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PREVIEW

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**The parent role as viewed by school psychologists: Understanding
and communicating the concept**

Pedro, Mariana Nunes, Psy.D.

Pace University, 1994

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300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

PREVIEW

**The Parent Role as Viewed by School Psychologists:
Understanding and Communicating the Concept**

Mariana N. Pedro

**A Doctoral Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology in the
Department of Psychology at Pace University
New York City
1993**



PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
PSY.D. PROJECT
FINAL APPROVAL FORM

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PREVIEW

ABSTRACT

The idea of being a parent seems inherently easy and natural. The definition of the parent role would seem equally easy. Within psychology, however, this is not the case. Currently, there is no theory of what the parent role is, and what being a parent means. The Parent Role Development Model (PRDM), developed and explored by Mowder (1991) proposes a definition and theory of the parent role. The concept includes characteristics of bonding, discipline, education, protection and general welfare, responsivity, and sensitivity. These characteristics are supported by existing literature, and have been substantiated by research exploring the PRDM. The model is also one which proposes developmental change in the importance and frequency of these characteristics over the lifespan of the child from birth to adulthood.

The current research explores the parent role in an effort to further understand the concept so that it can be communicated to school psychologists, and thus to parents themselves, in the form of service delivery. This would provide a common understanding between professionals and the parents of the children with whom they work, regarding what the parent role means.

School psychologists in a northeastern state were used as subjects in the current research. The group was administered the Parent Role

Questionnaire (PRQ) (Mowder, 1991a) which has been developed to explore the parent role through the characteristics listed above, and across the developmental stages of life. The research questions posed were intended to define the parent role, as reported by school psychologists via the PRQ. This study is an effort to help professionals form their own base of knowledge when attempting to communicate with parents of the children with whom they work.

Results suggest that the respondents define a parent role which incorporates the characteristics defined by the PRDM. Developmental trends were also identified. It is hoped that the information revealed by this study can be disseminated to other school psychologists so that they, in turn, can use this information in understanding the parents with whom they work. Working with a child's parents is essential to successful intervention with any child. This research should help the field of school psychology to understand parents as a component in a child's environment.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of children has long been an area of interest to researchers. In the profession of psychology, matters of childhood have often fallen within the realms of developmental psychology, school psychology, or even clinical psychology when looking at psychopathology. The topic of children is an appropriate one, as it is one which all professionals can relate to, having been a child themselves.

However, when observing and studying children, researchers often appear to do so with some distance. That is, children are often viewed in isolation. For example, when Piaget embarked on his extremely important work, it was with a focus on children as individuals, or as their own group, but not always in relation to others, especially adults.

A growing force in mental health is the approach of systems psychology (e.g., Heller, Price, Reinhartz, Riger, & Wandersman, 1984). This reminds us that no individual is ever really in isolation. That is, each person functions in relation to many systems of other people, which may include friends, family members, and persons of authority. There are also societal and cultural systems within which a person