while parents at the other end are inclined to be severely critical of their children. These parents rarely enjoy their children and are often insensitive to their emotional needs.

At the other extreme of the continuum are lenient parents who are very tolerant, exercise little control and offer little guidance to their children. These parents according to Gouws & Kruger (1994: 111) frequently accede to their children's demands and there is little difference between their role and that of their children.

According to Prinsloo & Beckman (1988: 54) parents sometimes need assistance to exercise their parental authority. A vital aspect of the parental authority relationship with the child is the degree of control which they exercise. Seita & Brendtro (1996: 20) state that children who have not bonded to adults, do not accept adult authority or internalise prosocial

values. "Nobody tells me what to do!" they shout, masking their belief that nobody really cares. Often children also don't care, plunging into anti-social life - styles that defy and outrage adults. Extreme rebellion is often a strong signal that adults have not met the child's basic need for secure attachment and autonomy.

According to Baumrind (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 111) parenting styles can take the following forms:

- Authoritarian (autocratic) parenting style.
- Democratic (authoritative) parenting style.
- Permissive (laissez-faire) parenting style.

The above three types of parental authority styles will be discussed in more detail.

#### (1) Authoritarian parents

Authoritarian parents, according to Le Roux (1992: 29) and Erwin (1993: 27), have fixed and inflexible notions of right and wrong. They are typified as detached and controlling, and somewhat less warm than other parents. Satisfactory interaction and intimate communication are virtually non-existent. The parental behaviour is characterised by too much



interference - he wants to control and correct the child in all his activities. Stewart, Friedman & Koch (1985: 86) maintain that authoritarian parents impose strict and often arbitrary demands on the child and make certain that the child obeys the rules. Punishment and orders are routine in such homes (Woolfolk, 1990: 125). Authoritarian parents are strict, they emphasise unquestioning obedience and respect for authority. They discourage talking back or verbal give and take (Mussen, Conger, Kagan & Huston, 1990: 364).

Baumrind (Stewart, Friedman & Koch, 1985:87) finds authoritarian parents to be firm, punitive, unaffectionate and unsympathetic. They value obedience from their children and authority for themselves. They try to shape their children's behaviour according to a set standard of conduct to curb their children's will. Such parents do not encourage independence. Authoritarian parents seldom praise their young children and these children have few rights in their homes, but they are expected to assume as much responsibility as adults.

Zimbardo & Shirley (1981: 27) maintain that authoritarian parents value obedience as a virtue and believes in restricting the child's autonomy. They are neglectful when it comes to showing affection and caring, even though they may see to their children's physical needs. When it comes to discipline and guidance, authoritarian parents do not pay much positive attention to their children's needs. Woolfolk (1990: 125) says that these parents are less involved with their children and are often very cold and

distant from their children. According to Mussen *et al.* (1990: 364) and Zimbardo & Shirley (1981: 27) these parents are very concerned that their children's "good behaviour" will reflect on them as well. They are more concerned with the evaluation of outsiders than they are with those of their family. While they sincerely believe that by being stern and tough they will, for example "make a man of their boy", they may be doing just the opposite. Webb (1990 : 21) states that authoritarian parents frequently use punishment on the child. These parents do not admit that they are punishing the child. They tell themselves, " I am teaching my child to do the right thing."

Pillari (1988: 122) states that strict rules and regulations are enforced upon the child. If the child revolts against their parent's authority or question it in any way, obedience is exacted from them by severe punishment or threats of punishments and little or no recognition, praise, or other signs of approval when the child meets the expected standards (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 112).

Hurlock (1985: 402) says that authoritarian discipline may range from reasonable restraints on the child's behaviour to rigid restraints that permit no freedom of action except that which conforms to prescribed stands. Authoritarian discipline always means control through external force in the form of punishment, especially corporal punishment. Visser, Kokot, Wiechers, Olivier, Van Rensburg & Petrick (1991: 106) state that such parenting style can cause an irreparable rift between parents and the child

- even animosity. This may then be projected onto other authority figures as well, thus forming an anti-authoritarian personality structure.

Cronje *et al.* (1987: 108) state that authoritarian parenting hampers the child's personality development so that he cannot grow up with a will of his own and self-chosen direction in life. According to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 26) children subjected to an authoritarian parenting style, tend to show little independence and social responsibility as they are apt to be dependent because norms and values have not been intrinsically established. They have little experience in choice and decision making. Hurlock (1985: 496) says the child who is dominated by one or both parents is honest, polite and careful, but tends to be shy, docile, easily influenced by others, submissive and overly sensitive. However, Gouws & Kruger (1994: 112) maintain that these children tend to be moody, unhappy, retiring, uninterested, inhibited and irritable. They are also less creative, intellectually curious, self reliant, mature in judgement and flexible than children who are exposed to other parenting styles.

Hurlock (1985: 404) and Gouws & Kruger (1994: 112) are in agreement that the child may become increasingly rebellious towards their parent's authoritarian parenting, expressing their resentment in negative, provocative and challenging behaviour that may culminate in serious conflict. The child may feel that "the world is hostile", and act accordingly. Too much rebellion against too strict discipline may

eventually lead to delinquency. The child may express aggressiveness towards other children - especially younger siblings and members of minority groups - and a hypocritical attitude towards all in authority. According to Davitz (Hurlock, 1985: 404) punishment and rejection give rise to fear: fear promotes defensive reactions; and the defensive reactions elicit further punishment.

Hurlock (1985: 404) further maintains that the child's personality is also unfavourably affected by authoritarian parents. Children who are outwardly quiet, well-behaved, and non-resistant often harbor deep resentments which make them unhappy and suspicious towards everyone they come in contact with, especially people in authority. Le Roux (1992: 29) says that there is a very poor "I-You" relationship between authoritarian parents and children, and a lack of communication between family members. There is no evidence of a relationship of trust and support in these homes.

## (2) Democratic (authoritative) parents

Democratic parents view the rights and duties of parents and children as complementary. As their children mature, they gradually allow them responsibility for their own behaviour. They reason with their children, encourage give and take, and listen to objections and they allow the child to participate in discussions and may take decisions but the final authority rests with the parents ( Seita & Brendtro, 1996 : 23).

According to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 27) the child of democratic parents is directed in a rational, issue oriented manner, where verbal give and take is encouraged, reasons for discipline are explained and discipline is used when necessary. The child is expected to develop independence and yet to conform to adult standards.

These parents are firm, but in a loving and understanding way. Their demands are reasonable as well as rational and consistent. They set clear limits and lay down categorical rules and are prepared to discuss these and reasons for imposing them with the child. Democratic parents enforce rules firmly, sometimes using punishment, but they explain the reasons for rules and involve their children in decision making about rules (Mussen *et al.*, 1990: 363). Le Roux (1992: 28) states that in these homes there is a good "I-You" relationship and good communication between parent and child. The parent accepts the child as he is, with all his failings and shortcomings. This provides safety and security for the child. He trust the parent and knows that he can depend on this person when he experiences hardship or problems. The trust is mutual and parents are emotionally involved in the child's daily activities.

According to Woolfolk (1990: 125) and Pillari (1988: 123-124) democratic parents use punishment and rewards with more emphasis on rewards than on punishment. Punishment is used only when there is evidence that children have "wilfully refused to do what was expected of them". Le Roux (1992: 28) further maintains that if a parent punishes the

child, he does it in an appropriate manner and on reasonable grounds. Corporal punishment is the exception rather than the rule. When children's behaviour comes up to expected standards, the democratic parent rewards them with praise and other expressions of approval. Their children tend to be content, self-reliant and assertive with high self esteem. These children co-operate well with others.

Although democratic parents are fairly strict, demanding, and controlling, they are also consistent, loving and communicative. They are willing to listen to their children and they encourage their children to "talk back", that is they encourage verbal give and take communication (Mussen *et al.*, 1990:364 ; Woolfolk, 1990: 125). They also encourage independence. They give their children a sense of being loved and clear ideas about what is expected of them (Stewart, Friedman, & Koch, 1985: 87 ; Hurlock , 1985: 405).

Papalia & Olds (1993: 354) say democratic parents respect a child's individuality, while at the same time stressing social values. They direct children's activities rationally, paying attention to the issues rather than to the child's fear of punishment or loss of love. While they have confidence in their ability to guide children, they respect the children's interest, opinions, and unique personalities. They are loving, consistent, demanding, and respectful of their children's independent decisions, but they are firm in maintaining standards and willing to impose limited punishment.

Democratic parents experience the least disciplinary problems (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 112-113). Children from democratic parents are capable of stating their views with necessary freedom because they are sure that their parents will treat them with the necessary respect and esteem. They feel secure both in knowing that they are loved, and knowing what is expected of them (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 113 ; Papilla & Olds, 1993: 354).

Woolfolk (1990: 125), Stewart, Friedman & Koch (1988: 88) and Hurlock (1985: 405) maintain that democratic parenting leads to good personal and social adjustment. It results in independence in thinking, initiative in action, and a healthy, positive, confident self concept which is reflected in active, outgoing and spontaneous behaviour. Greater freedom in the home shows itself in better cooperation, greater persistence in the face of obstacles, better self-control, greater creativity, and a friendlier approach to people. These children tend to be content, self-reliant and assertive with high self esteem.

Hurlock (1985: 405) says the most important contribution to children's personal and social adjustment made by democratic parents is that it develops inner control. This gives children feelings of satisfaction to know that they are permitted to control their behaviour and that they can do so in a way that will win social approval. Such children are far less likely to be plagued by feelings of guilt and shame.

### (3) Permissive parents

According to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 27) the permissive (*laissez-faire*) style of authority gives an individual freedom or "carte blanche" to behave as he wishes. Stewart, Friedman & Koch (1985: 87) say that permissive parents do not feel in control and do not exert control. Mother is loving, father is lax. Children in these families have few responsibilities but the same rights as adults.

Seita & Brendtro (1996: 23) maintain that permissive parents take a passive role and give complete freedom for group and individual decisions relating to group procedure and participation. As primary educators they make it known that they are available if required but take little initiative. Parents use little punishment and tend to accept the child with all his impulses, desires, drives, actions and immature behaviour. Le Roux (1992: 30) states that few demands regarding responsibility are made and the child is left to regulate his own activities. Although parents attempt to change the child's behaviour through reason they do not use their authority when in conflict and tend to give in to the child's demands.

Permissive parental authority is usually found in the "loose" type of family, also called the "boarding house family". Each member of the family lives "away from home", all come and go as they please, therefore a profound "I-You" relationships or intimate communication hardly ever occurs. The



family members all live their own lives and prefer to find their social relationships outside the family (Le Roux, 1992: 30-31).

Permissive parents do not seem to care about their children's grades at school, they make no rules about television, do not attend school functions, and neither help nor check their children's school work. As Baumrind (Papalia & Olds, 1993: 527-528) uses the term, the parents' motivation for providing little supervision may be either because they are neglectful and uncaring or, although caring and concerned, they believe that children should be responsible for their own lives. According to Dinkmeyer & Mickay (1990: 3) permissive parents are generally afraid to take a stand on things they believe in. Rather than risk being attacked verbally, they offer no opinions and make requests that can be easily ignored. They avoid conflict at all cost. Permissive parents usually see themselves as powerless.

Zimbardo & Shirley (1981: 28) found that permissive parents are often casual about everything from an infant's crying that signals a need for comfort or care, to setting down guidelines for a child's behaviour. They are sometimes benignly neglectful and inconsistent, and they may convey to their children a sense that they are unconcerned.

According to Hurlock (1985: 404-405) and Zimbardo & Shirley (1981: 28) children brought up in homes of permissive parents always felt that their parents did not really care for them, and they grew up feeling

unimportant. Coopersmith (Vrey, 1990: 98) states that children who are reared under strongly structured conditions tend to be more, rather than less, independent and more creative than the child reared under more open and permissive conditions.

Permissive parents value self-expression and self-regulation. They make few demands, allowing children to monitor their own activities as much as possible. They consider themselves resources, not standard-bearers or models. They explain the reasons underlying the few family rules that do exist, consult with children about policy decisions, and hardly ever punish. They are non-controlling, non-demanding, and relatively warm. The children from such parents tend to be immature - the least self-controlled and the least exploratory (Papalia & Olds, 1993:354).

Gouws & Kruger (1994: 112) maintain that children who grew up with permissive parents often felt vulnerable. They are not ready and mature enough to use their unlimited freedom wisely, with the result that they develop a sense of insecurity and uncertainty. They are often inclined to be impulsive and to display a lack of self-reliance and self-control.

Pillari (1988: 122) and Hurlock (1985: 402) maintain that permissive parental discipline is really little or no discipline. It does not usually guide the child into socially approved patterns of behaviour and does not employ punishment. Some parents, mistaking permissiveness for *laissez faire*, allow children to grope through situations too difficult for them to cope

were brought up. They grow into damaged parents, who in turn, grossly neglect or damage their children. By observing their parents these children often have no limits or boundaries set on what they may do; they are permitted to make their own decisions and act on them in practically any way they wish because of the limited parental influence on the child. Hurlock (1980: 133) states that permissive parenting produces adults whose ability to live independently is marginal and who are unable to work productively during much of their lives.

### 3.3 THE INFLUENCE OF THE VARIOUS PARENTING STYLES ON THE GRADE ONE CHILD

The manner in which parents raise up their children, that is their parenting styles, can play an important role in the becoming of the child. Attention will now be given to the influence of the various parenting styles on the grade one child.

#### 3.3.1 Authoritarian parenting style

Louw (1992: 352) states that parents who apply the authoritarian style, place such a high premium on conformity and obedience that they will even reject their child if he does not comply with their wishes.

Children who have grown up in authoritarian homes usually have a lower self-esteem and they are also less skilled in their relationships with their

Children who have grown up in authoritarian homes usually have a lower self-esteem and they are also less skilled in their relationships with their friends. Some of these children appear reserved, and others show a high level of aggression and they tend to do less well in school than children of democratic parents. These children also lack spontaneity (Wick & Israel, 1991:28 ; Schroeder, 1991:74).

Isenberg & Jalongo (1993: 258) and Erwin (1993: 27) state that these children are often resentful and rebellious and with a low self-esteem. Often they show characteristics of moodiness and anxieties about social comparison. Children, under the influence of authoritarian parenting, often find it difficult to form peer relationships; they lack initiative and tend to be anxious, withdrawn and apprehensive. Children experiencing power assertive styles of discipline, actually expect their unfriendly, assertive methods of resolving peer conflicts (such as threatening to hit the other child) to be successful.

Due to the fact the parent control is so authoritarian, children do not learn self-control. As soon as parents are away, children often become unruly and out of control. This behaviour is the child's way of expressing resentment of controlling interaction. Berns (1985: 108) maintains that, while producing outward conformity, the child may produce inner turmoil that may eventually surface. Baumrind (Berns, 1985: 110 - 111) labels parents of children who were relatively discontented, withdrawn and distrustful and detached, controlling and somewhat less warm than that of

social responsibility. Children of authoritarian parents were less likely than other children to have developed independent, self-reliant behaviour, and they were also angry and defiant.

Steyn, Van Wyk & Le Roux (1989: 338) state that authoritarian parents display dictatorial behaviour, thus dominating and controlling the child's behaviour. Children from these homes are often troubled by feelings of inadequacy, inferiority and shame. They lack creativeness and problem solving behaviour because they were never given the opportunity to take risks independently. They often develop serious problems with stress and they are dependent on other people. They lack the initiative to take responsibility and too often lack the courage to accept challenges. These children will become defiant, negative, aggressive and rebellious against all forms of authority. Erwin (1993: 27) states that the lack of warmth in the parent-child relationship may produce a child with low self-esteem, moodiness and anxieties about social comparisons.

### 3.3.2 Democratic parenting style

The democratic parenting style encourages verbal give and take in order to share with the child the reasoning behind any particular policy or rule (Pillari, 1988: 123). This type of parenting does exercise a firm control over the child, but not to the extent that the child is overburdened with restrictions. Schroeder (1991: 74) states that a warm parenting relationship between parents and children include hugging, kissing,

restrictions. Schroeder (1991: 74) states that a warm parenting relationship between parents and children include hugging, kissing, holding and cuddling. Such parenting has more influence on adult social adjustment than any other parenting style.

Louw (1992: 352) maintains that of all the parenting styles exerted, children who have grown up in democratic parenting homes have high self-esteem, they are better able to internalise moral standards and perform better academically. Parents who tend to use the democratic or harmonious style, according to Fogel & Melson (1988:437) and Stewart, Friedman & Koch (1985: 88), have children who were friendly, co-operative, independent, achieving and full of vitality.

Mussen *et al.*, (1990: 492) say that in addition these children are more independent, more ready to try new things and they show a high degree of altruistic behaviour. Children of democratic parents prove to be consistently and significantly more competent than children of authoritarian parents. Girls in democratic families show social responsibility, and are dominant and achievement oriented. Boys show social responsibility and friendly, co-operative behaviour in comparison to the hostile and resistant behaviour of children from authoritarian parenting homes.

According to Isenberg & Jalongo (1993: 260), Papalia & Olds (1993: 354) and Zimbardo & Shirley (1981: 27) children who live with

democratic parents appear to feel secure, know what is expected of them, and are self-sufficient, self-controlled and self-assertive. They also tend to be self-starters who are capable of initiating and completing projects independently of adults. Papalia & Olds (1993: 355) say that the democratic parenting style enhances the child's competence level. The success of this style may be related to the parents reasonable expectations and realistic standards. Children who felt loved by their parents were found to be most understanding, and the most likely to show active concern for others. Children from democratic homes showed a greater degree of creativity in their work and finished products. The democratic environment made the child feel more safe and conducive to learning and to do things differently and creatively (Hamachek, 1985: 403-404).

### 3.3.3 Permissive parenting style

The permissive parenting style creates a climate in which the child himself is responsible for regulating his behaviour. Although the child is well cared for by his parents, they exercise no control over him. Consequently the child does as he likes. According to Wick & Israel (1991: 28) parents tolerate children's impulses, make few demands for mature behaviour, use little punishment and allow children to regulate their own lives. Children tend to be impulsive, aggressive and lack independence and ability to take responsibility.

Papalia & Olds (1993: 354), Musen *et al.*, (1990: 492) and Stewart, Friedman & Koch (1985: 88) all are in agreement that children with permissive parents tend to be immature, the least self - controlled and self - exploratory and least self-reliant and unhappy. Because these children receive so little guidance they often become uncertain and anxious about whether they are doing the right thing. These children were found to show less moral behaviour as they were growing up.

Hurlock (1985: 404-405) maintains that because of limited experience and mental immaturity, which makes it impossible for them to make decisions about behaviour which will conform to social expectations, children do not know what they should or should not do. As a result they are likely to become fearful, anxious and excessively aggressive. They are likely to become resentful because they feel that their parents care too little about them to take the trouble to guide them and thus help them to avoid mistakes. It is not unusual for such children to feel contempt for their parents "softness".

Zimbardo & Shirley (1981: 28) say that permissiveness does not contribute much to the child's sense of security. Fogel & Melson (1988: 314) found that these children exhibited a lack of instrumental competence. Research conducted by Berk (Louw, 1992: 132) has indicated that children with permissive parents are disobedient and irascible when they are asked to do something that conflicts with their desires. They do not easily accept responsibility, tend to do less well at



school, and appear to be less mature in their behaviour and attitude towards their friends and school.

Block & Pulkkinen (Louw, 1992: 353) found that children of permissive parents show disturbances in relationships with other people, they often tend to be impulsive and even antisocial . Because of the inconsistencies in parental attitude, children in permissive homes tend to possess less self control, self-reliance, exploratory or investigative behaviour. Standards for behaviour are so inconsistent and the environment is so unpredictable, that children cannot anticipate that their rights will be protected or even clearly determine what their rights are (Louw, 1992: 352 ; Pillari, 1988: 123 ; Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993: 260).

### 3.4 SUMMARY

Parenting authority styles can be defined as the practice of assisting and guiding the child towards adulthood. Different parenting styles of child rearing cannot be actualized without communication and the parenting style is essentially an interpersonal communication style that is actualized with the child.

Parenting authority styles have a marked influence on any child. Various parenting authority styles can either hamper or enhance the development of independence and self-reliance in the child. It can also determine the

nature and extent of respect, trust and authority between parent and child.

When there is a lack of co-operation between parents in disciplining their children, no permanent authority can be established, since parental influence suffers because the child rejects parental authority and loses respect for the parent .

Discipline should not be evaluated in terms of its immediate results. Nor should it be evaluated in terms of the child's moral behaviour alone. Although a child can be forced into a pattern of adult-approved behaviour and made into a "perfect child", the long term effects on the child's attitude towards those in authority as well as the child's personality may outweigh the temporary advantages.

Parents should think of discipline as setting limits on the child's behaviour. Children actually thrive on limits. Because they count on adults to take care of their needs, they expect parents to stop them from hurting others.

Parental authority styles have a significant influence on aspects such as the child's socialization, self-actualization, self-concept, fulfilment of needs and personality development.

The following chapter will provide a description of the planning of the research, aimed at establishing parental authority perspectives of grade one parents.

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## CHAPTER 4

### PLANNING OF THE RESEARCH

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, an inquiry was made into the parental authority perspective of grade one parents. In the literature study it was found that the various parenting styles for example, the authoritarian, democratic and permissive have a great influence upon the grade one child. The manner in which the grade one child forms relationships with other people, objects and ideas has a strong bearing upon the parental authority styles of the parents. In order to investigate the findings in the literature study, it was necessary to undertake an empirical survey. The only means to collect the data was through administering a self structured questionnaire to parents of grade one children. Therefore this chapter will focus on the planning of the research in discussing the questionnaire as research instrument, pilot study and the processing of data.

#### 4.2 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

##### 4.2.1 The questionnaire as research instrument

According to Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994: 504) a questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group

of topics, given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration. Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 190) say the questionnaire is a prepared question form submitted to certain persons (respondents) with a view to obtaining information. Churchill & Peter (Schnetler, 1993: 77) have shown that the measuring instrument has the greatest influence on the reliability of research data. The characteristics of measurement are best controlled by the careful construction of the instrument. There is, however, insufficient appreciation for the fact that a questionnaire should be constructed according to certain principles (Kidder & Judd, 1986: 128-131; Behr, 1988: 155-156).

A well - designed questionnaire is the culmination of a long process of planning the research objective, formulating the problem, generating the hypothesis, etc. A questionnaire is not simply thrown together. A poorly designed questionnaire can invalidate any research results, notwithstanding the merits of the sample, the field workers and the statistical techniques (Huysamen, 1989:2). In their criticism of questionnaires Berchie & Anderson (Schnetler, 1993: 61) object to poor design rather than to questionnaires as such. A well-designed questionnaire can boost the reliability and validity of the data to acceptable tolerance (Schumacher & Meillon, 1993: 42).

It therefore stands to reason that questionnaire design does not take place in a vacuum. According to Dane (1990: 315-319) the length of individual

questions, the number of response options, as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by the following:

- Choice of the subject to be researched.
- Aim of the research.
- Size of the research sample.
- Method of data collection.
- Analysis of the data.

Against this background the researcher can now look at the principles that determine whether a questionnaire is well-designed. It is thus necessary to draw a distinction between questionnaire content, question format, question order, type of questions, formulation of questions and validity and reliability of questions.

#### 4.2.2 Construction of the questionnaire

Questionnaire design is an activity that should not take place in isolation. The researcher consulted and sought advice from specialists and colleagues at all times during the construction of the questionnaire ( Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988: 198). Questions to be taken up

in the questionnaire should be tested on people to eliminate possible errors. A question may appear correct to the researcher when written down but can be interpreted differently when asked to another person. There should be no hesitation in changing questions several times before the final formulation keeping the original purpose in mind. The most important point to be taken into account in questionnaire design is that it takes time and effort and that the questionnaire will be re-drafted a number of times before being finalised. A researcher must therefore ensure that adequate time is budgeted for in the construction and preliminary testing of the questionnaire (Kidder & Judd, 1986: 243-245). All of the above was taken into consideration by the researcher during the designing of the questionnaire for this investigation.

An important aim in the construction of the questionnaire for this investigation was to present the questions as simple and straightforward as possible. The reasons for this were that not all members of the target population under investigation might be adequately educated to interpret questions correctly or familiar with the completion of questionnaires. Questions were formulated in English. The accompanying letter and instructions were also in English. The researcher aimed to avoid ambiguity, vagueness, bias, prejudice and technical language in the questions.

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information regarding parental authority perspectives of their grade one children. The questions were



formulated to determine the parental authority of grade one child's parents for example:

- responsibility;
- punishment;
- obedience; and
- norms.

The questionnaire was sub-divided into two sections as follows:

- Section one which dealt with the biographical information of the respondents and consisted of questions 1 to 10.
- Section two focused on the parental authority perspectives of parents of their grade one children and consisted of 54 closed questions. In this section respondents were requested to indicate their perceptions of their authority perspectives in three ways namely always, often, seldom, and never.

#### 4.2.3 Characteristics of a good questionnaire

Throughout the construction of the questionnaire researcher had to consider the characteristics of a good questionnaire in order to meet the requirements necessary for the research instrument to be reliable. The characteristics of a good questionnaire that were considered by the researcher are, according to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 190), Mahlangu (1987: 84-85) and Norval (1984: 60) the following:

- It has to deal with a significant topic, one the respondent will recognise as important enough to warrant spending his or her time on. The significance should be clearly and carefully stated on the questionnaire and on the accompanying letter.
- It must seek only that information which cannot be obtained from other sources.
- It must be as short as possible, but long enough to get the essential data. Long questionnaires frequently find their way into the wastepaper basket.
- Questionnaires should be attractive in appearance, neatly arranged and clearly duplicated or printed.

- Directions for a good questionnaire must be clear and complete and important terms clearly defined.
- Each question has to deal with a single concept and should be worded as simply and straightforwardly as possible.
- Different categories should provide an opportunity for easy, accurate and unambiguous responses.
- Objectively formulated questions with no leading suggestions should render the desired responses. Leading questions are just as inappropriate in a questionnaire as they are in a court of law.
- Questions should be presented in a proper psychological order, preceding from general to more specific and sensitive responses. An orderly grouping helps respondents to organise their own thinking so that their answers are logical and objective. It is preferable to present questions that create a favourable attitude before proceeding to those that are more intimate or delicate in nature. Annoying and / or embarrassing questions should be avoided if possible.

#### 4.2.4 Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire

Data can be gathered by means of a structured questionnaire in *inter alia* the following ways: a written questionnaire that is mailed, delivered or handed out personally; personal interviews; telephone interviews (Kidder & Judd, 1986: 221). Each mode has specific advantages and disadvantages which the researcher needs to evaluate for their suitability to the research question and the specific target population being studied, as well as relative cost. The researcher decided to use the written questionnaire as research instrument after contemplating the considerable advantages of this method (Mahlangu, 1987: 94-95; Norval, 1984: 60).

##### (1) Advantages of the written questionnaire

- Affordability is the primary advantage of written questionnaires because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.
- Written questionnaires preclude possible interviewer bias. The way the interviewer asks questions and even the interviewer's general appearance or interaction may influence respondent's answers. Such biases can be completely eliminated with a written questionnaire.

- A questionnaire permits anonymity. If it is arranged such that responses were given anonymously, this would increase the researcher's chances of receiving responses which genuinely represent a person's beliefs, feelings, opinions or perceptions.
- They permit a respondent a sufficient amount of time to consider answers before responding.
- Questionnaires can be given to many people simultaneously, that is to say that a large sample of the target population can be reached.
- They provide greater uniformity across measurement situations than do interviews. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.
- Generally the data provide by questionnaires can be more easily analysed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.
- Using a questionnaire solves the problem of non-contact when the respondent is not at home "when the interviewer calls". When the target population to be covered is widely

and thinly spread, the mail questionnaire is the only possible method of approach.

- Through the use of the questionnaire approach the problems related to interviews may be avoided. Interview "errors" may seriously undermine the reliability and validity of survey results.
- Respondents may answer questions of a personal or embarrassing nature more willingly and frankly on a paper questionnaire than in a face to face situation with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger. In some cases it may happen that respondents report less than expected and make more critical comments in a mail questionnaire.
- Questions requiring considered answers rather than immediate answers could enable respondents to consult documents in the case of the mail questionnaire approach.
- Respondents can complete questionnaires in their own time and in a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Questionnaire design is relatively easily if the set guidelines are followed.

- The administering of questionnaires, the coding, analysis and interpretation of data can be done without any special training.
- Data obtained from questionnaires can be compared and inferences made.
- Questionnaires can elicit information which cannot be obtained from other sources. This renders empirical research possible in different educational disciplines.

(2). Disadvantages of the questionnaire

Researcher is also aware of the fact that the written questionnaire has important disadvantages. According to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 190), Kidder & Judd (1986: 223-224) and Mahlangu (1987: 84-85) the disadvantages of the questionnaire are *inter alia* the following:

- Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews. In an interview an idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting the question. If questions asked are interpreted differently by respondent the validity of the information obtained is jeopardized.

- People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing
- Questions can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.
- The mail questionnaire does not make provision for obtaining the views of more than one person at a time. It requires uninfluenced views of one person only.
- Answers to mail questionnaires must be seen as final. Rechecking of responses cannot be done. There is no chance of investigating beyond the given answer for a clarification of ambiguous answers. If respondents are unwilling to answer certain questions nothing can be done to it because the mail questionnaire is essentially inflexible.
- In a mail questionnaire the respondent examines all the questions at the same time before answering them and the answers to the different questions can therefore not be treated as "independent."
- Researcher is unable to control the context of question answering, and specifically, the presence of other people.



- In a mail questionnaire the respondent examines all the questions at the same time before answering them and the answers to the different questions can therefore not be treated as "independent."
- Researcher is unable to control the context of question answering, and specifically, the presence of other people. Respondents may ask friends or family members to examine the questionnaire or comment on their answers, causing bias if the respondent's own private opinions are desired.
- Written questionnaires do not allow the researcher to correct misunderstanding or answer questions that the respondents may have. Respondents might answer questions incorrectly or not at all due to confusion or misinterpretation.

#### 4.2.5 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

There are two concepts that are of critical importance in understanding issues of measurement in social science research, namely validity and reliability (Huysamen, 1989: 1-3). All too rarely do questionnaire designers deal consciously with the degree of validity and reliability of their instrument. This is one reason why so many questionnaires are lacking in these two qualities (Norval, 1984: 15). Questionnaires have a very limited purpose. In fact, they are often one-time data gathering

Kidder & Judd (1989: 53-54) mention the fact that although reliability and validity are two different characteristics of measurement, they "shade into each other". They are two ends of a continuum but at points in the middle it is difficult to distinguish between them. Validity and reliability are especially important in educational research because most of the measurements attempted in this area are obtained indirectly. Researchers can never guarantee that an educational or psychological measuring instrument measures precisely and dependably what it is intended to measure (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988: 198). It is essential, therefore, to assess the validity and reliability of these instruments. Researchers must therefore have a general knowledge as to what validity and reliability are and how one goes about validating a research instrument and establishing its reliability (Huysamen, 1989: 1-3).

#### (1) Validity of the questionnaire

Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994: 560) define validity as the extent to which a measuring instrument satisfies the purpose for which it was constructed. It also refers to the extent to which it correlates with some criterion external to the instrument itself. Validity is that quality of a data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine what it was designed to determine. In general terms validity refers to the degree to which an instrument succeeds in measuring what it has set out to measure. Behr (1988: 122) regard validity as an indispensable characteristic of measuring devices.

Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988 :237), Mulder (1989: 215-217) and Dane (1990: 257-258) distinguish between three different types of validity:

- Content validity where content and cognitive processes included can be measured. Topics, skills and abilities should be prepared and items from each category randomly drawn.
- Criterium validity which refers to the relationship between scores on a measuring instrument and an independent variable (criterion) believed to measure directly the behaviour of characteristics in question. The criterion should be relevant, reliable and free from bias and contamination.
- Construct validity where the extent to which the test measures a specific trait or construct is concerned, for example, intelligence, reasoning, ability, attitudes, etceteras.

It means that validity of the questionnaire indicates how worthwhile a measure is likely to be in a given situation. Validity shows whether the instrument is reflecting the true story, or at least something approximating the truth. A valid research instrument is one that has demonstrated that it detects some "real" ability, attitude, or prevailing situation that the

researcher can identify and characterize (Schnetler, 1993: 71). If the ability or attitude is itself stable, and if a respondent's answer to the items are not affected by other unpredictable factors, then each administration of the instrument should yield essentially the same results (Dane, 1990: 158).

The validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument reflects the sureness with which conclusions can be drawn. It refers to the extent to which interpretations of the instrument's results, other than the ones the researcher wishes to make, can be ruled out. Establishing validity requires that the researcher anticipates the potential arguments that sceptics might use to dismiss the research results (Dane, 1990: 148-149).

The researcher employed the questionnaire as an indirect method to measure parental authority perspectives of their grade one children. Because of the complexity of the respondents attributes one is never sure that the questionnaire devised will actually measure what it purports to measure. Items in the questionnaire cannot be measured like height, mass, length or size. From the interpretation of the results obtained and the sureness with which conclusions could be drawn, the researcher is, however, convinced that the questionnaire to a great extent did measure that which it was designed for.

## (2) Reliability of the questionnaire

According to Mulder (1989: 209) and Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994: 512) reliability is a statistical concept and relates to consistency and dependability. Consistency of obtaining the same relative answer when measuring phenomena that have not changed. A reliable measuring instrument is one that, if repeated under similar conditions, would present the same result or a near approximation of the initial result. Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 194) and Kidder & Judd (1986: 47-48) distinguish between the following types of reliability:

- Test-retest reliability (coefficient of stability) - consistency estimated by comparing two or more repeated administrations of the measuring instrument. This gives an indication of the dependability of the results on one occasion which may then be compared with the results obtained on another occasion.
- Internal consistency reliability. This indicates how well the test items measure the same thing.
- Split-half reliability. By correlating the results obtained from two halves of the same measuring instrument, we can calculate the split-half reliability.

In essence, reliability refers to consistency, but consistency does not guarantee truthfulness. The reliability of the question is no proof that the answers given reflect the respondent's true feelings (Dane, 1990: 256). A demonstration of reliability is necessary but not conclusive evidence that an instrument is valid. Reliability refers to the extent to which measurement results are free of unpredictable kinds of error. Sources of error that effect reliability are *inter alia* the following (Mulder, 1989: 209; Kidder & Judd, 1986: 45) :

- Fluctuations in the mood or alertness of respondents because of illness, fatigue, recent good or bad experiences, or temporary differences amongst members of the group being measured.
- Variations in the conditions of administration between groups. These range from various distractions, such as unusual outside noise to inconsistencies in the administration of the measuring instrument such as omissions in verbal instructions.
- Differences in scoring or interpretation of results, chance differences in what the observer notices and errors in computing scores.

- Random effects by respondents who guess or check off attitude alternatives without trying to understand them.

When the questionnaire is used as an empirical research instrument there is no specific method, for example the "test-retest" method, to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Therefore, it will be difficult to establish to what extent the answers of the respondents were reliable. Researcher, however, believes that the questionnaires in this investigation were completed with the necessary honesty and sincerity required to render the maximum possible reliability.

#### 4.3 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is an abbreviated version of a research project in which the researcher practises or tests the procedures to be used in the subsequent full-scale project (Dane , 1990: 42). The pilot study is a preliminary or "trial run" investigation using similar questions and similar subjects as in the final survey. Kidder & Judd (1986: 211-212) say the basic purpose of a pilot study is to determine how the design of the subsequent study can be improved and to identify flaws in the measuring instrument. A pilot study gives the researcher an idea of what the method will actually look like in operation and what effects (intended or not) it is likely to have. In other words, by generating many of the practical problems that will ultimately arise, a pilot study enables the researcher to avert these problems by changing procedures, instructions and questions.

The number of participants in the pilot study or group is normally smaller than the number scheduled to take part in the final survey. Participants in the pilot study and the sample for the final study must be selected from the same target population. For the purpose of this study the researcher conducted a pilot run on ten of his colleagues with children in grade one. According to Plug, Meyer, Louw & Gouws (1991: 49-66) the following are the purposes of a pilot study, and these were also the aim of the researcher in this survey:

- It permitted a preliminary testing of the hypothesis that leads to testing more precise hypotheses in the main study.
- It provided the researcher with ideas, approaches and clues not foreseen prior to the pilot study.
- It permitted a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, thus allowing an appraisal of their adequacy in treating the data.
- It greatly reduced the number of treatment errors because unforeseen problems revealed in the pilot study resulted in redesigning the main study.



- It saved the researcher major expenditures of time and money on aspects of the research which would have been unnecessary.
- Feedback from other persons involved were made possible and led to important improvements in the main study.
- In the pilot study the researcher tried out a number of alternative measures and selected only those that produced the best results for the final study.
- The approximate time required to complete the questionnaire was established in the pilot study.
- Questions and/or instructions that were misinterpreted were reformulated.

Through the use of the pilot study as 'pre-test' the researcher was satisfied that the questions asked complied adequately with the requirements of the study.

#### 4.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

If properly administered the questionnaire is the best available instrument for obtaining information from widespread sources or large groups

simultaneously (Mulder, 1989: 39). Researcher personally delivered questionnaires to selected parents in Umkomaas and collected them after completion. This method of administration facilitated the process and the response rate. A 80 % return was obtained with 80 (42 fathers and 38 mothers) out of 100 questionnaires completed and collected.

#### 4.6 THE PROCESSING OF THE DATA

Once data was collected, it was captured in a format which would permit analysis and interpretation. This involved the careful coding of the 80 questionnaires completed by the parents of grade one children. The coded data was subsequently transferred onto a computer spreadsheet using the Quattro Pro 4.0 data base statistics computer programme. The coded data was submitted to the Department of Statistics at the University of Natal and computer analysed using the SAS programme in order to interpret the results by means of descriptive statistics.

##### 4.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics serve to describe and summarise observations (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, 1994: 355). Frequency tables, histograms and polygons are useful in forming impressions about the distribution of data.

According to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 65-76) frequency distribution is a method to organise data obtained from questionnaires to simplify statistical analysis. A frequency table provide the following information:

- It indicates how many times a particular response appears on the completed questionnaires.
- It provides percentages that reflect the number of responses to a certain question in relation to the total number of responses.

#### 4.6.2 Application of data

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to determine parental authority perspectives of their grade one children. In order to obtain the information needed for the purpose of this study the questionnaire was sub-divided into two sections.

- Section 1 required demographic information about parents and included items 1.1 to 1.10.
- Section 2 gathered information regarding parental responsibility, punishment, obedience and norms within the relationship of authority between parent and child.

- Parental perceptions regarding responsibility was covered by items 2.3 , 2.7 , 2.11 , 2.12 , 2.13 , 2.14 , 2.15 , 2.16 , 2.39 , 2.41 , 2.42, 2.50.
- Perceptions regarding punishment included items 2.29 , 2.30 , 2.31 , 2.32 , 2.33 , 2.34 , 2.35 , 2.36 , 2.37 , 2.38 , 2.51 , 2.52 , 2.53, 2.54.
- Perceptions regarding obedience included items 2.1 , 2.2 , 2.4 , 2.8, 2.5 , 2.6 , 2.9 , 2.24 , 2.26 , 2.27, 2.28 , 2.47 , 2.48.
- Perceptions regarding norms included items 2.17 , 2.18 , 2.19, 2.20 , 2.21, 2.22 , 2.23 , 2.25 , 2.43 , 2.44 , 2.45 , 2.46.

#### 4.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION

This investigation was constrained by a number of factors. The following are likely factors that might have influenced the reliability and validity of the questionnaire:

- Although anonymity was required in the questionnaire the possibility exists that, because of Indian parents' cautiousness, they might not have been frank and truthful in their responses.

- The sensitive nature of items in the questionnaire might have elicited false or misleading responses and influenced the reliability of the results.
- To restrict the investigation to manageable proportions, the researcher limited the study to the parents of grade one pupils only.

#### 4.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter the planning and design of the empirical research was discussed and a description of the questionnaire as research instrument was given.

In the following chapter the data obtained from the completed questionnaires will be analysed.

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## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data which was collected from the completed questionnaires will be analysed, findings will be interpreted, and some comments will be offered.

### 5.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

#### 5.2.1 Gender of parents

Table 1      Frequency distribution according to the gender of parents

Gender	Frequency	%
Males (fathers)	42	52,50
Females (mothers)	38	47,50
TOTAL	80	100

Table 1 shows that more fathers (52,50 %) than mothers completed the questionnaires. Although questionnaires were required to be completed by both the mother and father, the above discrepancy occurs because seven of the mothers (cf. 5.2.5) regarded the father, as the head of the family, more competent to complete the questionnaire.

### 5.2.2 Age of parents

Table 2      Frequency distribution according to the age of parents

	Age	Frequency	%
1	younger than 21 years	0	0
2	21 - 25 years	5	6,25
3	26 - 30 years	23	28,75
4	31 - 35 years	21	26,25
5	36 - 40 years	16	20,0
6	41 - 45 years	9	11,25
7	46 - 50 years	5	6,25
8	51 - 55 years	1	1,25
9	56 -60 years	0	0
10	older than 60	0	0
	TOTAL	80	100

Table 2 indicates that more than half of the parents (61,25 %) are younger than 40 years. Younger parents are usually more actively involved with their children in for example sporting activities, educational values, showing the child love, etc. (Mwamwenda, 1989: 30).



### 5.2.3 Home language of parents

Table 3      Frequency distribution according to home language of parents

	Language	Frequency	%
1	English	80	100
2	Other	0	0
	TOTAL	80	100

All parents were English speaking (Table 3). This was a predicted finding because English speaking parents were selected as respondents.

#### 5.2.4 Respondents occupation

Table 4      Frequency distribution according to occupation of parents

	Occupation	Frequency	%
1	Teacher	8	10,0
2	Lawyer	1	1,25
3	Own business	3	3,75
4	House-wife	21	26,25
5	Minister	1	1,25
6	Mechanic	2	2,50
7	Clerk	7	8,75
8	Secretary	3	3,75
9	Farmer	1	1,25
10	Factory worker	8	10,0
11	Painter	1	1,25
12	Postman	1	1,25
13	Cashier	2	2,50
14	Unemployed	5	6,25
15	Others	16	20,0
	TOTAL	80	100

The minority of the respondents (12,5 %) Table 4 hold professional occupations. This corresponds reasonably with the educational level of

the respondents (cf. 5.2.5) which shows that only 20 % of the parents obtained tertiary education. Sixteen respondents (20 %) only indicated their occupation as "other" without specifying it. A possible reason for this phenomenon is that they were reluctant to reveal their occupation.

#### 5.2.5 Educational level of respondents

Table 5      Frequency distribution according to the educational level reached by the parent

	Educatin level	Frequency	%
1	Lower than Std 5	4	5,0
2	Std 5	3	3,75
3	Std 6	15	18,75
4	Std 7	3	3,75
5	Std 8	11	13,75
6	Std 9	8	10,0
7	Std 10	20	25,0
8	Certificate	1	1,25
9	Diploma	10	12,25
10	Degree+Certificate	2	2,50
11	Degree+Diploma	1	1,25
12	Higher degree	2	2,50
	TOTAL	80	100

Table 5 indicates that 80 % of the parents possess std. 10 or lower than std. 10 qualifications. 20 % have educational qualifications higher than std. 10. This is a possible reason for the findings in Table 4, namely that only 12,25 % of the parents hold professional occupations.

#### 5.2.6 Total number of children in the family

Table 6      Frequency distribution according to the total number of children in the family

	Total number of children in the family	Frequency	%
1	0	0	0
2	1	6	7,50
3	2	37	46,25
4	3	26	32,50
5	4	9	11,25
6	5	2	2,50
7	6	0	0
8	7	0	0
	TOTAL	80	100

Table 6 reveals that the majority of the families (86,25 %) have three or less children. Possible reasons are that the parents are still young as revealed in Table 2 and they are adopting family planning.

#### 5.2.7 Position of the grade one child in the family

Table 7      Frequency distribution according to the position of the grade one child in the family

Position of the grade one child in the family	Frequency	%
1	25	31,25
2	33	41,25
3	17	21,25
4	4	5,0
5	1	1,25
6	0	0
7	0	0
After 7	0	0
TOTAL	80	100

The majority (41,25 %) of the grade one children are the second born in the family and therefore these parents are already knowledgeable about the responsibility of having a child in school.

### 5.2.8 Place of residence

Table 8      Frequency distribution according to place of residence

	Place of residence	Frequency	%
1	Own home	55	68,75
2	Rented home	8	10,0
3	With parents (own- or in-laws)	16	20,0
4	Others	1	1,25
	TOTAL	80	100

Table 8 indicates more than half (68,75 %) of the families own their own homes. This enhances parental responsibility in providing a safe and secure haven for their children.

### 5.2.9 Parental responsibility

Table 9      Frequency table according to parental responsibility within  
the relationship of authority between parent and child

Question number	Always	Often	Seldom	Never	Missing values	TOTAL
2.3	4 5,0	11 13,75	27 33,75	38 47,5	0 0	80 100
2.7	10 12,5	33 41,25	33 41,25	2 2,5	2 2,5	80 100
2.11	16 20,0	32 40,0	39 36,25	3 3,75	0 0	80 100
2.12	36 45	25 21,25	15 18,75	2 2,50	0 0	80 100
2.13	57 71,25	20 25,0	2 2,50	0 0	0 0	80 100
2.14	46 57,5	18 22,5	14 17,5	2 2,50	0 0	80 100
2.15	52 65,0	17 21,25	10 12,5	0 0	1 1,25	80 100
2.16	51 63,75	22 27,5	6 7,5	1 1,25	0 0	80 100
2.39	16 20,0	30 37,5	26 32,5	8 10,0	0 0	80 100
2.41	5 6,25	17 21,25	25 31,25	32 40,0	1 1,25	80 100
2.42	30 37,5	26 32,5	21 26,25	2 2,5	1 1,25	80 100
2.50	3 3,75	6 7,5	14 17,5	48 60	9 11,25	80 100

According to Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994:518) the term responsibility means "morally answerable for the discharge of a duty or trust; that which one is answerable to; ability to meet obligations or to act without superior knowledge." In the relationship of authority the authority of the parent holds good in as much as the child lacks the necessary responsibility and knowledge to make an independent choice between right and wrong, proper and improper (Du Plooy, Griessel & Oberholzer, 1987:104). In the education situation the parent has to withdraw from time to time, i.e. allow the child freedom to proceed in a responsible manner. As soon as the parent perceives any evidence of responsibility in the child's conduct he must make known his approval and allow the child more opportunity, under his vigilant eye, to act with responsibility. Increasing the child's acceptance of responsibility is indispensable to the adequate practising of authority by the parents. The above statements are verified or refuted by the following questions in Table 9:

2.3 Nearly half (47,5 %) of the parents never allow their grade one children to stay overnight with friends while a third (33,75 %) seldom let their child sleep over. A possible reason for this finding is that parents want to protect their children against contacting illness, learning bad habits or bad language or even being abused. Parents should guard against over-protectiveness because it could curtail the child's development towards independence and responsibility. Van den Aardweg & van den Aardweg (1988:184) say the overprotected child is egotistical and spoiled, selfish and unwilling to share; demands attention and indulges in temper tantrums;



is restless and tyrannical with other children and has difficulty with peer relationships.

2.7 53,75 % always or often allow children to choose their own clothing and only 43,75 % seldom or never allow this. They thus more often than not allow them to accept responsibility for their choices.

2.11 Parents who partake in their children's activities , e.g. playing games with them, teaches the child at an early stage to behave appropriately in a group (community or society); to respect the achievements and property of others, to accept authority; to give assistance and to be tolerant with the strength and especially weaknesses of others and to obey rules and laws (Rogers & Webb, 1991: 176). Family activities is the first form of community the child encounters. Only 20 % of the parents seem to indicate some sort of abnormality. 60 % of parents always or often partake in their children's activities and this is a high percentage given the fact that most parents probably have full-time jobs.

2.12 According to the parents' responses to this question less than half (45 %) of them always attended parents' evenings at school and only 57,5% attend the child's sporting activities at the school (2.13) This finding might be an indication that parents are not adequately involved in their child's formal schooling which is characteristic of permissive parents (cf. 3.2(3)). According to Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994: 370) responsible parents consider their children's education important and

are the most important educative foundations. They want to be kept informed of their child's progress in school, and to be involved in their child's education. Parental involvement in the child's schoolwork is significantly related to the following:

- . improved academic achievement;
- . improved school attendance; and
- . improved behaviour at school.

2.15 & 2.16 In response to question 2.15 the majority (86,25 %) of parents indicated that they always or often assist their grade one child with homework problems while 91,25 % indicated that they always or often make sure that the child's homework is completed (2.16).

2.39 & 2.41 The smaller percentage 20,0 % of the parents always or often allow their grade one children to set the table while the larger percentage (71,25 %) never or seldom allow their grade one children to make tea for friends or guests. Parents who do not allow young children to do simple tasks deprives the child of the opportunity to act voluntarily and independently and to accept responsibility (Du Plooy, Griessel & Oberholzer, 1987:188.). However, most of the parents (70 %) indicated that their grade one children are obliged to tidy their own rooms which means that they teach their children personal responsibility.

### 2.5.10 Punishment

Table 10 Frequency table according to punishment within the relationship of authority between parent and child

Question number	Always	Often	Seldom	Never	Missing values	TOTAL
2.29	2 2,5	14 17,5	37 46,25	21 26,25	6 7,5	80 100
2.30	8 10	17 21,25	28 35,0	23 28,75	4 5	80 100
2.31	11 13,75	13 16,25	26 32,5	22 27,5	8 10	80 100
2.32	12 15	17 21,25	25 31,25	19 23,75	7 8,75	80 100
2.33	2 2,5	7 8,75	15 18,75	49 61,25	7 8,75	80 100
2.34	4 5	17 21,25	30 37,5	21 26,25	8 10	80 100
2.36	21 26,25	30 37,5	18 22,5	8 10	3 3,75	80 100
2.37	18 22,5	19 23,75	21 26,25	19 23,75	3 3,75	80 100
2.38	3 3,75	4 5	20 25	51 63,75	2 2,5	80 100

According to Mwamwenda (1989: 227) punishment means being subjected to a painful stimulus or having a pleasant one removed due to engaging in undesirable behaviour. Punishment may take the form of suspension, corporal punishment, manual work, expulsion, dismissal, isolation, detention, reprimanding, written lines and being deprived of

certain privileges. Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988: 187) state that punishment must meet the incident for example one does not administer severe corporal punishment to a child for breaking a tea cup or trespassing into the neighbour's garden. Accountable punishment encompasses four general objectives: reform, reprisal, protection and fear (Van Rensburg , Landman & Bodenstein , 1994: 503).

The following items in Table 10 illicited parent's perspectives on punishment with regard to their grade one children:

2.29 Nearly three quarters of the parents (72.50 %) do not believe in corporal punishment as a method of discipline. This view is also supported by Du Toit & Kruger (1991 : 120) who state that although sometimes extremely effective in the short term, corporal punishment can have very negative consequences for the child's emotional development in the long term. According to Mwamwenda (1989: 228) the best policy regarding corporal punishment is to avoid it completely.

2.30 Most of the parents (63,75 %) seldom or never apply "writing out activities" in meting out punishment to their grade one children. This is quite understandable because grade one children are still learning to write.

2.31 The minority of parents (30 %) always or often regard the withholding of pocket money as a form of punishment for the grade one

child. A possible reason for this is that most parents are of the opinion that children in grade one should not receive any pocket money.

2.32 More than half (55%) of the parents never or seldom "ground" the child as a form of punishment.

2.33 In isolating the child when he is punished for a misdemeanour has a negative outcome on his self-esteem (Train, 1995:46). This view is supported by 61,25 % of the parents who indicated that they never isolate children when punishing them.

2.34 More than a third (37,50 %) of the parents indicated that they seldom demand from their children to do extra chores as punishment. A possible reason for this is that the grade one child is not physically able to do certain chores. According to Du Toit & Kruger (1991: 108) the grade one child's bone and ligament growth is still incomplete and constant muscular exertion, exercise and the picking up of heavy objects should be discouraged.

2.36 According to Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg (1988:187) punishment should be meted out as soon as possible after the misdemeanour - immediate punishment is more effective (cf. 2.4). This view is also supported by the majority (63,75 %) of the parents who indicated that they always or often punish the child immediately after an offence.

2.37 An alarming high percentage (50 %) of the parents seldom or never discuss the form of punishment with their grade one child and are therefore not democratic in their parenting. According to Mussen *et al.* (1990: 363) parents who discuss punishment with their children have a democratic parenting style.

2.38 The majority of parents (85.75 %) indicated that they will never or seldom allow their child to choose the form of punishment. They believe that it is the parents right to choose the form of punishment and therefore exercise an authoritarian style in their disciplinary methods (cf. 3.2(1)).

#### 5.2.11 Administration of punishment

Table 11 Frequency table according to the parent who is responsible for disciplining the grade one child

		Frequency	%
2.51	Father	6	7,5
2.52	Mother	1	1,25
2.53	Both parents	70	87,50
2.54	Others	3	3,75
	TOTAL	80	100

2.53 According to the responses to questions 2.51 ; 2.52 ; 2.53 & 2.54 in most families (87,5 %), both parents are responsible for disciplining their

grade one child. According to Dobson (1982:170) both parents have to accept responsibility for disciplining their child.

5.2.12 ObedienceTable 12 Frequency table according to obedience within the relationship of authority between parent and child

Question number	Always	Often	Seldom	Never	Missing values	TOTAL
2.1	47 58,75	23 28,75	8 10	2 2,5	0 0	80 100
2.2	53 66,25	22 27,5	3 3,75	0 0	1 1,25	80 100
2.4	31 38,75	39 48,75	8 10	2 2,5	0 0	80 100
2.5	29 36,25	39 48,75	11 13,75	1 1,25	0 0	80 100
2.6	16 20,0	22 27,5	30 37,5	7 8,75	5 6,25	80 100
2.8	6 7,5	8 10	40 50	26 32,5	0 0	80 100
2.9	7 8,75	22 27,5	47 58,75	4 5	0 0	80 100
2.24	5 6,25	13 16,25	38 47,5	21 26,25	3 0	80 100
2.26	16 20,0	22 27,5	30 37,5	7 8,75	5 6,25	80 100
2.27	13 16,25	27 33,75	20 25	12 15	8 10	80 100
2.28	3 3,75	0 0	12 15,0	46 57,5	19 23,75	80 100
2.47	49 61,25	20 25	11 13,75	0 0	0 0	80 100
2.48	1 1,25	4 5	11 13,75	63 78,75	1 1,25	80 100



Responsible parents understand and trust their children and therefore expect them to obey rules, to comply with commands, to surrender themselves to their will actively, i.e. the children must have respect for authority. Obedience should occur in a relaxed atmosphere of love, understanding and sympathy. In a relationship of authority true obedience culminates in the following activities: *listening* to understand what is demanded and sometimes also why, *choosing* what to do in terms of the demands of propriety, and then *acting*, i.e. actualizing what has been chosen. What has been chosen will reveal what is pleasing to both parties and what they regard as valuable on the way to adulthood (Du Plooy & Kilian, 1985 : 93-94).

The above statements, with regards to parental obedience of the grade one child, are agreed or disagreed with as follows to the items in table 12:

2.1 The majority of parents (87,50 %) always or often expect their grade one children to obey them in all aspects. This finding points to an authoritarian style with regards to obedience (cf. 3.2(1)). Parents might also consider the grade one child still too young to make his own decisions.

2.2 The larger percentage (93,75 %) of parents always or often demand good behaviour of their children. Good behaviour is a prerequisite for acceptance in society and discipline is necessary to maintain a certain standard of social conformity. Through discipline the

child realizes the necessity for order in the world around him and that some behaviours are abhorred whilst others are praised (Kok & Myburg, 1995: 35-37).

2.4 A child that is eager to respond to his parent's requests (call, orders, instructions ) is a well disciplined and obedient child and this probably points to parents that follow a democratic parenting style (cf. 3.2(2)). Parents have a perception that in 87,50 % of the cases their children are always or often eager to respond to their requests.

2.5 & 2.6 "Love thy neighbour as thy love thy selves " is an apt philosophy to be inculcated in grade one children (Luke: 10: 27). According to the majority of parents (85 %) this philosophy was inculcated successfully because their children always or often made friends easily with new children in the neighbourhood and 47, 50 % with new adults.

2.8 & 2.9 During visits from friends (guests) the majority of parents (82,5 %) seldom or never instruct their children to stay in their room (2.8), while 58,75 % seldom tell them to play outside (2.9). These parents allow their children " to lend their ears to adult conversations". Parents who allow their children to "listen on" are often permissive in their parenting style ( cf. 3.2 (3)).

2.24 Nearly three quarters (73.75 %) of the parents indicated that grade one children seldom or never misbehaved when left under the supervision of an elder sibling. This is characteristic of a democratic parenting style where parents instill in their children mutual respect and obedience for older members of the family (cf. 3.3.2).

2.26 In their responses most of the parents (46,25 %) stated that they seldom or never respond immediately when their child asks a sensitive question in the presence of friends (guests), while 33.75 % would respond later (2.27) and only a very small percentage (3.75 %) would tell the child to ask someone else (2.28). However, nearly a fifth (17.50 %) of the respondents did not answer this question, which is possibly an indication that they have insufficient knowledge in this regard or feel uncomfortable to answer questions in this regard.

2.47 The majority of parents (61,25 %) will always question the child about his involvement about a fight (argument) at school. These parents show concern for the child's well-being (cf. 3.2(2)). Nearly eighty percent (78,75 %) of the parents indicated that they will never resort to punishment first but rather question the child first about the fight or argument (2.48). Style which considers the child's point of view can be considered to be democratic (cf. 3.2(2)).

5.2.13 Parental normsTable 13 Frequency table according to norms within the relationship of authority between parent and child

Question number	Always	Often	Seldom	Never	Missing values	TOTAL
2.17	46 57,5	31 38,75	2 2,5	1 1,25	0 0	80 100
2.18	58 72,5	19 23,75	2 2,5	0 0	1 1,25	80 100
2.19	33 41,25	33 41,25	14 17,5	0 0	0 0	80 100
2.20	33 41,25	28 35	16 20	0 0	3 3,75	80 100
2.21	21 26,25	30 37,50	8 10	20 25	1 1,25	80 100
2.22	27 33,75	23 28,75	7 8,75	22 27,5	1 1,25	80 100
2.23	2 2,5	12 15	42 52,5	22 27,5	2 2,5	80 100
2.25	4 5	3 3,75	41 51,25	29 36,25	3 3,75	80 100
2.43	3 3,75	1 13,75	28 35	37 46,25	1 1,25	80 100
2.44	2 2,5	8 10	32 40	36 45	2 2,5	80 100
2.45	5 6,25	25 31,25	25 31,25	23 16,25	2 2,5	80 100
2.46	20 25	18 22,5	25 31,25	17 21,25	0 0	80 100

Each community and family set guidelines, principles, rules and norms with regard to that which is considered right and wrong, proper and improper, good and evil (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988: 156). Some of these moral norms are incorporated into the laws of the land such as laws against theft and murder, while others are set within a cultural context by customs and traditions. The child has to learn these norms with the help of the parents. Initially it is his parents who urge him to behave correctly and decently. They are the ones who reprimand him when he has acted wrongly or improperly. With educational help the child learns to attribute logically acknowledged meanings to moral norms, social norms and those of his family (Du Toit & Kruger , 1991: 64-65).

The following items in table 12 indicate parents of grade one children's response regarding the inculcation of norms:

2.17 More than half (57,50 %) of the parents indicated that their grade one children always show respect towards other adults. By showing respect to other adults the grade one child acknowledges a norm of society and the authority of other adults, other than his parents ( Du Plooy & Killian, 1985:95). Children who are respected at home are able to show respect to other outside the home (cf.3.3(2)). Democratic parents successfully exemplify the important norm of society - respect for adults, including teachers. This was also confirmed by nearly three quarters (72,50 %) of the respondents (2.18).

2.19 In both these questions 41,25 % of the parents said that their grade one children always respect other children and siblings. Children can only learn to respect others if they themselves are respected (cf. 2.4.2(1)).

2.20 & 2.21 One of the demands of propriety is to show respect for other people's property - be it homes, cars, plants, animals, etc. (Griessel, 1988: 68). Most parents (76,25 %) have the perception that they always or often succeed in instilling the norm of respect for property in their children. Alarming is however, the finding that an average of 26.25 % of the parents never announce this norm in their parenting - this could point to permissive parenting or to parents who are socialists.

2.43; 2.44 & 2.45 Each child is a unique individual and should be respected accordingly (Griessel, 1988: 14). To reprimand a child in the presence of his friend, your friends (guests) could have a negative influence on the child's self-esteem. However, less than half the parents (46,25 % ) in 2.43 and (45,00 %) in 2.44 have indicated that they obey this norm by never reprimanding their children in the presence of others. According to nearly a third (31,75 % ) of the parents they often reprimand the child in the presence of the entire family (2.45). These parents could act more democratically when disciplining their children by taking into cognisance the child's right to privacy and individuality (cf.3.2(2)). Less than half of the parents (47.50 %) always or often reprimand the child in the privacy of his room (2.46).

### 5.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher's aim was to give some order to the range of information provided by the parents of grade one children in their answers to the questions in the questionnaire. Some of the data collected was of a demographic nature, which enabled the researcher to construct a broad profile of the sample selected for the investigation. Data collected regarding parental responsibility, punishment, obedience and norms with regard the relationship of authority between parents and their grade one children, was organised in frequency distribution tables - to simplify statistical analysis. The responses to the questions were interpreted and the findings discussed.

The last chapter of this study will consist of a summary of the literature study and the empirical investigation and certain relevant recommendations.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 SUMMARY

##### 6.1.1 Statement of the problem

In this study, an inquiry was made into the parental authority perspectives of the parents of grade one children. In the literature study and in the empirical research, it was found that there have been significant differences in the parental authority perspective of the parents of grade one children. It was established that certain aspects of parental authority are of vital importance for parents in order to exercise adequate authority on the grade one child. The absence of a relationship of understanding and trust between parent and child will hamper any form of authority over their children. It was also discovered that the various authority styles have an influence on the development of the child.

##### 6.1.2 The life-world of the grade one child

The concept "world" is a structure which consists of the whole of situations, occurrences and values at which man directs himself: a meaningful and grounding structure of human existence whereby man's



acts, thoughts and feelings are involved. Man's existence in the world is a matter of choice, he constitutes his own life-world. It is within this world that the grade one child relates with his surrounding: parents, peers, objects, God and ideas. It is also within this environment that he constitutes his own life-world.

In order to develop into a responsible adult the grade one child needs authoritative guidance in his life-world. This authoritative guidance can only be accomplished if there is mutual knowledge and trust between the grade one child and his parents. A meaningful life-world is formed when the grade one child, by assigning meaning, forms relations with himself, others, objects and ideas and God.

As the one who initiates relationships, the grade one child always occupies a central position in all the relationships formed. The child finds himself in a situation, becomes involved in it and attributes meanings in order to form relationships. No person or persons can attribute meaning for the child in his life-world. He himself must become involved in situations and events because he wants to do so. He himself experiences the world as a result of his involvement in it and he must give meaning to the relationships which he forms with the world in order to become oriented. It is within this world that relationships can be either positive or negative and could influence the grade one child's self-concept.

### 6.1.3 Authority styles of parents

Parents are the primary educators of their children. It is their task to lead them towards responsible adulthood. In leading their children towards responsible adulthood and fulfilling the criteria's of adulthood (viz. meaningful existence, norm identification, human dignity, responsibility, philosophy of life) parents throughout the ages have adopted various styles in exercising authority. Some parents have adopted an authoritarian style whereby they are the ones in control and decide on all activities and procedures for their children. These parents tend to control, shape and evaluate the child's behaviour and attitudes in accordance with absolute standards. Such parents are reluctant to give praise and criticism and demonstrate aloofness.

On the other extreme are parents who have adopted a permissive (*laissez faire*) style of exercising authority. This style of parenting allows the child total freedom to do what he pleases. Parents are very tolerant and accepting towards the child's impulses, actions and immature behaviour. These parents use very little or no punishment to discipline their children. They virtually take a passive role in the lives of their children. They may try to change their children's behaviour through reasoning but do not use their authority when in conflict and tend to give in to the demands of the child.

The more acceptable parenting style is the democratic style. These parents behave in a responsible and humane manner. Democratic parents see it as their task to guide their child to make the right decisions. They set broad limits, give advice, encourage the child in what they believe to be the right direction, but allow the child to make the final decision. They allow for open communication between parent and child. Democratic parents recognise the rights of the individual. They exhibit personal warmth, concern for and interest in their children. Democratic parents are able to exercise authority positively and are able to elicit positive responses from their children in comparison to authoritarian and permissive parents.

#### 6.1.4 Planning of the research

This study utilized a questionnaire, constructed by the researcher, as the data source. The information sought was not available from any other source and had to be acquired directly from the respondents. When this situation exists, the most appropriate source of data is the questionnaire as it can easily be adapted to a variety of situations.

With the aim of administering the questionnaire to the parents of grade one children, it was required to first request permission from the parents. Once permission had been granted, the researcher visited the parents and made the necessary arrangements to administer the questionnaire to the parents.

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information regarding their parental authority perspectives. The questions were formulated to establish the importance of parental authority with regards to the following:

- responsibility;
- punishment;
- obedience; and
- norms.

#### 6.1.5 Presentation and analysis of research data

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the data collected from the questionnaire completed by the 80 parents. At the outset, an explanation and description was provided as to the methods employed in the categorisation of responses and the analysis of the data. This was followed by an examination of the responses to the questions in the questionnaire.

#### 6.1.6 Aims of the study

The researcher formulated specific aims (cf. 1.5) to determine the course of this study. These aims were realised through a literature study, together with an empirical survey consisting of a structured questionnaire. On the basis of the aims and findings of this study, certain recommendations were formulated.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.2.1 Re-assertion of parents as authoritative figures

#### (1) Motivation

Every child needs both parents to help, lead, support and accompany him to self-actualization and ultimate adulthood. Both parents play a vital, albeit different role, in the gradual development of the child (cf. 2.4). Although no fixed pattern, formula or method can be prescribed to parents regarding their educational roles, they should have no uncertainties as to their responsibilities towards the development of the child. All parents should be fully aware of the role, purpose and task, as well as the possibilities and limitations of their activities regarding their authority over the child. The child has to be guided, protected safeguarded and disciplined in a responsible manner by the parents (cf. 3.2.1).

Parents who are able and equipped to carry out their task consistently and successfully, give a sense of security, of companionship and belonging to the child; they also bestow a sense of purpose and direction, of achievement and personal worth to the child. This is only possible if it is founded on a relationship of trust, understanding and authority between parents and children (cf. 2.4.2(1)).

Due to the socio-economic factors in the country the stability and security of family life has been severely affected. The media, life-style of people and the behaviours of the Western culture contributed significantly to the changing parental styles of exercising authority over their children. Many parents have become estranged from their children, and the authority relationship between parents and children have waned drastically. In some families parents have been dethroned from their status as heads of the family and principal authoritative figures (cf. 3.2(3)).

Book knowledge, introduced with Westernization, antiquated the traditional knowledge of parents as authority figures, which was passed on from older generations. The majority of insufficiently educated parents (cf. 5.2.5) probably do not understand the objectives and functioning of their role as authority figures in the lives of their children.

In exercising their parental responsibilities, the authority of the parents are often flouted, and they are even threatened by their alienated children (cf. 3.2(3)). It is therefore clear that in a changing society parents should seek help to enable themselves to establish or re-assert themselves as responsible parents and authoritative role models in the life of their children.

## (2) Recommendations

In order to assist parents to establish a realistic and positive approach towards their authoritative responsibility towards their children, the following recommendations are offered:

- Cultural leaders must actively propagate the re-establishment of the importance of nurturing the efficient functioning of the parents as authoritative figures in the family. Women's leagues must vigorously promulgate in directing children to realise the important role their parents play as authoritative figures.
- Promote and embrace family planning so that future parents may not be burdened with more children that they can economically support, and assist in the actualization of their potentials.

### 6.2.2 Guidance and involvement programmes for parents

#### (1) Motivation

A substantial number of the parents have an inadequate formal education (cf. 5.2.5). They are therefore forced to develop their own child-rearing

strategies (corresponding to their level of education) and omit to develop certain elementary codes of conduct in their children. Many parents are influenced by the various media, for example, the television, the newspaper, etc. regarding child-rearing strategies and have adopted these methods as part of their strategies.

There is therefore an urgent need for some form of education, training and guidance for parents with insufficient child-rearing knowledge. In this respect schools could, and should, play a more prominent role, especially in the provision of training programmes for parents.

## (2) Recommendations

With a view to assisting parents who experience authority problems the following recommendations are made:

- Training programmes for parents should be instituted at schools for the betterment of their authoritative role in their families.
- In order to reach as many parents as possible through various media (television, radio, newspaper and popular magazines) effective media based parents guidance programmes should be encouraged and promoted.



- The establishment of schools as community learning centres must be given the highest priority. At such centres the parents must be offered *inter alia* courses in effective parenting. The aims of these learning centres should be to:
  - Assist parents in building rapport with their children.
  - Facilitate communication skills between parent and child.
  - Encouraging parents to share activities with their children.
  - Guidance on positive disciplinary strategies.
  - Assistance in the setting of carefully planned basic rules for acceptable behaviour.

### 6.2.3 Further research

The role of parents as authority figures has been significantly and adversely affected by the changes in society. The influence of the various media has resulted in parental authority constantly undergoing changes from an authoritarian to a permissive style. A particular parental style of exercising authority will only be effectively enhanced if the parental relationship is based on sound knowledge, trust and authority between parents and their children. Because the research covered only Indian parents, with grade one children, living in a semi-rural area the possibility exists that the perceptions of parents of other racial groups, living in other areas may have different perceptions regarding their authority perspective. It is recommended that further research pertaining to the above mentioned diversities be undertaken.

## 6.3 CRITICISM

Criticism that emanates from this study include the following:

- It can be presumed that many of the parents who completed the questionnaire drew their perceptions regarding their authoritative role from the media - where in many cases the media tends to prescribe to the appropriate parental responsibilities in disciplining the child. The probability therefore exists that the majority of parents

indicated what is theoretical to their authority style and not what they practice in their own homes.

- The research sample comprised only of Indian parents of grade one children. Dissimilar responses might have been elicited from parents of other racial groups.
- By implementing a written questionnaire as research instrument, the researcher differentiated between literate and illiterate parents. Although more time-consuming and expensive, the written questionnaire could have been converted into an interview questionnaire in order to obtain the perceptions of illiterate parents regarding parental authority perspectives.

#### 6.4 FINAL REMARK

The aim of this study was to come to a better understanding of the parental authority perspectives of parents of grade one children in a rapidly changing society. It is trusted that this study will be of value, particularly to Indian parents, educational authorities and other stakeholders with regards to the re-appraisal of parents as authority figures, and the improvement of the parent-child relationship. It is also hoped that the recommendations from this study will be implemented and thereby

enhance the parents fulfillment of their responsibilities in disciplining their children to lead them to responsible adulthood.

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## **APPENDIX A**

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

# **QUESTIONNAIRE**

***Parental authority perspectives  
of grade one parents***

Tel. No. (0323) 84802

Dear Parent

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON PARENTAL AUTHORITY PERSPECTIVES OF GRADE ONE PARENTS**

At present I am engaged in a research project towards my M.Ed. Degree at the University of Zululand. My study leaders are Prof. G. Urbani and Dr M.S. Vos. The research is concerned with the parental authority perspectives of the parents of grade one children.

As one of the selected respondents I have taken the liberty of writing to you in order to seek your assistance in acquiring information about your experience relating to the research. The completion of the questionnaire should not require more than 20 minutes of your time.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information will be regarded as **CONFIDENTIAL** and no personal details of any parent / respondent will be mentioned in the findings, nor will any of the results be related to any particular home, family or school.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

.....

**T VENKETSAMY (ROY)**

### INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer all the questions by supplying the requested information. Kindly complete by makes a cross (X) in the appropriate block.

## SECTION ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 Respondent completing the form

Father ☐          Mother ☐

### 1.2 Age of father / mother

Younger than 21 <input type="checkbox"/>	21-25 <input type="checkbox"/>
26-30 <input type="checkbox"/>	31-35 <input type="checkbox"/>
36-40 <input type="checkbox"/>	41-45 <input type="checkbox"/>
46-50 <input type="checkbox"/>	51-55 <input type="checkbox"/>
56-60 <input type="checkbox"/>	Older than 60 <input type="checkbox"/>

### 1.3 Home language

English ☐      Other (please specify)

Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...**1.4 Respondent's occupation**

Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Own business	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housewife	<input type="checkbox"/>	Factory worker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minister	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dentist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mechanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Painter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postmaster	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cashier	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Other (please specify)

**1.5 Educational level of respondent**

No formal schooling

Lower than std 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Std 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Std 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Std 7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Std 8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Std 9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Std 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Degree + Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree + Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Degree(s) (e.g. Hons, B.Ed., etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...**1.7 Total number of children in the family**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More than 7

**1.8 Total number of school-going children in the family**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More than 7

**1.9 Position of grade one child in the family**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	After 7

**1.10 Do you live in your:**

Own home?

☐

Rented home?

☐With parents (*own or in-laws?*)☐Other (*please specify*)

--

**SECTION TWO****PARENTAL AUTHORITY PERSPECTIVES****INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENTS**

1. Please read through each statement carefully before giving your opinion.
2. Please make sure that you do not omit a question, or skip a page.
3. Please be honest when giving your opinion.
4. Please do not discuss statements with anyone.
5. Please return questionnaire.

Before expressing your feeling  
regarding a specific statement  
consider the following example

**EXAMPLE**

Do you choose your child's toys for him or her?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never
		X	



Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...

2.1 Do you expect your child to obey you in all aspects?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.2 Do you demand good behaviour from your child?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.3 Is your child allowed to stay overnight with his/her friends?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.4 Is your child eager to respond to your call / orders / requests / instructions?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**DOES YOUR CHILD MAKE FRIENDS EASILY WITH:**

2.5 New children in the neighbourhood/school?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...

2.6 New adults?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.7 Is your child allowed to choose his / her own clothing?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**DURING VISITS FROM FRIENDS (GUESTS) DO YOU INSTRUCT YOUR CHILD TO:**

2.8 Stay in his / her room?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.9 Play outside?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.10 Other (please specify)

2.11 Do you partake in your child's activities, e.g. play games with him / her at home, e.g. cricket, netball, etc.

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

*Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...*

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2.12 Do you attend parents' evenings at school?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.13 Do you allow your child to go on school excursions?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.14 Do you attend your child's sporting activities at school?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.15 Do you assist your child with homework problems?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.16 Do you make sure that your child completes his / her homework satisfactorily?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**DOES YOUR CHILD SHOW RESPECT FOR:**

2.17 Adults?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.18 Teachers?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.19 Other children?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.20 Older brothers / sisters?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.21 Other people's property (e.g. Entering other people's property without permission)?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.22 Plants and animals (e.g. Not throwing stones at neighbours' dogs or destroying plants)?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

*Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...***DO YOU FIND YOUR CHILD IS MISBEHAVING WHEN:**

2.23 You entertain guests?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.24 When left under the supervision of his / her elder brother, sister or aide?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.25 In school?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**IN THE PRESENCE OF FRIENDS/GUESTS YOUR CHILD ASKS YOU A SENSITIVE QUESTION ON SEX. DO YOU ANSWER HIM/HER:**

2.26 Immediately?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.27 Later? (After the guests have left)

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

*Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...*

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2.28 Tell him / her to ask someone else?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**WHAT FORM(S) OF PUNISHMENT DO YOU ADMINISTER TO YOUR CHILD FOR A SERIOUS OFFENCE?**

2.29 Corporal punishment (hitting, slapping, pulling ears, etc.)?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.30 Writing out activities (e.g. numbers, words or sentences)?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.31 Withholding pocket money?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.32 Grounding (e.g. cannot watch television for a week)?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...

2.33 Isolate the child (e.g. locking him / her in the bathroom, bedroom, etc.)

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.34 Doing extra chores?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.35 Other *(please specify)*

2.36 Do you punish your child immediately after an offence?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.37 Do you discuss the form of punishment with your child?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.38 Is your child allowed to choose a form of punishment for his / her offence?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

*Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...*

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**DO YOU ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO DO THINGS ON HIS/HER OWN AT HOME? E.G.:**

2.39 Set the table for supper?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.41 Make a cup of tea for a friend or guest?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.42 Is your child obliged to tidy his / her own room?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**DO YOU REPRIMAND (SCOLD) YOUR CHILD IN THE PRESENCE OF:**

2.43 His / her friends (peers)?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.44 Your friends or guests?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never



Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...

2.45 In the presence of the entire family?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.46 Alone in his / her room?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**YOUR CHILD WAS INVOLVED IN A FIGHT/ARGUMENT AT SCHOOL. DO YOU:**

2.47 Question your child about the fight / argument?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.48 Punish your child first and then ask questions?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

2.49 Encourage your child to defend himself?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

*Questionnaire - Parental authority perspectives ...*

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2.50 Ignore it?

Always	Often	Seldom	Never

**THE PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR EXERCISING DISCIPLINE  
AT HOME IS:**2.51 Father only? ☐2.52 Mother only? ☐2.53 Both parents? ☐

2.54 Other (please specify)

<b><i>Thank you for your co-operation !</i></b>
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