

**A COMPARISON OF PARENTAL AND SELF-EXPECTATIONS
FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADE STUDENTS**

THESIS

**Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development**

State University of New York

College at Brockport

**in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education**

by

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December 1990

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to investigate and to compare the parental expectations held for intermediate (grades 4-6) children with those expectations that these same children hold for themselves.

The subjects consisted of twenty-seven students and their parents. These participants were asked to complete a fourteen question survey. The survey given to the parents asked them about the expectations that they held for their children under a variety of circumstances. The student survey asked the children about their own expectations concerning the same circumstances.

The surveys were then examined and the number of parent-child agreements for each question was tallied and then converted into percentages. The percentage of agreements varied greatly among the questions.

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people who should be recognized for their help in the completion of this thesis.

Special appreciation is given to my family, especially my parents and my husband, Richard, who have all given me constant support and encouragement throughout my college career. Special thanks is given to my mother for her help in the final preparation of this thesis.

Sincere appreciation is given to Dr. Gerald Begy for his time, encouragement and continuous support throughout the writing of this thesis.

Deep appreciation is also give to Jacqueline Colicchio for her help in the final preparation of this thesis. Special thanks is extended to her for all the interest and enthusiasm that she expressed to me concerning this thesis.

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Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate and to compare the self-expectations of intermediate (grades 4-6) children to the expectations that their parents hold for them. Both similarities and differences in replies by the children and their parents were recorded.

Questions to be Answered

This study was conducted in an attempt to answer the following questions:

- A. What are some common self-expectations held by intermediate grade children?
- B. What are some common parental expectations that are held for intermediate grade children?
- C. What are some commonalities and differences between self-expectations of intermediate grade children and those that their parents hold for them?

Need for the Study

The world is changing quickly. Changes in the economy, the environment, politics and education occur daily. Even the family unit has changed a great deal from the past. "Today the traditional family with a husband as breadwinner and the wife as a full-time homemaker with two or more children is no longer the norm and comprises only a minority of families. Dual career families, single parent families and step-families are common" (Berlege, 1983, p.3). Along with these changes, the expectations that parents have for their children and those that children have for themselves are also changing.

These expectations can greatly influence children as they grow. Children's self perceptions, goals and achievements may all be influenced by both self and parental expectations. Because expectations may be so critical to a child's development, they must be investigated.

Parents, some who are unaware that they are doing so, often expect too much from their children. Children's goals or self expectations may be much lower for themselves than those held for them by their

parents. This may cause anger, frustration or even depression. Yet, parents can also expect far less of a child than he/she is capable of, and this may influence the child into not working towards his/her potential. The importance of neither over or underestimating a child's abilities further emphasizes the need for this study.

Parents need to be made aware of the expectations that today's children have for themselves. Also, parents should be encouraged to examine their own expectations for their child as well as those that their child has for him/herself.

Many studies concerning this topic have concentrated mainly on older students, although some studies have also been done with primary students as well. In these studies academic or occupational expectations have been a main focus for information. Although these are important, there are also other expectations that are important to children. Equally critical to the academic and occupational expectations of children are those that deal with family and social situations. Therefore, several types of expectations, including educational, occupational and social were investigated in this study.

Also, much of the previous research has been completed using only one parent. In the present study, each parent living in the home was encouraged to participate.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the fact that parents were asked to complete the surveys on expectations at their convenience, it is possible that some parents took a great deal of time to consider their replies while others may have thought less about their answers. Thought and length of answers may also vary for children who completed the surveys in school and who may have been influenced by schedules or time limits beyond the control of the researcher.

The vast majority of people taking part in this study were of middle class status, and results would most likely vary if people of either lower or upper socio-economic status had participated. This, however, would only emphasize the concept that various aspects influence the formation of expectations.

Summary

A great deal of research has helped stress the importance of parents' expectations for their children. Also shown to be extremely important are the expectations that children have for themselves.

Due to the fact that these expectations can be critical to a child's development, they were investigated in this study. Expectations concerning academic, social, family and occupational goals were examined. This was done by comparing the results of both parental and student surveys which deal with expectations of the students involved.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate and to compare the self expectations of intermediate grade children to the expectations held for these same children by their parents,

Introduction

"My parents expect too much from me." "But, Mom, my teacher expects too much from us!" "I really wish that my son/daughter would expect more from him/herself." Expectations. People deal with them everyday; at home, at their jobs, at school, in their personal relationships... Often the expectations that people set for themselves do not correspond with those that other people set for them. When this is the case, frustration, disappointment or even depression may occur.

This is particularly true for children. Children must deal with expectations concerning everything from table manners, participation in sports and drug usage

to scholastic achievements. The expectations dealing with these topics are placed on children by people such as parents, teachers and peers. As children begin to either meet with or fail to meet with these expectations they may begin to form judgments about themselves and their ability to accomplish things. In their book, Too Great Expectations: The Academic Outlook of Young Children, Entwisle and Hayduk (1978) state:

Parents, of course, almost from the moment children are born, have ideas about how well their children will do in school and, more generally, in life. The children themselves develop ideas about their own ability, not only from parents, but from peers, teachers, and others. (p.2)

The forming of expectations begins the first day that an infant arrives home or possibly even within the first few hours of life while the child is still in the hospital. Once children are born their parents, whether consciously or unconsciously, begin to communicate the expectations that they hold for them through their actions, words, and their own modeling behaviors. These actions may encourage or discourage young children to try to accomplish different things throughout their lives.

When investigating educational encouragement with secondary students, Conklin and Daily (1981) stated, "The way in which parents communicate educational encouragement or discouragement to their child varies across families. In some families it may be communicated through educational expectations the parents express to their neighbors, relatives and friends" (p. 254). Many people have verbally expressed their expectations concerning their children at one time or another. Statements such as, "I know that Johnny will do well on his math test" or "My daughter is going to go to the best college around" are quite frequently heard coming from parents.

Statements such as these surface surprisingly early in a child's life. Yet, even at these early ages, children may be influenced by the expectations which these statements represent. "College attendance is determined by some parents for their children even before they enter first grade" (Conklin and Daily, 1981, p.255).

Educational Expectations 3

Many factors may play a role in the type of educational expectations that parents hold for their children. The fact that a parent may or may not have attended college may influence the expectations that he/she holds for a child. Intons-Peterson (1985) demonstrated this when she investigated the expectations that fathers held for their children and found that those who had attended college held higher educational expectations for their children.

On the other hand, some parents who did not receive a college degree may feel that their child will achieve more in life with such a degree. Some of these parents may have wanted to go to college but were unable to do so and they may want their children to receive the education that they were unable to get themselves.

Crowley and Shapiro (1982) described the results of their interviews with youth 14-21 years of age by stating:

It would appear, then, that youth from better educated households are instilled with high educational expectations from an early age, and these very high expectations increase only slightly with age. Youth whose parents have less schooling lack this early parental socialization, but expectations of these

youth increase more rapidly as they grow older, thereby narrowing (but not eliminating) the influence of parental educational attainment. (p. 401)

Financial arrangements or a family's economic status may also affect parents' educational expectations for their children. Kendel and Lesser (1969) stated, "Parental desires for their children are more important determinants of the child's educational plan than is socio-economic status, although the parents' aspirations themselves may be determined in great part by the parents' position in society" (p. 221). Also discussing social class, Sewell and Shah (1968) stated:

Even when other variables known to be related to both social class origins and aspirations such as sex, intelligence, high school achievement, value orientations, and contextual variables such as neighborhood and community of residence have been controlled, social class origins have been found to have independent influences on educational and occupational aspirations. (p. 559)

In one study Conklin and Daily further investigated a parent's influence on a child's desire to continue his/her education and go to college. They found that when, in the home, it was taken for granted that the child would go to college, that it was indeed more likely that he/she actually would do so. They

stated that "This characteristic of parental encouragement reflects a long-standing general attitude; it is a measure of the environment in which the child was reared" (Conklin and Daily, 1981, p. 254).

However, neither socio-economic status nor parents' educational histories are the sole influence of parents' educational expectations for their children. Many factors may influence these expectations, as well as those that the children form for themselves. After interviewing 11,400 youths between the ages of 14-21 years, Crowley and Shapiro stated:

Aside from parental education, a number of other family structure measures are significantly related to educational expectations, especially among young men. Greater number of siblings are associated with lower expectations, other things being equal. Youths who lived with both parents at age 14 had slightly higher expected schooling than other youth. The number of parents present in the home helps determine the family's total resources, and the number of siblings influences how much of the family's resources are available for the rearing and education of each child. Greater resources should lead to higher expenditures on schooling. As anticipated, respondents born outside the United States have higher educational expectations than native-born Americans, consistent with the notion that foreign-born families are oriented toward upward mobility. (p. 401)

Yet more influences on educational expectations were stressed by Crowley and Shapiro (1982), "Social values, as indicated by religious upbringing and involvement and by sex-role traditionality, consistently predicted both educational and fertility expectations" (p. 415).

Even stereotypes may play a role in the expectations that are formed for children. In a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association, Yee (1986) discussed parents' perceptions of their children's math abilities. She reported:

Parents held these sex-differentiated perceptions of their children's math ability, despite the similarity of their sons' and daughters' actual performances, as measured by math grades and standardized math test. Further, compared to parents of daughters, parents of sons felt that math was more important than the other subjects for their child. (p. 3-4)

Further stressing this idea, a study by Jayaratne (1983) reported that even though daughters performed better than sons in math, the parents of the sons reported more positive perceptions of their child's math achievement.

Marcus and Corini (1978) described a study they performed concerning gender by stating:

This research project was begun during a time in our social history concerned with differences between men and women with respect to levels of achievement. A central purpose of this study was to determine whether differences in parental expectations of preschool boys and girls might parallel the later difference observed between men and women; that is, do parents of preschool boys have higher achievement expectations for their children than parents of preschool girls? In fact, the results of this study suggest a small tendency in the opposite direction - somewhat higher parental expectations of girls. While parents of preschool children may hold different life expectations for their children associated with gender and these expectations may favor long-range achievement of boys over girls, it appears that girls begin their academic careers with in a slightly more positive context than do boys. (p. 245-6)

Yee also presented ideas concerning stereotyping and its effects on parents' expectations regarding children's conduct. She stated:

The child's sex influences both parents' expectations for conduct and the child's marks in conduct; girls receive higher marks and are the targets of higher expectations. Sex stereotypes thus appear to influence both parents' conduct expectations for sons and daughters and their children's actual conduct as evaluated by the teachers' marks on the earliest report card the child receives. (p. 27)

Occupational Expectations

Occupational expectations for children are also influenced by many variables. Again, both the educational and economic status of a family can influence these expectations. For example, Crowley and Shapiro (1982) stated:

The level of economic well being of a youth's family of origin, proxied for (in part) by parental educational attainment, will determine the resources available for pursuit of postsecondary education and may also influence aspirations and expectations concerning childbearing and future employment activity. (p. 393)

After completing part II of their report, Crowley and Shapiro (1982) reported:

Parental educational attainment, a broad measure of socio-economic background, is significantly related to the occupational status aspirations of both female and male youth. Higher parental educational attainment is likely to be associated with greater family resources, facilitating acquisition of the education and training necessary for higher-status occupations. More highly educated parents are also likely to be role models for attaining higher-status occupations. (p. 41)

Stressing additional influences on occupational expectations, Koppel and DelRoccili (1978) stated:

We found that the reading achievement score exerts a highly significant influence on occupational aspiration and expectation even when controlling for parental occupational status, parental education, grade, sex, ethnicity and knowledge of the world of work. The implication of these findings is that students with higher demonstrated achievement are the most likely to aspire to and expect more prestigious jobs. (p. 455)

Adding to the previous influences on occupational expectations, Koppel and DelRoccili (1978) stated, "Thus, coming from a family of higher educational status, possessing good reading skills, and being more familiar with the world of work are all positively associated with more ambitious educational plans" (p. 456).

Just as they may influence educational expectations, stereotypes may also influence occupational expectations. Gettys and Cann (1981) reported their findings by saying:

The pattern revealed by these data would seem to leave little doubt that young children not only select sex-stereotyped appropriate occupations for themselves, but they also recognize that the occupations are typically filled by males or by females. Children in every age group clearly and accurately distinguished between occupations which

according to adult stereotypes or current practices are dominated by one or the other sex. (p. 306)

However, in one study conducted by Kriedberg, Butcher and White (1978) one half of a group of sixth grade females indicated a nontraditional profession as their occupational goal.

Shapiro and Crowley (1982) introduced more influences on occupational expectations when they reported, "Other family background characteristics also helped predict occupational aspirations, especially for males. Number of siblings, a variable measuring competing claims on family resources, has a significant negative relationship to aspirations for young men only" (p. 41).

Therefore, it appears that many influences may affect both self and parental expectations for children. The family is one group of people that can greatly influence these expectations. Yet, family members are not the only people to do this.

Significant Others

Yes, it is true that family members, and especially parents, may form and express their expectations for children when they are young and then

for the rest of their lives. However, these are not the only people who will form their own expectations for children. They also are not the only people who will influence a child's expectations. People such as teachers and peers soon become an important part of children's lives. Brophy (1987), emphasizing the impact that people have on children, stated, "Student motivation to learn is an acquired competence developed through general experiences but stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by significant others" (p. 40).

Once children enter school they begin to spend a majority of their time with people, other than their relatives, who most likely have been their main contacts since birth. This may occur earlier, of course, for those children who attend daycare or preschool.

Adults soon compare children to one another once they have entered school. Entwisle and Hayduk (1981) described this situation by saying, "In a classroom a child is compared with twenty to thirty other children

of the same age. The net residue of these comparisons is thought to shape the child's self-concept, self-image, or expectations" (p. 35).

Further stressing the importance of significant others, Picou and Carter (1976), citing Herriott (1963), used the terms "definers" (those who hold expectations) and "models" (those whose behavior is emulated) to describe these influential people. They stated, "One of the few studies which classified significant others in terms of 'models' and 'definers' found that peer-definer influence was actually greater than parental-definer influence for the formation of educational aspirations" (p. 13).

Picou and Carter (1976) also wrote:

Furthermore, when viewed in terms of alternate modes of peer influence, the implicit theoretical assumptions of previous investigations that peers influence primarily through modeling behavior rather than definer appears to be well-taken. (p. 21)

Also investigating the influence of significant others, Conklin and Daily (1981) stated:

The positive association between parental encouragement and adolescents' educational aspirations and attainment has been repeatedly substantiated. For example, adolescents' educational aspirations are more

highly associated with their peers' expectations for their educational futures. (p. 254)

Self Expectations

All of the expectations that significant others hold for children may greatly influence children's self-expectations and self-image. Entwisle and Hayduk (1981) stressed this by stating:

We suspect that self expectations are critical for academic development, because forecasts for the self likely filter, color, and even determine a child's experiences.

If children think they will do well, they will be glad to try. If, however, they think they will do poorly, they are apt to hang back and avoid the very things that will help them to learn. (p. 35)

Spenner and Featherman (1978) said:

The encouragement of one's parents and the plans of one's peers appear to shape ambitions more directly and with greater impact than any other source. Their effects are stronger than the direct influence of one's scholastic aptitude or previous academic achievement, and much stronger than any direct influence from one's social origins per se. (p. 392)

After working with eighth graders, Snead and Chase (1981) stressed the importance of self expectations:

...attempting to teach mathematics by standard class procedures to students who hold little expectation that they will learn it might well be at best inefficient. It, therefore, appears that the first step in instruction should deal with the learner.

The learner's readiness to learn must include a belief that she or he will indeed be successful with the topic to be learned. (p. 119),

Therefore, it is important for parents, as well as educators, to realize the primacy of forming realistic expectations for children and helping children to do the same for themselves. Entwisle and Hayduk (1978) reported:

Early events are clearly of overriding importance. Why? Because, once the cycle of self-fulfilling prophecy starts, expectations shape performance, then performance is evaluated, and the evaluations feed back to modify expectations - it may be a hard cycle to break. (p. 5)

Berlege (1983) also believed that people's expectations or the comparison of children to one another could greatly affect children's lives when he stated:

At an early age, parents and teachers make invidious comparisons and establish 'winners' and 'losers.' Children are classified as slow learners, average, above average and gifted. The consequences of these labels may result in self-fulfilling prophecy. In other words expectations may come to determine outcomes. (p. 7)

The Affects of Expectations

Berlege (1983) tried to further explain the early expectations that are frequently formed for young

children:

Many middle class parents today believe that to be a good parent means to structure their children's lives. This structuring and early parental involvement is thought to foster earlier academic, emotional, social and physical development. The belief is that the earlier a child masters a particular skill, the more proficient he or she will become.

This early parental involvement is placing unnecessary strain on children to achieve at early ages and is often placing unrealistic expectations on them. (p. 6)

In today's society these expectations even affect children's "free time." "But success in the school is just one area in which the child at an early age is expected to excel. Play, too, is now structured. Games are no longer spontaneous and for fun" (Berlege, 1983, p. 9).

Expectations, if too high, can produce negative outcomes. Yet, a child needs expectations that are high enough so that they will help him/her to achieve his/her potential. One study conducted in Hong Kong by Kit-Fond Au and Harackiewicz (1986) found that children who believed that their parents held high expectations for them tended to perform better on a given arithmetic test. When reporting their findings they stated, "These findings suggest that low perceived parental expectations might actually impoverish children's

performance when parental evaluation is anticipated. But perception of high expectations might enhance under similar circumstances" (p. 389).

"If a child is told, for instance, that he is good in arithmetic he develops ideas about himself (expectations) consistent with that evaluation. These ideas lead him to behave in ways that make the evaluation come true" (Entwisle and Hayduk, 1978, p. 1). Other researchers have also found that people tend to confirm expectations that are held for them by other people (Darley & Fazio, 1980,; Snyder, 1984; Snyder & Swann, 1978).

Therefore, it seems obvious that the expectations that children hold for themselves and those that other people hold for them may be critical to children's development in a number of situations. Researchers have investigated various influences on these expectations. The one idea that continuously appears in this research is that the expectations of significant people in children's lives may greatly affect children's self perceptions and expectations.

Chapter III

Design of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate and to compare the self-expectations of intermediate (grades 4-6) students to the expectations held for them by their parents.

Methodology

Subjects

Twenty-six intermediate grade (grades 4-6) students from both public and parochial schools of Western New York and their parents were the subjects of this study.

Letters were sent home to the parents of these children asking them if they, along with their child, would like to participate in this study. The parents who did return a positive reply then became subjects along with their child.

Procedure

Due to the fact that each parent survey was compared to the corresponding child's survey, at least one parent must have completed a survey in order for his/her child to also participate in this study. Therefore, a letter explaining the study was sent home prior to the beginning of this research. The parents were asked to return a positive reply if they wished to participate in the study.

The parent surveys were then sent home with the students in sealed envelopes. Each of these surveys was given a code number (e.g. 4A, 4B) so that all answers could be given anonymously and was accompanied by a cover letter asking the parents to mail the completed surveys in an enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Each student's survey was also given a code number (e.g. 4C). The students were given the surveys by either their own teacher or the researcher and asked to complete them during school hours. In the cases where the teacher distributed the surveys, each survey had the student's name taped onto the front page, which

the teacher then discarded as she gave the students their surveys so that anonymity was maintained.

Prior to the distribution of the student surveys, a statement written by the researcher was read to the students. This statement asked the students to fill out the surveys based on their own beliefs and reminded them that their answers may or may not be the same as those that their parents might give.

When all surveys were completed, the researcher then compared each student's answers to those of his/her parent(s).

Analysis of Data

When comparing each student's replies to those of his/her parents, the researcher looked for both similarities and differences.

After a general examination of all the surveys each child's survey was attached to that of his/her parent(s). Each one of these "sets" was then given a summary sheet on which the researcher recorded either "A", representing an agreement between the parent(s) and the child, or "D", representing a disagreement.

After all responses were recorded in this manner, all agreement responses were tallied and then converted

into percentages. Questions that were not answered or answered incorrectly due to a misunderstanding of the question were not counted in these percentages. Final percentages were recorded in Table 1.

After completing this portion of the analysis, the researcher once again examined each survey, paying attention to specific replies and comments.

Chapter IV

Findings and Interpretation of Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate and to compare the self-expectations of intermediate grade children to the expectations held for these children by their parents.

Analysis of Data

Table 1 includes a sample of each question from the parent survey. These questions differ from those on the student survey only in the fact that the students were asked to answer according to expectations that they held for themselves whereas the parents were asked to reply based on expectations that they hold for their child.

Also included in Table 1 is the percentage of parent-child agreements for each survey question. However, some of these questions asked for three replies. When the percentages for these questions were recorded they were based on how many of the three replies were listed as agreements.

Table 1

Percentage of Parent-Student Agreement on Survey Questions

Question #	Question	Percentage
1.	What do you think your child's future occupation will be?	67%
2.	List 3 things that you expect your child to do after he/she graduates from high school.	4% agreed on none of the replies. 38% agreed on 1/3 of the replies. 53% agreed on 2/3 of the replies 4% agreed on all of the replies
3.	In what subject do you expect your child to receive his/her <u>highest</u> grade on the next report card?	36%
4.	In what subject do you expect your child to receive his/her <u>lowest</u> grade on the next report card?	50%
5.	List 3 responsibilities that you think your child should have as a member of your family.	18% agreed on none of the replies. 43% agreed on 1/3 of the replies 36% agreed on 2/3 of the replies 2% agreed on all three replies

Table 1 (con't)

Percentage of Parent-Student Agreement on Survey Questions

Question #	Question	Percentage
6.	If your child saw something in the store that he/she wanted to buy, how would you expect him/her to get the money to buy it?	71%
7.	List 3 responsibilities that you think your child should have as a member of his/her school.	60% agreed on none of the replies. 35% agreed on 1/3 of the replies. 5% agreed on 2/3 of the replies.
8.	If you knew that your child would be receiving a grade on a test later this week, how would you expect him/her to prepare for the test?	98%
9.	List 3 things that you think your child should do because he/she is a friend to someone.	61% agreed on none of the replies. 37% agreed on 1/3 of the replies. 2% agreed on 2/3 of the replies.

Table 1 (con't)

Percentage of Parent-Student Agreement on Survey Questions

Question #	Question	Percentage
10.	Has your child ever done <u>worse</u> at something that you expected him/her to do?	72%
11.	Has your child ever done <u>better</u> at something that you expected him/her to do?	89%
12.	List 3 things that you expect from your child.	67% agreed on none of the replies. 29% agreed on 1/3 of the replies. 5% agreed on 2/3 of the replies.
13.	List 3 things that you expect your child to accomplish within the next year.	45% agreed on none of the replies. 50% agreed on 1/3 of the replies. 5% agreed on 2/3 of the replies.

Table 1 (con't)

Percentage of Parent-Student Agreement on Survey Questions

Question #	Question	Percentage
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14.	If you have any additional comments that you would like to make concerning the expectations that you have for your child please make them here.	
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Note. The questions listed in this table were taken from the parent survey.

Note. Due to rounding, the total percentages on some questions may be greater than 100%.

Summary

All answers given for the survey questions were tallied and converted into percentages of agreements. Once this was done, a wide variety in these percentages for each question became evident.

Half of the questions on the surveys asked the participant to give only one reply. However, the other half asked the person to give three replies. When this was the case, the percentage of agreements was based on the number of corresponding responses of the three possible replies.

All percentages and a sample of each question were then recorded in Table 1.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate and to compare the self-expectations of intermediate (grades 4-6) children to the expectations that their parents hold for them.

Conclusions

Twenty-seven intermediate grade students participated in this study along with their parents. It should be noted that in this group of parents there were twenty-five mothers and nineteen fathers. Seventeen pairs of these adults were married parents of a child participating in the study. Many conclusions may be drawn from the information given by these participants.

The results of question one, which asked what the child's future occupation would be, may actually be related to those of question two, which asked for three things expected of the student upon completion of high

school, due to the fact that many occupations do require specific training or education after high school. When answering this question, many students noted that they expect their future occupation to be one that does require advance education. Twenty-five percent of the students answered this question with an occupation in the medical field and thirteen percent with an answer in the educational field. Seventeen percent of the students gave an answer dealing with the arts.

Many of the replies given for question number two described expectations concerning higher education, future part-time employment, marriage and the development of a family. Other replies given by parents concerning their child mentioned travel and future living arrangements. Some parents said that they expected their child to move out, while others expected their child to live at home for an extended period of time. One parent specifically stated that she expected her child to live in a dorm.

On this same question parents seemed to list future actions or changes rather than the obtainment of specific monetary goods. However, some students did mention that they expect to possess certain things such

as: a horse, an "expensive house and car," or record albums.

Unlike most of the questions on the surveys, answers given for questions three and four, which asked what was the subject that the child would receive his/her highest and lowest mark on the next report card, might have been based on the prior knowledge of children's previous grades. However, even with the possible use of such information, the percentage of agreement on question three was only 36% and 50% for question number four.

Questions five, seven and nine are all based on expectations for children due to their involvement in specific groups or organizations. More students agreed with their parents on question number five which dealt with the family unit than on either question seven, concerning school, or question nine, dealing with friendships. This may have been due to the fact that the people completing these surveys are actually part of the family unit. It is likely that expectations concerning family members are expressed quite frequently in the home.

Questions seven and nine deal with situations where a parent has less contact and probably less

influence on a child than they do in the home environment. Children's responses might correlate higher with those of their teachers, schoolmates or other friends on these questions if they were asked to fill out similar surveys.

Contrary to these questions, survey questions number six and eight had high agreement percentages. Question number six dealt with the way in which a child would obtain money to purchase a desired item, and question eight dealt with the ways that a student might study for an exam. The high agreement percentages on these two questions may have been due to the fact that it is highly possible that these situations actually have arisen during the children's lives.

When parents were asked if their child had ever done worse at something than they had expected him/her to do, the majority said, "yes," as did most of their children when they responded to the corresponding question on their survey. Some parents stated specific examples when answering this question. The most frequent comment involved school subject grades and test scores. However, eating habits and sports were also mentioned. Interestingly, every child who also chose to write a specific answer to this question also

named a subject taught in school or a type of test given in school. It is quite possible that when the students read this question they assumed that it was inquiring about school subjects.

Question number eleven asked the parents and students if the child had ever done better at something than was expected. Again, the majority of parents and students replied, "yes." Specific comments written by some parents mentioned accomplishments dealing with things such as school subjects, test grades, music lessons, dance lessons, physical activities and learning to read. Student comments, once more, dealt mainly with school subjects and test grades. However, other accomplishments such as dance competitions and physical games taught in gym class were also mentioned.

The generality of questions twelve and thirteen may explain, to some extent, the low agreement percentages for these two questions. In question twelve parents and children were asked to list three things expected from the child. A wide variety of answers were given by both parents and students for this question. However, there were a few replies that appeared quite frequently on the parent surveys. A large number of parents (25) answered question twelve

by stating that respect is something that they expect from their child. Other frequent replies were: honesty, love, and performing to the best of one's ability.

Answers that appeared more frequently than others on student surveys were: good performance in school, completion of chores, being helpful, getting along with others and being "good."

Question thirteen dealt with the expectations held for a child within the next year's time span. Although there was a large variety in the replies for this question, the two most frequent replies given by parents were: to advance to the next grade level and to maintain or raise existing grades in school.

The idea that some parents of intermediate grade children expect their child to accept some responsibility was expressed through replies such as: to become more responsible, to become proficient at babysitting, to lose weight, learn new skills...

Question fourteen was added to the surveys to allow parents and students to make any additional comments that they might like concerning the expectations that are held for intermediate grade

children. Twelve mothers, six fathers, and seven students chose to make additional comments.

Parent comments varied greatly and included their ideas or hopes that their child will have faith in God, live up to his/her full potential, be happy, be willing to try new things, make "well thought out" decisions, ward off peer pressure, develop an interest in environmental issues and gain self confidence. One mother stated that she did not think that she should expect anything from her child because she brings up her children with certain morals and encouragement and she thinks this should guide them to become their own person.

Another mother said that she found it difficult to compare her parental expectations to those her daughter might hold for herself. She expressed her belief that parents should make their expectations known to their children, but they should not "push them into things" because she feels that if the child doesn't "live up to" these expectations than the child may become frustrated.

Implications for Research

The importance and causes of expectations have been expressed by many people. This study investigated the self-expectations of intermediate grade children and those that are held for them by their parents.

The children who participated in this study were not asked to reveal their gender. Yet, this, if further investigated, may prove to be important in the formation of expectations for children. It may be true that fathers and mothers hold very different expectations for their sons than for their daughters.

Birth order may also be an area that would be beneficial to investigate concerning expectations. It is possible that second or third children may be expected to "live up to" the accomplishments of a first-born child. It is also possible that a first-born child may have high expectations held for him or her in the hopes that he or she might set a good example for younger siblings.

This study investigated the expectations held for intermediate grade children in a number of areas. Future research might concentrate more on one aspect of children's lives.

Information such as this may prove to be beneficial to those who deal with children on a regular basis such as social workers, guidance counselors and teachers. The information could be used to better understand why children react in specific ways when they achieve or fail to achieve certain goals or accomplishments.

The ways to investigate children's expectations and parental expectations seem countless. The degree of specificity or generality of future research would depend on the way the information was to be used. For example, educators might wish to deal with academic expectations specifically.

Implications for Classroom Practice

Information concerning children's expectations might prove to be beneficial for classroom use in a variety of ways.

Having children think about their own expectations as well as those that others may hold for them may promote very informational and useful discussions. Given the chance, children might "open up" and discuss these expectations with one another. This may help teachers, as well as children themselves, to realize

how realistic or unrealistic their expectations might be. These discussions may also help students to develop new expectations for themselves and even for their classmates.

This information may also be beneficial for a teacher who wants to help his/her students to form educational goals for themselves. Once such expectations are formed, the teacher can also help students to meet these expectations and thus increase self confidence. The teacher may also help a child to realize that he/she may have set unrealistic expectations for him/herself, and thereby help the child to avoid becoming frustrated.

Teachers may also choose to allow their students to help in establishing expectations for the class as a whole throughout the school year. The class can then form new expectations based on academic knowledge, maturity and social skills that are acquired throughout the year.

The knowledge of specific parental expectations that are held for children may also prove to be helpful to a classroom teacher. These expectations may help to explain children's elation, disappointment or even

frustration over particular grades or activities performed in school.

The methods used to gain this type of information are numerous: e.g. surveys, discussions, role playing. This information may then be used to help many children to form expectations for themselves. It may also help them to understand the expectations that are formed for them by other people such as their parents.

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Appendix A
Initial Letter to Parents

Dear _____:

Hello, my name is Cheryl Marrese, and I am presently working towards completing a Master's Degree program at S.U.N.Y. Brockport. For a final project I am conducting a study to investigate the expectations that parents have for their children and the expectations that children have for themselves.

I am asking various intermediate (grades 4-6) students and their parents or guardians to fill out a short survey. The questions on the parent survey will ask you about specific expectations that you have for your child. The student survey will ask your child about expectations that he/she holds for him/herself. Each of these surveys will be given a code number so that all identities will remain confidential.

Once the surveys are complete, I will then compare each child's expectations for him/herself to those that his/her parent(s) have for him/her. I will look for differences as well as similarities.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will then send home a survey for each participating adult along with a self addressed stamped envelope so that these surveys may be mailed back to me. If two parents live in the home I would like to get both points of view. However, any help from either parent will be greatly appreciated! Your child will be able to fill out a student survey in school.

I would appreciate it if you would fill out the attached form and return it to your child's teacher by _____.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Marrese

Appendix B

Parent Survey with Cover Letter

Dear _____,

Hello again. Attached to this letter is the survey on parental expectations that you have agreed to complete. I, once again, want to thank you for participating in my study.

I would appreciate it if you would fill out the survey and then return it in the enclosed self addressed envelope. Please do not discuss the survey with any other household members until all participants, including the students, have completed filling out their surveys.

Please complete this and mail it by _____.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Marrese

PARENT SURVEY

Code # _____

Teacher's Name _____

Please answer the following questions. Thank you for your help!

What is your relationship to the child who will also be participating in this study? _____.

How many other children are in your family? _____.

1) What do you think your child's future occupation will be?

2) List 3 things that you expect your child to do after he/she graduates from high school.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

3) In what subject do you expect your child to receive his/her highest grade on the next report card? _____

4) In what subject do you expect your child to receive his/her lowest grade on the next report card? _____

5) List 3 responsibilities that you think your child should have as a member of your family.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

PARENT SURVEY

6) If your child saw something in the store that he/she wanted to buy, how would you expect him/her to get the money to buy it?

7) List 3 responsibilities that you think your child should have as a member of his/her school.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

8) If you knew that your child would be receiving a grade on a test later this week, how would you expect him/her to prepare for the test? _____

9) List 3 things that you think your child should do because he/she is a friend to someone.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

10) Has your child ever done worse at something than you expected him/her to do? _____

11) Has your child ever done better at something than you expected him/her to do? _____

PARENT SURVEY

12) List 3 things you expect from your child.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

13) List 3 things that you expect your child to accomplish within the next year.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

14) If you have any additional comments that you would like to make concerning the expectations that you have for your child, please make them here. _____

THANK YOU!

Appendix C
Statement Read to Students

Dear Students,

I am working on a study to investigate what students expect from themselves and what their parents expect from them. I would greatly appreciate it if you would fill out this survey for me.

I have asked your parents to fill out a survey that is similar to this one. When I have all the completed surveys I am going to look at them to see if students expect the same things from themselves that their parents expect from them.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Marrese

Appendix D
Student Survey

PARENT SURVEY

Code # _____

Teacher's Name _____

Please answer the following questions. Thank you for your help!

1) What do you think your future occupation will be?

2) List 3 things that you expect to do after you graduate from high school.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

3) In what subject do you expect to receive your highest grade on your next report card? _____

4) In what subject do you expect to receive your lowest grade on your next report card? _____

5) List 3 responsibilities that you think you should have as a member of your family.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

PARENT SURVEY

6) If you saw something in the store that you really wanted to buy, how would you get the money to buy it?

7) List 3 responsibilities that you think you should have as a member of your school.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

8) If you knew that you would be receiving a grade on a test later this week, how would you prepare for the test? _____

9) List 3 things that you think you should do because you are a friend to someone.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

10) Have you ever done worse at something than you expected to do? _____

11) Have you ever done better at something than you expected to do? _____

PARENT SURVEY

12) List 3 things you think your parents expect from you.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

13) List 3 things that you expect to accomplish within the next year.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

14) If you have any additional comments that you would like to make concerning the expectations that you have for yourself, please make them here. _____

THANK YOU!