



## **Indicators of Positive Development Conference Summary**

### **Introduction**

The Indicators of Positive Development conference was held on March 12 and 13, 2003, in Washington, D.C. The intent of the conference was to bring together researchers from across the country who have successfully measured aspects of positive youth development. This conference is part of a long-term effort to conceptualize, develop, and refine measures that could eventually appear in future indicator surveys at the national, state, or local level, in research studies and in program evaluations. Representatives of Federal agencies, foundation officials, and other researchers attended the conference.

Funding for the conference was provided by Child and Family Research Network of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Edna McConnell Clark Foundation; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics; MacArthur Network on Successful Pathways Through Middle Childhood; John Templeton Foundation; and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and Family and Youth Services Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Welcoming Remarks**

Kristin Moore, president and senior scholar of Child Trends, welcomed approximately 150 attendees to the Indicators of Positive Development Conference on March 12, 2003. Dr. Moore noted that, after years of studying adolescent childbearing and other problems in her own work, she came to realize that such topics represent an important but incomplete picture of children's development. From a scientific point of view, a broader vision needs to be developed that includes not only what we **do not** want for children, but also what we **do** want for children. One of the goals of the conference is to bring together researchers who have previously been working alone or in small groups on positive development to share their knowledge with a larger network of people, to assess the importance of positive development, and to provide empirical evidence that positive constructs can, or cannot, be rigorously measured.

Arthur Schwartz of the John Templeton Foundation emphasized the work that Templeton does in the area of positive development. The Campaign on Research on Forgiveness was a multi-million dollar endeavor that focused on family dynamics. More recently, a study conducted by Steven Post of Case Western Reserve University has examined love and altruism, including altruistic love, compassionate love, unlimited love, and the role that love plays in the world. Other research topics include purpose and youth, and religion and the religious experience among youth and college students. Dr. Schwartz made a statement that seemed to resonate throughout the whole conference: "What gets measured gets emphasized, and what gets emphasized gets measured." His experience as a qualitative researcher has shown him that not

everything that is measured counts, but that not everything that counts is measured. The intent of this conference is to help change that by introducing measures of positive constructs that count.

Jacqueline Kaye of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation next welcomed the audience. She spoke of two maxims that she felt were applicable to the goals of the conference. The first maxim was “The fact that everyone believes the same lie does not make it the truth.” She added that programs for children in this country too often result from politics or public relations and are not grounded in good data. The work of this conference can help to accurately measure true benefits of programs and lead to more accurate and helpful programming. The second maxim was “Don’t follow trends; set them.” Ms. Kaye wanted to add the words “or do both” to the end of that maxim to encourage researchers to chart their own course in their endeavors instead of following popular belief.

Harry Wilson from the Family Youth Services Bureau Administration for Children and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services added that the conference is very timely and in line with several important Administration activities. In December, the Executive Order for the Initiative on Youth was signed, and it included an axiom on positive youth development that is mandated across ten Federal agencies. Agencies such as the Justice Department are realizing that programs focusing on problem behavior are not working, and they are searching for new research on which to base future programs. In the Family Youth Services Bureau, many requests for proposals (RFPs) have included positive youth development. Many RFPs have been submitted to HHS and also the Department of Labor where people assembling new programs need to pay attention to positive youth development.

Finally, David Johnson of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which hosted the meetings in their Conference Center, welcomed the audience and stated that he has personally been an advocate for including a measure of positive behavior in the report “America’s Children,” produced by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Mr. Johnson also segued into the first session as the moderator.

The conference employed a Brookings style format. Thus, all the papers in each session were summarized and presented by an independent discussant, and the authors were given a chance at the end of this presentation to respond with their comments. Questions and comments from the audience were taken after the authors spoke. This summary will focus on the summaries and comments by the discussant, in order to provide an overview of the work covered in each of the papers. Important substantive comments by audience members have also been included.

## **Day 1, Session 1: Character and Spirituality**

The first session was led by discussant Dan Hart, of Rutgers University. The papers he discussed dealt with topics of character strengths and adolescent spirituality.

*“Assessment of Character Strengths Among Youth: Progress Report on the Values in Action Inventory for Youth,” Christopher Peterson, University of Michigan and Nansook park, University of Rhode Island*

This paper is a progress report on the authors’ efforts to conceptualize and operationalize the construct of “good character” among youth. The authors share a number of beliefs about character, including that it is comprised of a family of positive traits that exist in degrees and are present in a range of thoughts, feelings, and actions.

*“Adolescent Spirituality,” Peter L. Benson, Peter C. Scales, Arturo Sesma, Jr., and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Search Institute*

This paper focuses on the ability to measure spirituality and how to capture the rich diversity of spiritual and religious energy. In addition to reviewing and synthesizing the known literature about adolescent spirituality, the authors attempt to report what is known about the relationship between adolescents and their views on and practices of spirituality, with a particular emphasis on gender and race/ethnicity.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Hart commented that many adults believe that children and teenagers lack moral character. A survey conducted by the Public Agenda found that 71 percent of adults used words such as “rude” and “irresponsible” to describe teenagers, and only 15 percent described teenagers positively. Also, character and spirituality are important to the public, and that there is concern among the public that spirituality is being overlooked. For example, public opinion polls show that the public favors school prayer because it believes that prayer can improve behavior. Also, the public believes that right now children and adolescents are failing to learn moral values. Despite the centrality of these concerns over character and spirituality, there is a lack of measures in these areas.

In his discussion of the paper by Christopher Peterson and Nansook Park, Dr. Hart commented that the paper was a thoughtful study of six virtues, or core values, and of 24 character strengths that define the virtues. The study used the Values in Action (VIA) Youth Inventory, which is comprised of 182 items. Dr. Hart commented that while the VIA Youth Inventory has good internal consistency and is a reliable measure. He also stated that while the VIA Youth Inventory is a new measure and has not been used in many studies, the authors report that self-report of character strengths do correlate highly with the VIA Youth Inventory scores. For example, an adolescent who judges himself to be industrious also receives a high score on the VIA Youth Inventory scale for industry. Adolescents’ self-ratings for character strengths that are present in daily behavior are correlated with teachers’ ratings, showing that adolescents are evaluating themselves in ways that correspond to the evaluations made of them by others.

In Dr. Hart’s discussion of the character scale, he stated that while the scale shows considerable promise, a few changes need to be made in order for it to be ready for national use. First, the

scale needs to be greatly shortened since it is not realistic to add a 182-item scale to a national survey. While the scale was not developed with the intent to add it to a national survey, it does provide measures that would be beneficial to a Federal study. If the scale were to be adapted for this type of use, the most significant items should be culled from the scale in order to shorten it and maintain reliability. Second, he commented that it would be helpful to know if the VIA Youth Inventory is sensitive to change resulting from cultural conditions that occur with the passing of time. If so, it would be very beneficial in charting changes in adolescents from era to era.

In the discussion of the spirituality paper by Peter Benson, Peter Scales, Arturo Sesma, and Eugene Roehlkepartain, Dr. Hart indicated that the central argument of the paper is that spirituality and religiosity are central components in the lives of adults and adolescents. The paper reviewed findings from three traditional types of measures used to assess religiosity and spirituality. The first, affiliation, refers to religious denomination. The second, salience, is the judged importance of one's religion. The third, participation, refers to the frequency of attendance at worship services.

The findings regarding affiliation show an increasing diversity in adolescent life. More adolescents in recent cohorts report membership in non-Christian religions than did cohorts of several generations ago. The salience of these religious affiliations is also important. More than 50 percent of adolescents reported that being spiritual or religious is important to them, and there are few differences in age with regard to salience. Being spiritual or religious is just as important to 18 year-olds as it is to 13 year-olds. These adolescents who judge spirituality and religiosity to be important to them are also less likely to be involved in risky activities and are more likely to be "thriving", or doing well in school, helping others, and so on. The findings on participation show that while adolescents find religion to be important, they also participate less frequently as they get older. Younger adolescents attend religious services more often than do older adolescents. This does not mean that older adolescents are rejecting religion; it simply means that they are not participating in organized religious services as often as they did when they were younger.

Dr. Hart agreed with the authors of the paper that considerably more work in the area of spirituality is needed before spirituality scales can be included in a national dataset. He said that there are no findings right now that a spirituality measure would provide new information; however, that could be because there is too little research in this area right now. The biggest step that needs to be taken in the development of this measure is more research about the subject.

In final comments about both of the papers, Dr. Hart said that one of the biggest obstacles in the development of measures of character and spirituality is definitional. It is much more difficult to come up with clear-cut definitions of character strengths, and spirituality than it is to come up with a definition of delinquency or drug use, for example. Another large obstacle is that definitions of character and spirituality will differ from culture to culture, and it will be very difficult to come up with a universal definition that can reflect the profoundly different views and practices of religion held around the world. Regardless of these obstacles, Dr. Hart believes that the inclusion of such measures as character and spirituality would be important in portraying a clearer picture of youth. While considerable space in national studies is devoted to the

measurement of problem behaviors, it should be important to consider giving equal space to positive measures such as character and spirituality.

One theme seemed to resonate throughout the audience's comments. Jeff Evans of NICHD commented that the average time budget of a federal survey is somewhere between one half hour and an hour and a half per respondent. That time budget then generally costs between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per minute. He indicated that short, concise scales would have a better opportunity to be considered for inclusion in a federal survey.

## Day 1, Session 2: Life Satisfaction and Hope

The second session was led by discussant Corey Keyes, of Emory University. The papers he discussed dealt with hope and life satisfaction.

*“Measuring Hope in Children,” C.R. Snyder, University of Kansas*

This paper describes the use and psychometric properties of the Children’s Hope Scale, a six-item self-report instrument developed by the author and administered to children ages 7 through 15. The author has developed a theory of hope that defines hope as the existence of goal-oriented thinking, and the ability to find ways to reach those goals, as well as the ability to motivate oneself to reach those goals.

*“Psychometric Properties of Two Brief Measures of Children’s Life Satisfaction: The Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS) and the Brief Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS),” E. Scott Huebner, Shannon M. Suldo, and Robert F. Valois, University of South Carolina*

This paper introduces additional measures to evaluate children’s mental health. Traditionally, children’s mental health has been assessed by evaluating symptoms of psychopathology. This type of evaluation focuses on the presence of psychopathology, and does not emphasize many aspects of positive mental health. A measure of life satisfaction would evaluate the judgments that children make on their lives as a whole or in specific domains within their lives. The two scales evaluated in this article can provide a more complete picture of children’s well-being that cannot be captured by pathology-oriented scales.

Dr. Keyes began by posing a question to the audience, “Is mental health a necessity? Do we need it?” He went on to say that children growing up right now seem to have less hope and satisfaction with their lives. They also look to the adults in their lives and wonder whether those adults are satisfied with their lives: Are they having fun? Enjoying life? Doing things that are positive? The fact that suicide among adolescents is increasing seems to show that more and more children are looking around and deciding that life as they see it is not worth it. These children have an absence of mental health, and society should try to recognize that problem and help to provide children with positive mental health.

Dr. Keyes said that Rick Snyder’s definition of hope is the presence of belief in goals that can be attained. The goals must be present, one must think about the pathways to obtain those goals, and one must actually believe that the goals can be reached in order to have hope. In the paper written by E. Scott Huebner, Shannon Suldo, and Robert Valois, life satisfaction is defined. According to the authors, life satisfaction is simply feeling good toward or about one’s own life. Dr. Keyes believes that these two definitions are related. Life satisfaction is usually contingent on making reasonable progress towards or meeting one’s goals.

Dr. Keyes explained that the Snyder paper examined the Children’s Hope Scale, consisting of six items. The scale itself has been used with several different samples of children; it has good internal reliability and also very good discriminate and construct validity.

In the Huebner, et al., paper, two versions of the scale were used, one measuring global life satisfaction and the other looking more specifically at domains of life. The scales have very good internal reliability, and also have very good discriminate and construct validity. It was found that children who were more satisfied with their lives had very low levels of depression and anxiety, very positive self-concepts, and good family relationships. It was also found that children who did not experience any emotional disorders were much more satisfied than children who did experience emotional disorders.

In terms of next steps, Dr. Keyes believed that, while life satisfaction and hope are very critical elements of the mental health of children, there is a lot more to measuring mental health than just those two measures. There is a discrepancy between the scales that have been developed to measure mental health in adults, and those that have been developed to measure mental health in children. For adults, there are eleven brief and very good measures of positive functioning; however for children there is only one measure. Dr. Keyes stated that children are a little more rich and varied than that, and that children are thinking of and evaluating their lives in the very same ways as do adults. He believes that the body of research on children needs to be expanded, and that the scales need to include many more measures of children's mental health. Some of the dimensions of children's mental health that could be included are: Do they have a sense of autonomy? Do they have a sense of personal growth? Do they believe they have a purpose in life? Are they able to accept all dimensions of themselves, including the good and the bad? Are they able to develop positive, warm relationships with their peers and family? Do they feel integrated in their schools and communities? Do they feel they are contributing to society? Finally, are they able to accept the diversity of this world? The answers to questions such as these can help to paint a more complete picture of a child's mental health.

Dr. Keyes also stated that more representative and diverse samples are needed upon which to base these new measures. He added that the scales and measures need to be more concrete than they currently are. Some of the items in the Hope Scale were a little too vague to specifically measure a certain idea or feeling. Longitudinal studies are also needed to thoroughly measure these concepts. Finally, the indicator system that is ultimately developed to measure mental health should not be split into one positive set of indicators and one negative set of indicators. Dr. Keyes believes that a combined indicator system will allow researchers to look at the whole picture, and not simply look at the absence or presence of negative or positive traits.

The audience comments on this session focused mainly on how the authors would present their research and ideas to policy makers in order to persuade them that these concepts can and should be measured and reported on. Dr. Snyder said that he would like support of members of Congress to not only support the scientific part of research, but also to get the message out to the general public in mainstream knowledge. For too long the public has heard stories about negative behaviors of children. Dr. Snyder believes, however, that some children exhibit negative behaviors because the programs that are set up focus on negative behaviors and so adults come to expect that type of behavior. Once the public begins to hear positive stories about children, there will be more support for programs focusing on the positive.

## Lunchtime Session: International Projects

Laura Salganik, of the American Institutes for Research, spoke about the **Defining and Selecting Competencies (DeSeCo)** project of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The project was initiated in order to develop internationally comparable measures of competency that could be used in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, which was discussed by Mariann Lemke later in the session. The project was led by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, in conjunction with the United States National Center for Education Statistics and Statistics Canada. In the past five years, DeSeCo has addressed a basic question: What competencies are needed for individuals to lead a successful life and for societies to face the challenges of the present and future? In order to have a competence, individuals need a variety of internal characteristics that must be present. A key competence is one that must remain in different areas of life. The DeSeCo project came up with three categories of key competencies: acting autonomously, using tools interactively, and functioning in a socially heterogeneous group.

As part of this work, expert papers have been commissioned from international scholars in different disciplines, and responses to those papers have been commissioned from policymakers and people in practice. Two symposia have been held in Switzerland, and a book has been published from papers prepared for the first symposia.

Mariann Lemke, from the National Center for Education Statistics, spoke about the **Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)** of the OECD. PISA is an international assessment of 15 year-olds in three areas of literacy: mathematics, reading, and science. Rather than test students on those content areas, the survey evaluates students to see if they can apply their reading, mathematics, and science skills to situations that they may encounter in real life. Thirty-two countries have participated in PISA, and they are largely highly industrialized countries.

Data are collected cyclically for PISA every three years beginning in 2000. Each year the emphasis is on one major subject area; however data are collected for all subject areas. In 2000, the emphasis was on reading; in 2003 the focus will be on mathematics, and so on. Some of the data have already been used in reports that are available to the public, and the data are also available to the public. Ms. Lemke stated that it is a very rich dataset, and there are a lot of data in there that have not been used by researchers.

Judith Torney-Purta of the University of Maryland spoke about the **Civic Education Study of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAE) (CivEd)**. CivEd was a two-phase study. The first phase was comprised of case studies of 24 countries describing common expectations in the areas of civic engagement and development for 14 and 15 year-old students. The second phase was an assessment of 90,000 students in representative samples of 28 countries. The assessment was comprised of 13 scales, three of which assessed civic knowledge and the rest assessed civic attitudes. Each item was made as simple and direct as possible, so that the items could be translated into the language of each country. Some items that would be considered essential had to be left out because they did not make sense culturally in certain countries. Examples of some of the items in the survey include: trust in types of institutions, attitudes toward immigrant rights and women's rights, participation

in civic engagement, giving money to social causes or charities, and confidence and participation in schools. The instrument, publications, and contact information for this study are available to the public on the CivEd website (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/cived>).

Mairead Reidy of the University of Chicago spoke about the **Monitoring and Measuring Child Well-Being: Beyond Survival** project. The project began in 1996 with the objectives being to redefine the concept of children's well-being and to identify new and more appropriate indicators for measuring and monitoring the status of children. One of the key premises of understanding children's well-being is to see children as a distinct group, and to use the child as the unit of observation and source of information instead of relying on a parent, teacher, or other reliable adult as proxies. Phase II of the project is to build a reliable and valid database of measures of children's well-being. The project has identified five domains of children's well-being: Safety and physical status; personal life skills including interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, and academic skills; civic life; economic resources and contributions; and children's activities. Each domain includes a series of measures, although the measures are not all encompassing and complete. The current goal of Phase II is to continue to add relevant indicators.

### Day 1, Session 3: Positive Behaviors

The third session was led by discussant Steven Blumberg, of the National Center for Health Statistics. The papers he discussed dealt with positive social behavior and positive adolescent functioning.

*“Psychometric Analyses of the Positive Behavior Scale in the New Hope Project and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics,” Sylvia Epps, Seoung Park, Marika Ripke and Aletha Huston, University of Texas at Austin.*

This paper attempts to show that positive social behavior is demonstrable itself and not simply the absence of problem behavior. Analysis of the Positive Behavior Scale was conducted on data from two studies, with the New Hope Project focusing on children in low-income families, and the other from the Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. The scale in both samples holds up to analysis by demonstrating good internal consistency, stability, and construct validity.

*“Positive Adolescent Functioning: An Assessment of Measures Across Time and Group,” Brian Barber, University of Tennessee*

In this paper, the author uses developmental theory to assist in the measurement of positive adolescent functioning. There are three fundamental dimensions of adolescent functioning, and successful development is achieved through competent functioning at each dimension. The first dimension is Intrapersonal Functioning, which is measured through self-esteem, perspective taking, and empathy. The second dimension is Interpersonal Functioning, and is measured by social initiative, peer connection, and communication with mother and father. The third dimension is Institutional Functioning, and is measured by school, civic, and religious organizations.

Dr. Blumberg began his discussion by noting the similarities between the papers: each paper looked at observable behavior, and perhaps no behavior is more observable than social interactions. He began by discussing the paper written by Sylvia Epps, Seoung Park, Marika Ripke, and Aletha Huston, which focused on an analysis of the Positive Behavior Scale, which is made up of 25 items. The scale is intended to be completed by adults familiar with a child’s life, be it a parent, teacher, or other caregiver. There were two versions of the scale administered to two different samples, and the paper’s analysis included both versions. One sample was a community-based sample, with many single-parent families and ethnic minorities with low income. The second sample is nationally representative, mostly white, with wider income ranges. This national sample also used an abbreviated version of the scale, which was the first nine items from the scale plus a tenth one taken from elsewhere in the scale.

Mr. Blumberg stated that, regardless of the different versions of the scale, overall there is very strong internal consistency. In the longitudinal study, the scale was found to be stable over time. However, there is only a very weak correspondence between parent and teacher ratings. This may be because teachers only see the child in one setting, while parents see the child in many different settings. Also, their points of comparison may be different. Teachers are comparing

children to other classmates, however parents may not be able to compare their child to other children.

According to statistical analysis, neither version of the scale has strong validity. There were some very weak relationships between a child's scores and the teacher's report of competence, however other measures such as positive parental relationships and satisfaction with friendships were found not to be related to academic competence even though one might expect that there would be a positive relationship between them.

One of the main questions presented in this paper is whether or not positive social behavior is simply the absence of problem behavior. Epps et al., believed that the answer to this question is "no." However, the data show that there is a very strong correlation between positive behavior and the absence of problem behavior. Engaging in many positive behaviors is associated with few problem behaviors.

In discussing the paper written by Brian Barber, Mr. Blumberg pointed out that one difference between the two papers is that the Barber paper focuses on adolescents who can answer and respond to questions themselves. The main crux of his paper is that adolescence is characterized by fundamental dimensions of functioning that need to be learned and mastered in order to prepare for adulthood. The paper suggests that there are four components of interpersonal functioning: social initiative; peer connection; communication with mother; and communication with father. Also included were three components of intrapersonal functioning: self-esteem, perspective-taking, and empathy. Each component was represented by a scale in the Ogden Youth and Family Project, a longitudinal study of families with adolescent children in Utah.

The interpersonal scales are quite reliable in that they have good internal consistency and are not skewed or prone to outliers. Group differences are found in the data. For example, girls score higher than boys on all measures except communication with father, and children in non-poor households score higher than children from poor households.

The intrapersonal scales were statistically similar to the interpersonal scale. They had good reliability because they are not skewed or prone to outliers. The group differences were also very similar to the sorts of differences found in the interpersonal scales.

In closing his remarks, Mr. Blumberg stated that one of his responsibilities as a discussant was to assess whether the constructs and measures presented were ready for a national indicator system. While both authors presented data demonstrating the reliability of their measures, the validity of the assessments were weak. He concluded that there is not sufficient data to demonstrate that the components of positive social behavior as presented in the papers are meaningful or valid.

Dr. Barber was given a chance to respond to the criticism about the lack of psychometric data in his paper. He stated that he had been working on validity tests for the complete sample as well as various subsets of the sample. The seven scales in his study correlated with each other significantly, with values ranging from 0.2 and 0.4. The seven scales also are predictive significantly by using a set of three basic parenting measures: parental support, behavioral control, and psychological control. Dr. Barber asserts that there is some evidence of validity in

his scales, and that he intends to do more complex analysis to find additional relationships among the scales.

During the audience comments portion of the session, Richard Lerner of Tufts University challenged the group to develop an overarching theory of positive development in children. He said that the researchers involved in the various measurement models and various studies should think about integrating all of their theoretical ideas into one main theory. Dr. Lerner said that without a main theory, there will be a number of good measures but no principled way to choose and integrate across them. Jacquie Eccles had a response to Dr. Lerner's comment. During her work on the National Research Council Report on Community-Based Programs for Youth, she and her colleagues spent a lot of time trying to determine what is was they were trying to promote before they held programs accountable for producing changes. Dr. Eccles said that they determined that developing a formal theory is a judgment call on the part of the researcher. Based on the research presented at the conference so far, she believes that the community is further along on theory development than it appears because at this point a known set of competencies is apparent and it is apparent that they should be measured.

## Day 1, Session 4: Relationships

The fourth session was led by discussant Dan Lichter, of The Ohio State University. The three papers he discussed dealt with the quality of relationships between parents and children, and also among siblings.

*“Psychometric Analyses of the Parent-Adolescent Relationship Scale in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth-1997,” Elizabeth Hair, Kristin Moore, Sarah Garrett, Akemi Kinukawa, Laura Lippman, and Erik Michelsen, Child Trends*

The goal of this paper is to develop a solid measure of the relationship between parents, both fathers and mothers, and their adolescent children. Past research has shown that the quality of the parent-child relationship is an important factor in determining the types of behavior and attitudes that adolescents will develop. The impact of the relationship can be felt in domains such as health, education, reproductive behaviors, social interactions, and problem behaviors. The parent-adolescent relationship scale developed for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth-1997 was analyzed.

*“Parental Support, Psychological Control, and Behavioral Control: Assessing Relevance Across Time, Method, and Culture,” Brian Barber, University of Tennessee, Heidi E. Stolz, California State University, Joseph A. Olsen, Brigham Young University, and Suzanne L. Maughan, University of Nebraska*

This paper attempts to provide more information in order to better understand the role of parents in the development of their children. A conceptual framework was developed to test whether there were strong relationships between parenting dimensions and key domains of child functioning. This framework was tested and shown to be a reliable and valid addition to the literature on child development.

*“Positive Indicators of Sibling Relationship Quality: Psychometric Analyses of The Sibling Inventory of Behavior (SIB),” Brenda Volling and Alysia Blandon, University of Michigan*

This paper examines the rarely charted world of sibling relationships. While there are legions of studies examining parent-child relationships, there is far less empirical research devoted to the study of sibling relationships. It has been found that there is a positive relationship between sibling relationship quality and children’s developmental outcomes, specifically in social competence with peers and psychological adjustment.

Before Dr. Lichter discussed each paper, he indicated that the subject matter of this session is very important. There is a good deal of research that shows that the quality of familial relationships is important in adolescent development and can affect psychosocial functioning, delinquency, school achievement, drug and alcohol use, and precocious sex.

Dr. Lichter then introduced the paper by Beth Hair, Kristin Moore, Sarah Garrett, Akemi Kinukawa, Laura Lippman, and Erik Michelsen. This paper used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, tracking 12-, 13-, and 14-year-olds in the 1997 cohort through

several subsequent years. The sample is nationally representative, and the youth complete a self-administered survey on a laptop computer. There are four scales developed in this paper, each using various combinations of eight items of parental identification and parental support. Each scale was shown to be reliable as well as valid in that relationships were found among items that were expected to be related. For instance, scores were higher among adolescents in families that had parents with high levels of education, two-parent families, and higher income. Also, positive family relationships also correlated to less delinquency, less sexual activity, fewer school suspensions, and better grades.

Dr. Lichter also expressed several concerns about points in this paper. First, he was concerned about the parental identification scale. He asked whether it is always good for a child to identify positively with a parent. Some parents are bad influences, and so we may not want children to identify with certain types of parents. He was also concerned with the fact that only 70 percent of adolescents reported a positive relationship with their parents. Dr. Lichter said that figure seemed to be a very low percentage of children with a “high quality relationship” with their parents. A third concern was that even though this was a longitudinal study, there was no test/retest reliability here to measure whether adolescents from one year to the next had the same basic relationship with their parents, or if any family events like divorce or moving had any effect on the relationship. Finally, there was some concern that there was no real variation between the different demographic groups represented in the sample. Variation was within groups instead of between them.

The goal of the second paper by Brian Barber, Heidi Stolz, Joseph Olsen, and Suzanne Maughan was to identify specialized or unique affects between particular or unique types of parent/adolescent relationships. They focused on three measures: parental support; psychological control (for instance, denying children’s feelings or withholding love); and behavioral control, which was primarily the extent to which the adolescents’ parents knew about their friends and their activities. They wanted to see if those measures had any effect on particular positive outcomes of social competence, mental health, and antisocial behavior. The authors attempted to identify particular types of parent/adolescent relationships that had unique or primary effects on particular outcomes. The sample was taken from the Ogden Youth and Family Project, which was a study of fifth- and eighth-graders in 1994. The parental support scale included ten items and came from the Revised Child Report of Parent Behavior Inventory. The psychological control scale was comprised of eight items, and came from the Psychological Control Scale Youth Self-Report. The behavioral control scale consisted of five items about what parents really know about their child’s behavior. It was found on dominance analysis that there was a relationship between the three scales and the measures of positive outcomes.

Dr. Lichter’s critique of this paper was that the scales are long, which means that they are time-intensive and expensive to administer, and also that the sample is small and homogeneous. The authors also were only able to partially confirm the hypothesis set at the beginning. They were not able to find unique effects between a particular indicator and the outcomes that were examined.

The third paper, by Brenda Volling and Alysia Blandon, had a different familial focus. It focused on sibling relationships, and evaluated sibling empathy, companionship and teaching,

and the effects of aggression among preschool and school-aged children. The data came from 60 families composed of biological parents and at least one child age one and one child between the ages of two and six years old. Follow-up interviews were conducted four years later. Three scales were used in the study: companionship, empathy, and teaching. The reliability for these scales was statistically significant, although, reliability for the teaching scale was slightly lower than the other two. There also was moderate test/retest reliability between the initial interview and the four-year follow-up. It was found that there was only some concurrent validity, and only significant for the father. Predictive validity also was not fully established among all of the scales and measures.

Dr. Lichter's critique of this paper was based on the doubt that he had that this scale is relevant to pre-school children. Some of the original items, such as sharing secrets or including the sibling in activities, do not seem to apply to a relationship between a 4-year-old and a baby. Items such as those, in addition to items in the teaching scale, do not seem to be applicable until a child gets older. Another critique was that the scale did not appear to be psychometrically sound, with the low test/retest reliability and weak validity. One-third of the sample was lost at the follow-up, and many of those families were highly educated parents in the upper categories of income. This made for a less diverse sample at follow-up. Finally, Dr. Lichter questioned whether sibling relationships matter for school-age children, and whether the relationships formed in childhood are predictive of adolescent sibling relationships. He also repeated his concern about identification from the Hair et al., article. Do we necessarily want children to always identify and have a positive relationship with their siblings? Older siblings may sometimes exhibit bad behavior, and will a positive relationship with that sibling encourage the kind of behavior that should actually be discouraged?

In summing up all three of the papers, Dr. Lichter drew upon his training as a sociologist to suggest that concrete, quantifiable behavior be used to measure parent and sibling relationships instead of internal feelings. Do families eat together? Do they participate in activities together? Do they talk to one another? Dr. Lichter believes that each of these actions could be just as likely to determine types of family relationships as the measures suggested in these three papers.

The audience comments on this session focused mainly on the associations children make with their parents and other role models, and also the quality of relationships among siblings. Duane Alexander mused whether a positive relationship between a child and a negative role model is ever examined, such as when the parent is abusive, neglectful, or an alcoholic. Researchers in the audience indicated that such an examination would be interesting, but no one appeared to be aware of any analytic studies that examined that relationship. Many other comments revolved around sibling relationships, and how possible it is to assist families that do not have good sibling relationships. Brenda Volling answered that although wanting siblings to get along is a common desire of parents, there is not a lot of empirical research on sibling relationships to begin with, and so there are few programs available to help. There are, however, many quality books that have been written on how to foster positive relationships between siblings. Dr. Volling noted that the sibling relationship is for most people, one of life's most enduring relationships and accordingly warrants more study.

## Day 1, Session 5: Time Use and Healthy Habits

The fifth session was led by discussant Jodie Roth, of Columbia University. The three papers she discussed dealt with leisure activities that you engage in while not in school, and also on healthy habits of youth.

*“Leisure Activities in Middle Childhood,” Sandra Hofferth and Sally Curtin, University of Maryland*

The authors of this paper used time diary data from the 1997 Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics to examine the time that children spend in leisure activities. Children were asked to record the amount of time spent in certain activities. The authors then separated these activities into two groups: positive leisure activities and negative leisure activities. Regression techniques were used to examine the findings and recommend positive indicators.

*“Healthy Habits Among Adolescents: Sleep, Exercise, Diet, and Body Image,” Kathleen Mullan Harris, University of North Carolina, Rosalind Berkowitz King, NICHD, and Penny Gordon-Larsen, University of North Carolina*

This paper uses data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to explore indicators of healthy habits such as diet, sleep, and physical activities among adolescents. At this stage of development, many adolescents begin to make their own choices about what they eat, how long they sleep, and how they engage in physical activity. They also begin to develop ideas of an ideal body image and how their own body fits in with those ideals. The authors use the data to explore indicators on body image that can help to influence behaviors involving diet and exercise.

*“Adolescent Activity Participation,” Bonnie Barber and Margaret Stone, University of Arizona*

The authors used the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions (MSALT) to evaluate adolescent activity participation. Adolescents were given a list of activities and asked to check the activities in which they participated. The authors have examined individual activities and have also grouped activities into thematically grouped categories.

Dr. Roth noted that the first paper, “Leisure Time Activities in Middle Childhood” by Sandra Hofferth and Sally Curtin, examined data for a sample of 1461 children aged six to twelve who recorded their activities for two randomly assigned 24-hour time periods. The time diaries showed that children averaged only 43 hours of leisure time per week. Leisure time was defined as the time left over after accounting for sleeping, eating, attending school, and personal care activities such as dressing and bathing. Hofferth and Curtin separated the top five reported leisure activities into two groups. Reading, sports, and church were defined as positive leisure activities, while watching television and housework were defined as negative leisure activities. Using regression techniques, the authors examined the contribution that time spent in these activities had on cognitive and behavioral outcomes. It was found that time spent reading for pleasure was related to significantly higher scores on reading comprehension, problem solving,

and letter and word recognition. Time in church and church related activities related to higher scores on reading comprehension and math calculation. Time in sports related to higher scores on problem solving and math calculation. On the negative side, it was found that time spent watching television and doing housework was significantly related to lower test scores and higher scores on problem behavior scales.

The second paper, “Adolescent Activity Participation” by Bonnie Barber and Margaret Stone, examined how school and community-based extracurricular activities influence youth development. The authors looked at school-based and community-based organized activities from a sample of adolescents from the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions (MSALT) study. Data were collected beginning in 1983 with a cohort of sixth-graders, and nine waves of data have been collected on this sample. The students were given a list of activities in tenth grade and asked to indicate activities in which they participate. Barber and Stone grouped these activities into five categories: school involvement activities; performing arts; academic clubs; pro-social activities; and team sports. It was found that involvement in each of the different types of activities is predictive of changes in behavior. Students who were involved in pro-social activities reported less engagement in risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, and more involvement in civic organizations. Participants in school involvement activities as well as academic clubs showed better academic outcomes in twelfth grade and better occupational outcomes at age 29. Youth involved in team sports show more use of alcohol in twelfth grade, but they also show a greater liking of school, higher grades, and better academic and employment outcomes. Students participating in performing arts show higher grades, but also skip school more often and show more signs of emotional distress such as worrying, suicide attempts, and visits to a psychologist. The authors conclude from these findings that use of a general measure of activity involvement should be discouraged; and instead they recommend using a measure that distinguishes between different types of activities.

The third paper, “Healthy Habits Among Adolescents: Sleep, Exercise, Diet, and Body Image” by Kathleen Mullan Harris, Rosalind Berkowitz King, and Penny Gordon-Larsen used the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) to create four indicators of healthy habits: sleep; exercise; diet; and body image. Evaluating these habits are important because of implications they have in other areas of life. For instance, inadequate sleep can lead to lower grades, greater amounts of depression, anxiety, trouble with others, and delinquency. Also, it is important to measure diet and exercise because of the growing numbers of obese children and adolescents. Investigating body image is important because changes during puberty can affect the way a child sees himself or herself. While boys tend to gain more muscle mass and fit in with established norms of masculinity, girls tend to gain an increasing proportion of fat which goes against the perceived norms of female thinness and angularity. The authors found the following for each of the measures:

- The average amount of sleep an adolescent gets decreases with age. Validating these reports, the data also indicate that adolescents who report getting less sleep have later bedtimes and are more likely to report that they do not get enough sleep.
- Differences in age and gender appear when physical activity is measured. Those who were more likely to engage in adequate amounts of physical activity were younger adolescents and males.

- Diet was measured two ways, whether the adolescent ate fast food two or more times per week, and whether they ate two or more servings of fruits and vegetables per week. It was found that younger youth ate more fruit and less fast food, and older youth have less healthy diets.
- The body image measure addresses adolescents' self-perceptions of their body weight. It was found that girls generally believe that they are heavier than they actually are, and those who think they are heavier are more likely to try to lose weight than girls who perceive their weight correctly. For boys, a reverse relationship was found. Boys who believe that they are lighter than they actually are tend to attempt to gain more weight and those who believe they are heavier are less likely to try to lose weight.

One general theme during the audience comments on this session was the influence of socioeconomic status on many of the activities discussed. One comment was that the children who did the most housework tended to come from single-parent homes and were more likely to have at least two siblings. Their participation in housework could be their responsibility in the household in order to help the family out. This added responsibility also leaves them with less time to devote to school-related work. Another comment by Judith Torney-Purta was about the amount of time that children spent doing the shopping. Ms. Torney-Purta said that she inferred the shopping variable to be about teenagers headed to the mall to spend money. However, Dr. Hofferth responded that she believes the shopping variable to be more about spending time together as a family instead of simply spending money. The children are between the ages of six and twelve, and are not generally going by themselves or with friends. She surmised that they are going with their parents to purchase needed items for the household, and the process of doing something as a family is more important than the actual act of spending money.

## **Day 2, Session 1: Mastery Motivation, Achievement Task Values, and School Self-Regulation**

The first session of the second day was led by discussant Laura Salganik, of the Education Statistics Services Institute within the American Institutes for Research. The three papers she discussed dealt with school-related issues such as mastery, performance, achievement, and self-regulated learning.

*“The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey: History, Development, and Psychometric Properties,” Rob Roeser, Stanford University, Tim Urdan, Santa Clara University and Eric Anderman, University of Kentucky*

This paper uses the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (PALS) to analyze mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance. The sample was drawn from four school districts within Michigan, and the instrument has also been used by numerous researchers with other middle school, high school, and college samples. The measures have strong predictive and concurrent validity.

*“Measuring Children’s and Adolescents’ Ability Self-Perceptions and Subjective Task Values,” Jacquelynne Eccles, University of Michigan, Susan O’Neill, Keele University, and Allan Wigfield, University of Maryland*

This paper analyzes constructs of achievement-related behaviors to determine whether feeling competent and succeeding in socially valued achievement-related domains result in good mental health and have a positive benefit to society.

*“Assessing Academic Self-Regulated Learning”, Christopher Wolters, University of Houston, Paul R. Pintrich, University of Michigan and Stuart A. Karabanick, Eastern Michigan University*

This paper presents a general framework for academic self-regulated learning, which applies models of regulation and self-regulation to academic learning that takes place in school or classroom settings. The authors also outline their efforts to develop self-report measures of different components of academic self-regulated learning.

Ms. Salganik opened the session by indicating that all three papers examine factors that mediate outcomes traditionally associated with schooling and are all concerned with processes of learning and how different factors affect what individuals learn.

The first paper by Robert Roeser, Tim Urdan, and Eric Anderman, focuses on motivation and the two different types of goals that motivate individuals: mastery goals and performance goals and mastery goals for an individual focus on being able to exhibit competence in understanding material or performing a task. Performance goals focus the individual on demonstrating something to others. Individuals with mastery goals tend to attribute failure to lack of effort and want to work harder when they do not succeed. Individuals with performance goals are more likely to give up when faced with difficult tasks that they cannot perform. The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (PALS) uses different scales for mastery goals, performance-

approach goals, and performance avoidance goals. The mastery scale has five items, and one example is “It is important to me to learn a lot of new concepts this year.” The performance-approach scale also has five items, and one example is “One of my goals is to show others that I’m good at my class work.” The performance-avoidance scale has four items, and “It is important to me that I don’t look stupid in class” is one example of the items. Each scale has a very high alpha reliability coefficient and has strong correlations with similar constructs.

The second paper by Jacquelynne Eccles, Susan O’Neill and Allan Wigfield addresses the question of what task-related beliefs contribute to achievement. There are two forms of beliefs: one about the self, including your expectations for success, and the other about the task, focusing primarily on how important it is. The paper divides value-importance into four different theoretical constructs: Attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value, and cost value. Attainment value is the importance of succeeding in your core values; intrinsic value is how much enjoyment and pleasure you would get from a task; utility value is the value a task acquires because it is instrumental in reaching a variety of goals; and cost value is what you would lose from engaging in a certain activity. Two longitudinal studies were used, with one examining English and math by following students in grades 5 through 12 for two years, and the second examining reading, math, instrumental music, and sports for younger children. Three scales were used, with one each measuring ability expectancy, perceived task difficulty, and perceived task value. The ability expectancy scale contains five items, each asking the child to respond to questions on his or her performance in each subject. The perceived task difficulty scale contains seven items, each asking the child to respond to questions on his or her difficulty with each subject. The perceived task value scale also contains seven items, each asking the child about how interesting or relevant each subject is to him or her. It was found that there is very high predictive validity and reliability for the scales, and the scales do an excellent job in explaining the links between gender and achievement in English and math.

The third paper by Christopher Wolters, Paul Pintrich, and Stuart Karabenick included a large literature review of self-regulated learning and reviewed a number of different scales that measure different aspects of self-regulated learning. In self-regulated learning, learners assess themselves with reference to goals that they want to achieve and then take action to be able to achieve those goals. The authors state that there are three types of self-regulated learning strategies. The first type is cognition, which includes rehearsal, elaboration, and organization. The second type is motivation, which includes establishing rewards, environmental structuring, and self-talk. The third type has not been studied much but focuses on behavior that people engage in to regulate their efforts and the time they spend learning as well as seeking help. The authors used the Motivation Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) to develop scales that measure each of the three self-regulated learning strategies. The MSLQ has been used on a range of age groups including middle school, high school, and college students. The cognition scale contains items measuring rehearsal, elaboration, organization, and metacognitive self-regulation. The behavior scale contains items measuring the student’s ability to regulate time and study environment, their intention to seek needed help, the perceived costs of help-seeking, and the likelihood that they would seek help in the future. The motivation scale contains items measuring mastery self-talk, enhancement of situational interest, rewarding oneself for completed work, and environment structuring. All three of the scales show strong internal

consistency, and correlations have been shown to exist between the scales and other indices of achievement in the classroom, such as higher test scores, and better performance.

Ms. Salganik said that a strong case could be made for including the measures from all three of the papers in national datasets if there could be some conceptual consolidation among them. She also said that in order to maximize the possibility of inclusion in national datasets, the researchers would need to work together to eliminate extraneous variables.

In the time allocated for authors' response, Jacquie Eccles spoke about why measurement of school achievement is an important part of understanding child well-being. Dr. Eccles indicated that she had just completed a report for the National Research Council on community-based programs, and one key aspect of the report was that good achievement in school could be the single most important asset that young children can have in terms of life success. She said that school achievement opens the door to many opportunities later in life, and so it is important to understand what accounts for individual differences in school achievement. These differences can help to answer questions such as: Why are U.S. students not doing as well in school as children in other countries? Why are certain groups, such as low-income students, not achieving as well and disengaging from school? Dr. Eccles believes that more specific questions need to be asked in order to understand the answers to these questions, instead of general questions such as "Do you like school?" or "Are your teachers treating you nicely?" She summed up her remarks by saying that the two most important things to know about children are whether they think they can succeed and whether they want to succeed, and then the domains that are most meaningful need to be identified. Education is certainly one of those domains, and so it is important to know whether children believe they can master what they are beginning in school, and whether they think it is important for them to succeed.

## Day 2, Session 2: Connectedness to School and School Engagement

The second session of the second day was led by discussant James Connell, of the Institute for Research and Reform in Education. The three papers he discussed dealt with classroom environments, school connectedness, and school engagement.

*“Psychometric Analyses of Measures of Dimensions of the Classroom Social Environment,”* Helen Patrick, Purdue University and Allison M. Ryan, University of Illinois

This paper examines students’ perceptions about how they are encouraged to interact with and relate to others within the classroom social environment. The authors use measures administered to three separate samples to learn about four separate dimensions of the classroom social environment. These four dimensions are teacher support, promoting mutual respect, promoting student task-related interaction, and promoting performance goals.

*“Connection to School as an Indicator of Positive Youth Development,”* Clea McNeely, University of Minnesota

The author used the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to identify and validate an indicator of school connectedness. School connectedness is used to describe adolescents’ perception of safety, belonging, respect and feeling cared for at school. She successfully identified two indicators of school connectedness that relate to domains of social belonging and teacher-student relationships in school settings.

*“School Engagement,”* Jennifer Fredericks, Connecticut College and Phyllis Blumenfeld, Jeanne Friedel, and Alison Paris, University of Michigan

The construct of engagement has had an increase in focus lately because it is seen as an antidote to low achievement and high levels of student boredom and dropout rates. The authors focus on three types of engagement apparent in schools. The first is behavioral, the second is emotional, and the third is cognitive. The three types are described in detail in this paper, and they analyze measures of each of the three engagement types.

Dr. Connell presented the data and measures from these papers in an intuitive and concise framework that allowed the audience to compare measures and statistical soundness across the three studies. In the paper by Jennifer Fredericks et al., the authors administered two sets of surveys, one to children and the other to the children’s teachers. Both surveys asked the same questions about the child’s behavior and development. The intent was to find out whether the two groups were seeing the same behaviors. Who is best able to measure a child’s engagement, is it the child or is it someone who is looking at the child? It was found that the measures from both the teacher surveys and the child surveys correlated with and were able to predict engagement. The measures had good face validity, adequate internal consistency and adequate predictive validity. However, Dr. Connell recommended that a wider sample and more data would be needed before these measures could be considered ready for a national dataset.

The Patrick and Ryan paper focused on interpersonal and instructional support in the classroom's social environment. The authors measured three samples of middle-school aged children. Included in the survey were measures of teacher support, beliefs about competence and control, how connected and related children feel in school, and indicators of behavioral and cognitive engagement. They administered this survey to students, but also had observers go into the classroom to determine the classroom's social environment and to see whether an independent observation would match the students' reports. All of the measures used had good face validity and internal consistency. One interesting correlation that came to light was the fact that there was a very strong inter-class correlation in the teacher support measure. The children's responses to questions about teacher support were very similar among all the children in the same class, meaning that the students were assessing teacher support similarly.

The paper by Clea McNeely deals with interpersonal supports and how connected a child feels. The sample is from Add Health, a large ethnically diverse set of children in grades seven through twelve. Each measure was comprised of three questions. For instance, the connectedness measure included "Do you feel close to people in your school?", "Do you feel like you're part of your school?", and "Are you happy to be at your school?". The face validity for these measures is strong, in that they do appear at the outset to be measuring what they intend to measure. Dr. Connell did question the face validity of the teacher relationship measure. The three questions in this measure appeared to be three different kinds of questions. One asked students to report on the climate in the classroom, one asked the students how much they felt the teachers cared about them, and one asked if they had any problems with the teacher. This could lead to a divergence within the measure where a teacher could be supportive but still the child feels that the teacher doesn't treat him or her well as an individual. The factorial validity in all the measures was strong, in that the measures of grades/test scores and risk behavior could be assessed concurrently as well as longitudinally.

Dr. Connell offered some suggestions to make the measures in this session even stronger and more applicable to a national dataset. First, he suggested that researchers need to determine what the important outcomes are that the measures predict. He also suggested that a distinct cut-off point on certain measures would be important instead of simply having a continuous variable. In other words, instead of just being satisfied that an item correlates with life satisfaction, he suggested that researchers determine what is the minimum level of life satisfaction needed to be happy and strive to achieve that level. Dr. Connell also encouraged researchers to maximize predictability and be willing to tear apart their scales to pick out the items that are best able to predict the downstream outcome and use only those items in a scale.

### **Day 2, Session 3: Connection to Community and Civic Engagement**

The third session of the second day was led by discussant Jim Youniss, of Catholic University of America. The papers he discussed dealt with civic engagement, prosocial orientation, and community service.

*“Civic Engagement,” Scott Keeter, George Mason University, Krista Jenkins, Rutgers University, Molly Andolina, DePaul University and Cliff Zukin, Rutgers University*

This study uses data from an extensive study of civic and political engagement in the United States to document 15-19 year-olds’ involvement in civic life. Indicators were selected to measure behavior such as engagement in community problem solving, volunteering, and group or organizational membership.

*“Indicators of Positive Youth Development: Prosocial Orientation and Community Service,” Peter Scales and Peter Benson, Search Institute*

This paper reviews a number of existing measures of prosocial orientation and community service. The authors suggest that two kinds of measures need to be developed in order to comprehensively examine youth’s connection to community. The first suggestion is to measure hours of service, a measure that is common in studies of youth community service. The second suggestion is to measure the broader prosocial orientation that relates to helping attitudes and intentions to volunteer. The authors developed the second suggestion into a 7-item measure and administered it to a diverse sample of students in grades 6-12.

Dr. Youniss began by mentioning that the public discourse on youth’s involvement in society and in politics is negative and disparaging. He said that every meeting he has been involved in with political scientists has been a litany of the political problems of youth, in that they do not vote, they do not work for political parties, they are self-interested, and they are apathetic. The papers in this section instead look at factors of why students get involved, who gets involved, and what the students derive from their involvement.

The paper by Scott Keeter et al., attempts to discover what entices youth to become involved in civic and political engagement. They have determined that engagement in political processes is only one way to be engaged in society. Another method of engagement is involvement in civic processes. The high numbers of youth involved in civic activities can be a positive indicator for future involvement in political activism. The data for their analysis came from a sample of 3,246 people, from which a subsample of 641 youth ages fifteen to nineteen years of age was extracted. A scale of 19 items was used to measure attitudes on civic and electoral engagement, and on political voice. The electoral items referred to behaviors such as voting and working on campaigns. The civic items referred to community engagement issues such as raising money for charity and community problem solving. The political voice items referred to boycotting, protesting, demonstrating, and signing petitions. It was shown that people who scored strongly on the political voice items were people who have long-term commitments to civic and political involvement. More detailed scales were used to determine a person’s level of civic engagement in each of these three measures. The first was whether the respondent was working, either formally or informally, on community problem-solving with other people. The second was whether the respondent was involved in volunteerism and community service. The third was whether the respondent belonged to an organization or association. All three scales performed strongly in statistical analyses and would appear to work well in national datasets.

The paper by Peter Scales and Peter Benson looked at the larger issue of how youth are connected to society. The authors' approach was to look at youth as a "helper," as someone who is interested in helping other people or being involved in promoting the common good. They used a sample of students in grades six through twelve in Colorado who were administered two instruments of a survey. Two scales were used in the surveys. First, a seven-item scale was used, with four of the items related to one's social orientation. These items referred to whether students intend to perform service-related activities. Positive correlations to these items indicated that a student would be more likely to engage in positive behaviors such as succeeding in school, doing schoolwork, and valuing diversity. Negative correlations to these items indicated that a student would be more likely to engage in risk behaviors such as alcohol use, anti-social behavior, school problems, and violence. A second scale measured voluntary service and asked students whether they participated in voluntary service. This scale was found to be positively related to the pro-social items presented in the first scale. It was found that pro-social orientation is related not only to other pro-social thoughts and ideas, but it is also related to pro-social behavior. For this reason, national datasets would benefit by having these scales included in them.

Judith Torney-Purta commented from the audience that the work presented mirrored much of her work on the IEA Civic Education Study. She stated that civic engagement is certainly a multidimensional idea, including many different behaviors indicating a propensity towards involvement. She noted that researchers tend to try to predict the likelihood of future service rather than measure current engagement, and she questioned whether the Scales and Benson items, which measured prediction of engagement with current prosocial orientation, were the best way to measure civic engagement. Also, she reported that her work has found similar results, with approximately fifty percent of students in the United States performing weekly service. However, service is difficult to measure internationally because of translation problems. In the countries that can measure it, the next highest percentage of youth who participate in service is only thirty percent.

#### **Day 2, Session 4: Social Identity and Economic Behavior**

The fourth session of the second day was led by David Murphey, of the State of Vermont Agency of Human Services. The papers he discussed dealt with ethnic identity, racelessness, and economic behavior.

*"Psychometric Development of Brief Measures of Frugality, Generosity, and Materialism for Use in Children and Adolescents," Tim Kasser, Knox College*

This study developed and tested three measures on attitudes towards frugality, generosity, and materialism. The measures were administered to a sample of 206 children and adolescents in the

fifth through twelfth grades. Among the results, it showed that boys were less generous and more materialistic than girls, and that as a child ages, their generosity and frugality declines.

*“Psychometric Analysis of the Racelessness Scales in Studies of Rural African American Youth,”*  
Velma McBride Murry, Gene H. Brody and Dionne P. Stephens, University of Georgia

The authors of this paper intend to merge multiple approaches to studies of African American identity formation by creating one universal measure and then assess its usefulness in measuring different dimensions of developmental outcomes. The measure is based on self-reports from African American youth collected during a study of rural African American youth and their families.

*“Using the Ethnic Identity Scale to Measure the Developmental Pathways of High School and College Age Students,”* Adriana J. Umana-Taylor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The author examined the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS) to assess three domains of ethnic identity formation: exploration, resolution, and affirmation. Measures of familial ethnic socialization and self-esteem were added to the EIS and administered to a total of 846 high school and university students.

Dr. Murphey began with the paper by Velma McBride Murry et al., which offers exploratory research on an important aspect of youth identity. The authors’ research question was to what degree African-American youth identify with both positively and negatively socially-ascribed characteristics of their race, specifically whether acting “white” was perceived as necessary to achieve goals or success defined by the majority culture. A sample of 155 African-American families headed by single mothers and living in Georgia was used for the study. Children aged 14 years old were targeted from this sample, and they along with their mothers responded to questionnaires that had four subscales of a measure of racelessness in the questionnaires. The first subscale was on positive investment in school, enterprise, and future orientation. The second was impression management, or the degree to which a student downplays his or her academic achievement. The third was alienation, or the degree to which a student feels connected to peers. The fourth was stereotypical beliefs, or the degree to which students subscribe to social stereotypes of African-Americans. Analysis showed that there were modest correlations of the racelessness measure with other constructs. Students who are more confident in their social skills were more likely to have positive attitudes about school achievement and were less likely to hide their school success and less likely to endorse negative stereotypes about African-Americans. Students with a greater need for peer acceptance were more likely to hold negative attitudes about school achievement, be concerned with peers’ impressions of them, and endorse negative racial stereotypes. Given these results, it appears as if the higher a student scores on achievement attitudes, the greater racelessness that is exhibited by the attitudes and beliefs of that student.

Dr. Murphey said that he believes this paper raises a lot of interesting questions about primary identity. He wondered race, ethnicity, family experience, peer relations, or achievement is primary to developing a person’s identity. He summed it up by saying that the degree to which

you either positively or negatively identify with your race or ethnicity is important, but it is most likely just a small piece of the entire construct of identity.

The paper by Adriana Umana-Taylor provides another perspective on the role of racial and ethnic identity in adolescent development. The author used a framework of identity development that classified people into four categories, depending on the degree to which people have explored and made a commitment to a specific identity. The four categories are: diffuse, or not having explored or committed; foreclosed, or commitment without exploration; in moratorium, or explored but not committed; and achieved/resolved, or explored and committed. The author used two studies with two populations to examine her measure, one of undergraduate students and one of high school students. The first study was an ethnically diverse sample of over 600 university students from one institution in the Midwest and another institution on the West Coast. A questionnaire was administered which included three subscales of exploration, resolution, and affirmation. A construct of familial ethnic socialization, which refers to the amount that a person's family spoke about topics and participated in activities that were ethnically distinctive. The results showed that approximately 90% of students were positive about their identity, and 38% had explored their ethnicity and felt positively about it. Along racial lines, it appeared that white students had not explored much about their race but still felt good about it, while Latino, African-American, and Asian students generally had done some exploration about their ethnic identity, come to a resolution about it, and felt positive about it. People who had explored and resolved their identity and felt positive about it reported higher levels of family socialization around ethnicity.

The paper by Tim Kasser makes the point that attitudes and beliefs about economic issues are central to cultural values in our society. The author used a sample of 200 children from middle and high school in a midwestern community. The students completed a short questionnaire that had questions about three economic constructs: materialism, generosity, and frugality. There were also self-report measures of happiness, anxiety, self-esteem, and participation in risk behaviors, as well as questions about whether they participated in environmentally friendly behaviors such as recycling and turning lights off. Finally, there was one hypothetical question that asked the students what they would do if they suddenly came into \$100 and how they would divide it. The data showed that materialism is negatively correlated with generosity and unrelated to frugality. Children who scored higher in the generosity dimension reported themselves to be happier and to have higher self-esteem. They also were more likely to report that they had engaged in fewer of the risk behaviors. Children who scored higher on the materialism measure were not as happy, had lower self-esteem, and also were more anxious. These children also reported that they engaged in more use of alcohol and had more frequent fights. In response to the imaginary windfall question, frugal students imagined that they would spend less on themselves and give more to charity and save more. Generous students reported that they would buy less, give more to charity, and spend more on others. Materialistic students expected to spend more money on themselves, give less to charity, and save less. Both frugal and generous students were more likely to engage in environmentally friendly behaviors, while materialistic students were likely not to engage in those behaviors.

Dr. Murphey indicated that he believes that the measures in this study have a good chance of being included in a national dataset because they are brief and relate to significant outcome

measures. The limitations to the measures as they stand right now is that they need to be tested on much larger and more diverse samples, and they are entirely self-report. However, these limitations can be overcome with more study and application.

## Poster Presentations:

Child Trends commissioned six posters from researchers throughout the country to be displayed during the conference. Short summaries of the posters follow.

*“4H Study of Positive Youth Development: A New National, Longitudinal Study,” Dr. Richard M. Lerner, Dr. Jacqueline V. Lerner, Amy Alberts, Elise Christensen, Steinunn Gestsdottir, Helena Jelicic, Nancy (Lang) Ma, Christina Theokas, Daniel Warren, Tufts University*

The study is a four-year longitudinal study sponsored by the National 4-H Council. It is predicated on the belief that all young people have the capacity to develop into healthy and productive adults. The research employs indices of positive youth development and will examine their relationship to indices of "problem" behaviors (e.g., substance use and abuse, school underachievement and failure, and delinquency and violence). The goal is to test a theoretical model of adolescent development that conceptualizes positive youth development as *competent, confident, and caring* youth, who has *character* and positive social *connections* (the Five Cs). It is believed that such a young person will be oriented to make integrative contributions to self, family, community, and civil society.

The goals are to further research based knowledge through (1) the identification of variables that contribute to positive youth development; (2) the advancement of a conceptual model of positive youth development; (3) the development of a measurement model that permits the assessment of the individual and contextual components of positive youth development.

Study participants are a diverse group of about 2000 fifth grade adolescents with varying levels of involvement in community-based programs. Wave 1 of data collection was conducted from November 2002 to April 2003. Subsequent waves will be collected through April 2005. Structural equation modeling, or SEM, will be used to determine whether the model of the Five Cs is valid, i.e. it will be used to appraise the goodness of fit between these theoretical ideas and measures purported to index the five Cs.

*“Empathy,” H. Elizabeth Peters and A. Sinan Unur, Cornell University*

The research presented in this poster examines the relationship between parents' and children's other-regarding preferences in an experimental economics setting. In the experiment, a parent and his/her child separately and independently decide how much of a given amount of money to keep and how much to give to a non-profit organization such as the Red Cross or PBS. The cost of giving and the amount of money initially allocated varies under different conditions. It is found that behavior in the experiment is consistent with the economic implications of an altruistic motive for giving. It is also found that parents' giving behavior is moderately positively correlated with children's. While parents' and children's scores on the Self-Report Altruism Scale are directly correlated, there is no apparent relationship between parents' behaviors and their scores. An unexpected finding is a strong negative correlation between children's giving and their scores on the Self-Report Altruism Scale.

*“Commitment to Transcendent Ideals: Exploring Youth Sense of Purpose,” Kendall Bronk and Jennifer Menon / Bill Damon, Stanford University*

Purpose has been identified in psychological and educational research as a predictor of resiliency, positive youth development, and thriving, but little research has directly examined the concept of purpose itself. Given the importance of the concept and the dearth of research on it, the authors conducted 48 interviews with adolescents between 12-24 years of age in the hopes of finding out whether purpose existed, and if so what it looked like at the different ages. Results revealed that approximately 31% of our sample met all 5 criteria for purpose and that the nature of purpose differed by developmental stage. Twelve-year old purpose exemplars tended to express a deep concern for others and a commitment to helping people, but they had not yet focused in on a particular issue of concern. By 16 subjects generally focused on a particular area of concern (helping the needy, promoting civil rights, taking care of their family, etc) but they took an all or nothing approach to their commitment. They struggled to reconcile their conflicting desires and felt they either had to dedicate their entire lives to a cause, or give up on it completely. By 20 years of age a concrete purpose, on a scale that allowed subjects to pursue their personal desires along with their purpose, was evident. Finally, at 24, the subject had begun working toward his/her purpose and, in doing so, began encountering some of the obstacles and challenges inherent in it. This research is very preliminary, but suggests that indeed purpose exists and that the nature of it differs by developmental stage. This has implications for the way educators, parents, and other youth workers interact with young people and help adolescents find and remain committed to their own purpose.

*“Devereux Early Childhood Assessment,” Paul LeBuffe, Devereux Foundation*

Summary has been requested from author.

*“Child Health and Illness Profile,” Anne Riley and Barbara Starfield, Johns Hopkins University*

Summary has been requested from authors.

*“Positive Youth Development,” Richard F. Catalano, J. David Hawkins, and Brian H. Smith, University of Washington*

Protective factors must moderate or mediate the effects of risk exposure, and demonstrate results in multiple longitudinal studies. Some youth benefit from individual protective factors such as high intelligence and resilient temperament. The Social Development Model lays out how families, schools and communities can support the healthy development of all youth through building protection into their environments. This protective process begins with providing children and youth with prosocial opportunities and ensuring they have the skills needed for successful involvement. Recognition and rewards for successful prosocial involvement result in the creation of powerful bonds to families, schools, communities and positive peer groups. These bonds lead youth to develop healthy beliefs and embrace clear standards for positive behavior. Research has shown that youth with higher levels of protection achieve greater academic success and have lower levels of depression and drug use. However, high levels of protection are not found in seriously high risk environments, so successful support of youth development requires

interventions targeting both risk and protection. The Communities That Care prevention planning system helps communities assess their unique profile of risk and protection and choose appropriate tested, effective policies, programs and actions that match their specific needs. This data-driven system empowers communities to create an inclusive locally driven process for research based outcome focused action to support successful youth development.

### **Wrap-Up and Next Steps:**

To conclude the conference, remarks were provided by Kris Moore, president of Child Trends, Sonia Chessen from the office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the Department of Health and Human Services, and Katherine Wallman, from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Dr. Moore detailed the next steps that she hoped would come out of the work presented at the conference, and she also outlined what Child Trends would be working on in the near future with regards to the conference. She revealed that an issue of *The Journal of Adolescent and Family Health* was going to be produced and four representative articles would be included in that issue, and that an edited book would also be published which would include all papers, or perhaps all of the papers that were not included in the journal issue.

Dr. Moore outlined some of the next steps that need to be worked on, including: further data collection, including larger, more diverse national samples; determining who is the best reporter on children's behavior, be it the child, the parent, the teacher, or another adult; and developing a compelling overarching theory, or framework, of development that underlies the measures. Some of the constructs presented during the conference need more work, including spirituality and tolerance, additional mental health constructs such as personal growth and social cohesion, and positive relationships with adults outside of the family. Dr. Moore repeated the statement heard throughout the conference that what gets measured gets emphasized. She concluded by thanking the paper authors and wishing for continued collaboration with them to measure and subsequently emphasize the positive development of children.

Sonia Chessen spoke from the perspective of working for a department within HHS that supports research that informs policy. She indicated that from a governmental standpoint, a measure consisting of five items or fewer has more of a chance to be included in national surveys. It is important to develop these measures as soundly as possible, because millions of other researchers are battling to get questions included in the same surveys. Ms. Chessen indicated that she saw many measures presented during the conference that she felt could be ready for indicators, could be used in surveys, or could be used for programs.

Katherine Wallman also spoke from the government perspective, this time from the lens of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). She indicated that many people believe OMB to be a "scrooge" in terms of the imposition of budget constraints or burden controls. However, she believes that through coordination and collaboration some progress can be made on these issues. Through the "America's Children" report, much information has been presented on what we know, but also it has been used as a vehicle to indicate what is unknown about child

development. One of the things that has been identified over the years is the need to have more information on positive behaviors that are associated with improved child development. Ms. Wallman suggested that it would be constructive to arrive at a modest set of indicators that could be used across surveys. She also issued a plea to the research community that they invite her colleagues in the federal statistical system to create a dialogue and share in the knowledge being developed on both sides on how to improve surveys and the government's knowledge of child development.

## Related Materials:

Finalized versions of the papers presented at the conference will be published in two future volumes. A special edition of *The Journal of Family and Adolescent Health* will highlight four papers from the conference. An edited book is also being planned which will include all papers not published in the journal issue. More information on these publications, including availability and publish dates, can be obtained by contacting Julie Dombrowski, Research Analyst at Child Trends. ([jdombrowski@childtrends.org](mailto:jdombrowski@childtrends.org))

The Child Trends Databank, a one-stop shop for the latest national trends and research on over 70 key indicators of child and youth well-being, can be located online at <http://www.childtrends.databank.org>. The website is continuously updated with the latest national estimates on all indicators. The indicators feature descriptive text as well as color graphics and tables that can be downloaded directly into reports and presentations.

The research brief, “The Uses (and Misuses) of Social Indicators: Implications for Public Policy,” as well as many other research briefs published by Child Trends can be obtained through Child Trends’ publication website, located at: <https://secure.childtrends.org/onlinecart/>.

The book Indicators of Children’s Well-Being, edited by Robert M. Hauser, Brett V. Brown, and William R. Prosser was published in 1997 by the Russell Sage Foundation. For ordering information, please contact the Russell Sage Foundation directly.

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The publication America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being 2002 can be obtained from the Health Resources and Services Administration Information Center (HRSA). A limited supply of copies is also available from Child Trends. Copies from both organizations are free of charge, while supplies last.

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