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# EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENTING CLASSES FOR PARENTS OF AT-RISK YOUTH

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EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENTING CLASSES  
FOR PARENTS OF AT-RISK YOUTH

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work

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by  
Kristyne Armenta  
Janell Edith Huerta

June 2015

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## ABSTRACT

Parent education classes offered at the Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties were the focus of this study. A pre-test and post-test design was utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the classes for parents receiving parent education classes. The hypothesis was directed towards parents who attended parent education classes that would show improvement in knowledge of instrumental parental skills and an increase in parent satisfaction. This included understanding parents awareness and knowledge of healthy emotional expression, which further positive communication, appropriate developmental methods of discipline for their children and utilizing the coping strategies learned to deal with parent stressors. Accountability for program outcomes makes this study valuable to social worker clinicians working with at-risk youth.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Cory Dennis, Research Advisor, thank you for providing us with guidance, support and good humor.

To Dr. McCaslin, thank you for your knowledge and up-beat spirit in regards to research. It was a pleasure working with you.

## DEDICATION

To my beautiful mother,

I am honored to have the opportunity in obtaining my Masters in Social Work and I owe it completely to you. God was good to me in blessing you as my mother as I know I would not be who I am today without your love, encouragement, dedication and continued support. You modeled what it took to be a successful student, loving mother and supportive friend and most importantly to trust in the Lord within all aspects of my life. You always believed that I could achieve anything I put my mind to and here I am, 25 years old with a masters degree. I owe you my life, my love and my forever appreciation. Thank you from the bottom of my heart...I love you.

Love your daughter, Kristyne

I dedicate this research project to my mom, Grace Gil, who has given me unconditional love, emotional support, and guidance. Thank you mom for always believing in me and helping me throughout this journey. I am forever grateful and appreciative for everything you have done for me and my brothers.

Love your daughter, Janell

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of parent education classes is significantly greater when a parent attends a program parallel to their children receiving treatment.

Research suggests parents are more likely to reinforce positive behaviors at home that adhere to what their children are learning in treatment (Litschge, Vaughn & McCrea, 2010). Understanding the effectiveness of parent education programs is imperative due to the fact that the Child Protective Services Agencies and the courts rely heavily on these programs to maintain children in the home as well as help families reunify so that their children do not have to be placed in the foster care system. It is estimated that 400,000 recipients of child welfare services “will participate in voluntary or mandated parent training” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). Due to the frequent use of parent education classes, this study’s findings are critical in determining its effectiveness for continued use.

#### Problem Statement

The importance of understanding the effectiveness of parent education classes is also crucial due to the fact that detention rates of children are rising at an alarming rate. For instance, for Riverside Department of Public Social Services Children’s Social Services Supervisor II, Berkeley Edwards suggested, the detention of children has risen and there is currently an internal research

study being conducted to understand what factors are the cause of these detentions (personal communication, October 24, 2014). Within the county of Riverside between the years 2008 to 2014 there were 2,845 children detained and placed elsewhere from their home of residence (Safe Measures, 2014). Of these children detained from their parents, 64.6% of them were placed in foster family agencies, 19.9% of them were placed with their next of kin and only 3.4% of them were placed with a guardian (Safe Measures, 2014). Although the reasons for the children being detained is unknown, it can be assumed that either both parents were deemed unfit parents and were not meeting society's level of expectation to care for their child since a majority of them were placed in a foster family agency. Perhaps with the use of effective parent education classes, the number of detentions can decrease so children can remain in the home rather than be detained and displaced from their home of residence.

Although many individuals involved within the child welfare system are impoverished and have low levels of educational completion, this is not always the case. There are various clients from a range of backgrounds that are involved within the child welfare system. Likewise, throughout parent education programs there are a variety of participants who are from different socioeconomic statuses, marital statuses, educational levels, and cultural backgrounds, and as a result, may have contrasting beliefs about parenting their children. Although these individuals do come from various upbringings, they all attend parenting classes for the same goal of improving their parenting styles and interaction

patterns with their child. In like manner, parents from different backgrounds may also share similar internal and external stressors.

As previously stated, in today's society households are comprised of various backgrounds and structures. Families may be led by single parents, divorced parents, biological parents or other family members. Families may also be impoverished or wealthy, and may possibly be dealing with a history of family violence and/or substance abuse. Due to the environmental and economic differences these families may face, there may be a great deal of stress and dysfunction throughout their interactions. According to Tucker and Rodriguez (2014), life stressors within a family can lead to a parent abusing their child as a way to gain control within their environment. Moreover, the family's coping mechanisms may not be entirely healthy coping mechanisms, which leads to higher stress levels and negative modeled behavior, which in turn can create mental health concerns for their children.

According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2013) there were 73.7 million children within the United States in the year 2012, which makes up 23.5 percent out of the nation's entire population. As reported by the American Psychological Association (2013), of these 73.7 million children, 15 million are estimated to suffer from a behavioral health disorders. The nation is currently experiencing an epidemic in children suffering from a mental health disorder and as a result the Surgeon General has declared a public health crisis (Mendenhall & Frauenholtz, 2014). According to Meltzer, Gatward, Goodman,

and Ford (2000), children who suffer from behavioral and emotional problems are at a high risk for functional instability. Through the research presented on children's growing mental health needs, it is imperative for parents to receive education to help them deal with the present needs of their children in the most effective manner possible.

By providing effective treatment, and teaching the proper tools in order for children to change, it is important to also provide educational services to their parents. If a child begins to learn the tools needed in order to have a healthy change in their thoughts, behaviors and their actions, it is vital that their parents learn the same tools that can help ease the transition. Similarly, Barlow, Parsons and Stewart-Brown (2004) state, by providing parents the understanding of their child's needs it allows them to have the proper skills set to handle any further problems. Since parental understanding is the driving factor for their child's permanent change in behavior, the treatment provided to them is just as important. While a child receives mental health treatment it is often recommended for their parents to also attend a type of therapy, whether it be individual therapy, group therapy and/or a parent education class (Barlow, Parsons & Stewart-Brown, 2004). According to Reid, Webster-Stratton and Baydar (2004), without proper parenting styles a child can have an increase in the likelihood of developing behavioral problems, such as conduct problems and other mental health problems. Since parent education classes are often a

primary referral for parents of at-risk youth, understanding the effectiveness of these classes is crucial.

After various literature reviews it is evident that the most common theories utilized in parent education programs are cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), psycho-education and social learning theory. Research shows that CBT is most effective when working with parents and children suffering from behavior problems since it encourages changing cognitions, which then change behaviors (Nicholson, Anderson, Fox & Brenner, 2002). The use of psycho-education in parenting programs is useful due to the educational benefits it presents to the parents for utilizing positive reinforcements rather than negative reinforcements (Nicholson, Anderson, Fox & Brenner, 2002). Psycho-education also educates parents on the developmental stages so they can have appropriate expectations of their children. Social learning theory is described as being culturally sensitive, most effective and a type of observational learning strategy where both parent and child can learn from one another's modeled behavior (Chavis, 2012).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if parent education classes are effective for the families of at risk youth. As previously stated, parent education programs are the primary referral for parents working with a child welfare agency. Due to this being a primary referral it is vital to understand its effectiveness as this determines future decisions in continuing to refer clients to parent education

programs. While many of the referrals made to parent education programs are court mandated, others may be voluntary participants. Regardless of these participants being voluntary or involuntary, determining the programs' effectiveness affects their role as a parent and their interactions with their children.

According to a meta-analytic study conducted by Litschge, Vaughn and MCCrea (2010), parents who received parent education services had a higher rate of succession due to their ability to reinforce their child's proper behaviors. Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties adheres to practice theories such as CBT, psycho-education and social learning when conducting parent education groups. As stated by the community based organization Catholic Charities (2014), aside from utilizing these theories to direct their parents success they also teach them ways of enhancing their communication skills, setting healthy limits, and improving parental roles and family patterns. Furthermore, parents learn how to identify and manage their overwhelming feelings of anger, frustration, stress and guilt, while not projecting it onto their child.

### Significance of the Project for Social Work

Not only do mental health professionals recommend parent education classes to the parents of at-risk youth, child welfare workers often rely heavily on parent education classes as a means of parents having the ability to preserve

their family. It would be in the best interest for the mental health professionals and the child welfare workers to have a research study conducted that determines whether parent education classes are truly effective for the parents of at-risk youth.

This study contributes to social work practice by showing the importance of parents having the proper skills set, developmental knowledge, healthy coping skills and ways to validate their children in order to help them grow and succeed to their fullest potential. Moreover, this research would contribute to social work practice due to the fact that parent education classes often are for the purpose of maintaining children in the parental home. The findings of this research may determine if mental health and child welfare professionals will continue to refer their clients to parent education programs based off the effectiveness of parent education classes. Furthermore, the Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties would benefit from this study since their current parent education classes have not yet been studied to determine their effectiveness. Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties could utilize the research to show their future parent participants the expected outcomes of attending their parent education classes.

Additionally, this study contributes to values that social workers must uphold as part of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (2008). From the NASW code of ethics (2008), this study abides by the following values: service, social justice and the importance of human relationships. Through this

research, the participants will be receiving a service to help them address a problem they have. Social justice will be displayed due to the fact that the participants and their families are a vulnerable population. This study contributes to the value of the importance of human relationships since the interaction between a parent and their child is detrimental to the child's psychosocial well being and future interactions.

Aside from the NASW (2008) code of ethics, social workers also typically follow a seven stage generalist intervention model. This model consists of stages of engagement, assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, termination and follow-up (Weinbach & Grinnell, 2009). From the generalist intervention model this study will have a primary focus on the evaluation phase due to the purpose of the research determining the effectiveness of the parent education groups. The evaluation phase is described as relying on "statistical analyses to determine whether an individual intervention and/or program is accomplishing its objectives." (Weinbach & Grinnell, 2009, p. 2). This reflects the purpose of this study as it relates to evaluating the effectiveness of parent education classes and supports the research hypothesis that parenting classes for parents of at-risk youth are effective.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

In this chapter an overview of five key points will be introduced. Various studies on effectiveness of parent education programs will be presented. Research will explain parent stress levels associated with poor parenting skills. An overview of theories utilized by parent education classes will be introduced as well as the correlation between various socioeconomic status, cultural factors and stress levels that impact parents and their children.

#### Studies on Effectiveness of Parent Education Programs

According to O'Brien and Daley (2011), parent training has proven to be an effective method for supporting generalization and maintenance of skills in children with behavior disorders. There is a need for effective and efficient parent education classes to teach at-risk families how to deal with family dysfunction, improve parental satisfaction, and reduce the rate of child maltreatment. Hepworth and Larsen (1993) state, "deficiencies in parenting skills can be a major factor that contributes to child maltreatment" (p.226). Parent training may assist in reducing child maltreatment and family dysfunction.

Research now documents the positive role parent education programs play in improving parenting skills. Evidence suggests that families who enter

prevention programs at the highest level of risk are those who are most likely to benefit from such interventions. These families tend to earn higher scores on standardized measures of risk assessment and maltreatment rates, and lower scores on standardized measures of parenting knowledge and personal functioning (Olds and Kitzman, 1993; Daro, Jones, & McCurdy, 1993). Studies have found that locating prevention services within high-risk communities and offering them through community-based organizations creates a more positive and less threatening service delivery environment (Davies & Stratton, 1988).

Parent education and center-based services also have produced positive gains in overall parenting skills and have increased the use of community resources. This is critical if families are to move from services to self-sufficiency (Levine, 1988). The most notable outcomes of these efforts include an increase in positive parent-child interactions, more extensive use of social supports, less use of corporal punishment, and higher self-esteem and personal functioning (Daro, Jones, & McCurdy, 1993).

In a study conducted by First and Way (1995), eight mothers were surveyed after regularly attending weekly parent education classes during the evening for approximately two one-hour sessions. The group of mothers attending these sessions ranged in size from eight to sixteen members per session. In discussing their experiences, seven of the eight women surveyed disclosed that the classes were a turn-around points in their lives. One woman even admitted that prior to the classes she was prepared to terminate her

parental rights. The results of these surveys revealed several categorical benefits of attending these classes. These women were found to have better communication skills with their children, enhanced level of critical thinking, more positive loving relationship with children, improved anger management skills, changed outlook on life as well their as role as parent, and increased willingness to seek advice from fellow parents (First & Way, 1995).

### Parent Stress Levels

Although there is a great deal of literature exploring how children affect parents, there have been few studies on the psychological well-being of those parents. O'Brien and Daley (2011) concluded there is a need for effective and efficient parent education classes to teach at-risk families how to deal with family dysfunction, improve parent satisfaction, and reduce negative behaviors of children. This study also suggests that lack of effective parenting skills can increase the likelihood of negative behaviors of children.

Families are vulnerable to the effects of too much stress. Stress can come from environmental problems, economic factors, and from being unprepared for parenting and child-care. When faced with such stressors, some families are not able to cope and meet the challenges of child rearing in a healthy manner. However, for many families, the effects of too much stress are demonstrated through incidents of family violence, dysfunctional relationships and dissatisfaction with parenting (Longress, 1995).

Parents of children with aggressive and/or violent behaviors experienced extreme levels of stress and found few options for appropriate treatment and/or residential placement (Feldman and Werner, 2002). Feldman and Werner (2002) randomly selected 25 families who had completed a parent education class for families with children with behavior disorders. These parents received a comprehensive assessment, complete treatment plan, parental training, and received regular home visits. The intent of the study was to measure parents' stress in dealing with their child's disorder and whether parent education classes were effective in coping with this stress. Feldman and Werner (2002) concluded that parenting a child with a disability could produce great stress and a sense of imbalance in the family system. It is important that parents have a means to cope with such stress, and one factor that has been shown to alleviate parent stress is social support and parent education classes (Feldman & Werner, 2002).

Several studies suggest that at-risk families are vulnerable are unable to cope with internal and environmental stressors (Coombs & Landsveck, 1988). Garbarino and Ebata (1983) indicated that there is a disproportionately high percentage of child abuse cases in the United States, which originate in less educated, poor and minority homes. Tower (1993) proposed that this is due to the stress and frustration associated with poverty and oppression. The San Bernardino County Department of Public Social Services Family Preservation-Support Grant (2000) stated, that families identified as at-risk for possible child maltreatment and dysfunction are often impacted by three major internal and

environmental stressors: 1) low economic status, 2) cultural differences in parenting styles, and 3) family abuse and violence. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (1991) completed a study of parents with a history of abuse and violence among their children and found that parent education training was critical component to prevention.

### Theories Guiding Conceptualization of the Study

According to Levac et al. (2008), upwards of two-thirds of children within the mental health system experience disorders such as conduct disorder or oppositional disorder. It is due to this exceptionally high statistic that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is the most relevant theory to utilize in formulating an approach. This theory is best for approaches to children with conduct disorders in individual, family and group therapy. CBT is a highly structured approach that clearly presents expectations and likely results in positive behaviors. In previous parent trainings utilizing CBT, it has been shown that these programs have been effective in preventing the development of behavioral problems in children (Levac et al., 2008).

Chavis (2012) explores the application of Social Learning Theory to the formulation of behavioral therapy programs. Social Learning Theory is one of the more modern theories being applied to human behavioral problems in a social context (Chavis, 2012). This theory takes into consideration that people do not develop behaviors individually, but instead as a result of the social influences in

everyday life. Gross, Julion, and Fogg (2001) reported that in formulating behavioral therapy programs, social interactions are to be focused on in attempting to reduce problematic behavior and encourage positive behavior. Through the incorporation of observational learning and modeling, children can learn appropriate behaviors in a more realistic applicable sense. It is also important for therapists to evaluate the social and cultural influences that may have led to such problematic behaviors to begin with in order to create a therapy program unique to individual circumstances (Kazdin, 1997).

Cowen (2001) attempted to ascertain the overall impression of parents who sought treatment for their child who demonstrated maladaptive behaviors. Cowen (2001) examined the STAR Parenting program, which uses a multi theoretical approach consisting of cognitive-behavioral, behavioral and social-learning theories. This program sought to assist parents in developing responses to behavioral problems in a balanced and developmentally appropriate way. Cowen (2001) concluded that parents' stress level was exceptionally high during their experience of both observing the increase in their child's maladaptive behavior while obtaining diagnostic clarification. Pretest and posttest surveys were administered to parents participating in the parent education intervention. The pretest revealed parents to have scores associated with maladaptive parenting practices. The results of the posttest revealed parents to have an increase in the parental abilities to resemble that of a nurturing parent. In

conclusion, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of this particular parenting intervention and suggests similar results for similar intervention.

These classes are an example of learning through Social Learning Theory because it required the group to work through difficulties in a social context. Through this method, the participants were held accountable not only to themselves, but to each other as well.

### Parent Education Levels and Socioeconomic Status

In several studies the theme of poverty arose as a factor contributing to poor parental response to children's behaviors. A study conducted by Belsky (1990), determined that poverty is a significant determination to both ineffective parenting and consequently, children who demonstrated poor behavior in the future. Furthermore, Fox, Platz & Bently (1995) found that in addition to poverty as a factor, young age, and lack of education correlated with increased use of punishment using verbal and physical means. Additionally, Dodge, Pettit & Bates (1994) determined that when parents experienced poverty, their parenting skills were more likely to be erratic, indiscriminate of the child's needs of compassion or validation and therefore made these parents more vulnerable to inflicting abusive behavior on their children. Lastly, McLeod & Shanahan (1993) found that among parents who experienced poverty, the quality time with children may diminished which may lead to an unbalanced approach to parenting. It is clear from these studies the role of poverty in predicting parenting styles is significant.

Nicholson, Anderson, Fox and Brenner (2002) examined the effectiveness of a 10-week parenting program. It was found that although the program resulted in a diminished use of physical and verbal corrections, the number of parents who failed to complete the program was nearly fifty percent. It was determined that this was in part due to the erratic schedules of the mostly lower educated parents. Because of this, aspects of the program were changed in order to accommodate these challenges, which then resulted not just in lower levels of physical and verbal corrections, but also decreased stress among parents and decreased demonstrations of maladaptive behaviors among children. This study highlighted the importance of structuring a program based on the specific needs of the population it serves.

A study by Dora and Lee (1999) identified specific traits of parents who inflicted maltreatment on to children. Among these traits were poverty, depressed mood, a lack of partner support, lacking ability to effectively problem solve, and decreased or no social support. This finding is consistent with a study by Clark and Backer (1983), which showed that these same factors were a predictor of a lack of effectiveness of parenting programs. Therefore Azar (1999) concluded that parent-training programs must take into consideration factors beyond the typical time-out and contingencies in order to address these traits.

## Cultural Factors in Parent Education

Cultural factors have also been found to influence the effects of parent education programs. In a recent study of neighborhood and family effects on the health and development of African American children living outside of dense cities, Simons, et al., (2002) utilized data gathered from children from both Georgia and Iowa. The study consisted of 467 girls and 400 boys between the ages of ten and twelve with approximately half from each state. The caregivers of these children were predominately the biological mothers, 84% of caregivers in the study. The study measured prevalence of factors such as conduct problems, corporal punishment, parental control, family income, community deviance, prevalence of corporal punishment in the community, percent of African Americans, and community disadvantage. The significant finding of this study revealed a link between corporal punishment and child conduct problems relating to the prevalence of corporal punishment within the community. This association becomes smaller as the prevalence of corporal punishment within the community increases. This finding is exceptionally important to parental education programs in that these programs must take into consideration the acceptable norms of the community in addressing issues such as child conduct problems.

Taylor and Beauchamp (1988) reported notable differences in parenting knowledge, skills and attitudes among participants receiving only four visits compared to a no-service control group. Results increased when services were provided by members within the community who shared many of the same

values and experiences (Gray and Culter, 1979). These types of services provide interpersonal skills and also help manage class and cultural barriers that may occur between provider and client.

Current research has focused on the importance of developing a trusting relationship with parents by being respectful of their expressed values in their culture (Kirby, 2005). This trust increases parental participation in such classes and increases the likelihood of parents making use of newly learned parenting skills. A cooperative and trusting environment becomes a source of strength for family member and increase their parental functioning.

### Summary

The effectiveness of most parent education classes is measured by change in the child's behavior. Some of these changes may include appropriate behavior in the classroom setting, effective communication skills at home and positive interactions with their parents, siblings and peers. Although it is important to measure the change in their child's behavior it is also of equal value to monitor the changes in parent's stress levels. While all programs are developed by utilizing a particularly theory, and have been evaluated by research, SES and cultural aspects have been the area of least focus. At this time research indicates that no particular program is more effective than the other. Consequently, evaluating the effects of parent education classes within their participants is needed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

The following chapter will present an overview of the methods of this research study. This section will include this research study's design, sampling, data collection and the instruments used. In addition, this chapter will provide an overview of the procedures, protection of human subjects and analyze the data collected.

#### Study Design

The purpose of this research study was twofold: (1) to evaluate the effectiveness of parent education classes on parenting skills and (2) how parents utilize the approaches taught within these sessions. A quantitative design was used in this study as a way to measure statistically whether or not parenting classes are effective through the use of survey questions and Likert-type scale responses. The surveys measured participants' knowledge of approaches learned from parenting classes using the following criteria: parent's knowledge of healthy emotional expression which further positive communication, assess family satisfaction and measure the level of balanced cohesion and balanced flexibility by evaluating disengagement, enmeshment, rigid and chaotic attributes within the family system. The researchers hypothesis was directed towards

parents who attended parent education classes that would show improvement in knowledge of instrumental parental skills and an increase in parent satisfaction.

### Sampling

Participants were parents entering the Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties parenting classes for their at-risk youth. The sampling criteria consisted of approximately 36 participants of various ages, ethnic backgrounds, education levels, marital status and socioeconomic status. A majority of the participants were referred from child welfare agencies and court ordered. This sample was chosen due to the importance of parent involvement in their child's social, emotional and developmental needs.

### Data Collection and Instruments

The research design that was used in this study was that of a pre-experimental design, as a control group was not used (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014). The participants were given a survey on a voluntary basis prior to participating in the parent education program. Once the participants completed the program the post survey was distributed to the parents in efforts to measure the effectiveness of the parent education class. The data source was the parents receiving parenting classes from Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The independent variable was the participants of the parenting classes since they received the education. The dependent variable

was the knowledge the participants received. Independent variables included demographic questions such as age, ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic status. The dependent variables were operationalized as parent's knowledge of healthy emotional expression which further positive communication, assessed family satisfaction and measured the level of balanced cohesion and balanced flexibility by evaluating disengagement, enmeshment, rigid and chaotic attributes within the family system.

The measurement tool utilized for this study was the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES IV). This scale was obtained with permission from Life Innovations Inc (Appendix B). FACES IV is a 62-item likert scale questionnaire that ranges from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree scale. This self-report tool measures parent's ability to function as a family through their interactions. According to Olson (2011), FACES IV scale has six family scales that measure the family dimensions as followed by the Circumplex Model. The circumplex model focuses on three major concepts that help understand family functioning, cohesion, family flexibility and communication (Olson, 2011). The FACES IV scales are chaotic, disengaged, rigid, enmeshed, balanced cohesion and balanced flexibility all of which have an alpha reliability of .77 to .89 (Olson, 2011).

The strength of this data collection method is by utilizing a quantitative design the results are more generalizable. The strengths of this instrument are that it is culturally sensitive, adheres to a lay language by being at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade

reading level and has a high alpha reliability thus, indicating it is an effective and consistent measuring tool (Olson, 2011).

### Procedures

For the purpose of this study the voluntary participants were given an informed consent form that describes the nature of this study, confidentiality and their right to withdraw from this study (Appendix C). The research was conducted at Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties where multiple parenting classes were held on several days of the week. Parents attending the classes were given a description of the research, the requirements to participate, and the expected timeframe of the research. Prior to the instruction on the participants first day of treatment, a pretest survey was administered to those parents who volunteered, which were numerically coded to protect their confidentiality and an impending comparison to their posttest. The data was collected by two researchers attending the California State University of San Bernardino, Masters of Social Work program, and was secured by the researchers.

### Protection of Human Subjects

In this research study the protection of human subjects involved was as follows. First, the research was approved by the Social Work Subcommittee and the Institution Review Board. Second participants received a numeric code to

protect their privacy and confidentiality. The researchers only had access to the assigned numerical codes to ensure that participants' identities were protected. Last, the participants were provided a consent form informing them of the purpose of the study, the duration of the study, and participant's rights to withdraw from the study. In addition to receiving an informed consent, a debriefing statement (Appendix D) was also given providing information as to how participants could receive the results of this study and telephone numbers to direct their questions regarding the research. In order to protect the data, the surveys were kept in the possession of the researchers in a locked box to which only the researchers had the key.

### Data Analysis

This research study utilized a quantitative design to support the research hypothesis that parents who attended parent education classes would show improvement in knowledge of instrumental parental skills and an increase in parent satisfaction. The data was collected from pre-test and post-test questionnaires. Analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 8. Through the use of SPSS, the data collected was analyzed by running a variety of frequencies, descriptive statistics, and paired sample t-tests. The data analyzed the participants of the parenting classes since they received the education. The dependent variable was the knowledge participants received. These dependent variables were operationalized as

parent's knowledge of healthy emotional expression which furthered positive communication, assessed family satisfaction and measure the level of balanced cohesion and balanced flexibility by evaluating disengagement, enmeshment, rigid and chaotic within the family system.

### Summary

A questionnaire was completed and distributed to 36 participants of the Catholic Charities parent education classes to evaluate the effectiveness and parenting skills that was taught within the parent education sessions. Volunteers were obtained from the organization Catholic Charities from different cities within the San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The researchers presented the participants informed consent and were provided a detailed description regarding the nature of the study. All participants marked their assigned code indicating their consent to this research. After consenting to participate in the study, the pre-questionnaire was distributed and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Once the parent education classes were concluded, the participants completed the post-questionnaire. A copy of the debriefing statement was provided and researchers verbally informed the participants of how to receive the results of this study. The demographics, pre and post questionnaires was analyzed through the use of SPSS.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

This chapter will discuss the relevant descriptive statistics for the sample. Presentation of the results of the paired samples t-test will follow which will highlight the relevant results of these analyses. The chapter will be summarized by a brief conclusion.

#### Presentation of the Demographics

The sample consisted of parents from the parenting classes at various Catholic Charities service centers. As shown in Table 1, a small majority of the sample was comprised of females ( $n = 20, 55.6\%$ ). The minimum age of the participants was 20 and the maximum age was 70; the average age of the participants was 34 ( $M = 34.44, SD = 11.515$ ). Exactly half of participants stated that they completed high school ( $n = 18, 50.0\%$ ) with a small number of participants stating that they attended some college ( $n = 7, 19.4\%$ ). A small majority of the participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic ( $n = 16, 44.4\%$ ), followed by Caucasian ( $n = 12, 33.3\%$ ). Four participants identified their ethnicity as being multi-ethnic and were therefore placed in the "Other" category (11.1%). All of the participants stated that they have children. The number of children ranged from 1 to 12 and the average number of children was 3 ( $M = 3.19, SD =$

2.459). Exactly half of the sample stated that they were employed (n = 18, 50.0%) followed by unemployed (n = 14, 38.9%). A small number of participants identified as disabled (n = 3, 8.3%) and one participant identified as a student (2.8%). The majority of participants had an income below \$10,000 (n = 17, 47.2%), followed by an income less than \$20,000 (n = 9, 25.0%), an income less than \$30,000 (n = 3, 8.3%), and an income less than \$40,000 (n = 1, 2.8%). Four participants stated that they had an income of over \$40,000 (11.1%) and one participant failed to answer (2.8%). The great majority of participants identified their referring agency for the class as CPS (n=31, 86.1%) with three other participants stating agencies other than CPS such as Court, DPSS, and Other (8.4%) and two participants stating that they were self-referred (5.6%).

Table 1. Demographics

	Frequency n	Percent %	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	20	55.6		
Male	16	44.4		
<b>Age</b>			34.44	11.515
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Married	11	30.6		
Single	19	52.8		
Divorced	4	11.1		
Separated	2	5.6		
<b>Education</b>				
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	3	8.3		
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8	22.2		
Graduated High School	18	50.0		
Some College	7	19.4		

	Frequency n	Percent %	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Caucasian	12	33.3		
Hispanic	16	44.4		
African American	4	11.1		
Native American	0	0.0		
Asian	0	0.0		
Other	4	11.1		
<b>Number of Children</b>				
1	8	22.2		
2	11	30.6		
3	5	13.9		
4	6	16.7		
5	2	5.6		
8	3	8.3		
12	1	2.8		
			3.19	2.459
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Unemployed	14	38.9		
Disabled	3	8.3		
Student	1	2.8		
Employed	18	50.0		
<b>Income</b>				
\$0 - \$9,999	17	47.2		
\$10,000 - \$19,999	9	25.0		
\$20,000 - \$29,999	3	8.3		
\$30,000 - \$39,999	1	2.8		
Over \$40,000	4	11.1		
Failed to Answer	1	2.8		
<b>Referring Agency</b>				
Court	1	2.8		
CPS	31	86.1		
DPSS	1	2.8		
Self	2	5.6		
Other	1	2.8		

## Presentation of the Paired Samples t-Tests

Prior to the analysis, the data were not examined to determine that no assumptions of the paired samples t-tests were violated as t-tests are known to be robust under violations of the assumptions and there was not sufficient time to address any violations of assumptions were any found (Weinbach & Grinnell, 2009). The following findings are presented: For the total scores on the Faces IV survey, there was not a significant difference between pre-class and post-class scores  $t(30) = -1.325, p = .195; d = -.245$ ; however the effect size result indicates that there was a small difference between the pre and post-class scores. For the subscale Balanced Cohesion, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(35) = -.655, p = .517; d = -.110$ . For the subscale Balanced Flexibility, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(35) = -1.312, p = .198; d = -.219$ . Although there was not a significant difference between the pre and post class scores, the effect size calculation indicates that there was a small difference in participants' feeling about their family's flexibility from the beginning of class to the end of classes. For the subscale disengaged there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(34) = -1.076, p = .290; d = -.185$ . For the subscale Enmeshed, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(34) = -.166, p = .869; d = -.029$ . For the subscale Rigid, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(34) = .379, p = .707; d = .064$ . For the subscale Chaotic, there was not a

significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(35) = -.262$ ,  $p = .795$ ;  $d = -.046$ . For the scale Family Communication Style, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(33) = -.993$ ,  $p = .328$ ;  $d = -.170$ . For the scale Family Satisfaction, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores  $t(34) = -1.792$ ,  $p = .082$ ;  $d = -.303$ . Although participants did not feel significantly different in their level of family satisfaction from the beginning of the classes to the end of classes, the effect size indicates that participants did differ in their level of family satisfaction to a small degree,  $d = -.303$  (See Table 2).

Table 2. Paired Samples t-Test

<b>Variables</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Total Scores	31	30	-1.325	.195	-.245
Cohesion	36	35	-.655	.517	-.110
Flexibility	36	35	-1.312	.198	-.219
Disengaged	35	34	-1.076	.290	-.185
Enmeshed	35	34	-.166	.869	-.029
Rigid	35	34	.379	.707	.064
Chaotic	36	35	-.262	.795	-.046
Family Communication Style	34	33	-.993	.328	-.170
Family Satisfaction Scale	35	34	-1.792	.082	-.303

The following findings for women are presented: For the total scores on the Faces IV survey, there was a significant difference between pre-class and post-class scores for women to a moderate degree,  $t(17) = -2.784$ ,  $p = .013$ ;  $d = -.734$ . For the subscale balanced cohesion, there was not a significant difference

between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(19) = -.762, p = .456; d = -.170$ . For the subscale balanced flexibility, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(19) = -1.548, p = .138; d = -.346$ ; however there was a small difference for women in their perception of their family's flexibility. For the subscale disengaged there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(19) = -1.368, p = .187; d = -.320$ ; however women did differ to a small degree in their feelings about their families level of disengagement. For the subscale Enmeshed, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(18) = -1.541, p = .141; d = -.403$ . Although there was not a significant difference in women's assessment of their family's level of enmeshment, the effect size calculation indicates that women's feelings changed to a small degree. For the subscale Rigid, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(19) = .055, p = .956; d = .012$ . For the subscale Chaotic, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(19) = -.860, p = .400; d = -.213$ . Although there was not a significant difference the effect size indicates a small change in women's perception of their family's level of chaos. For the scale Family Communication Style, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(18) = -1.577, p = .132; d = -.363$ . The effect size calculation indicates that women's feelings did change regarding their family's communication style to a small degree. For the scale Family

Satisfaction, there was a marginally significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for women  $t(18) = -2.045$ ,  $p = .056$ ;  $d = -.0470$  demonstrating that women felt somewhat significantly different in their level of family satisfaction to a small, almost moderate, degree (See Table 3).

Table 3. Paired Samples t-Test: Females Only

<b>Variables</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Total Scores	18	17	-2.784	.013	-.734
Cohesion	20	19	-.762	.456	-.170
Flexibility	20	19	-1.548	.138	-.346
Disengaged	20	19	-1.368	.187	-.320
Enmeshed	19	18	-1.541	.141	-.403
Rigid	20	19	.055	.956	.012
Chaotic	20	19	-.860	.400	-.213
Family Communication Style	19	18	-1.577	.132	-.363
Family Satisfaction Scale	19	18	-2.045	.056	-.470

The following findings for men are presented: For the total scores on the Faces IV survey, there was not a significant difference between pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(12) = -.095$ ,  $p = .926$ ;  $d = -.027$ . For the subscale balanced cohesion, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(15) = -.157$ ,  $p = .877$ ;  $d = -.040$ . For the subscale balanced flexibility, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(15) = -.423$ ,  $p = .678$ ;  $d = -.106$ . For the subscale disengaged there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and

post-class scores for men  $t(14) = .093, p = .927; d = .024$ . For the subscale enmeshed, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(15) = 1.416, p = .177; d = .354$ . Although there was not a significant difference in men's perception of their family's level of enmeshment, the effect size indicates that men's perception differed to a small degree. For the subscale rigid, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(14) = .456, p = .655; d = .120$ . For the subscale chaotic, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(15) = .534, p = .601; d = .139$ . For the scale family communication style, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(14) = .049, p = .961; d = .013$ . For the scale family satisfaction, there was not a significant difference between the pre-class and post-class scores for men  $t(15) = -.780, p = .447; d = -.196$  (See Table 4).

Table 4. Paired Samples t-Test: Males Only

<b>Variables</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>d</b>
Total Scores	13	12	-.095	.926	-.027
Cohesion	16	15	-.157	.877	-.040
Flexibility	16	15	-.423	.678	-.106
Disengaged	15	14	.093	.927	.024
Enmeshed	16	15	1.416	.177	.354
Rigid	15	14	.456	.655	.120
Chaotic	16	15	.534	.601	.139
Family Communication Style	15	14	.049	.961	.013
Family Satisfaction Scale	16	15	-.780	.447	-.196

## Summary

This chapter discussed the relevant univariate and descriptive statistics for the sample; detailed information was presented in tables. The findings of the paired samples *t*-tests were presented in total as well as grouped by gender and were presented in tables. The researchers hypothesis is as follows: parents who attended parent education classes would show improvement in knowledge of instrumental parental skills and an increase in parent satisfaction. Although the findings did not statistically support the research hypothesis there was a small degree of improvement in participants' feeling about their family's flexibility from the beginning of class to the end of classes. Furthermore, the effect size indicates that participants did differ in their level of family satisfaction to a small degree. According to the effect size calculation women's feelings of family enmeshment, family's level of chaos and family's communication style changed to a small degree. Lastly, men also had a small degree of change to their feelings in their family enmeshment.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter will provide a discussion of the results of the participant's effectiveness on parent education classes for parents of at-risk youth. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the limitations of the study, recommendations for social work practice, policy and research as well as the conclusion to the study.

#### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of parent education classes on parenting skills and how parents utilize the approaches taught within parent education sessions. The participants were comprised of 36 parents from seven different cities in the San Bernardino and Riverside County area. Of these participants there were 20 females and 16 males. From this sample, 50% of the participants stated they were employed followed by 30.9% who reported they were unemployed. Of these participants 72% of them fell below the poverty line of \$20,090 with a 3 person household as reported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2015). Research indicated 91.7% of participants were referred by Child Protective Services or Court

ordered, thus being involuntary clients. Furthermore, 44.4% of participants identified as Hispanic and 33.3% identified as Caucasian.

The hypothesis is as follows: parents who attended parent education classes would show improvement in knowledge of instrumental parental skills and an increase in parent satisfaction. Overall, the quantitative findings did not show a difference between pretest and posttest results. However, there were a statistical significance with women and an improved satisfaction level. This suggests that the women who participated in the parent education classes felt satisfied with their efforts in completing the course. This coincides with the research conducted by First and Way (1995) where eight mothers were surveyed and stated had they not completed the parent education course they were prepared to terminate their parental rights. In addition the female participants who completed their parent education program felt connected to the other members within the class and were inclined to seek advice to their fellow group members.

Unfortunately, there were no statistical significance with the women and the other variables such as, cohesion, flexibility, disengagement, enmeshment, rigidness, chaotic and communication. Yet women enrolled in a parent education class, possibly benefit by having a positive gain in satisfaction through completing a parent education course. There may be several reasons that women feel more satisfied after completing their court ordered parent education requirement. For example the parent education class could provide a supportive

environment, encourage positive self-awareness and praise, and a safe place for them to express themselves and be validated by peers that are experiencing a similar life struggle. Overall, this supports Davies and Stratton's (1988) findings that parents attending a community based organization felt more positive and less threatened when receiving services. In addition, Daro, Jones and McCurdy (1993) outlines in their literature that parents who receive services are more inclined to have a higher self esteem and have a positive outlook on their daily activities.

Overall, there were no statistical significance with the men and the different variables such as, cohesion, flexibility, disengaged, enmeshed, rigid, chaotic and communication. It is possible that while men completed their parent education classes they had no change for the lack of feeling forced to attend the parent education group. While the men and women within this course were provided the same material and outline, their findings differ from one another in regards to their parent satisfaction levels. These findings can suggest that men were not satisfied for numerous reasons such as not feeling support by the other men in the group, taught by female facilitators and not in favor of the workbook assignments. In a study conducted by Berlyn, Wise and Soriano (2008) male participants in a parent education class reported having a stronger connection to male facilitators due to being able to relate to life experiences for example, being a father, issues with anger outbursts and possible history of domestic violence. Many of the male participants were enrolled in the parent education class with

their significant other and this could have led to their resistance to express themselves freely and participate within the group. In Berlyn, Wise and Soriano's (2008) findings, men who participated in a group setting with other men were more comfortable with sharing their experiences and feelings regarding their children. Due to their significant other being present, this might have led them to be disconnected to the group which hindered the ability to have a positive change in their parenting skills.

As stated in the literature review by Dora and Lee (1999), research participants showed the commonality between low income, poverty and single parenthood characteristics. This compares to the San Bernardino County Department of Public Social Services Family Preservation-Support Grant (2000) information that stated families who enter the child welfare system are typically from (1) low economic status, (2) cultural differences in parenting styles, and (3) family abuse and violence. Similarly, this research study's findings showed similar trend to the research that was conducted in the parent education classes. These findings prove that a majority of these parents are of low socio-economic backgrounds that are impoverished, single family households. Furthermore, as stated in Fox, Platz and Bentley (1995) parents who tend to use verbal and corporal punishment are younger, single, less educated and low income mothers. This supports the research findings that more than half of the participants were single, low income women who only obtained a high school education and were all referred from Child Protective Services.

According to O'Brien and Daley (2011), parent training has shown to be effective in decreasing family dysfunction and improving parental satisfaction. Our study partially supports O'Brien and Daley's (2011) findings that parents attending a parent education class have improved parent satisfaction levels. Although this fact was solely relevant to the women attending the parent education class in this study, other research suggests that parents have an overall improvement in their satisfaction levels. In opposition to O'Brien and Daley (2011), this study's findings did not support the idea that attending a parent education class can decrease family dysfunction as evidenced by our research findings.

#### Limitations

One probable confound in this study was the inability to collect data in a 10 week period. According to Grinnell and Unrau (2014), a majority of the research studies conducted in social work practice consist of small sample sizes and fail to be longitudinal studies. This fact is significant due to our small sample size and lack of time frame to conduct a longitudinal study. Due to this limitation the research findings were not meaningful to support the researchers hypothesis.

A majority of the participants in this research study were court ordered to complete a parent education course, which indicates they are involuntary clients. Due to being involuntary clients, their lack of motivation and their resistance could have led to their unwillingness to participate in the research study. As

stated by Cingolani (1984), involuntary clients are subjected to complete services in order to meet the societal requirements of acceptable behavior. Research indicates that the stage of engagement from the Generalists Model in social work is vital when establishing a working relationship with service provider and involuntary clients (Cingolani, 1984).

A limitation to this research study was the researchers introduction to the class as social workers obtaining their masters degree. The majority of the participants were referred from social workers and when the researchers introduced themselves as social workers the participants had a negative outlook towards them, as evidence by the participants asking, “why do you want to be a social worker all they do is take peoples kids away?”, which could have led to a biased outcome. Researchers found that self administered surveys can impact survey outcomes if the participant has a definite opinion on the questions asked or little to no interest in the topic being researched (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014).

#### Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Research

The recommendations for social work practice in regards to improving parent education classes is implementing practice theories by master level facilitators to improve their relationship with their child. According to a meta-analytic study conducted by Litschge, Vaughn and MCCrea (2010), parents who received parent education and were taught practice theories such as CBT, psycho-education and social learning when conducting parent education groups

had a higher success rate in positive parenting skills. Aside from utilizing these theories to direct their parents success they also teach them ways of enhancing their communication skills, setting healthy limits, and improving parental roles and family patterns. Furthermore, parents learn how to identify and manage their overwhelming feelings of anger, frustration, stress and guilt, while not projecting it onto their child. Although the curriculum in this research study had a psycho-educational theoretical foundation, it lacked implementation of the use of CBT and social learning approaches.

An additional recommendation for social work practice would be to provide appropriate services to match the clients needs. For instance, a child protective social worker could be more cognizant of matching their client to a parent education program that is tailored to meet the client's individual needs rather than referring most of them to one particular organization. By social workers not adhering to a client centered approach it fails to meet the client's cultural norms, language, religion and sexual orientation.

Social workers could advocate for policy change to provide more effective services to their clients. The policy could be implemented by creating and utilizing a resource assessment tool that would determine the type of parent education class that the client and their family could benefit from. This resource assessment tool would be completed prior to the social worker providing a referral for the parenting class. This policy change is vital to the clients as well as

the child welfare organizations due to it being good social work practice as well as fulfilling the social work core value, service.

An additional policy change that could be implemented within the social work field would be a monthly job requirement for social workers to attend one parent education class. The purpose of this policy would be for social workers to understand the material that is being taught to their clients. This is beneficial to social workers during their monthly face to face visits as they can observe and identify when the clients are utilizing the skills that are being taught. This will help social workers in obtaining information to utilize within their court report and their monthly contacts. Social workers would have a better understanding of the family's dynamics as well as improve rapport between the social worker and their clients. Furthermore, part of this policy change would encourage social workers to be more empowering to their clients, as the clients might feel supported and more willing to complete the parent education program. Cingolani (1984) found that social workers who were actively involved and educated in their clients services found that clients had an increase in completing the services.

A few recommendations for future social work research would be to survey different agencies throughout various cities, counties, states and perhaps even globally. Due to the time constraints allowed to conduct the research for this study surveying various agencies and a larger geographical area was not attainable. By surveying a vast amount of agencies and geographical areas it would be beneficial to social work research in determining a representative

sample on the effectiveness of parent education classes. Due to the lack of representation this research study had it is difficult to determine if the parent education classes are truly effective. Although the findings indicate they are not effective it cannot be a generalized statement based on solely this research study.

Another recommendation for future social work research would be to survey both voluntary and involuntary clients. As previously stated, a majority of the participants in this study were involuntary as a result of the agency being subcontracted with child welfare agencies and being the primary referral source. Perhaps if the participants were voluntary they might have had a greater change in their responses from their pre and post questionnaires. Turney (2012) reports, working with involuntary clients is difficult due to their efforts being forced to make a change in order to comply with child welfare services. Parents are more likely to be compliant and gain from the services they are receiving if they feel they are respected and understood (Turney, 2012). By conducting research on voluntary clients it would be helpful to compare the results with those clients who are involuntary to determine if an individual is more inclined to change when they want to change rather than forced to change.

## Conclusions

Effective parent education classes are vital to at-risk families and their children. Essentially children are an extension of their parents and what their

parents teach them is what they display through their interactions. Children learn adaptive and maladaptive behaviors from their parents. Thus, generational patterns can affect an individual's insight and actions in their own parenting roles.

Parent education has the ability to enhance the lives of families where the education transcends the classroom and becomes integrated into participants' everyday lives. Participants' stories evidence the effect these classes can have. These participants demonstrate the confidence and empowerment that comes from learning how to responsibly care for a child. These positive changes in outlook and attitude extend past the realm of parenthood and positively affect other aspects of parents' lives. In this way, parent education can change not only the relationship dynamics and communication of a family, but also how that family interacts with the world.

APPENDIX A  
PARENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

### Parent Demographic Information

Please complete the following questionnaire. Any questions that you do not wish to answer please leave blank. You may stop at any time. Thank you.

1. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_
3. Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Single \_\_\_\_\_  
Divorced \_\_\_\_\_  
Separated \_\_\_\_\_  
Widowed \_\_\_\_\_
4. Education- highest grade completed in school \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ethnicity:  
Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_  
Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_  
African American \_\_\_\_\_  
Native American \_\_\_\_\_  
Asian \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. Number of children and their ages: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Employment:  
Unemployed \_\_\_\_\_  
Disabled \_\_\_\_\_  
Student \_\_\_\_\_  
Employed \_\_\_\_\_
8. Income:  
Between \$0 to \$9,999 per year \_\_\_\_\_  
Between \$10,000 to \$19,999 per year \_\_\_\_\_  
Between \$20,000 to \$29,999 per year \_\_\_\_\_  
Between \$30,000 to \$39,999 per year \_\_\_\_\_  
Over \$40,000 per year \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who referred you to these classes? (Self-referred, DPSS, CPS, Probation, Court ordered, this agency, other agency, other) \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
FACES IV QUESTIONNAIRE

## FACES IV: Questionnaire

### Directions to Family Members:

1. All family members over the age 12 can complete FACES IV.
2. Family members should complete the instrument independently, not consulting or discussing their responses until they have been completed.
3. Fill in the corresponding number in the space on the provided answer sheet.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Generally Disagree	Undecided	Generally Agree	Strongly Agree

1. Family members are involved in each others lives.
2. Our family tries new ways of dealing with problems.
3. We get along better with people outside our family than inside.
4. We spend too much time together.
5. There are strict consequences for breaking the rules in our family.
6. We never seem to get organized in our family.
  
7. Family members feel very close to each other.
8. Parents equally share leadership in our family.
9. Family members seem to avoid contact with each other when at home.
10. Family members feel pressured to spend most free time together.
11. There are clear consequences when a family member does something wrong.
12. It is hard to know who the leader is in our family.
  
13. Family members are supportive of each other during difficult times.
14. Discipline is fair in our family.
15. Family members know very little about the friends of other family members.
16. Family members are too dependent on each other.
17. Our family has a rule for almost every possible situation.
18. Things do not get done in our family.
  
19. Family members consult other family members on important decisions.
20. My family is able to adjust to change when necessary.
21. Family members are on their own when there is a problem to be solved.
22. Family members have little need for friends outside the family.
23. Our family is highly organized.
24. It is unclear who is responsible for things (chores, activities) in our family.
  
25. Family members like to spend some of their free time with each other.
26. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.
27. Our family seldom does things together.
28. We feel too connected to each other.
29. Our family becomes frustrated when there is a change in our plans or routines.
30. There is no leadership in our family.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Generally Disagree	Undecided	Generally Agree	Strongly Agree

31. Although family members have individual interests, they still participant in family activities.
32. We have clear rules and roles in our family.
33. Family members seldom depend on each other.
34. We resent family members doing things outside the family.
35. It is important to follow the rules in our family.
36. Our family has a hard time keeping track of who does various household tasks.
  
37. Our family has a good balance of separateness and closeness.
38. When problems arise, we compromise.
39. Family members mainly operate independently.
40. Family members feel guilty if they want to spend time away from the family.
41. Once a decision is made, it is very difficult to modify that decision.
42. Our family feels hectic and disorganized.

- 
43. Family members are satisfied with how they communicate with each other.
  44. Family members are very good listeners.
  45. Family members express affection to each other.
  46. Family members are able to ask each other for what they want.
  47. Family members can calmly discuss problems with each other.
  48. Family members discuss their ideas and beliefs with each other.
  49. When family members ask questions of each other, they get honest answers.
  50. Family members try to understand each other's feelings
  51. When angry, family members seldom say negative things about each other.
  52. Family members express their true feelings to each other.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Generally Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied

**How satisfied are you with:**

53. The degree of closeness between family members.
54. Your family's ability to cope with stress.
55. Your family's ability to be flexible.
56. Your family's ability to share positive experiences.
57. The quality of communication between family members.
58. Your family's ability to resolve conflicts.
59. The amount of time you spend together as a family.
60. The way problems are discussed.
61. The fairness of criticism in your family.
62. Family members concern for each other.

*Thank you for Your Cooperation!*

Source: Life Innovations, Inc. (2014). *FACES IV*. Retrieved from <http://www.facesiv.com/home.html>

APPENDIX C  
INFORMED CONSENT

## INFORMED CONSENT

**TITLE:** ARE PARENTING CLASSES FOR PARENTS OF AT-RISK YOUTH EFFECTIVE?

**SPONSOR:** Rosemary McCaslin, Ph.D.

**INVESTIGATORS:** *Janell Huerta, MSW Candidate & Kristyne Armenta, MSW Candidate*

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the effectiveness of parents attending parent education classes and how parents utilize the approaches taught within these sessions.

The rationale for this study is to assess knowledge and approaches to effective parenting classes. You are invited to participate in this research study because your outcomes from this parent education program are vital to the study. Approximately 60 subjects will participate in this study all of which are from the Catholic Charities Organization of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

### **You must meet the following requirements to be in the study**

You can participate in this study if you are at least 18 years of age or older and enrolled at Catholic Charities San Bernardino and Riverside Counties Parent Education Class.

If you meet the screening requirements and you choose to take part in the study, then the following procedures will take place: You will receive a 62-item questionnaire in addition to a demographic survey at the initial start date. At the end date of your parenting class you will complete the 62-item questionnaire to end the research study. The questionnaire should take about 20 minutes to complete; all of your responses will be kept confidential by providing you with a numeric code to replace any personal identifying information, which will ensure that your identity will be protected.

Some of the questions may cause embarrassment or anxiety, or the questions the researchers ask you may be upsetting or make you uncomfortable. If you do not wish to answer a question, you can skip it and go to the next question. If you do not wish to participate you can stop at any time. Although you will not benefit directly from this study, the scientific information gained from the study may benefit individuals in the future by improving future parent education classes.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate or to withdraw at any time from the study will have no negative consequences on your treatment.

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify the research team immediately.

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential by providing you with a numeric code to use in place of your name or other identifying information. Although absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, every effort will be made to keep your identity confidential and you will not be identified by name in any publications describing the results of this study. *There is no cost to you for participating in this study and you will not be paid to participate in this research study.*

If you wish to contact an impartial third party not associated with this study regarding any questions about your rights or to report a complaint you may have about the study, you may contact the Main Administration Office, 1450 North D St. San Bernardino, CA 92405, phone (909) 388-1239, e-mail [adeaton@ccsbriv.org](mailto:adeaton@ccsbriv.org) for information and assistance. For concerns or questions please contact Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Research Coordinator, California State University San Bernardino, phone (909) 537-5507, email [rmccasli@csusb.edu](mailto:rmccasli@csusb.edu).

- I have read the contents of the consent form and have listened to the verbal explanation given by the investigator.
- My questions concerning this study have been answered to my satisfaction
- Signing this consent document does not waive my rights nor does it release the investigators, institution or sponsors from their responsibilities.
- I hereby give voluntary consent to participate in this study.

I understand I will be given a copy of this consent form after signing it.

---

Mark your Assigned Numeric Code

---

Date

APPENDIX D  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

## DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The research team, Kristyne Armenta and Janell Huerta would like to thank you for your voluntary participation in this research project. The purpose of this study was to assess the parent education classes offered at this organization, so that they may provide effective services to their classes. We would like to emphasize that all the information collected is strictly confidential and at no time will your identities be revealed. We encourage participants to contact the research team if you have any questions regarding this project. For questions or concerns regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Cory B. Dennis Professor of the Department of Social Work, California State University San Bernardino, at (909) 537-3501.

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## ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:  
Team Effort by Kristyne Armenta & Janell Edith Huerta
2. Data Entry and Analysis:  
Team Effort by Kristyne Armenta & Janell Edith Huerta
3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:
  - a. Introduction and Literature  
Team Effort by Kristyne Armenta & Janell Edith Huerta
  - b. Methods  
Team Effort by Kristyne Armenta & Janell Edith Huerta
  - c. Results  
Team Effort by Kristyne Armenta & Janell Edith Huerta
  - d. Discussion  
Team Effort by Kristyne Armenta & Janell Edith Huerta