THE LIFE WORLD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD IN A BOYS TOWN

by

ATAL SUCHANANDAN

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject
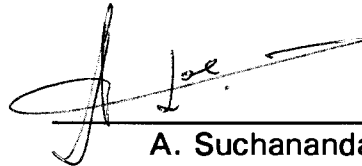
PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION
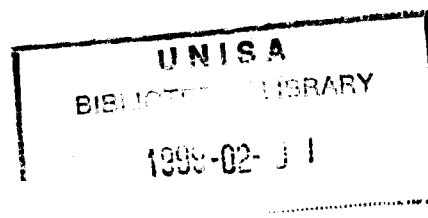
at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: Dr F E GOUWS

JUNE 1998

I declare that THE LIFE WORLD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILD IN A BOYS' TOWN, is my own work and that all sources
that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged
my means of complete references.

A. Suchanandan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE LIFE WORLD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD IN A BOYS' TOWN

by Atal Suchanandan

Degree: Master of Education
Subject: Psychology of Education
Supervisor: Dr F. E. Gouws

Summary

The purpose of the present study is to obtain an understanding of the primary school child's life world while resident at a Boys' Town. The study presents an extensive review of the literature on developmental phases of the primary school child, relationships with himself, his family and peer group while resident in an institution. The study employed the use of quantitative and qualitative measures to elicit information from the child. To enhance the findings of the study, information from a comparative group of primary school children with intact families from the wider community was utilized. The target subjects in the study included all primary school children resident at a Boy's Town in Tongaat. The results yielded useful insights in the life world of the primary school child.

These insights into the life world of the primary school child formed the basis for recommendation and served the direction for future research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER: ONE

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Admission to a Boys' Town follows a major intervention in the child's life, which changes his life-base for a minimum period of two years. The purpose of which is rehabilitation to some familiar or less familiar life in society at large. Evidently children referred to a Boys' Town have typically suffered from traumatic events in their early years, or from an ongoing deprivation of a stable environment. These children are seen to manifest behavioural problems as a result of the trauma of family life and deprivation of physical and emotional needs (Govender & Janzen, 1991:20-25). Consequently these children in a Boys' Town will construe a life world around them that may be different from their peers who reside in the wider community, who enjoy a stable and consistent family relationship. Research into the life world of children and youth in care have mainly been investigated from a sociological and social work perspective and almost all of these relate to American or British children.

There is an abundance of theory and literature on the subjects of intellectual competencies, maternal deprivation and the effects of institutionalization on primary school children. However, there is a paucity of information in respect of the life world of the primary school child in care, and especially so at Boys' Town's. Little is known of the child's perceptions of his past, aspirations for the future and how these relationships and attitudes determine his present perception and modes of functioning.

One of the central issues emanating from the above is the need for an exposition of the life world of the child in alternate care. On a broader academic level, this study attempts to address the issue of the life world of a primary school child in a Boys' Town.

1.2 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

Boys' Towns remain an inherently remote place far away from the child's familiar life world, his family and the security of his home. From the preceding sub-section it is noticeably clear that primary school children have been uprooted from their original living arrangements. As a result of these circumstances primary school children at a Boys' Town have seen to exhibit a whole range of emotional and behavioural problems.

Children with behavioural problems constitute a major concern in the field of education (Hoghughi, 1988:136-137). It seems that not only are the primary school children at Boys' Towns who manifest the problem behaviour affected, but also their peers, educators and professional staff suffer the effects of the unacceptable behaviour.

Behavioural problems experienced by primary school children have a critical influence on the effectiveness of their educational programme. This influence possibly affects a great percentage of children, both at a Boys' Town and in the wider community. It is surprising that professional efforts are not directed at determining the life world of the child with the view of overcoming these difficulties.

Thus far the emphasis has been on the general characteristics and classification of behavioural problems in institutions and the importance of meeting their needs. Research into aspects of residential care of children have been of a limited nature and mostly biased against institutions. Too much emphasis is placed on the detrimental effects of institutional life, learning difficulties of institutional children, self-esteem and academic achievement, and intellectual competency levels of institutional children as compared with non institutional children (Mudaly, 1984:1-2).

No one group of primary school children require more understanding and greater diagnostic and educational skill from both teachers and professional staff than the group of children with whom this study is concerned. These children often present good mental abilities but are unable to integrate their intellectual efforts and direct them towards realistic goals.

It is in this context that the problematic/'difficult' child is perceived as being

ill prepared for the classroom situation. The child's difficulties have persisted for such a long time that the classroom is associated in his mind only with social and academic failure, and with people who make seemingly impossible demands. It is this sense of failure and its resultant feelings of guilt and of being unwanted that must somehow be overcome if he is to develop healthy attitudes towards school and schoolwork (Mudaly, 1984:5).

It has been observed that children and youth rarely separate their personal life from their academic life. Evidently at a Boys' Town a drop in the child's academic achievement is often indicative of problems experienced in his personal life, adverse relationships with parents, siblings and peers.

The way children learn to think of themselves during the primary school years largely depends on how their parents have treated them and what their peers think of them. Children who have ties severed from their parents and peers find it harder to cope with group standards and norms (Hoghughi, 1988:172 -173). These children have been found to be anxious, withdrawn, emotionally unresponsive, demoralized and depressed when peer groups fail to respond positively to them. They become anxious and this results in a drop in self- esteem (Clark, 1987:35-36).

It is against this background of poor relationships with parents and peers and a lowered self - esteem of the primary school child resident at a Boys' Town that the researcher wishes to investigate.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Children/youth admitted to a Boys' Town are poorly organized and are ill-equipped to take the stresses of group living and formal instructions (Muller & Steyn, 1992:80-84). These primary school children are easily recognized by their inability to adapt to regular classroom situations.

They are also identified by disruptive behaviour, failure to function successfully with their peers and low tolerance and frustration levels. This merely serves as a frustration to both child and teacher/tutor (Muller & Steyn, 1992: 55-58). Through assessment of the primary school child to determine the root cause of the child's difficulties, a wide range of causative

factors emerges. It is rare that a single disturbance will disrupt a child's' total pattern of functioning.

More likely, several disturbances that are in and around him have a causative relationship to his malfunction and inability to handle difficult situations. As one analyses the problems presented by these children there is little question that these problems impact on the particular life world of the child.

These problems must be seen against the backdrop of intellect and education, home and family, anti social behaviour, social skills and physical factors. It seems that these factors have resulted from the child's initial removal from his home and family environment. Removal from the home environment strains the relationship that the child shares with the parents, given the facts that this relationship is qualified by mutual knowledge, care, responsibility, respect and trust. The problematic behaviour manifested by these primary school children could be directly associated with his relationship with his parents.

Anger and hostility towards parents may be directed towards staff at the institution or at the system in general. Therefore removal from the family structures will not only effect the child's perception and attitudes but also his relationship with his parents and family members.

It is also a presupposition that when a primary school child's progress in becoming an adult in the fullest sense of the word is restrained, his world is hampered and he loses his bearings and norms (Clark, 1987:176 -177). The causes do not necessarily lie in the community at large, but in the child's educative environment, that is his parental home, the school and in his immediate social environment. Although primary school children start their academic career at an early age, it is evident that the family still remains the dominant influence in the child's life (Hoghughi, 1988:17). The child acts primarily on the basis of the values and motivation transmitted by parents and other members of the family. Children and youth are confronted with a new set of peers who affect their lives either positively or negatively when placed in a Boys' Town. For example, the child's popularity is

measured by his acceptance in the peer group whilst in the same vein the child who behaves aggressively is usually rejected by his peers.

The child's acceptance or rejection forms the foundation of his relationship with his peers that contribute to his social development at a Boy's Town. The basis for identification and conformity in a peer group must be seen against the backdrop of rules, regulations and routines at a Boys' Town.

The role and the influence of the parents and peers support the development of a positive or negative self - concept. It must be stressed that his relationship with himself forms the core of his life world. His relationship with himself is formed mainly through his relationships with people and objects. As a result of being exposed to a limited number of people, relationships and things effects the formation of a positive self-concept of the primary school child in a Boys' Town.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 HYPOTHESIS ONE

There will be significant difference in the relationship between parents of the primary school child resident in a Boys' Town and that of the primary school child from the wider community?

1.4.2 HYPOTHESIS TWO

There will be significant difference in own person relationships between institutionalized primary school children and the non-institutionalized primary school child.

1.4.3 HYPOTHESIS THREE

There will be significant difference in peer relationships of the primary school child and that of the secondary school pupil resident at a Boys' Town?

1.4.4 HYPOTHESIS FOUR

There will be significant difference in academic performance of the primary school child at a Boys' Town and that of the primary school child of the wider community.

1.4.5 HYPOTHESIS FIVE

There will be significant difference in attitude of the primary school child at a Boys' Town towards the peer-group system of self - government.

1.5 AIMS

PRIMARY AIM

The study aims to obtain an insightful understanding of the life world of the primary school child. These primary school children have not only experienced separation from their biological parents, but would have also experienced protracted/long term stay in an institution such as a Boys' Town. The researcher's concern is the manner in which the child uses his abilities, potential, instincts and passions to construe a life world. The child does this by his involvement, attribution of meaning and experiences.

SECONDARY AIM

A secondary aim of the study is to examine the potential differences in the relationships that the primary school child at a Boys' Town attributes to his parent, peers, and himself as compared to those children who do not reside in an institution (that is non-residential).

TERTIARY AIM

The study also aims to determine the impact of the Peer-Group System of Self Government as implemented at a Boys' Town on the self-concept of the primary school child.

MINOR AIM

To determine the extent to which the primary school child at a Boys Town progresses in terms of his schoolwork.

1.6.   DEFINITION OF TERMS

A number of concepts are explained in depth for the purpose of this investigation. This is done to remove any obscurity that might exist in the meanings of concepts, to obviate any ambiguity and to enable the reader to have a clear understanding of the concepts.

1.6.I   LIFE WORLD

Every child lives in his own unique life world. The child's life world includes everything that has meaning for him, not only the geographical world but also his relationships with objects, ideas, people and even himself.

"These relationships may be interdependent and interactive. They are always dynamic and ever increasing and changing. The Gestalt of meaningful relationships constitutes the child's life world. All to which he has attributed significance and one which he therefore understand. From birth the child is involved in searching for meaning in his life world so that he can orientate himself to self-actualisation" (Van den Aardweg & Van Den Aardweg, 1988:144).

The child's life world therefore includes everything to which he has attributed meaning and which he understands. It is a personal life world, and it is impossible to constitute a life world without personal experience, personal involvement and the attachment of meaning by the child himself.

1.6.2   PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

The primary school child is about 6 -12 years of age. The physical developments of the primary school child are punctuated by an increase in weight and height and the appearance of typical sexual features become evident. In terms of language competencies the primary school child is in the position to communicate, listen, understand the instruction and follow the story (Vrey, 1979:86 -87).

- The primary school child enters a world where the centre of authority and attraction is no longer mother but teacher.

- He is subject to a strict routine.

7

- He has to consider many other children who are at the same the age and stage of development as himself instead of a few siblings at home.

He is subjected to new attitudes, standards and behaviours.

He now irrevocably becomes a member of a peer group (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988, 182).

Furthermore the primary school child finds himself in a world of play and work requiring many skills and in a world of adult logic, symbolism and communication (Van Den Aardweg & Van Den Aardweg, 1988, 182).

1.6.3 RESIDENTIAL CARE

Residential care, in the context of the study refers to the legal placement of a child in a Children's Home/Institution/School of Industries or to a reformatory by a Child Welfare Agency in terms of the Child Care Act No 74, of 1983. Children placed at any one of these forms of care are primarily a result of parent's inability to provide adequate physical care (that is food, clothing and shelter) and appropriate emotional care (free of neglect and abuse). In addition problems of inconsistent discipline and time management results in behavioural problems such as stealing, truancy, drug abuse, hostile verbal and physical aggression, low tolerance and high frustration levels.

Group care describes a form of residential care such as a Boy's Town in which several children and youth are housed in the care of childcare practitioners. These professional practitioners normally work on a shift basis and fulfill primarily, a supervisory role. Children at a Boy's Town setting would fulfill a greater responsibility in managing their home than their counterparts in other children's homes.

1.6.4   NATURALISTIC CARE

In the context of the study, naturalistic care refers to the daily caretaking offered by biological parents to the children. The relation with the parent is punctuated by a provision of adequate food, clothing and shelter. This relation is further qualified by love that implies mutual knowledge, care

(free from emotional, physical and sexual abuse), responsibility (consistent discipline) and trust.

1. 6. 5 BOYS TOWN.

Boys' Towns are a series of residential children's institutions in South Africa providing child-care programmes for boys between the ages of six to eighteen years. The programme at any given Boys' Town offers management, care, assessment and treatment for those boys who range from being neglected to severely problematic/ troublesome. Tailored to both therapeutic and development needs, such treatment is often a combination of individual and group techniques designed specifically for each child on the basis of a careful diagnostic study. Boys' Town purposefully integrates various programme activities into the stream of each child's daily living experiences. The institution has a relatively open setting. Within their planned schedules, the children are given considerable autonomy of movement.

One of the criteria for admission to a Boys' Town is that a boy must have an IQ score above 90. Boys' Towns are not detention camps, reformatories, holiday camps or Roman Catholic institutions. Boys' Towns are also not for the psychotic, severely neurotic or minimal brain damaged boy.

Boys' Town exists throughout South Africa. The original Boys' Town is situated at Magaliesberg in Gauteng, and a family home in Johannesburg. In Kwa-Zulu Natal there are three Boys' Towns, one treatment centre situated in Genazzano-Tongaat on the Kwa-Zulu Natal North coast and two family homes that are situated in Verulam and in Durban respectively. The Western-Cape has one treatment centre in Macassar and two family homes, one in Cape Town and the other in Belliar. In Gauteng at Khagiso another treatment centre catering for street children has been built.

1.7 GENERAL DEMARCATION

The present study by way of elucidation, attempts to explore the relationships that a primary school child has with himself, parents and peer groups in constituting a meaningful life world. A central feature of the study is to determine the primary school child's attitudes and perceptions towards his parent, peer groups and toward the therapeutic programme implemented at a Boys' Town.

The study will also focus on the role and influence of both the parent and peer group on the child in care. The present study follows the rationale of the literature study approach by elucidating and exploring descriptive data of the life world of the primary school child. For practical considerations primary school children will be drawn from a Boy's Town, namely Genazzano- Tongaat. A comparison group of primary school children will be drawn from the Tongaat North Coast areas.

1.8. NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION

From the topic it is obvious that the present study is an exposition of the life world of the primary school child but more particularly the primary school child at a Boys' Town. The problem namely social skills, home and family, intellectual and education, physical and anti-social are so vast that it is obviously impossible to deal with all its aspects in a study of this nature.

The investigation is therefore, limited to the study of the primary school child's relationships with his parents, peers and himself.

The investigation will examine the child's relationship with his parents and other family members who are separated from the child for a minimum period of two years.

The study will also examine:

- The effects of separation on the relationship with the parents and family members.

- The role and influence of parents on the behaviour of the child whilst the child is a resident at Boys' Town.

- The attitudes and perception of the child towards the parents.

- The nature and composition of the peer group at a Boys' Town.

- The role and the influence of the peer group on the development of the primary school child at a Boys' Town.

- The influence of the peer group on the self-esteem of the child.

Finally the study will investigate the following:

- The development of the self-concept whilst the primary school child is resident at a Boys' Town.

- The role of the family in the development of the self-concept while the child is resident at a Boys' Town.

- The relationships between self -concept, family functioning and academic achievements whilst the child is at a Boy's Town.

In view of the above, clearly the everyday life world is too complex to be investigated as the whole of reality. It is therefore necessary for the purpose of this study that the life world be investigated from a literature study perspective, with the intention of bringing the three relationships into focus.

The literature study approach is preferred since the emphasis is on the child being engaged in the process of making sense of his life world by interpreting, attributing meaning to, justifying, explaining, defining and rationalizing his actions.

The fact that the primary school child is continuously constructing, developing, changing these everyday interpretations of his life world makes the literature study paradigm a viable approach. It is conceded that a detailed exposition of the life world of a primary school child in an institution is meaningless unless a comparative study of the life world of non-institutionalized primary school children is made. A study of such a nature will reveal aspects of the life world, which are common to or shared by the

particular groups of primary school children.

A target group comprising of primary school children from Boys Town Tongaat- Genazzano will be selected for the purpose of the study. These primary school children will be below the age of thirteen years. A comparison group will also be investigated with the hope of enhancing the meaningfulness of the study proper by affording opportunities for comparative insights in respect of data from the target group.

The comparison group will comprise of primary school children drawn from schools in the Tongaat-North Coast area. Comparative insights in respect of the life world of non-institutionalized primary school children and that of primary school children at a Boys' Town will be evaluated.

Recommendations will be made in respect of relatively negative or positive features, shortcomings, limitations and weaknesses. Corrective measures will be deemed to be necessary in specific areas in order to afford meaning and quality to living in a residential setting such as a Boys' Town

1.9   METHOD OF RESEARCH

The following instruments will be used:

(a) **The Self -Esteem Inventory:** This self report inventory developed by Coopersmith, S (1967:10) will be administered to obtain an individual evaluation of self – worth.

(b) **The Family Functioning Scale** developed by Beavers, Hampton, Roberts and Hulgus (Beavers, Hampton, Roberts & Hulgus, 1985:402) to measure an insider's view of his or her current family situation.

(c) **Choice questionnaire** developed by Polsky and Claster (1968: 97) to measure peer relationships in an institution such as a Boys' Town.

(d) Finally the research will employ the use of a primary school child's **Individual Treatment Plan (ITP)** which will form the bulk of the instrumentation. The Individual Treatment Plan includes the following scales <u>attitudes towards both mother and father</u> as well as <u>attitudes towards friends</u> and <u>schoolwork achievements</u>. In addition to the above scales the researcher will conduct interviews and group – work to elicit the

experiences of the participants. This will assist the researcher to gain accessibility to the life world of the participants.

1.10. PROGRAMME OF INVESTIGATION

This investigation consists of the following chapters.

In Chapter One: The Introduction is discussed in terms of The Problem, Demarcation of the Field of Study, Aims of the Investigation, The Method of Research, Definition and Elucidation of Concepts and the Programme of Investigation.

In Chapter Two: A theoretical conceptualization of the family system, peer-group and self-esteem will be presented.

Chapter Three deals with the concepts of family and peer relationships as well as self-concept.

Chapter Four will deal specifically with the review of the literature.

Chapter Five details the method of investigation and it's justification for its use. This chapter also includes the elicitation, explication and statistical analysis of research data.

Chapter Six focuses on the interpretation of the data presented.

Finally, Chapter Seven concludes with recommendation and direction for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

A STUDY OF THE LITERATURE OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.

2.1.   INTRODUCTION

This study is undertaken in the belief that both practice and research must stem from the foundation of theory. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to present the views of Erikson, Piaget, Freud, Kohlberg and Bandura on the developmental years of the primary school child.

These views are presented in the hope that they will generate new ideas whilst at the time enhance our knowledge on the primary school years of the child. The presentation of these views is based upon research in the primary literature of these theorists. The researcher has attempted to offer the most recent concepts whenever newer ones have superseded earlier finding. The use of technical terminology employed by each theorist has been refrained, and since all theorists avoid commitment to chronological age, age periods have been cited for the sake of the study.

Each viewpoint deals with a separate aspect of development namely cognitive, moral, emotional and behavioural. Together these viewpoints form an associated frame of reference on the developmental stage of the primary school child. An understanding of child's development particularly the primary school years, is a prerequisite to the understanding of the life world of a child at a Boys' Town.

It has been decided to include only those stages that pertain to the primary school child.

2.1.1 ERIC ERIKSON

2.1 1.1   INTRODUCTION

Erikson states that human beings develop through eight major crises, or conflicts, during the course of their lives. He therefore describes eight developmental phases, attributing five phases to childhood and three to adulthood. Each phase can be seen as a vertical crisis, culminating in an individual psychosocial solution and a horizontal crisis calling for a personal and socially satisfactory solution to the problems of motivational forces. The following is a list of Erikson's five phases of childhood, the word 'sense' underscores the affective stages being dealt with in the progression of development.

a) A sense of basic trust while overcoming a sense of basic mistrust.

b) A sense of autonomy while combating a sense of doubt and shame.

c) A sense of initiative while overcoming a sense of guilt.

d) A sense of industry while fending off a sense of inferiority and:

e) A sense of identity while overcoming a sense of identity diffusion.

Although this section on Erikson limits itself to a study of child development, an understanding of the eight phases, which cover the total span of development, is essential, particularly because helping adults are dealing with their own development as well as the child's (Shaffer, 1992: 53-54).

For the purpose of the study the phase a *sense of industry while overcoming a sense of guilt* will be discussed at length.

2.1.1.2. ACQUIRING A SENSE OF INDUSTRY AND FENDING OF A SENSE OF GUILT

The major theme of this phase reflects the child's determination to master the tasks before him. The child during this phase directs all his abundant energies toward working as an equal with his age mates and toward those social problems of the world that he can successfully master. During this phase (roughly between the ages of seven to eleven) the child delves diligently into all opportunities to learn by experimenting with the basic skills required of his culture. The child proves his competencies, lest he perceives himself as inferior (Maier, 1978:107).

In terms of development, maturation slows off to consolidate what has already been acquired. In the same vein psychological development in the child reflects a similar pattern.

According to Erikson (Maier, 1978:107) children during this phase work incessantly on their physical and perceptual skills, as well as on their growing knowledge of the world that becomes increasingly important to them. Above all they concentrate on their capacity to communicate with, relate to, and team with those individuals who are most significant to them (their peers). A sense of accomplishment, for having done well in the midst of their peers, being the strongest, best, cleverest, or the fastest are the successes that count. Essentially however, all activities and feelings reflect, competitive rather than autonomous strivings. Children must master important social and academic skills. Failure to acquire these skills or attributes leads to a feeling of inferiority (Shaffer, 1992:54). In trying to excel in anything and everything, the need to associate and co-operate with others is of main importance so that he could measure his own skill and work with that of his contemporaries (Maier, 1978:107).

According to Erikson, children who acquire these skills should feel quite competent and be adequately prepared for the next psychosocial hurdle-the identity crisis of adolescence. Those who fail to acquire important academic and social skills should feel incompetent or inferior and have a difficult time establishing a stable identity later in life (Shaffer, 1992:455).

In his play, the child depends on social aspects, which he incorporates in to

real life situations. It is noted that the sexes tend to have separate play habits although upon occasion boys and girls enter each other's world. Sometimes, participating in play that is thought of as particularly appropriate for the other sex. Play begins to lose importance at the end of this phase. What once had an industrious involvement in play slowly merges into serious and eventual involvement in work (Maier,1978:107-108).

According to Erikson the parent-child relationship during this phase evolves to a realistic level of dependency in areas where dependency is skill necessary or desirable. At this phase the child begins to recognize that he must eventually break from his accustomed family life. Since the child sees his parents as representatives of the society in which he must operate he now begins to measure them against other representatives (Maier, 1978:108).

Friends of their parents and parents of their peers assume new importance. The child during this phase will identify with aspects of people that are most meaningful to him without considering the total personality and situation of the person.

The world of the peers assumes a position of equal importance to that of the adult. Within this context peers are needed for self- esteem, and serve as criteria for the measurement of the boy's own success or failure. Hence among his peers, the child finds another source of extra familial identification. This is characterized by the child's focus from dependency upon parents as his major influence to his dependence upon social institutions (Maier, 1978:108).

The solution of problems of initiative and guilt causes an entrance to a stage of developing a sense of industry. The child is now ready to be a worker and producer. The child is enthusiastic about doing jobs to the best of his ability instead of merely initiating them and exploring them. Standards must be maintained in order to measure up to the expectations of the family or society (Papalia & Old, 1975:431).

In acquiring a sense of industry and in overcoming a sense of inferiority children must, according to Erikson, find their sense of competence while accepting, though with misgiving, their limitation.

2.1.1.3.   CONCLUSION

The major theme of this phase is reflected in children's determination to master whatever they are doing. On the one hand, there is abundance energy to invest in every possible effort to produce, to be 'industrious.' On the other hand, there is the ever-present pull towards earlier levels of lesser productions. The fear of the latter is reinforced by the very fact that they are still children, which feeds into feelings of inferiority. According to Erikson (Hamacheck, 1979:38), one way to combat this feeling of inferiority is to take advantage of all opportunities to learn by doing to experiment with the rudimentary skills required.

In summary during the primary school years, children must learn the academic skills of writing, reading and mathematics, as well as a variety of social skills. If the child succeeds in acquiring these skills and if others value these accomplishments, the child develops a sense of industry and has a positive view of the achievements. Children who are constantly compared with others and come up a distinct second may develop a sense of inferiority.

2.1.2 JEAN PIAGET

2.1.2.1   INTRODUCTION

Piaget views development as a distinct progression of phases that maintains an essentially evolutionary process. Within this developmental process he locates a series of distinct developmental and sub-phases. According to Piaget each phase reflects a range of organizational patterns that occur in a definite sequence with an approximate age span in the continuum of development (Maier, 1978: 27-28).

The completion of one phase provides a passing equilibrium as well as the beginning of an imbalance for a new phase. Each phase suggests the potential capacity and probable level of behaviour. Most important is the order of succession of these phases. The order remains always the same. Thus with Piaget's observations, the developmental phases are age bound, since they depend on the completion of the previous phase. They are also age free, since the age does not determine their occurrence (Maier, 1978:29). It is important to note that in Piaget's theory these phases and stages are not merely descriptive and conceptual, but are also verifiable and predictable.

Piaget distinguished three main periods in which cognitive development is qualitatively different with sub-stages in each period. The first of these is the period of sensori-motor intelligence that extends from birth until the appearance of language, which is approximately during the first eighteen months of life. The second period extends from this time until about eleven to twelve years of age and consists of preparation for and realization of, concrete operations of classes, relations and numbers. The period of formal operation begins at about twelve years of age and achieves its full development roughly three years later.

For the purpose of this study the second phase will be discussed in detail. This period is subdivided into pre-operational which extends from about eighteen months to about seven years. The pre-operational state is further subdivided into pre-conceptual stage, extending from birth until four years of age and the intuitive stage extending from four to seven years of age. The

period seven years to adolescence is known as the concrete operation stage, and it is this stage that the study is particularly interested in (Beard, 1969:13-14).

2.1.2.3 THE PHASES OF CONCRETE OPERATIONS

Piaget calls this period 'concrete operations,' because he believed that children at this stage apply operational schemes only to objects, situations, and events that are real or imaginable. Children, during the ages seven to eleven years, find it difficult to think about abstract ideas or about hypothetical propositions that violate their conception of reality (Shaffer, 1993: 256). It is during the phase of concrete operation that children are rapidly acquiring cognitive operations and applying new skills when thinking about objects, situations, and events that can be seen, heard or otherwise experienced (Shaffer, 1992:256).

According to Piaget (Maier, 1969: 55) it is in this phase that children can state and eventually sum up what they intend to tell. Two essential structures of thinking (reversibility and conservation) are capable of being applied within this phase. Reversibility constitutes a level of thinking by which the individual is capable of relating an event or thought to a total system of interrelated parts to conceive of the event or thought from beginning to end and vice-versa (Maier, 1969:55). Conservation is a mode of thinking which includes the capacity for mobile thought.

During conservation an individual's conception of events is not distorted by deceptive perceptual or symbolic input, nor does this conception have to be verified, necessarily through repeated experience (Maier, 1969:55).

The child during this phase is moved from conceiving things and relationships for what they do and their use, to encountering things and events in order to classify group and eventually substitute and replace them with other events. An ice-cream cone is no longer just "yummy" and "mine" it is also chocolate, perhaps too soft, possibly costs three Rand and may represent money too quickly spent, which could have been spent on a video game (Maier, 1969:55).

During the primary school period these operations of reversibility and conservation become logical operations that is they meet certain criteria namely,

a] An operation is an action that may be internalized or executed.

b] The action is reversible.

c] An operation presupposes a measure of conservation.

d] An operation is never isolated (Vrey, 1979: 108).

Piaget separates operational thought into two distinct phases, that is, formal and concrete operational thought. Concrete operation presupposes that mental experimentation that still depends upon perception. The primary school child in the seven to eleven age group cannot perform mental operations unless he can concretely perceive logically.

Thinking during this phase has the freedom to develop along two levels of cognition. Both these cognitive expansions deal with a fitting together of the whole and part as well as the sorting out of which parts belong to the greater whole. Primary School children deal with two rational issues in this regard namely:

1] Which means can accomplish which end, and conversely which ends require what means.

2] Establishing a system of classification.

In dealing with means and ends children are out to discover the consequences one part has for the other. They ponder at the internal relationships of any one event as if they are setting up an equation. Together with these cognitive explorations primary school children are also preoccupied with establishing for themselves systems of classification. It has been noted that children will tend to see that they can conceptualize and classify each object as a part of a larger total system. The child will tend to organize parts into a larger whole by the pyramid systems of either 'nesting' or 'lattices.' Nesting is a descriptive term to classify an internal relationship between smaller parts and their inclusive whole. Lattices refer to a special form of classification in which the focus is upon the connective link and the

parts that are linked (Maier, 1969:52).

In this stage the child envisages any object in relation to one or several wholes that, in turn becomes part of a still larger unity of system. It is now evident that a child continues in an ordered world where he can organize his experiences separately or as part of a unity.

At this point the child shifts from inductive to a deductive mode of thinking. In all mental operations the child's reasoning takes cognition of a larger whole and the logical relationship to it. It must be stressed that the mental capacities of concrete operations evolve one by one and proceed from the very simple to the ordinary and eventually to the more complex (Droz, 1976:63-64).

As the child becomes accustomed to operational thinking he can conceive two hypotheses simultaneously and understand their relationship without being able to communicate this understanding by words or actions. In his acquisition of language the child adopts word definitions without full awareness of all they convey. On the current level of mental organization, language continues to be a tool of communication, it also serves as a vehicle for the thinking process.

The child's contact with his physical world becomes more productive since there is an increase in accommodation that stimulates a real desire for verification. Second there is an accurate perception and an awareness of the process of perception that extend his present understanding of his physical environment.

On the second level Piaget's term for operation bearing on space, time, speed and movement, that is operations dealing with reality in terms of its physical aspects rather with collections of objects. Thus the second level of concrete operations is marked by the achievement of operations relating to space, speed, time and movement (Droz, 1976:64-65).

It is during this period that most problems of logic are eliminated due to the child's continuing interactions with other people particularly the child's parents and peers. This demonstrates the child's developing ability to adapt his or her perspective to those of others. In this stage, however, the child's

thinking is limited to images that have direct physical counterparts (Fogel & Melson, 1988:40).

Piaget stresses that the widening awareness of physical factors always precedes an awareness of social factors. Emancipation from parental domination and participation as an equal in his social world causes a shift in the child's model of imitation. Recognition of seriation and hierarchy of nesting also places the child's understanding of family in a new perspective. The family is now composed of those immediately related in 'blood', that means that pets lose their immediate status as members of the family.

The understanding of relationships, interpersonal and 'blood' provides the schema for this new awareness (Maier, 1969:62).

Observation, composition and comprehension of others assume an important part in the child's life. Play and conversation are no longer primary means of self - expression, they become a media for understanding the physical and social.

Children between the ages of nine and twelve are interested in rules that tend to regulate their mutual activities. They examine rules for all their details. They inquire into the meanings of the parts to establish verifiable relationships as well as to guarantee themselves a sense of permanency. Social reciprocity leads to a sense of quality that is carried over in the concept of fair punishment. Equality in punishment, to compensate exactly for the damage done or to do to another exactly what was done to oneself, constitutes fair judgment. Violation of reciprocity seems to be the worst crime (Maier, 1969:63).

Regrettably outside 'action' and 'thinking,' Piaget's theory is of little help. It seems that Piaget was not concerned with individual differences, nor did he spend much time discussing emotional problems and emotional development. Although peers enter his theory as sources of knowledge, Piaget sadly makes no reference to facilitation of peer interaction or to assist children who cannot make friends. It is also important to note that Piaget makes little or no reference to broader social or environmental influences on the development of children (Fogel & Melson, 1988:40).

2.1.2.3   <u>CONCLUSION</u>

We see, then, that Piaget's stage of concrete operations has great potential value. For Piaget, true learning is not something handed down by the teacher, but something that comes from the child. It is a process of spontaneous invention and discovery. A boy entering the stage of concrete operations begins to think logically, but his thinking is still partly tied to concrete objects and activities.

It has been seen that the environment is important, but only partly so. The environment nourishes, stimulates and challenges the child, but children themselves build cognitive structures. Furthermore children at the level of concrete operations are seen to be able to consider two aspects of a problem simultaneously. In their social interactions, they perform conservation experiments, they consider not only the most visible change but compensating changes. Thus, in Piaget's view the ability to simultaneously coordinate two perspectives forms the basis of social and scientific thinking.

2.1.3 <u>ALBERT BANDURA</u>

2.1.3.1   <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

The approach that Bandura developed focused on the highly efficient form of learning known as observational learning or imitation. Bandura viewed observational learning as requiring direct reinforcement to the learner. Observational learning generally takes place in a social situation involving a model or an imitator. The imitator observes the model and experiences the model's behaviour and its consequences vicariously. This process is vicarious reinforcement (Morgan, 1986:56).

2.1.3.2 <u>OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING</u>

Bandura's four-part model offers a fine analysis of imitative learning. On a broader level, one of Bandura's primary concerns has been the socialization process by which societies induce their members to behave in a socially acceptable way. Bandura is of the opinion that socialization is an inclusive process that influences almost every kind of behaviour, even technical skill. For example many teenage boys feel that they will not fit into their social group unless they learn to drive a motor car. Similarly, all cultures seem to teach their members when it is acceptable to express aggression. It is also likely that all cultures try to teach its members certain modes of cooperation, sharing and helping. Aggression and cooperative behaviours then are 'targets 'of socialization in all cultures (Crain, 1992:179).

2.1.3.3 <u>AGGRESSION</u>

Bandura believed parents and socialization agents reward children when they express aggression in socially appropriate ways, for example in games or in hunting. Furthermore parents punish children when they express aggression in socially unacceptable ways, for example hitting younger children. Children observe aggressive models, notice when they are reinforced, and imitate accordingly. Bandura has examined this process in several experiments. In a study conducted by Bandura (Crain, 1992:179), children individually watched a film in which an adult male model engaged in some novel aggressive behaviour. Each child was assigned to one of three

conditions, which meant that each child saw the same film but with different endings (Crain, 1992:179).

In the 'aggression-reward' condition, the model was praised and given treats at the end of the film. In the 'aggression–punishment,' condition, the model was called a bully, swatted and forced to cower away at the end of the film. In the third 'no–consequence' condition, the model received neither rewards nor punishment, for his aggressive behaviour. The experimenters observed the child through a one – way mirror to see how often he or she would imitate the aggressive model. The results indicated that those who had seen the model punished, exhibited significantly fewer imitations than did those in the other two groups. Within this context vicarious punishment reduced imitation of aggressive responses (Crain, 1992:179).

In the second phase of the experiment the children were offered juice and a pretty sticker picture for each additional response he or she could reproduce. The incentive eliminated the difference among the three groups. This resulted in all the children including those who had seen the model punished, imitate him to some extent. Thus vicarious punishment had only blocked the performance of the new responses. The children in the aggressive – punished condition had learned new responses, but had not felt that it was wise to actually reproduce them until a new incentive was introduced (Crain, 1992:180).

In this experiment Bandura showed that models could influence the performances of previously learned behaviour of the same general class. For example a boy might watch a violent movie and act roughly towards his sister. He does not imitate the behaviour he saw in the film, but he feels freer to engage in previously learned behaviour of the same kind. In such cases, we say that behaviour, has been disinhibited. Models may also inhibit previously learned behaviour, as when a girl sees a boy punished in class she therefore decides to check her impulse to do something else of a mischievous nature (Crain, 1992:180).

It is clear from the above mentioned that when children engage in enjoyable activities that are ordinarily inhibited by social prohibition, observing

behaviour that is unpunished, increases similar conduct in observers to the same degree as witnessing the models rewarded. Children who expect punishment but go free would hardly react as though they were non-rewarded. When anticipated consequences exist, observed non-reward is likely to operate as a positive reinforcer in the context of expected punishment, and as a punisher in the context of expected reward (Bandura, 1977:119).

Furthermore vicarious punishment has been shown to have similar inhibitory effects on transgressive behaviour. Children who have seen models punished for violating prohibitions are less inclined to transgress themselves than if modeled violations were either rewarded or simply ignored. Children who observe peers punished for engaging in prohibited activity show the same degree of response inhibition in temptation situations, as did the punished transgressor.

According to Bandura (1977:120), it is generally easier to disinhibit than to inhibit behaviour by either direct or vicarious means. This is because negative sanctions are usually applied to behaviour that is rewarded for the user but is suppressed for the convenience or benefit of others. Therefore, it does not require much successful modeling of misconduct to reduce vicariously restraints over activities' children find personally rewarding. In contrast, inhibitions are more difficult to induce and sustain by punishment when they involve relinquishing behaviours that are functional for others (Bandura, 1977:120-121).

2.1.3.4 SEX ROLE

Children are taught to behave in sex – appropriate ways during the process of socialization. In this regard societies encourage boys to develop 'masculine' traits and girls to develop 'feminine' traits. Children frequently learn through observation the behaviour of both sexes however they usually perform only the behaviour appropriate to own sex, because they have been reinforced to do so. Social reinforcement, then, only restricts the range of skills that boys and girls practice and not what they observe. After a while, children may even stop making quite as careful observation of

opposite sex – models (Crain, 1992:180).

2.1.3.5 PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Social learning theorists have taken the lead in understanding prosocial behaviour that is behaviour that can be readily influenced by the exposure to the appropriate model. Numerous studies conducted in this regard (Crain, 1992:181) show models, influence not only children sharing but also their helpfulness towards others in distress, their co-operativeness and their concern for others' feelings (Crain, 1992:182).

2.1.3.6 PRACTICING AND PREACHING

Socializing agents such as parents and teachers teach children by behavioural example, by preaching virtue and telling children how to behave. Preaching within this context will be ineffective unless it is forceful. For example when an adult simply mentions that "It is nice to share," the child will be far more influenced by what the adult does. If the adult shares, so will the child regardless of whether the adult preaches altruism or greed (Crain, 1992:182).

2.1.3.7 SELF – REGULATION

Children who are socialized are less dependent on external rewards and punishment and increasingly regulate their behaviour. That is they establish their own internal standards and reward and punish themselves according to these standards. For example an individual might criticize himself for a moral transgression that no one else is even aware of. The individual punishes himself because his behaviour violated his standards (Crain, 1992:182).

According to Bandura (Crain, 1992:182), people set exceedingly high achievement goals and reward themselves only when they meet these goals. Within this context, Bandura (Crain, 1992:182) believed that self – evaluation standards are products of direct reward and punishment. For example parents tend to give their children approval only when they achieve high grades. Thereafter these children adopt these standards as their own.

The influence of models are demonstrated by Bandura in an experiment that

involved seven to nine years old children (Crain, 1992:182). As follows, the design was that these children watched people playing a bowling game. In one condition the model rewarded himself with a candy when he obtained a high score. Otherwise he made self - critical remarks such as 'That does not deserve a treat,' (Crain, 1992:182). In the second the model followed a lower criterion for self - reward. During the experiment there was a control group of children who saw no model. The main finding of the experiment was that when children played the game alone, they adopted the patterns of self-reward of the model to which they had been exposed. The children in the control group, who had seen no model, adopted no consistent standards, they took treats whenever they felt like. In summation the model exerted a clear – cut effect on the children's self – evaluative behaviour (Crain, 1992:183).

Bandura (in Crain, 1992:183) also forwards the view that children tend to adopt the self – evaluative standards of peers rather than adults because children can more easily achieve the lower standards that peers set. Bandura also points out that adults could assist their children to adopt higher standards, for example adults could encourage their children to associate with high-achieving peers (Crain, 1992: 183).

2.1.3.8   SELF-EFFICACY

The evaluation of performances with standards and goals is termed 'self – efficacy appraisals' by Bandura (Crain, 1992: 183). He believes that self – efficacy appraisals exert powerful effects on levels of motivation. For example when children believe that they are good at certain tasks, they work on them vigorously and persist with them despite temporary setbacks. When children doubt their abilities, they work less energetically and are more likely to give up when they encounter difficulties (Crain, 1992:184).

It is possible, of course for a child to have too high an estimate of his or her abilities. For example a boy who has an exaggerated sense of himself as a dancer might enter a competition before he is ready and subsequently experiences unnecessary failure. Bandura is of the view that it is best to have a slight overestimate of one's abilities. Then one will attempt tasks that

are realistically challenging and solve tasks that one could not solve before (Bandura, 1977:394).

2.1.3.9 CONCLUSION

Many theorists use the term stage or period loosely, as merely a convenient device for summarizing their findings. Bandura on the other hand overlooks the importance of cognitive structures or stages. According to Bandura, children in the developmental phase, begin life full of enthusiasm for learning, and during the first years they learn a tremendous amount on the their own, without the adult instruction. Thereafter they are subjected to 'socially guided instructions' by the adult who further provides them with modeling influences, teaching them what and how to think. As a result, children stop trusting their judgment and loose the thrill that comes from making their own discoveries (Crain, 1992:191).

Bandura's contributions to developmental theory can be summed as follows:

1. Children are more prone to imitate 'real' models than film actors.

2. When the model is reinforced, children show more imitative aggression, even though they may criticize the model's behaviour.

3. Even though children are not likely to imitate a model that has been punished, they will perform the aggressive behaviour if appropriately rewarded.

Given the above "aggression" is learnt through the process of "modeling." Bandura's demonstrated in his experiment with a Bobo doll that children who witness authority figures being aggressive also act aggressively. Furthermore children who witness aggression in their homes or feel that aggression is condoned are more likely to be aggressive.

2.1.4 LAWRENCE KOHLBERG

2.1.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Kohlberg offers a fine grain theory on moral understanding. He presents this theory with the use of stories called 'moral dilemma,' to children whilst at the same time analyzing their response in great detail. Having done so Kohlberg uncovered a variety in patterns of thinking. As a result, Kohlberg distinguished three broad levels of moral reasoning namely prevocational, congenital and postconventional morality. Within each level he identified two stages, making a total of six stages of moral understanding.

Kohlberg advocates that progression or advance to a higher or next stage is not inevitable. He feels that individuals can become stuck at a particular stage. Therefore age levels are not associated with any stage progression. However, Kohlberg believes that stage one characteristics are associated with children under the ages of seven, while in stage two reasoning is most common during the middle years. During the late elementary school period, evidence of reasoning can be found in some children (Fogel & Melson, 1988:417 -518).

Before looking at Kohlberg's sequence of stages, it is important to emphasize that each stage represents a particular perspective, or method of thinking dilemma, rather than a particular type of moral decision. The basic themes and characteristics of Kohlberg's three moral levels are:

1) PRECONVENTIONAL MORALITY: At this level rules are truly external to the self rather than internalized. The child conforms to rules imposed by authority figures to avoid punishment or obtain personal rewards. Morality at this level is self-serving, that is what is right and what one can get away with or what is personally satisfying.

2) CONVENTIONAL MORALITY: At this level the individual now strives to accept rules and social norms to win other's approval or to maintain social order. Social praise and avoidance of blame have now replaced tangible rewards and punishment as motivators of ethical behaviour. The perspectives of other people are clearly recognized and given careful consideration (Shaffer, 1992:556).

3) POSTCONVENTIONAL MORALITY: The individual at this level of moral reasoning now defines what is right and wrong with broad principles of justice that could conflict with written laws or with the dictates of authority. Morally right and legally proper rules are not always one and the same (Shaffer, 1992:556).

Kohlberg (in Shaffer, 1992:556) does not assign any ages to a particular level. However, within Kohlberg's mode of thinking it has been found that characteristics of primary school children are identified at the preconventional. For the purpose of the study this level will be discussed in detail.

The story of Heinz is important in the understanding of Kohlberg's levels of morality. Briefly the story entails the moral dilemma of a husband in obtaining money to procure essential drugs for his sick wife suffering from cancer (Shaffer, 1992:557).

2.1.4.2   PRECONVENTIONAL MORALITY

STAGE ONE

Children using preconventional moral reasoning try to avoid punishment and receive rewards. Moral action is considered as being determined from aspects outside the self, usually by authority figures. Most children around the age of nine years of age are seen to reason at this level. During the first stage of preconventional reasoning children argue that 'might is right.' Children behave morally and avoid punishment out of an unquestioning deference to superior power. A child during this stage would feel that Heinz should not steal the drug because he will be punished or that Heinz should steal the drug because his wife is important and powerful in his life (Clarke & Friedman, 1987:440).

This stage, evidently underlines the punishment and obedience orientation. The merit of the goodness and badness of an act depends on its consequences. The child will obey authority and adult figures to avoid punishment. Within this context, the child will not consider an act if it is detected and punished (Clarke & Friedman, 1987:439).

STAGE TWO (*Instrumental relativist orientation*)

At this stage of reasoning the motivation for behavior is to get pleasure for one's self (naive hedonism) in the form of rewards from another person. This level indicates that everyone has the right to do what he wants to do with himself and his possessions, even thought his behavior is in conflict with the rights of the others. It seems that at this stage reciprocity is pragmatic and has nothing to do with loyalty or gratitude or even justice for that matter (Schuster & Ashburn, 1986: 364).

A marked feature prevailing during this stage of preconventional reasoning is the 'market place morality.' Moral action during this stage involves making deals for a fair exchange. Children are of the opinion that Heinz should not steal the drug because it would not be worth the risk of going to jail. The child does realize that jail is not an inevitable consequent of an act of stealing. The child is in the process or weighting up the possibilities of Heinz getting caught against his desire to restore his wife's health. Children at this level of reasoning will be seen to steal the drug to save a stranger's life if the stranger would later repay them by saving their life. This is seen to constitute a fair exchange. The purpose or goal at this stage is to 'look out for number one.' Clearly both these stages are hedonistic in nature (Clarke & Friedman, 1987:440-441).

2.1.4.1   PEERS AS AGENTS OF MORAL SOCIALIZATION

Kohlberg was of the opinion that interaction amongst social equals probably contributes more to the moral development of the child. This interaction is more beneficial than the one-sided discussions with the adult authority in which the children are expected to defer to the adult. Kohlberg felt that children seem to think more deeply about both their own and their parent's moral ideas in discussions with peers than in their talks with mothers. Children who discuss moral issues in groups are seen to indicate advances in their moral reasoning (Shaffer, 1992:560).

According to Kohlberg social experiences promote moral growth by introducing cognitive challenges to one's current reasoning patterns. Kohlberg contends that less mature individuals will adapt to these challenges by assimilating and accommodating to other person's logic (Shaffer, 1992:560).

2.1.4.2. CONCLUSION

In his theory of moral development Kohlberg argued that moral reasoning is related to cognitive growth and development. Kohlberg identified six separate stages of moral development, falling into three general categories. The first stage of moral reasoning Kohlberg termed the preconventional level in which satisfaction of one's needs and rewards and punishment serves as a basis of moral decision making. Kohlberg's termed his second level of moral reasoning 'conventional level,' in which conformity to the expectations of others and society serves as the basis for moral decision making. The third level Kohlberg termed the 'postconventional level,' in which moral reasoning is made on the basis of individual values that been internalized.

In summary it seems fairly clear that Kohlberg's stages are qualitatively different from one another. For example, stage one responses, focus on obedience to authority, that is different from stage two responses, which argue that each person is free to behave as he or she wishes. Within this context children move through the stages by encountering the views that challenge their thinking and stimulate them to formulate better arguments.

2.1.5   SIGMUND FREUD

2.1.5.1   INTRODUCTION

The first comprehensive view of human personality development was that of Sigmund Freud who forwarded the theory of psychoanalysis. Central to Freud's theory is the notion that human beings have powerful biological urges. According to Freud these urges must be satisfied. Freud viewed the infant as a 'seething cauldron' an inherently selfish creature. The infant is driven by two instincts that are called **Eros** (life instincts) and **Thanatos** (death instincts). As Freud developed his psychoanalytic theory he relied on techniques such as hypnosis, free association and dream analysis that gave him an indication to the individual's unconscious motives (Shaffer, 1992:46 – 47).

According to Freud the mental process of an individual comprises the **id, ego and superego**. The id is a collection of innate desires and needs such as sleep, sex, hunger, love and aggression. The pleasure principle regulates the id that acts in irrational and self - seeking ways. The ego is the self-regulating aspect of the person and operates by means of the reality principle. The ego serves the function of defense of the person in threatening situations. The third structure of the mind is that of the superego. The superego is the conscience and is made of parent's prohibitions, guilt feelings, and the standards and norms of acceptable behaviour at home, school and playground (Fogel & Melson, 1988:33).

The sex instincts according Freud are seen as the most important of the life instincts. By observing mental patients he found that mental disturbance in individuals revolved around sexual conflicts. These conflicts are usually repressed and are forced out of conscious awareness. Seen in this perspective Freud stresses that as the sex instinct matures its energy or libido that gradually shifts from one area of the body to another. This shifting of sexual energies results in the development of the child. Freud called these developmental stages 'psychosexual' to underscore his theory that the maturation of the sex instincts leaves distinct imprints on the developing psyche (Schaffer, 1992:47).

Freud calls the earliest psychosexual development the oral stage. During this stage the mouth is the foremost as the source of sustenance and pleasure. It is imperative that the mother must not frustrate the child's impulse to suck and mouth objects. The second year of life is characterized by pleasure of the anal zone. The conflict of letting go and holding back, between defecating impulsively and conforming to an imposed schedule is characteristic of this stage which Freud calls the anal stage. In the anal stage the child is seen to act defiantly, grabbing of toys, as well as ignoring of parental prohibitions. Rigid and selfish personalities are as a result of harsh toilet training and severe discipline (Fogel & Melson, 1988:35).

During the period three to six years of age Freud believed that the phallus (penis) assumes a critical important role in the psychosexual development of boys and girls. He referred to this stage as the Phallic stage. According to Freud boys between the ages three to four develop an intense sexual longing for the mother. Boys are seen to be jealous even against their father for maternal love. This state of affair Freud calls the **Oedipus Complex**. The female Oedipus bears some obvious similarities to that of the boy and is known as the **Electra Complex**. The period during six to twelve years of age is commonly referred to the Latency stage. Dung this stages the child's sex instinct is relatively quiet. The final stage in the psychosexual development of the child is the Genital stage. With the onset of puberty the process of maturation of the reproductive system follows. It is seen that during this growth period there is a flooding of the body with sex hormones, and according to Freud, a reactivation of the genital zone as an area of sensual pleasure. It is during the genital stage that Freud believed people remain for the rest of their lives (Shaffer, 1992:50-51).

For the purpose of the study the latency stage will be discussed in detailed.

2.1.5.2 <u>LATENCY PERIOD</u> *(ages six to eleven years)*

The phallic stage ends with the resolution of the Oedipal situation. The child then enters the **latency stage**. During this period the child's sex instincts are relatively quiet. The child is presumed to have adaptively repressed the oedipal conflict while waiting for the onset of the genital stage. It is also

assumed that during this stage all available libidos is channeled into some socially acceptable activity (such as schoolwork or vigorous play) that consumes most of the child's physical and psychic energy. With the establishment of strong defenses against oedipal feelings, the child enters the latency period, which lasts from about the age six to eleven years. As the name suggests, sexual and aggressive fantasies are now largely evident and are kept firmly down, in the unconscious (Crain, 1992: 235). Freud was of the firm belief that the repression of sexuality at this time is quite sweeping. It includes not only oedipal feelings and memories, but also oral and anal ones (Crain, 1992:235). Because dangerous impulses and fantasies are kept underground, the child is not excessively bothered by these impulses, and the latency is a period of relative calm.

An important observation to note during this stage is that the child's parents and family the old form is no longer pursued. Evidently infantile drives begin to weaken during the latency stage. The passionate emotional situation has changed remarkably. In term of his relation to his feelings that dominated the relationship of the child towards his /her parents begin to rapidly diminish. This relationship between parent and child continues on a calmer, less passionate and less exclusive terrain. The father is seen in a reasonably light while the mother at the peak of the phallic stage resembles adult love. This gradually gives way to tenderness that makes fewer demands and is no longer devoid of criticism (Freud, 1936:42-48).

The parental influences during this stage are seen to change from an external to internal one. It is seen within this context that a child of two to three years of age will obey parental orders only when they are present. Despite intense external forces that influence him the child also develops an inner force that determines his actions.

2.1.5.3 CONCLUSION

Child development theorists differ greatly on the value of psychoanalytic theory to the understanding of child development. Within this context certain aspects of Freud's views offer useful insights. For example his ideas of concerning the unconscious have been of great interest, as well as his

description of defense mechanism. This has allowed educators to obtain new understanding of what were in the past incomprehensible behaviours.

Freud argued that children progressed through five psychosexual stages that involve the unfolding of sexual instincts. Some of these concepts, such as unconscious motivation and defense mechanism protect children from anxiety and other negative emotions. The stage of particular importance to the primary school child is referred to as the latency stage. As the name suggests sexual and aggressive fantasies are now largely latent, that is, kept firmly down in the unconscious. Freud was of the opinion that the repression of sexuality at this time is quite sweeping, it includes not only the oedipal feelings and the memories, but the oral and anal ones as well. Because dangerous impulses and fantasies are now kept underground, they do not excessively bother the child, and the latency period is one of relative calm. In general, the latency-age child possesses a new composure and self control.

2.1.6 SYNTHESIS

Any effort to understand the life world of the primary school child must be aimed at the developmental phases, instead of the individual behaviour per se. Each of the viewpoints presented makes use of the developmental phases rather exact age forms.

It is submitted that an understanding of the defined phases proposed by the theorists provide a valuable insight into assessing each child's development tasks. Virtually all viewpoints suggest that in the continuum of development whatever the child does, thinks and feels in any one phase of his life at any given point in time is intrinsically linked to the persons image of himself (life world), his family, his peers and his key reference group.

The implication of the foregoing viewpoints for the purposes of understanding the life world of the primary school child is reviewed within the framework of the sequential developmental phases.

It is important to understand that Piaget's observation that an individual first experiences a situation affectively before he can comprehend it or explain

38

and utilize his understanding of it. Central to his viewpoint all children construct and constantly revise their models of reality thus, progressing through sequential stages of intellectual growth. According to Piaget the primary school child acquires the ability to perform cognitive operations based on a logical reasoning rather than intuitive functioning. What Piaget pointedly demonstrates is that there are regular patterns in cognitive development that is experienced by all children. In turn such understanding allows the child to predict his mode and range of comprehension all along his development.

Although Piaget has adequately described the general sequencing of intellectual development, his tendency to infer underlying competencies from children's intellectual performance leads him to often underestimate and occasionally to overestimate the child's cognitive capabilities. Within this context Piaget has been challenged on his assumption that development occurs in stages while others have questioned his theory for failing to specify how children progress from one stage of intellect to another. In sum the Piagetian approach remains the most comprehensive statement of intellectual growth that currently exists. Furthermore if one has to take Piaget's assumptions to its logical conclusion then one must agree that children actively construct their world rather than being passive registers for external stimuli. In addition, development is a product of a continual relationship between child and environment.

Erikson's developmental blueprint on the other hand can be summarized as a process of maturation meeting a process of education. In technical terms it is the growth of the ego combined with the quality of the ego experience afforded to the child by his immediate environment. In a sense it is called an era of 'industry, duty and accomplishment' (Vrey, 1979:86). A sense of accomplishment for having done well, being the strongest, best, wittiest or the fastest is the success towards which the child strives. Most of the child's efforts are devoted toward improving his ego processes. Since society hints that his very handling of the ongoing situation will determine his future. The child/parent relationship during the primary school level evolves to a realistic level of dependency. The child has to recognize that he must eventually

break from his accustomed family life. The child sees his parents as representatives of the society in which he must operate (Maier, 1969:56).

For Erikson and Freud, the fantasies and fears of the oedipal child are temporarily buried during the latency stage, which lasts from about six to eleven years. This is a relatively calm period when children seem more self – composed. For Piaget this change is not the result of the repression of emotions, fears or dangerous wishes, rather it comes about because; intellectually the child has entered the stage of concrete operations.

Kohlberg's stages of moral development bear some resemblance to those of Piaget for example stage one of Kohlberg's scheme is similar to moral realism, while stage three contains many of the same characteristics described by Piaget as autonomous morality. Like Piaget, Kohlberg's view his earlier stages as invariants. What Kohlberg advocates in this instance is that all children begin at stage one believing that physical consequences determine whether an action is good or bad and progress sequentially through higher stages of reasoning. However Piaget differs with Kohlberg who feels that advancement from one stage to the another is inevitable. There are also situations during development that individuals can stagnate at a particular stage.

In terms of Kohlberg's view primary school children are seen to follow the rules only if it is to someone's immediate interest. The ultimate reason for doing so is to serve ones own interest in a world where one must recognize that other people have interests too. Kohlberg's input is of particular importance to a Boy's Town programme since it recognizes moral issues (general principles relating to justice, fairness, and the welfare of others) and social conventions (arbitrary rules of conduct sanctioned by the institution)

Bandura, unlike other theorists, does not acknowledge the importance of cognitive structures or stages to his theory of child development. Bandura as we have seen, does acknowledge that cognitive skills set limits on what children can learn and imitate. However, Bandura does hold the opinion that these cognitive skills are best described as broad stages or structures.

Instead, he thinks of cognition as a large number of specific isolate skills. Practical implications for the study of Bandura are his contribution to the behaviour modification programme that is implemented at Boys' Town's nationally. The technique of the behaviour modification that includes inter alia modeling and observation is of particular importance. At a Boys' Town the system of deterrence relies heavily on the inhibitory effects of exemplary punishment and discipline. The threat of punishment and discipline are designed to serve a broad preventive function by restraining others should they encounter circumstances that tempt them to transgress. It must be pointed out that behaviour relies more on deterrence through preferable prosocial options than on threats of punishment. Modeling influences as outlined by Bandura also reduces the deterrence efficacy of any misbehaviour at a Boys' Town.

The complexity of the life world of the primary school can be better understood if aspects of the child's development are studied. The child's relationship with his parents, peers and himself is better understood if the child's development perspective is reviewed. In determining the life world of the primary school child the study does not subscribe to any theory or phaseology. In sum the study of child development from a pedagogic point of view is to enable the study to come to grips with the child progressing towards adulthood.

Given the large number of theorists reviewed in this chapter, it is difficult to decide among them in thinking of an application to policy or to intervention. Because of the inherent complexity of child development, no one theory can account for all aspects of development and behaviour. Thus, researchers and practitioners try to choose the theory or combine elements of theories in ways that best fit their particular application. In spite of the strides made in understanding child development in the past fifty years, a lack of a unified theory exists. Every professional within the field needs to be familiar with different approaches and to be creative in their application: choosing the theory and method that best fit the problem/ investigation at hand. There is no single answer that fits all primary school children in all situations. Seen in this light a wide variety of experiences with different children, balanced

41

against a conceptual understanding of the diversity of theories of development, are the best guide to becoming an effective researcher.

CHAPTER THREE

A THEORETICAL STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

3.1 SELF CONCEPT

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the tasks of growing up is developing a sense of self, a sense of who one is and how one fit into one's society. According to James (1966:41), the self can be divided into two components, the 'me' and the 'I.' The 'me' is the sum total of all the person can call 'his,' including abilities, social and personality characteristics, and material possessions. The 'I' is the 'self' as knower (James, 1966:41). This aspect of the self continually organizes and interprets and experiences people and events in a purely subjective manner (Damon & Hart, 1982:844). The beginning of self-awareness appears during the second year of life and at around eighteen months. During these years the child begins to recognize his/her own face, and point at pictures of them when someone says their name. During the childhood years the rudimentary sense of the self grows into an elaborated and stable network of self-perception and feelings (Mussen, Janeway, Kagan & Huston, 1990:388).

Self-concepts are usually measured by asking people to describe themselves or tell how different they are from others. For example a child may be asked to tell how he would describe himself in a diary that no one else would see, or how he would be different if he were his best friend. These measures of self-concept are intended to identify the attributes that the child considers most important (Mussen et al, 1990:388).

The concept of the self is of particular importance to the life world of the primary school child as it is central to the personality structure. The child's concept of himself has direct influence on his behaviour, emotion and cognition. This section is concerned with the definition of self-concept, an investigation of the way in which it is related to the broader concept of the life world. Furthermore an attempt will be made to trace the development of the self-esteem from infancy to the primary school years.

The primary school child already has an established self-concept, that is his self-concept represents what he understands of himself. During this period the child gets to know himself in a wide variety of new relationships. The child's conception of himself will not only develop and expand; it will also change both positively and negatively. This is particularly true if the child enters school with a negative self-concept, for he will be inclined to interpret all new experience in that light (Vrey, 1979: 112-113).

When referring to self-esteem the majority of authors tend to describe a subjective dimension that the child construes concerning his/her abilities (Yamato, 1972:214). He also refers to the self-esteem as 'something like having faith in the self.' According to Rosenberg the self-esteem signifies a positive or negative orientation towards an object (Rosenberg, 1979:54).

It is clear that as children form identities and concepts about themselves they implicitly assign positive or negative values to their attributes that collectively constitute the self-esteem. Self-esteem, therefore, differs from self-concept because it involves an evaluation of the self. Self-concept can be best described as a set of ideas about one -self that is descriptive but non- -judgmental. The fact that one has dark hair and not a soft voice can be part of one's self-concept, but these qualities are not judged as good or bad; they are neutral. Self-esteem on the other hand, refers to one's evaluation of one's qualities for example if we consider an eight-year-old lad who views himself as someone who fights a lot. If he values his ability to fight and stand up for himself, that quality may add to his self-esteem. If he is unhappy about his tendency to get into fights, this behaviour might detract from his self-esteem.

Wells and Marwell (1976:59) forward the idea that the self-esteem is equated with the self-concept. They differentiate between the evaluative and affective dimension, the former being mainly cognitive in nature, while the latter is associated with the "emotional and behavioural concomitant of self-evaluation" (Wells & Marwell, 1976:59-63).

3.1.2 DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES OF THE SELF-CONCEPT DURING THE PRIMARY SCHOOL YEARS

There are regular changes in the categories children use when they describe themselves. Until about the age of seven, children tend to define themselves in physical terms. They name concrete; observable features of themselves, such as hair colour, height, or favourite activities for example " I like to play ball." They are less likely to name comparative qualities such as reading abilities or bravery. Inner psychological characteristics are not described as being separate from overt behaviour and physical characteristics (Mussen et al., 1990:389).

Erikson on the other hand states that the infant's basic life tasks may be represented by a dichotomy of trust versus mistrust. Trust in this context refers to the 'truthfulness of others as well as a fundamental sense of one's own trustworthiness' (Erikson, 1968:96.). Furthermore the infant needs the consistent care of the mother figure, if the child is to develop a basic sense of trust in the world. This trust in turn forms the basis of the individual's sense of identity (Samuel, 1977:69-70).

The child's self-concept will develop during the primary school years either positively or negatively. An important factor facing the child is the challenge of designing a system for making a stand against success and resisting failures and incompetence. Since the child is involved in school activities for the better part of life, the school plays a decisive part in the forming of the self-concept. Children, who are efficient in the handling of their success and failures, constitute a positive self-concept (Vrey, 1979:114-115).

3.1.3. SELF-CONCEPT AND SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

There is increasing evidence to indicate that low achievement in basic school subjects, as well as misguided motivation and lack of academic involvement that characterizes the underachiever and the chronic failure, may be due at least in part to the negative perception of the self. For example, some pupils have trouble with schoolwork, not because of low intelligence or poor hearing, but because they have learned to consider themselves as being unable and inadequate (Hamachek, 1979:293). Primary school children are

in the early phases of forming their concept of self. This is not to imply that the primary school child has no sense of identity whatsoever, but rather suggests that their sense of self is incompletely formed. As noted earlier the danger of this period according to Erikson (Crain, 1992: 255), is the development of a sense of inadequacy and inferiority in the primary school child who does not receive recognition for his efforts.

According to Hamachek (1979: 294) early school success is crucial for three basic reasons:

- Subsequent success is not only easier to build onto early success, but it also seems more possible to the pupil.

- Early success gives children, not only a sense of competence and accomplishment, but also a precedent with which they can strive to be consistent.

- Primary school success makes any later school failures more bearable because they are more likely to occur within a consolidated self-system supported by achievement and strengthened by personal accomplishment.

As noble or worthy as primary school success may be, it unfortunately is not available to all children. Many primary school pupils experience failure at the time in their lives when they are most influenced by it (Hamachek, 1979:301 – 302).

3.1.4.   CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHILD'S RELATION WITH HIMSELF

According to Vrey the child's relation with himself are evident in his self-concept. The following are inherent features:

- The self-concept is dynamic. The self-concept is subject to change, which depends on the maturational development and experiences of the child.

- Every individual strives at conducting himself in such a way that his behaviour resembles his self-concept. The child's self-image is his interpretation of himself. Whatever his actions are will necessarily be related to his interpretation. Should a child underestimate his potential and abilities and if he is convinced that he is not capable of success, his efforts at success will be reflected in his convictions.

- There is an interaction between self-concept and achievement.

Research have found a significant drop in self-esteem among children who were under-achievers, as well as that poor achievement leads to a lowering of the self-esteem (Vrey, 1979:115- 116).

3.1.5 PROGRAMMES OF SELF-AWARENESS AT A BOY'S TOWN

An important part of the programme at a Boy's Town is to respond to the child in a way that increases the likelihood of positive growth in the child. Frequently, this is a very difficult task and failure to implement such a programme only perpetuates old negative patterns of behaviour and confirms the child's essentially negative view of himself.

Some basic principles of the programme.

- A belief that those even severely disturbed children have an -intrinsic capacity for growth, which becomes operative under the right conditions

- Respect for the child's need to feel that he has control over his healing process

- A belief that one can use what the child is already doing and saying to create a context where positive change can occur. One needs to look for positive aspects of the child's behaviour and reframe the behaviour so that it takes on a positive meaning.

The programmes of self-awareness at a Boy's Town consist of various facets, each of which runs on an ongoing basis. The choice of group-work over individual work is prompted by the need for role-playing and social encouragement in the programme, which under the circumstance can be best, provided by group members. In addition the use of the group as a social support and therapeutic agent could not be ignored. These facets are briefly described:

a) Making praise specific: This includes the communication of positive feelings and giving of praise. It must be noted that the communication of feelings and giving praise are not necessarily the same, for example, 'I like your picture' is different from 'you used colour so nicely in this, I especially

like red and blue.' Children need to know that what they have tried to do well has been noticed. When praise is specific it's more credible and helps the child to develop more self-awareness.

b) <u>Children are informed when the behaviour is having a positive effect on others</u>. Praise for good interpersonal relations with others gives children feedback that refires their 'toolbox' of interpersonal skills.

c) <u>Children are encouraged to express ideas that may be different.</u> This is especially important when helping children solve problems. A child profits from knowing that he can express ideas even when they are 'weird.' For example, many children from disrupted backgrounds have not learned how to express feelings and how to make their needs known. They may have not learned how to ask a favour or how to apologize. For example a newly arrived child may believe that the only way to ask for something is to say 'gimme' or 'hand over me that'. This in turns confirms his image in the world as a 'bully' or 'aggressive'. It is therefore crucial for adults to recognize their teaching role, which usually involves presenting to the child the skill to be learned. The example is either modeled by the adult alone in a group setting or by other children who have mastered the skill.

d) <u>Pointing out something about the child which is different or special</u>. Children may possess the same quality, but each child feels special about himself. Expressing something in his own way makes a child special to himself. It's this recognition of pointing out something different, which is important to the child. Pointing out such things as 'you dance divinely,' or' you paint such lovely pictures.' In addition it also helps the child when the changes are pointed out.

e) <u>Providing opportunities for children to express themselves creatively</u>. Crucial to the child's self-esteem is the acquisition of knowledge and skill. Success in learning social skill imparts confidence. Boys' Towns are committed to expanding the primary school child's understanding of the world. Knowledge of the immediate environment is obtained from field trips and direct experience (Raman, Morar, & Suchanandan, 1994:20-140).

During the period under review the following informative field trips were undertaken.

Visits to a crocodile farm and nature reserve in Tongaat

Visit to the first sugar mill in Kwa-Zulu Natal located in Compensation on the North Coast.

Visits to Japanese Botanical Gardens, Umgeni Bird Park and Oribi Gorge.

Visits to fire department, Telkom, historical and bird museum.

3.2. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

The self - concept can be discussed from a number of viewpoints. In view of the phenomenological approach, the self-concept is central to the adjustment and behaviour of the child. It is composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities, the precepts and concepts of the self in relationship to his peers and family. Furthermore it is clear from the above discussion that a high self – concept will automatically lead to high achievement, but it does forward the argument that that achievement rarely occurs in the absence of a reasonably high self – concept. Good family and peer relationships as well as good schoolwork are mutually reinforcing to the other, insofar as a positive change in one encourages a positive change in the other. Although a child's self – concept expands and takes shape during the primary school years, it is important to keep in mind that the child's concept of himself can be redirected, reshaped in later years. In summary a Boys' Town is likely to be a positive experience that encourages healthy self - attitudes to the extent that the teachers concentrate on the pupils' strengths, praise their best efforts, and establish fair and consistent expectation for performances.

3.3 THE FAMILY

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The nature of the family and its role in society as well as the lives of its members, have changed significantly in the past fifty years. Moreover in recent years the rate of change has been increasing rather than decreasing. Although the overall picture of the family is complicated by socio-economic, ethnic, religious and other factors, certain general trends are quite apparent, for example, increasing urbanization and geographic mobility (Conger, 1991:180-185).

The traditional composition of the family consists of the father, mother and siblings. Additional members include the paternal and maternal grandparents as well as the aunts and uncles. Changes in the nature and function of the family have placed additional demands on family members. Among these changes are a decrease in average family size and the interdependence of family members. Up through the nineteenth century families were generally larger and early parental death and economic insecurities were far more prevalent and as a result, families were more dependent on one another. This tended to promote family solidarity but left little room for individuality (Conger, 1991:188).

The traditional function of the family as an institution is divided among family members in its formation of roles. The economic function in a family encompassed in the provider role is customarily enacted by the husband, is sometimes paralleled by a provider role by the wife. The wife enacts the house executive role.

3.3.2   TYPES OF FAMILIES

The type of family a child is born into dramatically affects the expectation, role, beliefs and interrelation that he/she will experience throughout life. Within the current context three basic family styles will be examined.

EXTENDED FAMILIES

In an extended family (one having many relatives and several generations close by) children may be cared for by a variety of people including uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents or older siblings as well as parents who live together and fulfill a mutually supportive function. As society becomes increasingly industrialized, people become economically and physically mobile, often moving away from their family base to raise their children alone. The extended family is still a common pattern in many cultures in South Africa (Craig, 1983:123). In a rural and technologically underdeveloped society, such an extended family traditionally lived on farms where they functioned as an economic unit (Louw, 1995: 499).

COMMUNAL FAMILY

Social interrelationships take a different form from those of the extended family. The peer-group is often an intensely powerful force in the socialization of young children. Communal societies reinforce conformity and cooperation while discouraging individualization and significant defiance from group standards. The Israeli Kibbutz represents one of the most sustained and studied efforts to institutionalize communal child - care in any modern society. Some communal groups in the United States have attempted a modified version of the Israeli model; they consider their children to be coherent segments of society, not the property of individual parents.

However, a successful communal arrangement depends on a very high degree of consensus among parents on social and life styles (Craig, 1983:125-127).

NUCLEAR FAMILY

The traditional nuclear family consists of a husband, a wife and their unmarried children, all of whom live as a unit apart from relatives, neighbours and friends. The husband and father is head of the household, but spends

much time away from home, working for the financial support for their material needs (Craig, 1983:127). The wife and mother are responsible for household keeping, cooking and most of the care and training of the children. Many people in the western world assume that this pattern is the natural and customary family form. In fact, many western countries have constructed legal safeguards to protect it. In the United States, husbands are obligated by law to support their families (Craig, 1983:127).

The traditional nuclear family has carried a heavy responsibility for childcare, health care, moral training, economic and emotional stability. Parents are expected to meet all these demands within a minimum of outside assistance (Craig, 1983:128-129).

3.4   THE RELATION BETWEEN CHILD AND PARENT DURING THE PRIMARY SCHOOL YEARS

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

At the core of parental sentiments towards the child, are attitudes of love and approval for the child as he is. According to Coopersmith (1967:165) other persons will value the child for his appearance, abilities, performances and other qualities. Therefore it is imperative that parents express love and approval to the child who may also be limited in his attributes and functions.

It also seems that it is undoubtedly easier to love a gifted, charming and attractive child, but such approval and support must be given to any child. Children need neither earn nor gain their parent's love and approval; he has achieved such love by being their child (Coopersmith, 1967:165). The need for love is met by the child experiencing from birth onwards a stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationship with his parents, whom themselves enjoy a rewarding relationship with one and other.

Parents give meaning to the child's distress cry and are able to know what to do even if this means withholding help. This relation between the parent and child is more extensive than the educational relation because the parent is continually educating the child. Under these circumstances it should always be possible for an educational relationship to emerge from the parent-child

52

relation. This notion that love is the most important attribute of the parent-child relationship is supported by Montage (Vrey, 1979:92-93).

3.4.2   LOVE

The relationship between parent and child is based on love. In the relationship between the mother and child the features of pedagogical love can be best identified. According to Vrey (1979: 94) this does not mean that parental love is identical to pedagogical love.

The basic all pervasive feature of parental love is that the child is valued unconditionally, concerning his sex appearance, abilities and personalities. This love between the parent and child is given without expectation of or demand for gratitude (Pringle, 1980:35).

The greatest impact of such love is on the self. In addition approval and acceptance by others are essential for the development of self-approval and self-acceptance. A consequence of parental love is that the child is enabled through mutually rewarding relationships, first with the mother and then with others who become significant to him, to learn self-control and to acquire morals. Such love is extremely difficult to replace and makes the child vulnerable when it is lost to him, temporarily or permanently (Pringle, 1980:36-73).

The knowledge of love and being loved is vital for the child, for the child too has a part in the parent-child relationship and in the process shapes the parent's attitudes towards him.

The child's crying, reaction, sex and appearance all shape the parent's behaviour towards him. In this context Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (988:159) state that there is a positive relation between mother's love and the happy, calm, positive behaviour of the child.

3.4.3 KNOWLEDGE

A relationship of love requires that those who participate in it know one another. It is important that both parent and child know one another. Furthermore, it is also imperative that in this context 'knowledge' does not merely mean intellectual insights rather one should experience the other for example the mother interprets the baby's cries, cough, restlessness, shyness, or rebelliousness. Clearly the parent's involvement leads to a co-experience of the child's experience and in doing so the parent gives meaning to these co- experiences in an empathic manner. In the same vein the child also has co-experiences of the parent's moods and emotion. This mutual intuitive knowledge is essential, without it parents and children cannot love each other (Vrey, 1979:94).

It is important that parents take cognizance of the growing child's independence. For example children during the primary school years no longer want to be cuddled on the parent's lap, or be kissed in the presence of his peers. The parent must support the child in his struggle for his emancipation and his identification with his peer group (Vrey, 1979:94 -95).

It is a common occurrence that the primary school child will refuse to conform because their friends do not do it either. This is not disobedience, because the authority of the teacher and that of the peer group also confront the child. The child is in an invidious position because he has to earn his acceptance in his peer group whilst at home he is accepted for what he is and not for what he does (Vrey, 1979:95).

3.4.4 CARE

Knowledge of the other person goes hand in hand with care. Care is much more than the provision of food, shelter and clothing. The welfare of the child is of paramount importance to the parents, even though the child displays the attitude that he does not need it. The parents must allow the child the opportunity of carrying his burden. In this context it is essential that children should experience neither over-protection nor rejection (Vrey, 1979:96).

Parents who are warm and accepting express their love for the child by bold

and lofty acts. They are seen to be particularly concerned about the whereabouts, health and welfare, as well as being supportive when the child expresses distress and failure. Though parents may at times express disapproval about particular deeds or acts that the child may have performed or omitted, their acceptance of the child is unconditional (Coopersmith, 1967:165).

3.4.5 RESPECT

Respect is not fear and awe, it denotes the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality. Respect is the concern of the child as the child grows and unfolds for his sake, and his ways, and not for serving the parents. Clearly respect is possible only if the child achieves independence (Fromm, 1985:23).

The appreciation of the child's uniqueness and self - being forms the third facet of the relation between parent and child. This relation between the parent and the child is respect. Respect is punctuated by the acceptance of child by the parent for what the child is, in an active and positive sense. Respect implies concern that one wishes the other nothing but the best. Respect implies recognition of the uniqueness and integrity of the other without wanting to shape the child according to one's mirror image. Pedagogical love therefore requires respect for the dignity of the child even though he might be retarded or handicapped (Vrey, 1979:96).

It is also true that primary school children will operate within the policies and limits established by the parents. These limits will extend and policies change as the child matures insofar as the parent respects the child and holds him to be significant. Parental respect is manifested by efforts to justify limits, willingness to allow free expression of opinion, and freedom to participate in planning and decision making. Though these efforts are geared to the age of the child, the common feature is recognition and respect of the child's significance and individuality (Coopersmith, 1967:200).

3.4.6 RESPONSIBILTY

The parent's willingness to respond to, answer to the distress cry of the child, to assure him that all his needs will be met are characteristics of responsibilities of the parent towards the child. It is the full responsibility of the parent to ensure that the welfare and the educational support that the child needs are met. During the primary school years the parents are seen to adjust their responsibility after school, in terms of time management and supervision of the child (Vrey, 1979:96).

3.4.7 TRUST

For any child to trust the mother it is important for the child to know the mother. Clearly knowledge of the mother presupposes trust. This knowledge is obtained in the mother's involvement in the child's independence. Trust depends on the internalization of the continuous sameness of the mother's consolation and provision in his distress (Vrey,1979:97).

The child during the primary school years is seen to surrender himself to the parent. For a sound and satisfactory interpersonal relation to exist, trust is a basic prerequisite. Love and trust are interrelated for love does not thrive without trust while at the same time trust is a pillar that supports love. Pedagogical love means trusting the child to embody the norms presented to him (Vrey, 1979:97).

3.5 A FAMILY PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED AT A BOY'S TOWN

All too often when a child is admitted into a residential programme, the referral agency and its practitioner workforce unwittingly exclude the family from continued involvement with the child. Furthermore professionals often misperceive families as being 'dysfunctional' when these families are, in fact, experiencing normal reactions to the serious lack of appropriate, affordable, accessible, community-based services and supports. Under these circumstances it is hardly surprising if the natural family members feel excluded and consequently show a limited willingness to be involved in

family counselling or maintain contact with their child. It can be argued that all family members, irrespective of their limitations or personal difficulties, are capable of offering some care for the child. There are ranges of practical activities in all residential programmes in which natural family members are involved in as their contribution to the treatment/care of the child.

Objectives of a family programme implemented at a Boys' Town

- To minimize the alienation of family members whose child has required admission.

- To include family members as equal partners in the treatment process.

- To empower and encourage the family to learn effective ways of meeting their responsible towards their child.

The term 'parent' has been replaced by 'family' since so many children admitted to a Boy's Town do not live with both parents or, in many cases, with either parent. The comprehensive, inclusive definition of 'family' is used to collaborate with adults who are responsible for the child's well being.

Maintaining links with the family and family reconstruction work has become an important aspect of a family programme at a Boys' Town. Placement at a Boys' Town should therefore be seen as a necessary and effective way to treat both family and the child, so as to restore family function so that the child can return to the natural parents. Frequently when a child is admitted to a residential programme, the referral agency and its social worker exclude the family members from continued involvement with the child. The basic value-laden assumption is that the family and parents in particular must have failed, or are inadequate as parents because their child is in institutional care.

3.5.1 CONTACT AT A BOYS' TOWN

For the majority of boys at a Boys' Town there will be no doubt that their interest will be best served by efforts to sustain or create links with their natural families. Contact, in the form of personal meetings is generally the most common, and for both families and children, the most satisfactory. Furthermore contact reassures the child that he has not been rejected at

separation which helps him feel secure within his placement at a Boy's Town. The underlying ethos is that if the child sees his parents regularly, he will have an increased understanding of why he cannot live at home, which helps to minimize fears of rejection. This participation of the family is actively encouraged at a Boys' Town. Although the patterning of contact is aimed at improving the quality of family relationships, there is no guarantee that this will lead to family reunification. It is a first step towards the establishment of conflict free and enjoyable periods of contact between the parent and the child. If this can be achieved then it may lead to other improvements, which may include family reunification.

The exchange of photographs, letters and gifts between the family and child is a useful way to keep memories for the child. However what is more important is to find a way of helping the child and the family in real relationships with each other.

Weekend Visits

There is one method of working at a Boys' Town that has particular relevance for the family, and this is the 'five day residential programme.' Children are at the institution from Monday to Friday and, by design, spend their weekend at home. This is not simply a system of weekend off, but planned according to the child's individual treatment goals. The purpose of such a programme is to facilitate adjustment in the family upon release or when release to the parent or foster family is seriously contemplated. This programme is usually implemented in respect of those boys who have made sufficient progress and are to be disengaged from the institution.

These weekends are systematically used to involve parents in the continued responsibility for their children. Contact with parents is very intensive. The weekends are carefully planned and supervised to ensure that necessities are provided for, the parents are prepared for time management and discipline problems. The parents sometimes fetch children while frequently they are transported home by the institution. The residential treatment personnel draw their conclusion about the nature of the home visits from their descriptions by the children and from their behaviour on their return.

These descriptions are documented in the child's file.

<u>Monthly Visits</u>

Parents are invited on a monthly basis to visit the child at the institution. This is generally on the first Sunday of month. Transport is provided for the family by the institution. During these visits parents are exposed to social work services. Parents are also informed about the child's scholastic progress as well as the child's progress within the system. For those parents living a distance away from the institution accommodation is provided over the visiting weekend. This also provides the treatment team an opportunity to observe the child within the context of the family. These monthly visits also allow parents to meet other parents and their children to meet each other's parents. Parents thus become aware that other families have difficulties and, through discussions that arise naturally between them, they receive significant support from their own peer group.

In terms of contact, parents are the main figures in all visiting plans, since they are usually the most meaningful as well as the most ambivalent figures in the child's life. It is with the parent that a Boys' Town works most closely in order to help them understand and deal with the behaviour of the child. If there have been other people of positive significance to the child, such as grandparents, they also visit on a regular basis. Distant relatives and family friends can visit by arrangement on an infrequent schedule. Siblings may or may not visit, depending on their meaning to the child in placement. Often, the child is under less stress if they visit infrequently and only by plan. Despite all precautions that may be taken at a Boys' Town to ensure that stress-producing elements of the visit are kept to a minimum, one often sees what is most frequently described as 'upset' behaviour of the child after the visit.

<u>Vacations</u>

If the home circumstances are favourable, boys are sent home on vacation. They are sent home on the understanding that skills acquired at a Boys' Town should be utilized. Each boy signs a written contract undertaking to abide to certain conditions whilst on vacation. If for some reason the home

circumstances are unfavourable or if prognosis is poor and no alternative accommodation is secured then the child spends his vacation at Camp Caroline at Munster (twenty kilometers off the Wild Coast).

Alternate Placement

The depth of contact with family also makes it possible for the treatment team to decide sooner whether a child is likely to return home or whether alternative plans should be considered. As result many children who would have remained in the institution have been placed with former host families or foster families.

Daily Contact

Parents are also encouraged to contact their child by means of letter writing or telephonic contact. All contacts with the parents, host or foster families are logged and recorded. The child is also encouraged to write letters and send cards on special occasions to the family.

3.5.2 CONCLUSION

Irrespective of whether there is an initial causal relationship, family and peer relationships as well as academic performance influence both subtly and obviously, the primary school child's conception of himself. As children become aware of social attitudes towards their family-life patterns as presented by them, they become aware that these attitudes invariably differs from that of their peers. These attitudes affect their relationships with members of their families. Within this context children regard being different as a sign of inferiority, and this tends to contribute to deterioration of family relationship. Whenever adverse factors such as marital discord, divorce and poor parenting contribute to the deteriorating family relationships, they form unfavourable judgments that have a pronounced influence on the child's personal and social adjustment. It becomes apparent that adverse family patterns ranks even above deterioration in family relationships as a major break in family life. Once the deterioration start, it weakens the bonds between family members and, unless corrected, it leads to a breakdown in family solidarity.

3.6. PEER GROUP

3.6.1 INTRODUCTION

A peer group is an intimate and select group. They form mutually among children who live near each other or go to school together. Children who play together are usually within one or two years of the same age. Though an occasional neighbourhood playgroup will form that will include small children along with older ones. In primary schools, peer groups are usually all boys or all girls. The age group function in accordance to the particular needs and demands of its group members. During these years children of the same sex have common interests (Papalia & Old, 1993:449).

3.6.2 FUNCTIONS AND INFLUENCE OF THE PEER GROUP

Different peer activities contribute differently to the functions of the group. For example, non competitive activities offer opportunities for enhancing relationships while competitive ones (like sport) help children identify unique aspects of the self (Papalia & Old, 1993:248). Belonging to a peer group is extremely important for a child as it provides a forum for children to form opinions of themselves by seeing themselves as others see them. Children have a basis of comparison, a realistic barometer of their abilities and skill. Only within a group of peers can children get a sense of how smart, how athletic and how presentable they are. It is understandable that the peer group assists the child to choose values to live by. They are seen to test opinions, feelings, and attitudes against those of the peer group. It is of particular importance that this testing helps the child to shift through the values they previously accepted unquestioningly from parents (Papalia & Old, 1993:448).

The acceptance that the child experiences in the age group enables him to accept himself. The feeling of belonging to the group adds support to his dignity as a person. Identification and conformity characterize the relation of the child to his peers. This is made possible by the fact that the child no longer sees the other person as an object, but as a person like himself with ideas and feelings (Vrey,1979:104 -105).

61

In addition the peer group helps children in their social interaction as well as in how to get along in society. Children learn how to adjust to the needs and desires of others, when to yield and when to stand firm. This opening up of new perspectives helps children to form a positive self-concept, counter balance parental influences, develop social skills and frees them to make independent judgments (Papalia & Old, 1993:248). The child gets to know himself and evaluates his self-identity more realistically. The demands made on him by the peer group are at his level of competence, which is not the case when he moves in the world of adults. These experiences are necessary conditions for his self-actualization (Vrey, 1979:105).

The influence of the peer group may hold out some undesirable values for the primary school child for example self-regulation when children are most susceptible to pressures to conform. The inherent effects of conformity can of course be serious for example when issues are ambiguous, peer influences are seen to be strongest. Some degree of conformity to group standards is healthy and is often seen in adults (Papalia & Old, 1993:248-249).

The primary school child's peer group, through its conformist pressures and its emphasis on the need of children to be accepted unconditionally shape the external behaviour of its members. Even though children may resist inwardly or feel threatened, they attempt to produce behaviours they think that the group expects of them. This is particularly true in ambiguous situations (Gordon, 1975: 234).

Clearly the peer group provides a safe home for the child to actualize his significance attribution and orientation. An efficient relation with friends in the group is indispensable for the development of the child during the primary school period.

3.7. PEER GROUP SYSTEM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT AT A BOYS' TOWN

3.7.1. WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BOYS' TOWNS

Boys' Towns that are treatment centres offer a peer group system of self-government within a structured environment for problematic (behaviour) and "difficult" boys. These centres generally accommodate between 55-75 boys at any given time. The emphasis is on rehabilitation that includes assessment, management, care and treatment. The family homes are designed to cater for children and youth whose home circumstances have caused their removal, but who are able to function within the community from which they come. The primary aim of the family home is to return the child to the community with a level of competence in their daily functioning.

3.7.2. BOYS' TOWNS: TREATMENT CENTRES

The specific treatment approach implemented in a Boy's Towns treatment centre is the <u>peer group system of self-government.</u> The boys' peer group is seen as an integral part of the child's treatment process. This system harnesses the strength and resources of the peer group towards positive solutions for a variety of behavioural problems. This is based on the concept that as a young person reaches out to help others, his self-concept, competencies and sense of personal efficiencies are enhanced. The techniques of <u>Behaviour Modification</u> are extensively used within this system of approach. These techniques provide a systematic and effective means of teaching alternative behaviour to problematic children and youth.

The above programme is supplemented by social work, psychological and educational services. These services are utilized and integrated into a clinically orientated treatment plan for the individual child. The overall programme at a Boys' Town plays a significant role in the formation of a positive self-concept. The extent to which a child is successful in the school environment contributes directly towards building up a positive picture of him. Experiences of failure are directly related to the development of a negative self-image. It is, therefore, clear that Boys' Towns play a significant role in determining the quality of the child's self-concept especially concerning academic materials and other contents with which the child has

had only limited previous experiences. It provides the child with an opportunity for systematically measuring himself against his peers and in a variety of situations ranging from intellectual and physical competencies to competent decision making. The treatment centres also have an important task of confronting the child with a carefully selected programme that allows sufficient and suitable experiences as well as setting of realistic goals that are in keeping with the child's potential and abilities. In doing so the programme minimizes the possibilities of negative self-images being formed.

Teachers, subject tutors and professional staff (psychologists, social and childcare workers) develop positive attitudes towards each child that create and maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to the development of a positive self-concept. The professionals' skill, innovativeness, and energy are generally the major factors that determine their impact on the children.

3.7.3 BOYS' TOWN: GENAZZANO –TONGAAT

Although the existence of Boys' Town institutions is extensive throughout South Africa, this investigation has been limited to Genazzano-Tongaat, Kwa-Zulu Natal, because of practical considerations. The researcher has been associated with the institution for ten years.

3.7.4 NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME AT GENAZZANO

During the period, 01 April 1995 to 31 March 1996, a total of 76 boys were involved in the programme at Genazzano-Tongaat. All the boys were admitted in terms of the Child Care Act, No 74 of 1983 when parents/guardians were considered both to be unable to care for and discipline them appropriately. The breakdown in terms of population groups is as follows:(63) Indians, (8) Coloured, (3) Blacks and (2) Whites.

The geographical breakdown of the boys is as follows:

Kwa - Zulu Natal - Durban (39), Chatsworth/ Pinetown

(12) Verulam (6), Pietermaritzburg (4), Stanger (3), Ladysmith (2)

Umzinto (1), Tongaat (1), Inanda (1). Gauteng – Pretoria - Laudium, (5) and

Johannesburg/ Lenasia, (2)

3.8 PROFILE OF RESIDENTS AT GENAZZANO

3.8.1 PHYSICAL

- Smoking or experimenting with drugs because of negative peer pressure and inadequate parental supervision

- Poor physical condition (poor hygienic habits) because of parental neglect and inappropriate socialization.

During the period under review, 47 of the boys admitted that they had either smoked or experimented with drugs (Boy's Town Annual Programme Evaluation 1996: Schedule A).

3.8.2 INTELLECTUAL AND EDUCATION

- Negative attitude towards schooling, because the family does not value its importance.
- Poor school adaptation and distractibility /disruption because of unfavourable home circumstances.

During the period under review 57 boys had problems with all of the above.

3.8.3 HOME AND FAMILY

The below mentioned are problems that presented themselves in the family:

- Family instability-due to factors such as alcohol and drug abuse that results in marital discord.
- Inappropriate or inadequate parental control due to inconsistent discipline.
- Divorce and its consequence exposure too adverse parental factors because of marital discord and other pathologies that exist in the family.
- Problems with parental guidance because of inadequate parenting skills/ techniques.

During the period under review all the boys experienced inappropriate parental control, while 66 boys experienced problems with parental guidance and 57 of these boys experienced both family instability and adverse parental factors (Boy's Town Annual Programme Evaluation 1996: Schedule

A).

3.8.4 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- Truancy due to lack of parental supervision, time management and problems experienced at school.

- Uncontrollability because of inconsistent discipline and poor role modeling.

- Absconding from home because of poor home conditions and influences in the family.

During the period under review 65 boys were uncontrollable at home and at school, 59 boys had a history of absconding from their homes while 38 boys played truant from school (Boy's Town Annual Programme Evaluation 1996: Schedule A).

3.8.5 SOCIAL SKILLS

- Relationship problems because of adverse home circumstances such as poor parenting and family instability.

- Problems of self-presentation because of inadequate role models, poor parental guidance and supervision.

During the period under review 47 boys experienced both relationship

problems and problems with self -presentation (Boy's Town Annual Programme Evaluation 1996: Schedule A).

3.9 PEER INTERACTION AT A BOY'S TOWN

Within an institutional setting such as a Boys' Town peer interaction and its influence are extensive and of greater importance and significance to the child than that of the adult. At a Boys' Town peer interaction with the community is of utmost importance. The children at a Boys' Town are not made to feel isolated from the community.

Objectives of peer interaction

- to promote the psycho-social development of the child
- to develop the sex-identity of the child

- to promote community involvement in the project

Interaction with the community is undertaken on various levels, for example attendance at religious meetings visits to shopping centers, day at the beach and to the cinema.

Attending religious services in the community is an important aspect in the life of a child at a Boys' Town. The boys attend church services in the different denominations in the community. They attend the Roman Catholic Church (Maidstone), Full Gospel and Presbyterian (Seatides) Methodist (Tongaat). The Hindu boys attend services at a temple that is situated on the premises. These services are hosted by the community and are usually conducted by community elders. The Moslem boys receive religious instructions every alternate weekday and attend prayer services on a Friday afternoon at a Mosque situated in La Mercy. These religious edifices also promote bi-lateral interaction by conducting youth programmes on a Friday evening.

Weekend Privileges

Weekend privileges are awarded to the boy depending on his leadership status. This privilege relieves him from his leadership duties on a Saturday allowing him to go into the business center in Tongaat. Boys normally spend the day with community friend /s.

On admission boys are required to indicate who their friends are in the community. Contact with the child's old school peers is maintained by means of letter writing and telephonic contact. Girl friends are also encouraged to contact the child on a daily basis.

3.9.1. INFLUENCE OF THE PEER GROUP SYSTEM OF SELF GOVERNMENT

The association with their peers profoundly influences young people. Often the peer group has been viewed only as a liability, seldom has it been seen as a resource. Just as peer groups' influence can foster problems, so can the peer group process be used to solve problems in an institutional residential environment. The peer-group system of self-government is based on the positive peer culture that is designed to 'turn around' a negative child /youth subculture and mobilize the power of the peer group in a productive manner.

Children in such a programme learn how to identify problems and how to work towards its resolution. In group sessions and day to day activities, the goal is to fully involve young people in the helping process (Bishop, Rosen & Miller 1996: 40- 42).

In the formation and structure of groups, consideration is given to the time the child has already been in the programme for example recently enrolled children may be readily involved in newly formed groups with a leader senior in rank in the leadership council. These groups are open ended, which mean those older members leave the group and new members enter, in a continual process.

The group leader plays a central role in the development of the peer group system of self-government. The leader instructs, redirects, guides and motivates but always makes the group responsible for working on problems.

Group meetings are conducted by the child's leader and follow a clear agenda that systematically involves all members but also provides wide latitude for spontaneous individuality. These meetings convened on a Tuesday and Saturday afternoon are structured for efficient problem solving.

These positive peer culture meetings operate with a specific structure to foster maximum involvement and group cohesiveness. The four stages of a typical meeting are described briefly.

Reporting problems: Each member initially reports on any problems he had since the last meeting and has not shared with the group. Other members can point out problems omitted in his self-report. This takes ten to fifteen minutes and gives a good overall picture of the group and individual functioning.

Awarding the meeting: After all have been reported, the group must reach consensus on who will have the meeting, that is the boy judged to be most in need of help. This usually takes a few minutes.

Problem solving: The group works to understand and resolve the problems of the individual using methods that naturally arise from the group. Over time the leader can help the group learn alternate helping approaches, such as more effective ways of dealing with restrictive children. Problem solving

usually takes between thirty to forty minutes.

Summary: The group leader uses the last few minutes to evaluate what has occurred and teaches more effective strategies for future meetings. The spirit of the group is one of trust and openness rather than confrontation and destruction of defenses. Sessions may well-become confrontational and such encounters are carried out in a climate of deep concern. As new boys enter the positive peer culture they observe that the established peer-groups share deep feelings without defensiveness, discuss problems without the fear of retribution and support members without regard to their status. Although formal meetings are the core of peer building, the real test of the culture is the climate of helping in the classroom and in the community.

Peer leaders undergo intensive training conducted by the principal on a weekly basis. Peer Leadership meeting chaired by the mayor (head boy) is convened on a Tuesday afternoon. The principal participates as an observer during these meetings.

3.10   CONCLUSION

The primary school peer group presents a difficult challenge for a Boy's Town. The use of the peer group as an agent of positive change in 'problematic' children is a practice implemented at a Boy's Town. Within this context the peer group is seen to have the strongest influence on the values, attitude, and behaviour of these children. Furthermore alternatives to the antisocial values of the peer groups have two sources, both of which have been alluded to in this chapter. First there are the internal strengths of the individual child, which are expressed in constructive ways in the context of the peer group meetings. Second are the values of peer leaders among primary school children, which achieve some attractive quality through effective role modelling. However, what is important is that staff members within a Boy's Town become aware of and elicit from the primary school child a constructive expression of their internal strengths and energies. For it is through exposure to more constructive ways of interacting with others, their peers in particular, that troubled children can grow beyond their unsettled identities.

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE STUDIES OF THE LIFE WORLD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD IN AN INSTITUTION.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Reviewing the literature on the life world of the primary school child within an institutional setting presents at once a difficult task. This is because of the dearth of research directly dealing with the topic on the one hand, and the many divergent bodies of literature that are relevant to it on the other. It is within this context that Prosser (1976:33) is of the opinion that reports of children's own feeling about themselves and their life in care would be enlightening. This would constitute another dimension of research, "a study of the self-concept of the child in residential care: how he sees himself in relation to his past and future, and to the people in his life, similar to the studies of foster children, would be illuminating." Similarly Page and Clark (1977:97) were of the opinion that, "little work has been done to find out what the children themselves think about the life society has provided for them," (Page & Clark, 1977:97).

In view of the above, it is surprising that little attention has been paid to this issue namely the life world of the primary school child in an institutional setting, yet it is of great theoretical interest and of practical importance. A comprehensive literature study of the life world of the primary school child would therefore be virtually impossible. It is perhaps relevant to see how much expansion in our knowledge about children in residential care there has been since the extensive review in Residential child care: facts and fallacies by Dinnage and Pringle (1967:5-17).

Rightfully, Dinnage and Pringle (1967:47) make the point, in their review, that the main focus of research in recent years had been the effects of deprivation and institutionalization on children's development. The emphasis of these research studies focused on the child's adjustment and achievement.

They expressed the view that inquiry, should center on questions regarding:

1) The aim of enrichment programmes for children.

2) In what areas of development are compensatory experiences most needed?

3) What are the role and function of remedial work? In short how can a therapeutic community be created so that children leave residential care emotionally and intellectually strengthened rather than being more deficient or damaged than when they entered into care (Dinnage & Pringle, 1967:17-18).

Regrettably, little has been published in the latter years to provide answers to these questions despite the still urgent need. Recent research in Britain has continued to concentrate upon the consequences of institutionalization for children. Although a great deal of research has been documented in the United States of America concerning the care and treatment of emotionally disturbed children, studies have mostly been limited to the experiences of one particular centre and one particular treatment. Considering the research over the past twenty years in South Africa, it is disappointing that little is known of the primary school child in institutional care. However, this is not unexpected in view of the extremely limited funds hitherto available for research in this field. Consequently most research studies in South Africa have been on too limited a scale and conducted over too short a period. The focus of these research studies aimed at the academic achievement, self-esteem and intelligence of institutional children as compared to non-institutional children.

The review of the available literature in this chapter is also intended to provide a conceptual framework against which the relationships of the present study may be considered. It is also directed at studying the methodical aspects and possible limitations of related studies in an attempt to improve on their possible shortcomings.

4.2. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

At present we can define only in very general term the conditions and experiences that seem to promote good family relationships. For example harmonious, happy and loving families that provide a dependable framework of security and acceptance and which sets definite moral standards appear to produce children who are emotionally stable. Work with behaviourally problematic children suggests that it is the quality of the emotional relationships and family that is of central importance. By studying an even more special group, such as children separated from their own families and living in residential care, we might be able to narrow the problem down still further.

The issue of continuing ties between the child and his parents during the child's stay in a setting outside the home is of constant concern to those occupied with the child's welfare. In the past the generally preferred approach was to 'save the children from their parents,' in the belief that physical separation would serve the emotional and psychological ties between them. Reality has demonstrated the error of this assumption that it is impossible to eliminate the ties between the family and the child even when they are most disorganized or detrimental (Simmons, Gumpet & Rothma 1973: 232).

Littner (1975:175-181) lists four primary reasons that explain why a child's ties with his biological parents remain important even when the child is placed with foster parents or in an institution.

- Firstly, the child feels the absence of his parents and misses them even if the relationships are disturbed and difficult, because he still dependents upon them for providing him with a source of security.

- Secondly, a child removed from his home has no understanding of the reasons why he has been made to leave his parents. He imagines a series of irrational explanations, for example that he was a bad boy and therefore he has been taken out of the home.

- Thirdly, the child identifies with his family in such a way that any criticism towards them, justified or not is viewed by the child as an attack on

himself.

- A fourth reason is that while separated from the family, the child may develop an incorrect image of them, and of himself (Littner, 1975:175-181).

Similarly Moss (1969:155-157) focuses on the separation between the parent and child and states that a lack of attention to parent-child ties harm both the child's capacity for adoption to the institution and his ability to benefit from the opportunities available at the institution. As a result of the trauma of separation upon entrance and the repeated need for separation at each visit, coupled with ignorance of the need to shape a new parent-child relationship adversely effects the parent-child relationship of the child while he is resident at an institution. Children are in constant need of proof of their parent's love and of their place in the family. The establishment of a modified relationship that is clear to the child helps him cope with these needs and permits the development of positive ties with others (Moss, 1969:157).

Johnson, Yoken and Voss (1995:479- 483) conducted a study on the impact of institutional care on family ties, as seen by a number of children between the ages eleven and fourteen in a study. His findings indicated that the children in institutions were missing their families most of the time. Almost all the children had advice to give to their parents about care and wanted them to know what it is like for them to be in alternate care. Children in the study were also interested in telling their parents to stay in contact and visit them regularly. This is particularly important because children need to know them and parents need to know what the child's life is like in alternate placement.

Holman (1975:10) advocates that the family must continue to offer a personalized role in the life of the child. The basic premise is that the parent must not be excluded from the institutional system whilst at the same time the child needs 'a true sense of their present identity and history.' The goal of the child's placement in any institution should provide for the rehabilitation of the natural home. Observation and inferences suggesting the poor perception of family functioning of subjects in institutional care has been reported in many studies (Bickrum,1991:250; Mudaly, 1984:377; Page &

Clark, 1977:14-18; Bickrum,1991:250) found those children from natural and foster-care perceived their family more positively than those from residential care. The poor functioning of children in residential care in comparison to foster and naturalistic care may be understood within the context that the staffs in institutions are seen as supervisors. They work set hours and take their vacation away from their "family" (the children in their care), (Bickrum, 1991: 250).

Kufeldt, Armstrong and Dorosh (1995:695) examined the effects of aspects of inclusive care on children's rating of their parents and their foster placement. The instrument chosen for the children's rating was the Family Assessment Measure (F.A.M.). Forty children assessed their family and their foster placement to provide measures of family functioning from the child's perspective. Results of the study yielded that half of the children rated their parents as healthy and half rated them as problematic. The most problematic indications were in communication, task accomplishment, affective involvement, affective expression and control. Furthermore, the data suggested that children deprived of contact with their parents do not tend to idealize them (Kufeldt et al.,1995:711).

Within this context research investigating children's concept of family have found a similar but not identical result. Isaac, Leon and Kline (1987:105) reported studies showing that it is not uncommon for a small percentage of children (up to six percent) to omit a parent from a depiction of the family. Furthermore the authors report that omission dramatically increases among those children who are visited less than once a month (incidence of thirty percent). They proposed that children are quite aware of who is responsible for their welfare, and the children use this awareness to define family membership (Isaac et al., 1987:102).

The major theme to emerge then is that children in institutions consistently relate to those responsible for their welfare rather than their biological kin, as family. These findings might be understood as an extension of the consequences of separation. Moss and Moss (1984: 168) concur with the above data on the effects of separation from the family. These authors examined some of the sources of the threat to place the child outside the

context of the family and the dynamics of separation from the perspectives of both parents and children. They found that children often perceive the threat to place as abandonment, "as making him an outsider, forced to survive without parental protection, guidance and nurturance" (Moss & Moss, 1984:168). The child in this situation is confronted with the existential fear of being alone. Furthermore faced with placement at the institution, the child often feels unloved and worthless, he feels his parent want to change not just his behaviour but his whole being, his self" (Moss & Moss, 1984:168 and Gardner 1996: 172- 182).

Along with the above Moss and Moss (1984:167) found that anger and protests are frequently the child's major reaction to the threat of separation. Similarly Garret (1970:22) found that children's perception of being unwanted by their biological family is reinforced by their perception of their lack of belonging and security as well as the discontinuity in their life imposed by substitute care. The consequences of these perceptions clearly indicate that these individuals' sense of significance is undermined.

Triseliotes (1983:30) reiterates this viewpoint in a study that revealed that children viewed substitute care as disruptive in the sense that it deprives them and their future children of having a family life with its network of support systems. In his study he also found that much of the sadness of children in care stemmed from the fact that they had no family to fall back on.

Simmons et al (1973:231) in a comparative study tested the hypotheses related to the following areas:

- Lines of inquiry.

- The effectiveness of the family residential centres in facilitating contact between children and their natural parents and

- The effects of such an increased contact upon the behaviours and attitudes of the children and their natural parents.

More, explicitly, it had been anticipated that the residential centre would promote greater involvement and participation by the parents in the daily lives of the children. Not only would the involvement increase beyond what

normally occurs in traditional children's homes, but the involvement itself would be qualitatively more positive with growth needs of children and the satisfaction derived by adults from functioning more successfully as parents and people (Simmons et al, 1973:231).

It was expected in the study that the children would show improvement in their general functioning in their relationship with their family and with their peers in the institution and in the community. In this study the experimental research design compared the experimental group, consisting of nine children placed in the residential centre with two control groups. Children were randomly selected for both the experimental and control groups.

Research findings in this regard indicated that children whose parents visited the institution regularly and participated in institutional life and activities reached higher academic achievements. Furthermore they developed a relatively strongly self-concept, had stronger ties with their biological families and a better capacity to establish effective peer relationships. Secondly they found that these parents exhibit more functional attitudes and enhanced parental performance towards their children.

Therefore it seems likely that residential structures seem more successful in helping natural parents to remain secure in their roles, whether or not they regarded the professional staff and teachers as competitive figures (Simmons et al., 1973:232).

4.2.1. FEELINGS OF CHILDREN IN INSTITUTION

Fansel and Shinn (1978:497) conducted a longitudinal study of 624 children who entered care in 1966. These children, who were followed for five years, revealed that children in institutions felt that they have little control over the forces determining the outcome of events in their lives.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that children in care viewed decisions concerning their separation from their families, their placements in residential care or their re- placement as lying, not with them or their parents, but with total outsiders (Fansel & Shinn, 1978:150-185). Gil and Bogart (1982:359) itemized comments given to them in an investigation into the perception of

children in foster and residential care. These perceptions were in terms of why children saw themselves in these care contexts and yielded the following comments

- "Because I was bad"

- "Mother ran on me"

- "I have no one who wants to take care of me."

- "Don't know" (Gil and Bogart, 1982:359).

These perceptions of 'unwantedness' and insignificance related to parental rejections is supported by Mudaly (1984:233) and Garret (1970:23) in studies that indicated the inability of these individuals to come to terms with the fact that they do not live with their parents like other children.

Mudaly (1984:377) reported that 'there was a yearning for the experience of family life, to have parents and to like them.' He attributes the children's unhappiness and 'unwantedness' to their alienation from their biological family and home. Not having an adequate insight of their family/ biological past and unable to satiate the need to talk to others about their family was also an area of concern (Mudaly, 1984:377).

According to Moss and Moss (1984:172-173) anger and protest are frequently the child's major reaction to the threat of separation. The child may feel helpless at having little ability to control his fate. Rather than accepting the role of victim, he may become defiant and refuse to accept both parental and institutional expectations. A rarely examined aspect of the child's life is his sense of 'home,' which comprises a complex mixture of psychological, social and cultural meanings for him. The home for the child is often the place that most strongly ties him to his family. The home and neighbourhood are representatives of symbols of the past association and interactions. Overall the home may offer the child the very support that he needs most, a stable refuge and a support to his sense of self (Moss & Moss, 1984:173).

Despite behavioural gains made by children in institutions, many may still face enormous pressures and conflicts in their family environment when they

return home. These children either feel more detached from their parents and families after placement or may be given increased power in their families as a result of their growing reputation as 'ungovernable,' 'disturbed,' and even 'dangerous' in the community. They are likely to experience the inner terror of feeling increasingly disengaged from their families while at the same time having great power and responsibility over whether to continue placement (Kagan & Schlosberg, 1989:174).

Analysis of the above seems to indicate that children in institutions cannot accept nor come to terms with the reality that they do not live with their parents and family, as do most other children. Preoccupation with parents and family is a significant aspect of the life world of these children.

4.3   SELF- CONCEPT

The positive self-concept is valued as a desirable outcome and as a potential mediating influence leading to other desired outcomes such as academic achievement. Despite the many 'self-concept' studies conducted with older students there has been little research conducted with children younger than ten years of age. This is, however, unfortunate, as this developmental period may be critical in the formation of a positive self-concept particularly in educational settings. This lack of research stems apparently from the dearth of instruments appropriate for measuring self-concept in children of this younger age. However there are areas of research that provide relevant information and theoretical direction on the nature of the self-concept of children in residential settings (Triseliotis, 1983:22-31 and Wagner & Killman, 1986:165- 176).

Studies investigating the well being of children during several years of placement in residential situations paint a pessimistic picture of children's self- concept. Studies reveal significant association between self-esteem and institutional care among children in residential care (Youngleson, 1973; Mudaly, 1984; Zigler , Balla & Watson 1972; Long et al., 1970; Chassin et al., 1981).

Youngleson (1973:283) assessed the self-esteem levels of children from

residential care on the Personal, Home, Social and Formal Relations Questionnaire (P.H.S.F). He reported that the self-esteem levels of the subjects were significantly lower than that of children from naturalistic-care backgrounds. The author purports that the lower self-esteem of the residential group was found to be associated with the inadequate socializing environment of the institution. Furthermore the researcher was also concerned with the effects of institutionalization on these children. To achieve this, the institutionalized sample was split at the median into long-term (that is children institutionalized for more than thirteen years) and short term institutionalization to test the effect on self-esteem. The findings indicated that the longer the period of institutionalization the lower the individual self-esteem (Youngleson, 1973:284).

The merits of this study relate to the employment of a control group that has been matched exactly with the experimental group on several significant variables. Furthermore the P.H.S.F. Questionnaire devised by South African researchers appeared to have positive implications for the validity of findings on self-esteem.

The results presented by Mudaly's study (1984:176-234) of the life worlds of children in residential care lend supports to Youngleson's findings. This study illustrated children's expression of a poor sense of belonging within their care environment. The experiencing of a poor sense of belonging was reported as being a reflection that the residential-care environment was viewed unfavourably by its wards. According to Mudaly (1984:234), these children view institutions as places in which they ought not to be, but which they have resigned themselves into tolerating. The author is of the express opinion that the child's preoccupation with his family interferes with his/ her capacity to develop a sense of belonging, self-identity or personal self-worth within the care setting. The children in the institution expressed the feeling of being 'abandoned' by parents and family and 'segments of ones significant community' (Mudaly 1984: 230). In this regard Younglesons (1973:284-285) and Mudaly's (1984:233) findings related to the significantly poorer social adjustment of institutional children. Mudaly indicated that, although close interpersonal relationships may not be fostered by children in an institution,

they nevertheless did express "a longing and concern to be thought well of, liked by people in their immediate life world, and to be given recognition as individuals" (Mudaly, 1984:233). Although Mudaly's study provides important information on a child's sense of belonging at an institution the significance of his findings must be treated with caution. The researcher's inability to match subjects with specific ages creates the impression that developmental factors rather than their stay in the institution perhaps influence both the control and experimental groups.

Page and Clark (1977:14-18) have illustrated in a major study the lack of 'a sense of belonging' experienced by children in an institution. The study included an analysis of children's reports on institutional care. In addition these reports included analogies of children's experiences of what they construed to be true in the naturalistic context.

A brief summary of the children's descriptive reports included aspects, such as having to seek assistance or have decisions made about them. These decisions were made through, the 'director,' 'social worker' or 'faceless committees,' as compared to those children from natural backgrounds (Page & Clark, 1977:15). Furthermore these authors believed that institutional care is ineffective in stimulating the self-concept a sense of belonging or continuity in children. They concluded, "institutional care at times is an interlocking circle of confusion" for the child (Page & Clark, 1977:17).

The findings in a comparative study conducted by Zigler et al (1972:81) of one hundred and eighteen institutionalized and non-institutionalized retarded (mentally handicapped), younger normal children and older normal children were consistent with Mudaly's and Youngleson's conclusions. The conclusions of Zigler et al (1972:85) indicated that independent of developmental level, institutional children were found to have greater self-image disparity than non-institutionalized children. In addition this disparity was found regardless of the fact that institutionalized children had significantly lower ideal self-image scores than did non institutionalized children. An important feature of these findings clearly indicates that children living in institutions set lower standards for themselves coupled with a very low sense of self-esteem. However the study was not in the position to

determine whether this negative self-esteem is due to institutionalization as such, or to the generally pre-institutional experiences of the children (Zigler et al., 1972:85).

Within the context of pre-institutional experience the findings of Parfit (1968:41) needs to be considered. He found that early damage done to a child's development or personality before being admitted to an institution might leave permanent scars even with the most professional intervention. In addition these children have also been subjected to so much neglect, indifference and mishandling in their family homes and from their parents, that when they are admitted into an institution they are already deprived or maladjusted. Consequently, whilst still at the institution the child may remain unsettled as long the problems of his home, his family and his relationship to his parents remain unresolved and unsatisfactory (Parfit, 1968:41). It is within this context that knowledge about personal background and history is vitally important to the development of positive concepts in these children.

Researchers report consistent findings in this context (Bickrum, 1991:236 and Zigler et al., 1972: 68-77). In an investigation of some psycho-social variables in children from foster, institutional and naturalistic care Bickrum (1991:237) found children in institutional care to have a low self-esteem while no significant difference was found between the naturalistic and foster-care groups (Bickrum, 1991:237-238).

4.4 PEER GROUP

The influence of peers on a child's academic and social development is frequently discussed but rarely documented by research. Peers are influential in several ways, first, they serve as models for both appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Children model the dress, language and social behaviour of their peers in varying degrees. A withdrawn child may become more outgoing by observing his socially confident friends. Unfortunately, inappropriate behaviours such as drug abuse, cheating and aggression may also increase as result of modeling peers. Furthermore, peers influence children by responding conditionally to their behaviour, for example, peers offer and withdraw their friendship dependent upon the child's behaviour. A disruptive child may 'shape up' in response to the child's aversive admonitions. On the other hand, children may 'shape up' the behaviour of the peers through positive controls, for example membership to a group may be contingent upon the child's demonstration of courage and skill of fighting. A third important aspect of peer influence is competition 'doing better than one's peer' seems to function as a reinforcement for many children (Papilia & Old, 1975:500-501).

Considering the above, that is the peer network's apparent effects upon behaviour both in terms of the support it provides and the values it promotes, it would behoove the study to pay closer attention to peer processes in an institutional setting. The child in a residential treatment programme spends most of his time in groups. The principal socialization milieu for the child is the institution group approximating a surrogate family type environment with substitute 'siblings' and parental figures. The appropriate 'matching' of a newly admitted child with his institutional peers is highly important in the initial stages of formulating a particular treatment plan for the child. The composition of the child's group will effect his initial adjustment, maturation, and subsequent involvement in his treatment programme. Appropriate matching is not easily achieved because of complexities in organizing and perpetuating theoretically balanced peer group. In addition, stability of a particular group is not easily maintained because of shifts in the child population such as absconding, release of the child to his family/foster and

transfer to a school of industry/children's home.

Children in institutions are probably socialized more by their peers than any other young persons in society. Little research exists, on the benefits of peer relationships in ameliorating some of the harmful effects of separation from the family and subsequent institutionalization. While many researchers indicate that close ties with friends may decrease children's vulnerability to stressful situations, little empirical data exists. In a study conducted by Heiniche and Westheimer (in Rutter, 1981:40) of children admitted to a residential setting they found that distress was much reduced in children who associated with siblings that played the role of peers. Just as good personal relationships in the family may seem to be protective, so too, good relationships with peers may also serve to mitigate the effects of stress. In a longitudinal study of resilient children conducted by Werner and Smith (in Kool, 1994:76) one of the findings concerned the role of informal sources of support utilized by resilient children and youth. Peer friends (35%) and older friends (30%) were the primary source of support for the majority of the children. While 25% perceived parents, minister (8%) and teachers (2%) as the secondary source of support.

Polsky (in Kool, 1994:76) conducted an equally important research on the role of the peer group in a residential setting. The author concluded that the peer structure provided the stability for deviant patterns of aggression, manipulation and exploration of an appropriate negative value system. Furthermore staff members used this system of peer relation to control behaviours in the institution. These peer orientations grew out of, and supported the pyramidal order that diverged significantly from the values of the institution. Peer social exchange and expectations were institutionalized and taught to new members entering the system (Kool, 1994:76). In a follow up study Polsky (in Kool, 1994:76) concluded that an exclusive emphasis upon custody seemed to be conducive to the development of indigenous peer groups based upon anti-social values and roles.

The positive influences of the peer group in children's institutions are not well recognized in the literature. Many researcher (Maier, 1981:61) and childcare practitioners see the peer group as potentially disruptive. Polsky (1962:107)

discovered that it was possible for even a 'first rate' institution to maintain a deviant subculture that supports negative behaviour through conformity to peer influence, where ascension of the status hierarchy is achieved through physical aggression and intimidation. In addition, he observed that each boy's 'self-image was dependent upon his peer's esteem, which was predicated on the dominant values of the group.' Top status boys gave orders to others and made the final decision in any choice of group activities. Controlling the means for peer status in this way, the group strictly regulated the behaviour patterns of individual members. Physical confrontation was the established means to status mobility. According to Bronfenbrenner (in Kool, 1994:77) negative emphasis on the peer group lies in the fact that the peer group is relatively autonomous and isolated from the adult world. The author believes that if the institutions of our society continued to remove parents, other adults and older youth from the active participation in the lives of children, an age-segregated peer group would fill the resultant vacuum. The effects would lead to an increase in alienation, indifference, negative behavior, and violence amongst the younger generation in all segments of society (Kool, 1994:79).

As a result of the criticism leveled at the peer group in institutions, the study of a peer group can be approached in varying ways. First the selection of the children who enter the program to form the peer group. Furthermore, it has been seen that the spontaneous coming together of children to support each other in their common situation is quite evident. Finally, planned intervention by professional staff (teachers, social workers, psychologists and childcare practitioners) to organize the peer group for communal projects that enhance self-concept. The very selection and balance of the individuals that form the peer group are crucial. The group cannot have too many impulse-ridden and acting out individuals. Some members of the peer group must have enough judgment and self control to even out the disruptive behaviour (Taylor, 1980:268).

Given such differential responses in the foregoing studies Kool (1994:178) in a study on peer relationships at a boy's institution attempted to answer the following questions:

- The importance of the peer group/children's group for the children resident within the institution.

- The stability of the peer group/children's group when compared with other social groups.

- The importance of group structure in influencing the social and emotional development of the child and the relationship between this structure, sociometric status and observed behaviour.

- Characteristic patterns of intervention that existed between the children in the dormitory style.

- Perceptions that the children from the same dormitory group had of themselves and each other and the role this perception played in the child's social construction of reality.

The study identified five distinct groups of children. These groups tended to develop children that were of similar age and sociometric status. Generally, patterns of interaction were hierarchically organized with relationships tending to be peer based. This study provided useful insights into relationships at a boy's institution. According to Kool (1994:241) the most intense and pervasive relationship occurred between children in the same dormitory group. Of particular interest these relationships provided children in 'care' with stability and continuity and emotional support. This was especially so since there was a lack of adult care and supervision in this environment. The author was of the opinion that the intensity and pervasive nature of these relationships, led to a unique relationship configuration similar to the features of familial, most notably a sibling relationship. Interestingly, these relationships functioned as an important support system. Despite the positive effects of these relationships a high level of conflict and aggression also characterized them. The act of aggression was primarily directed towards the younger residents and these children were decidedly 'at risk' both emotionally and physically in this environment (Kool 1994:241-242).

It seems that the structure of the environment, in which these relationships were embedded, tended to maintain rather than ameliorate the negative

patterns of behavior that existed between the children. Although the children had frequent contact with non-institutional peers, these friendships were seldom conducted after school hours. Associating with other children outside the institution proved to be problematic for the institutionalized child (Kool, 1994:242).

The researcher made the following observations regarding friends from the community:

No firm directives were issued concerning the visitation of friends. These arrangements were left to the discretion of the staff who often viewed such relationships as unnecessary and unimportant.

Few group outings were arranged for the children in the institution and when these did occur, they were often arranged with other institutions. This tended to reinforce, rather than militate against the harmful effects of institutionalization.

Close friendship conducted at the institution was not viewed favourably by residents. The boys gave a number of reasons for the lack of contact with peers in the community for example the institution discouraged peers from the community. Most importantly, these children in the institution felt that their community regarded them as 'different.' They also felt their peers viewed them as objects of charity rather than friends and equals (Kool, 1994:177-182).

In a similar study Bickrum (1991:242) found a lower mean rating on the Social Self-Peer Scale for institutional children when compared with non-institutionalized children. Her findings could be explained from the perspective that the institutional environment deprives children of situations in which their social skills may be reinforced. An institutional environment may not allow children to learn appropriate response for social interaction. Seemingly these children remain socially immature (Bickrum, 1991:242-243).

Mayer, Rickman and Bulcerzak (in Kool, 1994:79) conducted a very contradictory but significant study on the importance of the peer group of latency age children. It was concluded that children of this age group might thrive better in group care than in any other substitute care (Kool, 1994: 79). These authors suggest that at this age children need to play with friends, acquire new skills in dealing with the world, and develop complex skills. Often the needs of this age group are better catered for in a stimulating person animated environment such as a group home with peers of the same sex than in any other form of substitute care (Kool, 1994: 79-80).

Douglas (1986: 149) supports this view from the perspective that residential settings offer more contact amongst a limited population who will nevertheless have obvious similarities than many a situation outside the ambits of the institution. The author is of the opinion that children are pushed to build supportive relationships to survive adverse situations that often contain elements of threat (Douglas, 1986:148).

The above findings encapsulate the dynamics at play in relationships between institutionalized and non-institutionalized children in so far as peer relations are concerned. Thus examining the research on the peer group of primary school children in an institutional setting leads one to the conclusion that theory in the area is under-developed and that too little effort has been devoted to theoretical work. Perhaps the paucity of satisfactory theory is due to the researchers desire not to attempt theoretical formulation before devoting time to observation and description of the phenomenon under study.

In conclusion, research has consistently indicated peer attachments serve as an added resource and becomes a vital freeing factor in the sequence of child development. Peers along with parents make up the primary school child's primary support systems, and it is largely through the child's attachment to peers that life's important attitudes and behaviours are shaped.

4.5. THE RELATIONSHIP OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The relationship between self-esteem/ concept, family and peer group and academic achievement have been extensively researched but unfortunately research regarding academic achievement of children in institutions has been very limited (Essen, Lambert & Head, 1976: 339- 342). Nevertheless the few research studies, didactic articles and books that deal directly or indirectly with the subject will be discussed in summary.

Less known in this country is the early study of Feinberg (1954:217-229) on the concept of academic performances of institutional children on the Stanford Achievement Test. This study involved a comparison of the academic performances of twelve-year-olds with a mean intelligence quotient of 105 from residential and foster care. The children's scores on the Stanford Achievement Test were compared with those of children from foster placements and of maladjusted children studied in previous research. The findings of the study revealed that children's performances from institutions were significantly poorer on the Stanford Achievement Test as compared to children placed in foster care but less retarded than the maladjusted group. Furthermore, when the subjects were re-tested six months later, they showed a decrease in achievements. The author attributed the poor performances of institutional children, in arithmetic and science as compared to literature, to the lack of achievement motivation offered within the care context. He also attributed the significant difference in general achievement to the emphasis on protection and conformity that exists in institutions (Feinberg, 1954:224-227).

Rawlinson (in Dinnage & Pringle, 1967:134-135) conducted a comparative study of the rate of progress in academic attainment of institutional children and that of children from normal homes, (naturalized background). The study consisted of 37 institutional children and 16 children from naturalized backgrounds who were matched for school, age, intelligence and sex. The children in the study were tested at the beginning and at the end of the year. Their performances in subjects such as mechanical arithmetic, and English, (inclusive of spelling, reading and vocabulary) were tested. The findings

revealed that the non-institutional group improved slightly more than the institutional children. However on the vocabulary test the difference in performance was significant at the 5 % level (Dinnage & Pringle, 1967: 134-135).

Taken collectively both these early studies generate considerable insight into the academic performances of institutional children, however its generalization warrants caution. One of the limitations pertains to the vast improvements undergone during the years concerning remedial and special education and more specifically in orthopedagogics. The other limitation concerns the structure and mode of assessment, management, treatment, and care of children in institutions.

Bickrum (1991: 266-268) conducted more recent research on the academic performances of children in institutions. She concluded that the academic achievements for children from naturalistic backgrounds are significantly better than those children do from institutional and substitute care. The author is of the opinion that these institutional children undergo feelings of powerlessness or the sense that their competence or the competence of the parent is seriously undermined. As a result these adverse conditions negatively impact on their motivation even in the belief that they are capable of achievement resulting in poor academic performance. This unfortunate situation needs to be seen in tandem with the perception that children in institutions are generally not valued at the school-level. This appears to suggest a debilitating consequence on the scholastic achievement of these children. Furthermore the author postulates that a conceptualization of the family dynamics may also explain the relatively poor scholastic performances of institutional children (Bickrum, 1991:266-268).

Bickrum's (1991:268) conclusions are congruent with the above two earlier studies in the area of academic performances. These studies emphasize two important points that institutional children are handicapped emotionally, socially and intellectually lack the skills that could assist them in their schoolwork. Secondly these children lack verbal skills that could assist them to understand their predicament.

Findings of poor intelligence, performance, and adjustment among children in institutions are however general, but one study of contradictory evidence is offered by Gavin and Sacks in Dinnage and Pringle (1976:84). The purpose of the study was to test the validity of the current assumption that institutional care is inevitably damaging to young children, irrespective of the quality of care. The authors report that children in institutions made considerable gains in terms of intelligence; during their placements at an institution. Furthermore these gains in intelligence increased with the length of stay. The authors were of the opinion that the encouraging outcomes in intelligence could be attributed to the 'progressive and individualized care' provided compared to the lack of stimulation and intellectual development provided by the biological homes (Dinnage & Pringle, 1967: 84).

Despite contradictory findings, a recent study conducted by Clark (1987:234-236) is of particular interest. The aim of the study was to evaluate the effects of the Feuerstein Enrichment Programme on the intellectual competence, learning potential, academic achievement and self-esteem on a group of institutional and non-institutional children. The conclusions arrived at revealed that there was no statistical difference and no significant improvement in academic achievement between the two groups. The lack of improvement in academic performances could be attributed to the school subjects that were heavily loaded with verbal ability.

4.6.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion it may be accepted that theories concerning the child's relationships in an institution will always be somewhat speculative and must therefore be approached with caution. While a great deal of attention has focused on the effect of institutional care on children. It must be noted that inherent complications were present in such studies. Consequently most studies have been conducted on older children that focused on relationships with caregivers, family separation and studies of the reversibility of deprivation. These studies found that the ill-effects of long-term institutional care of children on older children manifests themselves in relatively low scores on intelligence tests, poor educational progress and deficiencies in

90

emotional and social development. When compared with children from similar socio-economic backgrounds who live with their families.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND APPROACH USED TO DETERMINE THE LIFE WORLD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD IN A BOY'S TOWN.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises a discussion of the research. It describes the sample, the various tests employed and the method of collecting or gathering information. It also explains the procedures for abstracting information from observational and interview records.

The major obstacle to studying children's subjective appraisal is that children are notoriously difficult to interview in a manner that yields reliable and comparable information. For example when one asks the same open – ended question, children are likely to give the same unrelated or incomplete answer. Additionally when standard response formats (for example true or false or multiple choice) is used, young children tend to lapse into random responding or to misinterpret items or oversimplify their feelings. To probe children's emerging perception about their life – world a psychometrically strong instrument is essential. Ideally the instrument should:

- Be developmentally sensitive to children's cognitive and emotional understanding.

- Be understanding and enjoyable regardless of temperament (for example shyness or attention span).

- Be suitable across a wide range.

- Build up knowledge about children, and

- Provide a broad view that includes all family members and key individuals such as teachers, friends and or other relatives (Boys' Town Training Manual 1995:25- 26).

The research methods employed in the study included both quantitative and qualitative measures as well as archival investigation of the child's Individual Treatment Plan (ITP). By employing different methods the researcher hoped to increase the reliability of the study by providing a complete picture of the

primary school child's life world at a Boys' Town. More importantly the researcher in using these different methods hoped to -

1] Take advantage of the particular strong points of each type of data.

2] Crosscheck information collected by each method.

3] Collate information that is only available through some techniques.

4] Finally it was hoped that relevant information extracted from any one-research method would necessarily supplement other methodological approaches.

In the present research the group-work contributed to the design and implementation of the sociometric measures, while at the same time, the sociometric data and questionnaire contributed to the interviews in the following manner -

1] Verification of group- work and ITP interpretation.

2] Focusing new information on ITPs and group-work observations.

3] Self-report scales and questionnaire are being administered increasingly in institutions to obtain retrospective impression of an individual's family.

In using these various tests the researcher wishes to accomplish the following aims.

PRIMARY AIM

The study aims to obtain an insightful understanding of the life – world of the primary school child who has not only experienced separation from his biological parents, but would have also experienced protracted/ long term stay in an institution such as Boys' Town.

The researcher's concern is the manner in which the child uses his abilities, potential, instincts and passions to construe a life -world by his involvement, attribution of meaning and experiences.

SECONDARY AIM

A secondary aim of the study is to examine the potential differences in the relationships that the primary school child at Boys' Town attributes to his

parents, peers, and himself as compared to of those primary school children who do not live in an institution (that is non residential).

TERTIARY AIM

The study also aims to determine the impact of the peer group system of self - government as implemented at a Boy's Town on the self-concept of the primary school child.

MINOR AIM

To determine the extent to which the primary school child at a Boy's Town progresses in terms of his schoolwork.

5.2. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS USED TO DETERMINE THE LIFE WORLD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD IN A BOY'S TOWN

5.2.1. THE SELF REPORT INVENTORY (SFI)

5.2.1.1 DESCRIPTION

Beavers, Hampton Robert and Hulgus developed the Self-Report Inventory (SFI) in 1985. This instrument like all other self-report scales is a measure of an insider's view of his or her current family situation. In this study the Self-Report Inventory was administered to obtain a quantitative index of perception of family functioning of subjects from natural and institutional care-backgrounds (Beavers, Hampton, Robert & Hulgus, 1985:402).

The Self-Report Inventory in this study included a 43 item self-report scale. Items 1-42 offered 3 response choices that are 'yes,' 'some times' and 'no.' Item 43 represented a ten-point rating scale to evaluate family cohesion (a score of one reflected minimum cohesion and ten reflected maximum cohesion). The Self-Report Inventory included sub-scales such as family health, expressiveness and conflict (Beaver et al., 1985:401).

The table 5.1 indicates a list of items for the four factors derived from a factor analysis of the 44 items in the Self-Report Inventory. The most prominent factor was Health with thirty-three items. The other items included were expressiveness (6), style (3) and leadership (2) (Beavers et al., 1985: 401-403).

Table 5.1

Distribution of Items on the Self-Report Inventory

Factor	Scale Item
Health	1, 4, 6, 10, 15, 16*, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 29*, 33, 34, 35 37, 38, 40.
Expressiveness	12, 14, 26, 28, 31.
Cohesion	2, 5*, 9, 11, 19, 23*, 32*, 39.
Conflict	3, 7, 8*, 13*, 17*, 19, 22, 30*, 36*, 41, 42. *

All items have factor loading of 0.35 or higher. Items marked * are reversed when scoring (Beaver et al., 1985: 401).

5.2.1.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE SELF REPORT INVENTORY

Beavers et al recorded internal consistency between 0,84 and 0,88 for the Self-Report Inventory (Beavers et al., 1988:87) and test-re-test co-efficiency, r= 0.88 (Beavers et al., 1994:62). Beavers et al (1985: 402) using a clinical population of (n=71) compared perceptions of health styles of family members and outside raters. The authors concluded that the first two factors of the Self-Report Inventory were able to distinguish significantly (r < 0.18 and 0.003 respectively) between rated groups of high and low functioning families. This relatively high agreement between observational and self-report family health assessment, suggest that the Self-Report Inventory is useful as an instrument for detecting families at high risk for emotional and behavioural problems (Beavers et al., 1985: 401-402).

Furthermore the validity of the Self-Report Inventory has also been checked against observational and other family self-report scales with observed correlation's of 0.74 or better between Self-Report Inventory health scores and observer rated health on the Beavers Interactional Competence and Style scale. On this measure lower numerical values corresponded with greater competence (Beavers et al., 1985: 401 -402).

5.2.1.3 <u>SCORING</u>

For all positive items, the points allocated per response choice were

Yes	(fits our family well)	3 points
Some	(fits our family sometimes)	2 points
No	(does not fit our family)	1 point

For negative items the points allocated per response choice were reversed as follows.

Yes	(fits our family well)	3 points
Some	(fits our family sometimes)	2 points
No	(does not fit our family)	1 point

The maximum possible score for the Self-Report Inventory in this study was 136 and the lowest possible score was 41 (Beavers et al., 1985:401-405).

5.3   THE SELF ESTEEM INVENTORY (SEI)

Coopersmith developed the Self - Esteem Inventory in 1967. Most of the items in this self-report was based upon items from the Rogers and Dymond scale developed in 1957 (Coopersmith, 1967:10). The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) is not a published test, but it has been used widely in the United States of America, Britain and even in South Africa. It has no separate manual, but there are brief instructions for its use in Coopersmith's book The Antecedents of Self- Esteem published in 1967. Unlike other tests, the theoretical foundations are made clear in some details within this book, both for the full scale and for the sub-scale of General Self, Social Self (peers), Home (family), and School (academic). The Coopersmith Self – Esteem Inventory (SEI) was used in this study because no inventory of self – esteem has been specifically designed for children in institutions. The Coopersmith Self – Esteem Inventory is about the closest in covering such a wide array of sub – scales.

5.3.1   DESCRIPTION

The Self- Esteem Inventory contains 58 items of which 50 are directed to the perception of self-worth in areas that relate to self-peer, self-and home and self-school relationships. These self-evaluation attitudes are conglomerated into four sub-scales of General-Self, Social Self-Peers, Home-Parents and School-Academic respectively (Bickrum 1991: 178). The remaining eight items comprise a scale, which provide an index of the defensiveness of the individual. The Self - Esteem Inventory induces the respondent into a choice response of 'like me' or 'unlike me.'

From table 5.2 a very large percentage of the item are concentrated on the self sub-scale while the other sub-scales are more evenly distributed.

Table 5.2

Distribution of items on The Self - Esteem Inventory

Factor	Scale item
General-Self	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 23, 24, 29, 3 31, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44, 45, 50, 51, 52, 57, 58,
Self – Peer	11, 18, 25, 27, 39, 46, 53, 55,
Home-Family	5, 12, 19, 26, 33, 40, 47, 54,
School – Academic	7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49, 56,
Lie defensiveness	2, 10, 14, 22, 32, 34, 41, 48,

5.3.2   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE SELF ESTEEM INVENTORY

Spatz and Johnson (in Bickrum, 1991:175) in testing the internal consistency of the Self- Esteem Inventory with fifth and ninth graders (standard three and seven respectively), (n = 600) recorded co-efficient of 0,81 for the fifth graders and 0,86 for the ninth graders. Furthermore in an earlier study conducted by Coopersmith (1967:10) the Self – Esteem Inventory was administered to two groups of fifth and sixth graders, (standard three and fours respectively) of both boys and girls. The mean score for the boys (n = 40) was 81,3 with a standard deviation of 12,2, while the mean score for the girls was 83,3 with a standard deviation of 16, 7. There was, however no significant difference in the mean scores (F = 0, 80, p < 0,50). The Self - Esteem Inventory was re-administered five weeks later to the fifth graders (n = 30). The test-retest reliability of the fifth graders after the five-week interval was 0, 88 (Coopersmith, 1967:10).

In terms of the construct validity for the Self - Esteem Inventory various scales were correlated with the Self - Esteem Inventory such as the Achievement Series that yielded values of 0, 33 (p < 0,01). Furthermore correlation with Thorndike Intelligence Test yielded a similar value of 0,30 (p < 0,01). These correlations may be considered reasonable indicators of the construct validity of the Self - Esteem Inventory (Bickrum, 1991:175).

5.3.3. SCORING AND INSTRUCTIONS

The general-self sub-scale comprised twenty-six self-esteem items from a total of fifty. These items were allocated one point allowing for a maximum of twenty-six points. The social self-peers, home-parents and school-academic sub-scales each comprised eight of the fifty self-esteem items, all allowing for a maximum raw score of eight. The maximum total score for the Self-Esteem Inventory yields a score of hundred excluding the Lie sub-scales.

All positive items answered 'like me' and negative items that were answered 'unlike me' were scored as correct responses and were allocated one point. In this respect the Lie items were allocated one point if the response to the item was 'like me.' The maximum score for the 'Lie' sub-scale was eight. The Lie scores on the Self- Esteem Inventory provided a proportional index of the defensiveness of the respondents that is the higher the score the greater the defensiveness.

The pupils were instructed to answer each statement on the inventory in the following way:

If the statement describes how you usually feel, please put a tick (✓) in the column "like me."

If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, please put a tick (✓) in the column "unlike me."

Pupils were assured that there was no right or wrong answer.

5.4 NOMINATION MEASURES

In the investigation of relationships of children living within an institutional setting, it is initially essential to establish the importance of these (peer) relationships of the child before investigating the 'patterns' of these relationships (Kool, 1994:90). The nomination questionnaire to measure the child's relationship with his peers was designed by Polsky and Claster (1968:97), and is known as the Choice Questionnaire.

Nomination measures have the following methodological advantages:

- It appears to be stable over time for elementary and older children and the scores appear to be stable for positive nominations in primary school children.

- Different sets of children are identified from nomination. Another distinct advantage of nomination measures in this context is that children of varying social status are identified (Kool, 1994:84).

- The Choice Questionnaire as a quantitative instrument provided data towards children living in the institution, their relationship with their peers in the institution and their peers living in the neighbourhood community. Furthermore, the measure provided information of the pattern of interaction existing among the primary school children in the dormitory.

5.4.1 DESCRIPTION

The Choice Questionnaire developed by Polsky and Claster (1968:97) was used as criterion for validating a status indicator. This measure provided core data on the peer group of the dormitory and the institution as a whole. The Choice Questionnaire ascertained whom each boy liked most and least and respected most and least in the dormitory and in the institution. Furthermore the questionnaire indicated the child's preference among his peers for positions of leadership (Polsky & Claster, 1968:97-99).

In the first part of the measure the child was requested to indicate which boy in the dormitory he would personally choose for different kinds of activities. Pupils were assisted with examples of tasks such as assisting with

homework, doing repair tasks and doing menial chores.

The second part of the measure the child had to indicate which boy in the dormitory he personally 'likes' and 'dislikes most,' as well as those who he has most 'respect' and 'disrespect' for.

In the third part of the questionnaire the child was requested to indicate which boys, both at a Boys' Town or in the community, that he personally 'likes' and 'dislike' most, and those he has most 'respect' and 'disrespect' for.

The child was requested to indicate his first, second, and third choice in each case.

5.4.2   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Polsky and Claster (1968:99) conducted investigations at three institutions namely Fairlain, Hearthstone and Concord to test the reliability and validity of the Choice Questionnaire. In the investigation the reliability was computed by correlating the number of choices received from one half of the dormitory/ cottages with the choices received from the other half. In the Fairlain investigation corrected correlation ranged from 0.34 to 0.97. The Hearthstone and Concord investigation yielded scores in the range of 0.40 to 0.95 and 0.47 to 0.90 respectively (Polsky & Claster, 1968:99).

In determining the validity Polsky and Claster (1968:214) computed a Composite Role-Evaluation Score (CRES) for each boy. The mean evaluation score attributed to a boy was converted to a plus or minus scores. The possible range was pegged from -2.00 to + 2.00. A sum of -2.00 would then indicate the boy would have been given an evaluation of 'much disrespect' while on the other hand a score of +2.00 would indicate an evaluation of 'much respect.'

An average evaluation or indifference point, that is 'some respect' yielded a score of +1.00. Thereafter the number of times a boy was chosen by his peers was multiplied by his evaluation score and these products were summed algebraically to yield his Composite Role-Evaluation Score (CRES). This score identified those boys who were most frequently mentioned by their peers when the question, "which boy you personally have the 'most

respect 'for and 'most disrespect' for, both in the dormitory and in the institution?" According to the authors when these questions are subsequently asked these two items serve as validating criteria (Polsky & Claster, 1968: 213-214).

5.4.3 SCORING

The total number of nominations received by each child was counted. The raw 'like most,' 'disliked most,' 'respected most' and 'disrespected most' were counted for each pupil. Socio-metric variable that is social preferences was then computed.

The total number of nominations directed at children in the institution and in the community was also computed and expressed in terms of percentages. These percentages were then transferred to a graph.

5.5   UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The unstructured interview was employed in this study to gain understanding of the life world of the primary school child. After the completion of the quantitative instruments the researcher interviewed each child individually to elicit information on the child's relationship with himself, family, peers and his attitude towards school and schoolwork. The interview complemented the questionnaire as a data collection tool. Structured and unstructured interviews are conducted at a Boys' Town that serve the following function:

- Creative a permissive climate in which the child is capable of talking without fear of adverse consequences.

- Enables the child, through reinforcing their positive relationship, to explore alternate approaches to the difficulty being experienced.

- Guide the child's thinking towards the implication of different solutions to the problem.

- Encourage positive feelings in the child about himself, and return these feelings as an aid to the child's search for self-fulfillment.

- Evolve, if necessary, a self-directed action programme by and for the child (Hoghugi, 1988:184).

5.6   GROUP-WORK PARTICIPATION

The researcher entered the field with broad questions regarding primary school children's' interaction and relationships. Group-work at a Boys' Town serves the following functions:

- It assists in discovering personal identity and socially acceptable goals.

- Increases the understanding of self as a result of other members' feedback and ones own attempt at self-projection.

- Increases information input about other children, the environment, problems of living and the choices that are available.

- Increases the opportunity for acquiring social skills of basic interaction, conversation, group membership, co-operatives, sensitivity and fellow feeling.

- Learning to recognize boundaries for own behaviour and those of others.

- Practicing the shifting of ground-rules of relationships in groups (Hoghugi, 1988:185 – 187).

The importance of group-work observation as a research tool can be ascertained from the number of functions it performed through this methodologically diverse study. This method provided qualitative data on the relationships between the following:

- Group dynamics.

- The ecological climate of the institution.

- The impact of the peer group system of self-government on primary school children.

- The impact of the peer group system of self-government on the behaviour, belief and values of the primary school children.

Two institutional social workers and one student social worker from Ireland conducted eight group-work sessions. The role of the researcher in group-work was that of participant observer.

5.7   INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT PLAN (ITP)

The Individual Treatment Plan is a long-range 'master' strategic plan of treatment, concerning the 'nuts and bolts' practicalities of who is to do what, how and when. The Individual Treatment Plan is a widely used programme document used at a Boys' Town. All teachers and professional complete the Individual Treatment Plan when the child is admitted to the institution. Thereafter the Individual Treatment Plan is completed every three months. It entails the following:

(1)   Setting out the problem.

(2)   The aim of treatment.

(3)   The preferred method of treatment.

(4)   The techniques to be used.

The Individual Treatment Plan consists of the following assessment areas:

1] Physical

Physical problems encapsulate everything that is wrong with the body and its functioning. It also includes difficulties concerning those physical problems such as addiction to solvents and drugs that have no straightforward physical basis or medical solution (Hoghughi, 1988:25). Some of the areas that are evaluated:

- Has the child any brain damage or motor disorders?

- Is he an epileptic?

- Has the child any eye/hearing impairment or speech defect?

- Does he suffer any elimination disorders such as enuresis or encopresis or retention of faeces?

- Has the child any eating disorders?

- Is the child dependent on any drugs?

- Has the child any sleeping disorders and are there any other medical conditions (Hoghughi, 1988:211 – 221)?

2] Cognitive

Although not much can be done to raise the genetically determined ceiling of intelligence, considerable information is needed to improve the effective level of intellectual functioning and reduce the consequences of handicap (Hoghughi, 1988:26). Some of the areas that are evaluated for example are:

- Does the child function below his potential?

- Is he easily distracted from tasks?

- Does he have a poor span of attention?

- Does he have any specific memory disorder?

- Does he possess an adequate vocabulary for his age level?

- Does he have word building skills?

- Can he comprehend written materials?

- Is his writing legible?

- Is his grammar distorted?

- Is his numeracy retarded?

- Does he possess a positive attitude towards school?

- Does he play truant from school (Hoghughi, 1988:121 – 226)?

3] Home and family

This category contains a huge range of problems, most of which arise from the interaction of family members with the child and their wider social context (Hoghughi, 1988:26). Some of the areas that are evaluated:

- Are the parent's present whereabouts known?
- Are the parents homeless or do they have accommodation?
- Do the parents have sufficient food/clothing?
- Are they stigmatized/ostracized from their neighbourhood?
- Are they in serious conflict with the neighbourhood?
- Are parents divorced or living apart?
- Are there any adverse parental factors (such as alcoholism,
- Criminal offender, unemployment or gambler)?
- Is there marital disharmony?
- Do the parents abuse the child?
- Do they reject the child?
- Do they mete consistent punishment?
- Does the child abscond from home (Hoghughi, 1988:226 – 237)?

4] Social skill

Information is needed for the amelioration of social skill problems such as unpopularity, social discomfort, sensitivity to others and situational problems (Hoghughi, 1988:26). Some of the areas that are evaluated:

- Does the child have good manners?
- Does the child have appropriate eye contact and facial expression?
- Does child engage in conversation?
- Does child avoid contact?
- Is the child popular with his peers?
- Is the child manipulative?
- Is the child hostile/aggressive?
- Is the child dependent on adults?
- Is the child defiant?
- Is the child sensitive to other's feeling and does he have/sustain satisfying interests (Hoghughi, 1988: 237-248)?

5] Antisocial

In this context antisocial behaviour is a conglomerate of many problems with quite different characteristics such as verbal and physical aggression, disruptiveness, uncommon sexual interests, sexual misbehaviour, sexual offences, property offences, and arson (Hoghughi, 1988:26). Some of the areas that are evaluated are:

- Does the child have temper tantrums?

- Does the child stir up trouble?

- Does he attempt to physically harm himself (for example
 suicide)?

- Does he have uncommon sexual interests (such as
 transvestitism, fetishism, exhibitionism and homosexuality)?

- Has he committed any sexual offences?

- Has he committed any property offences and does he test out
 limits (Hoghughi, 1988:248 – 258)?

6] Personal

Evaluation in this area depends on the particular condition subsumed under the label of 'personal.' Patterns of personality characteristics (such as impulsiveness, emotional instability, depression, anxiety, self – concept and moral development) can be varied in intensity and frequency of manifestation. The child's problems of identity can be reasonably resolved when identified. Some of the areas that are evaluated are:

- Is the child an extrovert/introvert?

- Does the child have high frustration level?

- Does the child show remorse or guilt?

- Does the child act impulsively?

- Does the child laugh/cry easily?

- Does the child have pronounced mood swing?

- Does the child show any emotional response?

- Is the child preoccupied with himself and does the child have any fears (Hoghughi, 1988:258 – 274)?

Within the above context it is reasonably clear that the Individual Treatment Plan includes aspects that describe the child's life world. In arriving at an

Individual Treatment Plan intensive assessment is conducted which includes the entire staff composition.

Information inputs are extracted from various scales and instruments, of which the Hudson Scales are an integral part. For the purpose of the study the following scales were used:

- "Attitude toward the Father and Mother."
- "Attitude toward Teacher and Schoolwork."
- "Attitude toward Peers."

5.8 REPORT CARDS

Report cards were used to obtain an index of the scholastic achievements of primary school pupils from a Boys' Town and primary school children from the wider community. The first, second, third and fourth quarter results were compared.

5.9 THE PROCESS OF COLLECTING DATA / INFORMATION FROM THE VARIOUS RESEARCH METHODS USED.

The data gathering process was carried out from the beginning of the year (1996) to October (1996). The administration of the questionnaires was done during the months of June, July and August (1996) for both the institutional and non-institutional groups. The interviews and group-work observations were conducted during the months of September and October (1996).

Since the basic purpose of the study was to explore the life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town, much of the analysis of information involved straight forward compilation of parental, emotional and social characteristics of both the institutional and non institutional child. The findings were expressed both qualitatively and quantitatively in an attempt to describe and explain the life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town. As the quantitative data did not involve complex numerical calculations, tabulations and univariate statistics in the form of means, percentages and standard deviations were used to describe the data. Qualitative data were derived from the analysis and assessment of interviews, group-work and information obtained from the ITP.

5.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The researcher allayed any fears of both teachers and children that information obtained was to be used by any authorities (both externally and internally) and reassured the participants that the information was genuinely for the researcher's own purpose. From the researcher's experiences of working with children particularly those from welfare and state agencies, children tend to appear suspicious and anxious when questions that appear to be formal or 'official' looking are presented. Furthermore, according to appropriate ethical considerations the researcher adhered to strict confidentiality throughout and after the study regarding the contents of the child's Individual Treatment Plan (ITP) and interviews. Utmost care was taken to withhold information in the study that would reveal the child or the family's identity. Within this context, where applicable a number identified the child.

5.11   SELECTION OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

5.11.1   NATURALISTIC CARE GROUP

This group was introduced for the purpose of comparison with the hope of enhancing the meaningfulness of the study. The group comprised of primary school children from the Seatides Secondary and La Mercy Primary schools. These schools were chosen because they are near Boys' Town and would thus contribute to the consistency of community background to some extent.

This group included participants from standard three to five. All the participants were of South African nationality. The participants in this group were from intact two parent homes and, hence experienced relatively stable home circumstances for much of their primary school life. Within this context it was felt that the stresses of single parenting might influence the outcome of the study. The participants ranged from affluent to low socio- economic backgrounds.

No attempt was made to match this group perfectly with the institutional group. Although intelligence quotient scores were available for the institutional group no scores were available for this group. Incidentally no intelligence quotient or group tests were conducted in the past three years at either school which was the case under the House of Delegates.

5.11.2   INSTITUTIONAL GROUP

This group comprised of fifteen primary school boys living at a Boys' Town. All the participants in this group were from low socio-economic backgrounds. The educational level was set from standard three to standard five. The age range of the participants was between ten and twelve years of age.

This group included participants who were placed in care as a result of the parent's inability to provide adequate care and/or implement appropriate disciplinary measures. Below is a table of the nature of problems prior to admission to a Boys' Town extracted from the Boys' Town-Tongaat-Annual Programme Evaluation 1995 /6 (Schedule A)

Table 5.3

Nature of problem upon Admission

Nature of problem	number
1] truancy	13
2] negative attitude towards school-hostile to schooling	15
3] negative attitude to schoolwork-poor achievement motivation	14
4] inadequate or/and inconsistent parental guidance	15
5] inadequate or/and inconsistent parental control	15
5] lack of parental involvement-parental/child rejection	5
6] conflict within the family	11
7] adverse parental factors (alcoholism, unemployment)	13
8] no home base-parents whereabouts unknown, homeless	4
9] victim of abuse-sexual, physical and emotional	8
10] absconds from home	6
11] smoking	6
12] theft	9
13] low frustration tolerance levels	4
12] property offences	3
13] school phobia	5
14] disruptive in class	7
15] material deprivation	12
16] poor response to control (defies agents of control, authority)	10

Table 5.3 Indicates the range of presenting problems of primary school boys at a Boys' Town. Those primary school children admitted to the institution as a place of safety were excluded from the study. This was a result of insufficient time spent at the institution and the probability of the child being removed from the institution before the study was completed.

Intelligence quotient scores were available for each participant as this construed a criterion for admission to a Boys' Town. [The minimum requirement for admission in terms of intelligence quotient is a score of ninety (90)].

Table 5.4

<u>Distributions of participants according to educational level, care</u>

<u>background, numbers, mean, ages.</u>

Naturalistic Care.			Institutional Care		
standard	number	mean age	Number	mean age	mean IQ
3	3	10yr 8mths	5	11yrs 4mths	103
4	5	11yr 6mths	6	12yrs 5mths	104
5	7	12yr 5mths	4	12yrs 10mths	100

Table 5.4 reflects the mean ages of pupils from the wider community and from a Boys' Town. Evidently the mean age of the primary school child resident at a Boys' Town is higher than that of his peers from the wider community. Much schooling time is spent at places of safety. Some pupils wait up to two years before court orders are finalized to have them removed from a place of safety to an institution or foster placements.

Table 5.5

Characteristic details of the Institutional Group

Participants	age in years and months	Standard	years/months in care
1.	12 years 8 months	3	2 years 7 months
2.	12 years 3 months	3	1 year 9 months
3.	11 years 10 months	4	2 years 11 months
4.	12 years 8 months	4	9 months
5.	12 years 11 months	3	8 months
6.	11 years 1 month	3	8 months
7.	13 years 7 months	5	1 year 6 months
8.	12 years 11 months	5	7 months
9.	13 years 9 months	4	1 year 1 month
10.	12 years 8 months	4	1 year 3 months
11.	12 years 7 months	4	8 months
12.	11 years 9 months	4	1 year 1 months
13.	10 years 11 months	3	7 months
14.	12 years 1 month	5	8 months
15.	12 years 10 months	5	2 years 2 months

Table 5.5 reflects the number of years spent at a Boys Town. Within this context Boys' Towns nationally are aware of the Child Care Act limiting the child's stay at an institution for a minimum of two years. However, there have been instances, for example, unfavourable home circumstances or parents whereabouts are unknown in which court applications have been made to the child commission for the child's prolonged stay at a Boys' Town. Of the fifteen primary school children, three primary school boys came from another institution, four from foster placement and the rest from their biological families.

5.12   <u>CONCLUSION</u>

This chapter contains a description of the design of the study, the sample and the questionnaires used. In addition, observation and group-work was conducted to discover the types of activities engaged in by the primary school child within the confines of a Boys' Town. This included the type of interaction that occurred between them and with their peers from the wider community. This chapter also included the rationale for the use of questionnaires and the description of the procedure of the investigation.

CHAPTER SIX

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS RELATED TO THE LIFE WORLD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD IN A BOYS' TOWN.

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the results obtained from the analysis of the data gathered for the purposes of the present study are presented and discussed in relation to the hypothesis previously formulated. The primary objective therefore of the data analysis was to examine each of the instruments, and to provide a summary of the responses that were obtained through the data gathering phases of the research procedure.

The responses were obtained quantitatively and qualitatively respectively. These stemmed from the implementation of three questionnaires, interviews, group-work and research of archival records [Individual Treatment Plan (ITP) and school reports] of the primary school child.

The study of literature (chapter three) reflects the above criteria as factors necessary to determine the life world of the primary school child. The following procedures were used in the analysis and description of data.

Measures of Central Tendency and Variability

The most important measure of central tendency, namely the arithmetic mean was calculated. The arithmetic mean best describes the distribution of scores.

The most frequent measure of variability the standard deviation was calculated. The standard deviation also corresponds to the description of the average deviation, but takes a step further by squaring all values of x. Thereafter, the mean of all the squares is found, its square root is determined which yields the standard deviation.

Correlation

The Pearson r Correlation technique was employed to describe the relationship between the means of the primary school children resident at a Boys' Town and that of children from the neighbouring community. Sub – scales of the Self – Esteem and family functioning were also correlated.

The Pearson r Correlation was calculated by using Quatro Pro on the Windows 95 programme.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical calculations on the data (frequency distribution, cumulative frequency, and percentages) were performed using Quatro Pro on the Windows 95 programme. Graphic presentation of percentages was also utilized extensively to enhance the meaning of the results.

6.2   FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Table 6 1

Mean and Standard Deviation For Self – Report Inventory

	Number	Mean	S. D.
Naturalized	15	104	10.33
Boys' Town	15	90	7.74

6.2.1   INTERPRETATION

Table 6.1 reflects the means and standard deviations of perceptions of family functioning for pupils resident at a Boys' Town and from the broader community.

Computation of scores extracted from the Self Family Inventory (SFI) yielded a significant difference in the perception of family functioning that exists for naturalistic primary school children (mean=104) and primary school children at a Boys' Town (mean=90). Statistical analysis of scores indicated that primary school children at a Boys' Town perceived their families to function less favourably than those of primary school children from the broader community. These findings offer strong support to the tenet that there is a consistent positive significant difference in individual rating of the families based upon time spent in a Boys' Town.

The statistical significance between the group means of both the scores indicate that the primary school child at a Boys' Town apparently view their families differently or alternatively perceive their families as different from the naturalistic group.

The poor perception of family functioning of primary school children at an institution such as a Boys' Town harks back to such pioneering education and welfare studies as those of Dinnage and Pringle (1967:43), Page and Clark (1977:14-18) and Mudaly (1984:375-378).

The negative perception of family functioning of primary school children at a Boys' Town relative to primary school children in the wider community may also be understood within the context of the consequences of separation in

divorced and separated families of children resident in an institution. Primary school children at a Boys' Town have lost daily contact with both parents and siblings. With a few exceptions, parents are likely to be regarded as the most significant adult in the child's life. Due to this extent, their presence or absence in the family is a central concern for the child at a Boys' Town. Concerning those primary school children from the community that received a high score, they were strongly influenced by their families' prevailing values and were dependent on the family for guidance.

Furthermore, siblings may not be present when parents visit the child at a Boys' Town. They may be in other institutions or in foster homes. This presents difficulties for the children to maintain contact within the family.

6.2.2. <u>COMMENTS</u>

There are several important conclusions that can be drawn from the above information. First it is clear that the primary school child at a Boys' Town has strong desires to be with his parents. This conclusion is underscored by the observation that over 50 % of the parents do make regular contact with the child at a Boys' Town. In attempting to account for this observation, non-visitation by parents could construe a form of parental neglect. There is no basis in the present study to assume parental neglect. However, given the short time (2 years) that the child is committed to a Boy's Town, failure to keep in contact suggest that the above explanation may be somewhat valid. Parental involvement in the child's life at a Boys' Town was measured by the parents' participation in visits, telephone calls, involvement in behaviour management workshops or in decisions regarding the child's future and attendance at teacher–parent interviews. It should be pointed out that 'involvement' here is involvement with the child as reported by the child. The parent's perception of involvement might be somewhat different.

6.2.3   SUBSCALES OF THE SELF-FAMILY INVENTORY
Table 6.2

Mean and Standard Deviation for the Family Functioning Inventory

Sub-scales	health		Conflict		cohesion		Express	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D
Naturalistic	49.46	2.7	24.06	3.15	18.93	2.48	11.73	2.35
Boys' Town	28.0	5.5	20.33	4.25	15.06	4.43	10.02	1.83

6.2.3.1   INTERPRETATION

Table 6.2 reflects the means and standard deviations of perception of family functioning of pupils resident at a Boys' Town and of pupils from the community.

Statistical analysis of the sub-scale scores of the Self-Family Inventory indicates the means for Emotional Expressiveness (which consists of items concerning the open expression of warmth, caring and closeness by verbal and non verbal means) was significantly higher for the primary children resident in the community (mean = 11.7 and mean = 10 .2 respectively). Similarly the means for Family Health (which consists of items involving happiness, parental coalition, problem solving; individual optimism, acceptance of individuals and love in the home) was higher for pupils in the wider community than the primary school children residing at a Boys' Town (mean =49. 46 and mean = 28.0).

The perception of lower expressiveness in the primary school child at a Boys' Town may be explained in terms of the multitude of factors (such as marital disharmony, parental conflict with other siblings, inconsistent discipline and punishment, inadequate parental guidance, alcoholism and drug abuse) which appear to be limiting factors for children at a Boys' Town than for children from the wider community.

Correlation between Conflict (items relating to covert/ overt fighting, arguing, blaming problem solving versus unresolved conflict) and Family Health

scores reveal a significant negative relationship for the child at a Boys' Town. Primary school children perceive their families to be in constant state of instability due to the factors identified above.

6.2.3.2. COMMENTS

Information presented in section 6.2.3.1 does not address the causal relation between conflict and the child's adjustment at a Boys' Town. However, conflict may lead to the child's problem, by eliciting feelings of abandonment that may result in the child not functioning effectively. If these feelings are tense or frequent and if the child ruminates about the conflict it may lead to the development of anxiety that culminates in the child running away from the institution. While speculative, such processes are consistent with archival data that indicate reason for absconding as a result of conflict in the family.

A second issue examined the strategies that children generated for coping with conflict, (12/15) felt that they would seek professional assistance (principal, social worker or teacher). If the intensity of the conflict was high (3/15) boys indicated they were more likely to intervene directly to help solve the conflict.

Given the adverse parental factors all but three children described missing their families, six boys reported that they missed their parents most of the time. Almost all the boys wanted to be released to their families despite the conflict experienced in the family. Furthermore interview data revealed that primary school children resident at a Boys' Town evinced a desire that their parent/ s maintain contact while they are at a Boys' Town. In terms of contact between the primary school child and the parent, seven boys maintained regular contact with the family, one with an inadequate grandmother, one with host families and two with foster families. Similarly eight families made more or less regular attempts to maintain contact (although two families made sporadic attempts to maintain contact, evoking little or no response, or a hostile response from one of the primary school children). This kind of response (or lack of it) was due, to the nature of the parent's approaches that frequently consisted of nags and recriminations. One boy made repeated but unsuccessful attempts to evoke a loving response from his

mother. Unfortunately, she was unable to regard him with anything, but hostility, because she blamed him for the discord in the family. Parental contact was also made with the institution when the child absconds from the institution or when problems regarding schoolwork and behaviour are identified. Hence, the perception then of the primary school child from a disruptive or disturbed background without normal family relationships or without experiences of a stable and loving home, is one of hostility and negativity.

Matrixes of Pearson r Correlation for the levels of self – esteem and perception of family functioning of pupils resident at a Boys' Town and of pupils from the broader community.

Table 6 .3

Pearson's r Correlation of family functioning for pupils at a Boys' Town

(n = 15)

Sub-scales	Family Health	Conflict	Cohesion	Expressivenes
Family Health	1.000			
Conflict	0.42	1.000		
Cohesion	- 0.10	- 0.32	1.000	
Expressivenes	0.13	- 0.04	0.12	1.000

r = 0.641 (critical value) p < 0.01 (two tailed)

r = 0.514 (critical value) p < 0.05 (two tailed)

For pupils living at a Boys' Town no significant positive relationships were reflected for perception of family functioning. However according to the table significant negative relationships were indicated for the following pairs of sub – scales.

1] Family Health and Cohesion

2] Conflict and Expressiveness

3] Cohesion and Conflict

Pearson's r Correlation of family functioning for pupils in the wider community (n = 15)

Table 6.4

Sub – scales	Family Health	Conflict	Cohesion	Expressiveness
Family Health	1.000			
Conflict	0.240	1.000		
Cohesion	0.214	0.102	1.000	
Expressivenes	0.519	0.20	0.555	1.000

r = 0.641 (critical value) p < 0.01 (two tailed)

r = 0.514 (critical value) p < 0.05 (two tailed)

According to table 6.4 significant positive relationships were found for the following pairs of sub – scales for perception of family functioning.

1] Family Healthy and Expressiveness

2] Cohesion and Expressiveness

6.2.2.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results from the data analyses suggest quite strongly that the lack of emotional involvement adversely effects the primary school child's stay at Boys' Town. Judging by the results that were obtained it is apparent that the absence of family members in the child's life restrains his emotional growth.

Since the study was conducted on primary school children that were a non-clinical sample, these results may or may not apply to children in a clinical context. It was impossible to determine from the findings whether the difference in family interaction qualities was during the latency stage or whether these significant differences were related to differences in perspective and age-period. Nevertheless, the results of this study indicate specifically, that the ages of the subjects make a significant difference in how an individual rates his family. These data suggest that with any instrument (including the Self-Family Inventory) that addresses perception of family

functioning, researchers would do well to specify the age-period in which the self-report is to be framed.

Despite the limitations, the present research makes promising forays into the investigation of the child's perception of conflict, family health and cohesion, while at the same time identifying a number of important issues that deserve investigation.

Firstly it is important to examine aspects of the family context that may shape children's perceptions of and responses to conflict.

Secondly, future work on perceptions should consider developmental differences in children's understanding of conflict and how these differences may effect the child's responses.

6. 3   SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONCEPT
Table 6.5
Mean and Standard Deviation for Self – Esteem Inventory

	Number	Mean	S. D.
Naturalized	15	80	12.94
Boys' Town	15	58	9.98

6.3.1   INTERPRETATION

The above table 6.5 reflects the means and standard deviations of the self–esteem levels for pupils' resident at a Boys' Town and from the wider community.

The analysis of scores on the Self- Esteem Inventory indicate that there was a significant difference in the self-esteem levels, between children from naturalized families (mean=80) and children from a Boy's Town backgrounds (mean=58). Although the findings of self-esteem of primary school children at a Boys' Town was significantly lower than the children from the community, the score for the primary school child at Boys Town was significantly higher than expected.

This could be attributed to various factors that are inherent in the day to day programme. These include inter-alia group-work (with themes that include building and enhancing of the self), peer-group meetings (that includes sharing of problems, family misery and school failure). These activities serve the purpose of making the child realize that he is not alone. Furthermore, encouragement and honest praise for tasks completed come from peers and peer-leaders. Primary school boys who previously perceived themselves as 'outcasts' now realize that they are capable of giving support and encouragement to other primary school children whose situation may be more desperate than their own. It seems that the opinion held by others, especially peers at a Boys' Town is of greater significance to the primary school child at Boys' Town. Similarly Reeve (in Dinnage & Pringle, 1967:158) is of the view that children with 'lower self-esteem are much more sensitive to group opinion than the average person.'

These findings are consistent with the findings of Page and Clark (1977: 43) that forwarded that negative connotations were associated with institutional care that may be influential in undermining the self-esteem of children. Similarly, Mudaly (1984:234) reported 'perceptions of unwantedness and insignificance related to perceptions of parental rejection'.

This showed that although the differences were not statistically significant there was a trend in the expected direction. Along with the above factors primary school children at the institution were accessible to families by way of the five-day programme. Some primary school boys were going home regularly for weekends, occasionally every weekend and sometimes monthly or perhaps three weekends per term.

Furthermore a possible reason for this trend of statistical minimum difference in scores suggests that home-parent aspect was estranged from the child's conception of who he is and his evaluation of himself. This issue, unfortunately, has not been encountered in the literature reviewed, and is thus difficult to resolve at this stage

6.3.2   COMMENTS

An examination of the findings which emerged from the analysis of the self-esteem sub-scales for primary school children in the community reflected that the home-parent sub-scales (which describe perceptions of being valued in the home and positive parent-child interaction) correlated significantly with the general-self sub-scales (which assessed the individual's positive attitude towards the self). Predictably a significant relationship for the home-parent sub-score was absent in the study for the primary school child at a Boys' Town. This may suggest that an absence of the family is considered an adverse factor for a child at a Boys' Town. An important caveat that should considered when interpreting the findings of the home-self sub-scale is the implication of the connection between expressiveness and self-esteem. It would be an error to discount that children with a low self-esteem come from families that do not express themselves emotionally. These findings must be considered within the context of the general emotional climate of the institution. The lack of adult intervention from a caring aspect appears to be

more conducive to instilling feelings of emotional neglect. Furthermore, the feeling 'not belonging,' to the institution may have contributed to the lower levels of self-esteem relative to children from naturalized backgrounds. It may be proposed that the high parental role models for the primary school child from naturalistic-care background may have also contributed to the self-esteem being statistically high.

6.3.3 THE SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY SUB-SCALES SCORE

Table 6.6
Mean and Standard Deviation for Self- Esteem Inventory

Sub – scale	Social/Peers		School/Academic		Home Parent		General/Self	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Naturalistic	24.5	2.78	21.4	2.78	23.7	4.80	10.46	2.66
Boys' Town	16.0	3.30	17.0	5.82	16	3.60	7.65	2.84

6.3.3.1. INTERPRETATION

Table 6.6 reflects the means and standard deviations of sub – scale scores of self – esteem levels for pupils resident at a Boys' Town and from the wider community.

For the Self-Esteem Inventory sub-scale scores, somewhat more equivocal findings were recorded compared to the total Self- Esteem Inventory scores. Relative to the community children, children from a Boys' Town tended to evaluate themselves least positively across all sub-scales. They viewed themselves as negatively in (Home– Parent and General-Self) as well as acknowledging poor peer acceptance than their counterparts. Taken collectively these results suggest that children at a Boys' Town tend to report fairly accurately, but have a negative perception of themselves perhaps merely acknowledging their deficiencies and weaknesses.

To perceive the relevance of the findings, children from the broader community obtained the highest rating on the following:

Social-Self-Peer   (mean = 12.3),

School-Academic   (mean = 10.8),

Home-Parent   (mean = 10.4) and

General-Self   (mean = 10. 5)

Data extrapolated for primary school children at a Boys' Town yielded the following:

Social-Self Peers   (mean = 8. 0)

School-Academic   (mean = 8.5)

Home-Parent   (mean = 8 0) and

General-Self   (mean = 7.5)

In comparison, primary school children from the wider community valued themselves higher on the General-Self sub-scale. They also perceived being valued by their friends (Social-Self peer) and by the family. In addition, they perceived being valued by the school to a greater extent than those primary school children resident at a Boys' Town.

It is not surprising to observe that children at a Boys' Town have lower levels of self-esteem relative to children from the community, which is nevertheless consistent with research. Within this context, a somewhat large proportion of children from separated parents do have lower self- esteem than those whose families were intact (Rosenburg in Burns, 1982:204).

The preceding results indicate that the primary school children at a Boys' Town felt less competent regarding their academic functioning than did their peers in the community. The implications of this finding on academic performances are apparent. Children with deficient performance on school test tend to perform in a manner suggesting a more negative view towards their self than do children with adequate achievement performance. This finding is consistent within a theoretical framework that suggest that children at institutions (Boy's Town) express lower self-esteem than comparison groups (Burns, 1982:215). Given the heavy emphasis on academic achievement and the pressure from teachers and management on the child

to achieve academically. It is not surprising that most primary school children at the institution use academic attainment as an important index to self-worth. It thus seems that the child's life at a Boys' Town is largely the world of the school and his basic tasks are largely school tasks.

When measures of self-esteem specific to academic performance are applied in the sub-scale academic /school it was not surprising that the strength of the association with academic work decreases significantly. Despite some inconsistency, there appears to be meaningful and significant association between general self-esteem and academic performance for the primary school child at a Boys' Town. Within this context self-esteem may not be strong or significant in its effect on academic performance when it's at average or above average levels. Nevertheless, it seriously inhibits confidence and academic performances when the child's self-esteem was at a low level.

6.3.3.2. COMMENTS

The results of this section clearly demonstrate that primary school children who differ in self – esteem can have divergent interpretation of positive achievement outcomes and use different mechanisms for evaluating their relations. In the present context, high self – esteem children of the wider community seem to be predominantly success oriented. They related success to their ability in School – Academic, General-Self, Social-Peers and General – Self and Home – Parent and General – Self. For the primary school child at a Boys' Town Social-Peers and Home – Parent were important (indicated by table 6.6 as significant).

6.3.4.   CORRELATION OF SELF- INVENTORY

Table 6.7

Pearson's r Correlation of Self- Esteem Inventory for Pupils at a Boy's Town (n = 15)

Sub-scales	Social/Peers	Sch./Academic	Home/Parent	General/Self
Social/Peers	1.000			
School/Academic	- 0.06	1.000		
Home/Parent	0.545	0.458	1.000	
General/Self	0.473	- 0.162	0.120	1.000

r = 0.641 (critical value) p < 0.01 (two tailed)

r = 0.514 (critical value) p < 0.05 (two tailed)

6.3.4.1   INTERPRETATION

According to table 6.7 significant positive relationships is indicated for the following pairs of sub – scales for self-esteem for pupils living at a Boys' Town.

1] Social-Peers and Home-Parent

2] Social-Peers and General-Self

3] Home-Parent and School-Academic

Significant negative relationships are indicated for the following pairs of sub – scales.

1] Social-Peers and School-Academic
2] School-Academic and General – Self

Pearson's r Correlation of Self Esteem for pupils in the wider community (n = 15)

Table 6.8

Sub – scales	Social/Peers	School/Academic	Home/Parent	General/Self
Social/Peers	1.000			
School/Academi	0.387	1.000		
Home/Parent	0.369	0.367	1.000	
General/Self	0.539	0.510	0.525	1.000

r = 0.0641 (critical value) p < 0.01 (two tailed)

r = 0.0514 (critical value) p < 0.05 (two tailed)

For pupils living in the broader community significant positive relationships for self – esteem is indicated for the following pairs of sub – scales.

1] Social-Peers and School-Academic

2] Social-Peers and General-Self

3] School-Academic and General-Self

4] Home-Parent and General-Self

6.3.4.2   COMMENTS

The above results offer considerable support to the claim in literature that there is a positive correlation between self-concept and school achievement. The findings indicate that the primary school child at a Boys' Town displays similar characteristics to primary school children in institutions in the United States of America and Britain (Feinberg 1954: 224-227, Dinnage & Pringle 1967: 134-137).

Frequency Distribution on the Lie Scale for pupils at a Boys' Town and from the community

Table 6.9

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean
Naturalized	14	1	2	1	11	2	9	8	8.75
Boys' Town	7	7	4	7	10	1	8	1	5.6

Table 6.9 indicates the highest index of defensiveness, as demonstrated by the Self – Esteem Inventory, existed for primary school pupils from the wider community.

6.4.1.   INTRODUCTION

The analysis of peer relationships of the primary school child was attempted by means of both qualitative and quantitative data. To provide an in-depth discussion, data was used to answer the research questions formulated at the beginning of the study, namely the importance of the peer group for the primary school child resident at a Boys' Town. The importance of this relationship in influencing the child's social development was accentuated. Furthermore, the perception that the child domiciled in the dormitory had of his peers and the role that these perceptions play in the child's construction of his life world is emphasized in this section.

6.4.2   POSITIVE /NEGATIVE NOMINATIONS DIRECTED AT GROUP DYNAMICS WITHIN A BOY'S TOWN.

Figure 6.1
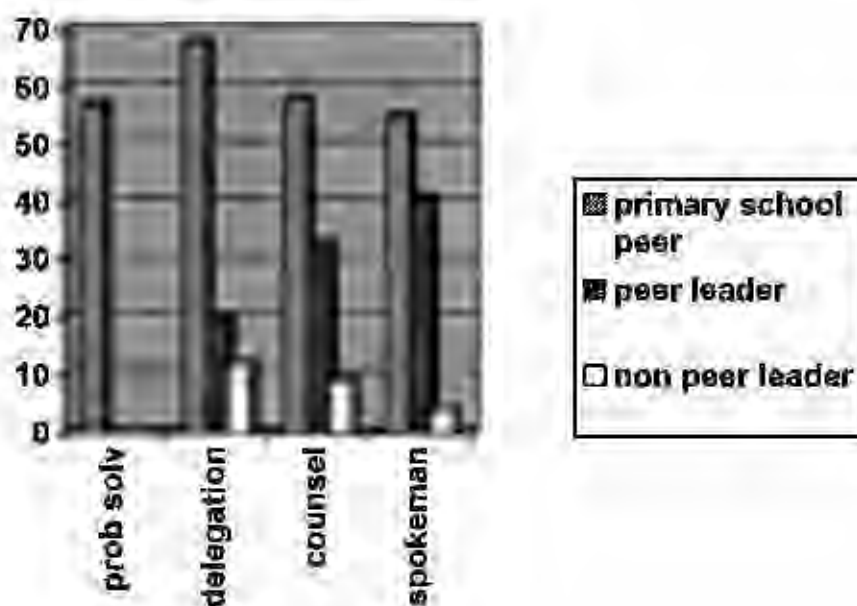
6.4.2.1 INTERPRETATION

Figure 6.1 indicates those primary school children resident within an institution such as a Boy's Town provides each other with the most important friendship network. In addition primary school children indicated that they derived their peer relationships from children living inside the institution.

It seems that it is within the dormitories that peer relationships are fostered and endured. Given the importance of peers at this stage of the child's development, the disruption of friendship can be particularly troublesome 10/15 (66%) of the primary pupils had new friends from the primary school standard at the institution. Occasional contact with their school peers from their previous community accounted for 33% (5/15). Interestingly, 7/15 (46%) of the primary pupils identified friends as the persons they most missed from their previous community. The child [12/15 (80%)] found a new friend at the institution in spite of the disruption in friendship. All 15 boys indicated that they wished to maintain contact with their friends from the institution after they were discharged.

Furthermore, figure 6.1 presents evidence to support the aims that children living within a Boys' Town provide each other with the most important peer network relationships. Within this context 57 % of the primary school children indicated they would approach peers from their own age group to solve their problems whilst 43 % indicated that they would approach a peer leader to problem – solve for them. Similar patterns exist for delegation of chores and duties, counseling and acting as a spokesperson for the child. Interestingly secondary school pupils received no nominations for problem – solving and less than 10 % in other areas.

6.4.3 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE NOMINATIONS DIRECTED AT PEERS DOMICILED IN THE DORMITORY

Figure 6.2
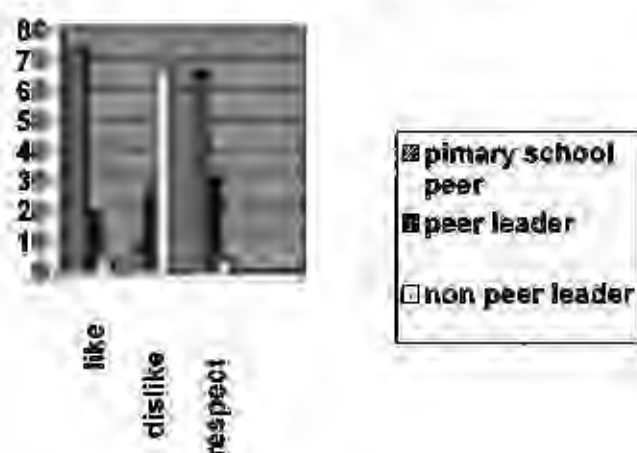
6.4.3.1 INTERPRETATION

Graph two indicates that 72% of primary school children's positive nominations (like) were directed towards their peers in the primary school standard domiciled within the same dormitory. Similarly the results also indicate that an average of 68% of negative nomination was directed at secondary pupils also domiciled within the same dormitory. In addition primary school pupils also indicated that they respect their primary school peers (66%) particularly those who were leaders. Secondary school pupils within the same dormitory were both disliked and not respected by the primary school child. They received positive nominations of 5% (like) and 4% (respect), respectively.

In addition, graph two indicated a pattern of conflict and situational withdrawal between the primary school child and his peers domiciled in the same dormitory. Evidently Graph Two reflected that a total 74% of all positive nominations and 7 % of all negative nominations were directed towards primary pupils domiciled in the dormitory.

For the majority of the primary school children, the most important and intense relationships are embedded in the dormitories. This is a management policy at the institution to house five to six primary pupils

together in the same dormitory with two or three secondary school pupils. The objective of housing together of primary school children was aimed at strong in-group cohesion with emphasis on shared group activities and goals.

Analyses of information yields that the secondary school pupils within the same dormitory as the primary school group received a higher percentage (67 %) of negative than positive nominations (5%). This indicates that negative involvement of the secondary school pupils within the dormitories was higher than positive involvement.

Although the primary school children were clearly alive to the importance of relationships between the children in the dormitory and within the institution as a whole, they were equally sensitive in their perception of their peers and of the institution. Therefore it was a tall order to expect them to have given sensitive or controversial details both in the interview and group-work situations. The data derived from group-work nevertheless provided an opportunity to examine the peer relationships amongst the primary school children at the institution. The primary school children at a Boys' Town were seen to be concerned for and tolerant of each other. Many of the primary school children seemed to have aggressive interchanges characterized by increasingly higher levels of mutual 'hurtfulness.' For example what begins as mild teasing frequently turns into serious name-calling, which often escalates into defamation about the other child's family. Interestingly, the termination of conflict was abrupt and without engaging either party to remedy or ameliorate the interpersonal rift.

The primary school child at a Boys' Town is encompassed both by conflict and disagreement as well as sharing and co-operation. The results nonetheless show that these young children and their primary school peers are motivated to disengage from their conflicts and reach equal solutions to a greater extent than their older peers at the institution are. These differences increase the probability that the children's relationship will continue once the disagreement ends. Figure 6.1 indicates that 57 % of the primary school pupils preferred his primary school peer to solve his problem as opposed to 45 % whom preferred his peer leader to assist in problem solving.

Thus far analyses of information focused on examining the strengths of peer relationships between the various components that comprise the peer group without necessarily detailing the specific interaction that changes over in these relationships. By contrast the next set of analyses relates to the interaction processes and the changes that occur in these processes over time.

Within this context three major findings emerged from the peer nomination analyses. The first finding that merits attention pertains to the general flow of interaction between the primary school child and peers in the dormitory. Figure 6.2 indicates that primary school children have serious communication difficulties with the secondary school pupils and inevitably share a poor relationship with them. The primary school child tends to avoid play with secondary school children because of their aggressiveness.

The primary school boys targeted ten secondary school pupils as 'bullies' domiciled in three separate dormitories. Most negative nominations were directed towards these boys (Figure 6.3).

A somewhat interesting finding emerged when the primary school child was asked to comment on these so-called 'bullies'. Responses seem to indicate that the cycle of bullying behaviours continued indefinitely even when the bigger boys were removed from the dormitories. As witnessed by these findings, the interaction between the primary school child and his older peers are characterized by less than optimal functioning, while both the primary school child and his older/ bigger peers exert a strong and negative influence on each other. Furthermore this experience suggests, regardless of how well intended staff efforts are within the treatment centre, there will always exist an equally powerful potential for the emergence of more destructive delinquent value systems.

The third finding concerns the child's dependence on the staff, for his security 66% (10/15), while the remaining 33% (5/15) formed friendships amongst themselves. Primary school children find support in sheer strength of numbers rather entering into a trusting relationship with a staff. It is beyond the scope of this study to speculate about the antecedents of the

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FINDINGS REGARDING SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD IN A BOYS' TOWN

SYNTHESIS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental aim of this study is to establish the life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town. To determine the life world of the primary school child it was necessary to compare the child's relationships with himself, his family and his interaction with his peers to that of primary school children resident in the wider community. The above problems have been investigated in-depth in the previous chapters. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a synthesis of the research undertaken. It is therefore imperative to recapitulate the statement of the problem, demarcation of the field of study and the aims and method of this investigation.

After a discussion of the foregoing, the main findings from the empirical research will be undertaken. This will be followed by a discussion of the primary school child's attempt to explore the relationships with his parents, peers and himself in constituting a meaningful life world. Conclusions drawn and the limitation of the investigation will follow this. Thereafter, the recommendations arising from the findings will be highlighted. Furthermore, the implications of the recommendations and suggestions for future research will be presented.

7.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem, with which the research was confronted with in the study, has already been referred to and adequately explained in chapter one. Briefly, it comprises the relationships the primary school child establishes with his parents, his peers and towards himself while he is resident at a Boys' Town.

FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

From the analysis and interpretation of information in chapter five, the

following findings regarding the life world of the primary school child at Boys' Town emerged:

- There is a significant difference in attitudes towards parents of primary school children living at a Boys Town and those primary pupils from the wider community.

- Primary school children resident in a Boys' Town manifested a significantly lower self-perception than those primary school children resident in the wider community.

- There is significant difference in academic performance between pupils from the wider community and those pupils residents at a Boys' Town.

7.3. MODES OF BECOMING

7.3.1. INTRODUCTION

The life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town can be represented as a network of relationships with objects, people and himself, that includes everything to which he attributes meaning and which he understands. It has been observed in chapter six that these relationships were often interdependent and interactive. It has also become apparent that the development of the primary school child as a person requires an understanding of the actualisation in his becoming. Within this context the findings in chapter six are presented with the modes of becoming, namely exploration, emancipation, distantiation, differentiation and objectivation. Furthermore, the findings in chapter six indicated that a child at a Boys' Town displayed in his becoming an inadequate actualisation that will be discussed with the essences of actualization (namely attribution of meaning, experiencing, involvement and self-transcendence.).

7.3.2. EXPLORATION

The primary school child's orientation to his life world at a Boys' Town is poor and at the same time he finds it difficult to understand his own situatedness. This arises from the fact that the primary school child lives his daily life as a unique member of a peer group that has the power to control his behaviour. Group pressure at a Boys Town is applied to motivate the child to behave,

and to be more conforming/accepting of the rules. The rules, routines and planning of the child's living experiences at a Boys' Town restrains the child in his becoming as experiences of exploration are limited. Limited experiences of exploration, in the form of play and thinking deny the primary school child at a Boys' Town an opportunity to explore the life world of the adult. In addition the child has not gained sufficient independence, and as result has formed a poor self–image of him. This self–image is of importance to the primary school child as it mirrors his success and achievements. Furthermore, the primary school child's reluctance to risk exploring his world results from the fear of failure. This unwillingness to participate in the task of becoming an adult is commonly displayed by a child at Boys' Town. This is indicative of the child's volitional education that has been neglected.

Nevertheless it should be emphasized that the primary school child's bodily exploration and constituting of his life world is a corporal mode of giving meaning to his world. By actively engaging in sports and recreation the primary school child experience his physical mode but show little interest in exploring his potential at other levels. Thus, with exploration the primary school child at a Boys' Town directs himself in constituting his life world through his corporeality.

Furthermore, the primary school child at a Boys' Town is insecure in his relationship with adults because of the peer group culture, which is a dominant feature at a Boys' Town. As a result of this insecure relationship the child's intentionality does not come into play. It has been observed that the child does not find the courage to venture out into expanding his world and become a person in his own right.

7.3.3   EMANCIPATION

The mode of emancipation for the primary school child at a Boys' Town is similar to that of children from the wider community. However, the circumstances surrounding this task will be different for children who are separated form their family of origin to children who remain in an intact family.

In view of his limited exploration the primary school child at a Boys' Town

constantly underestimates his potential at various levels and as a result he actualises this "inferior" potential. The child does not sufficiently emancipate towards adulthood and is kept worrying about his current circumstances.

From the review of interviews conducted it was clear that the child felt some responsibility for the factors leading to his admission into a Boys' Town. The child felt that he had little control over the forces determining what would happen to him, that is, whether he would stay at a Boys' Town or be transferred to an industrial or reform school. Although the child preferred to go home to his family, circumstances would ultimately prevent him from doing so. It seems that he has limited say at a Boys' Town over which he has any control. The fact that the primary school child had little or no freedom to make his own decisions, he would experience difficulty in facing the future independently.

It is thus evident that the primary school child at a Boys' Town does not develop, as he ought to according to his full potential. Moreover, he does not learn according to his learning abilities. Findings in chapter six support the view of a weakened will concerning his real scholastic potential. The primary school child at a Boys' Town regards himself as inadequately emancipating in his volition and acquisition of knowledge.

7.3.4. DISTANTIATION

The finding in chapter six has shown that a primary school child at a Boys' Town distances himself from his situatedness. In distantiating himself the primary school child has adopted an improper attitude in involving himself with things of the environment/ setting that are outside him. It could be stated then that the primary school child at a Boys' Town is dealing with pathic matters of a personal nature that is the child in effect has failed to control his emotional life by reason.

The primary school child at a Boys' Town constantly wishes to distantiate himself from his peer group, and readily identifies with an adult role model. The role of the adult (inclusive of teachers, principals and social workers) as primary pedagogic authority and the child's affective relation to the adults are therefore decisive.

Although it has been accepted that play is a good example of learning as experiencing in relation to things. The primary school child in a Boys' Town has not sufficiently distantiate himself from the pathic sphere by experiencing the world through play. It has been observed that the primary school child would rather remain idle than risk himself in illusive play thus remaining on the level of pathic play.

Given that the primary school child displayed a lack of concentration before and during admission at a Boys' Town, he is seen to be unable to sufficiently distantiate himself that is to get involve with the learning material.

7.3.5. DIFFERENTIATING

Whether the facility selected for a primary school child is a Boys' Town a Reform or an Industrial school, it is a strange environment for him in many ways. When he enters a Boys' Town his 'Gestalt' is altered, by being introduced not only into new individual relationships but also into a new pattern of organization and a different life style. The new environment is objectively superior to the one that he has left, in his capacity to meet his essential needs. Before, the primary school child can accept living at a Boys' Town he must have the opportunity to develop some trust and comfort in individual relationships and in a strange environment. The primary school child in a Boy's Town sees the world from a new vantagepoint, which evokes feelings of anxiety and insecurity. Insecurity and anxiety are therefore, signs of inadequate differentiating or broadening the child's life world. The primary school child is reluctant to fully actualise his potential and accordingly reveals a reluctance to differentiate. Given the fact the criterion for admission into a Boys' Town requires an intelligent quotient sufficient to achieve academically, the primary school child is 'unwilling' to differentiate according to this ability.

7.3.6. OBJECTIVATION

From the moment of arrival at a Boys' Town the primary school child is confronted with a well-planned controlled environment, a group living situation and a range of relationships with peers and adults. In addition he is

further confronted by unfamiliar interpersonal situations to which he has to adapt to. It has been observed that this situation evokes uncertainties and anxieties even among relatively well – adjusted children. It can be frightening and threatening experience to primary school child being admitted into a Boys' Town. In addition placement at a Boys' Town causes enormous changes in the child's life. In view of the above too much is expected of the primary school child at the latency period of development. The child does not readily divest himself into these interpersonal relationships. It is too risky for him to become fully involved, especially if he preconceives of the challenge as being far too difficult for him. The primary school child's indifference stems from lack of involvement in his treatment pogramme, not being involved in the classroom and relationships with others.

In terms of his schoolwork the primary school child experiences serious problems as result of the backlog. Schoolwork becomes too complicated for the child and he consequently withdraws into his world of experience. In this regards he remains subjectively involved in his schoolwork, as cognitive issues do not appeal to him,

7.4. THE ESSENCE OF ACTUALISATION

7.4.1   ATTRIBUTION OF MEANING

From the time the primary school child is admitted to a Boys' Town he orientates himself towards the world in which he has been placed into. He finds himself in a community of people and things, which are strange to him and assigns meaning to these situations. The primary school child at a Boys' Town attributes limited meaning to his work especially at school. The findings in chapter six clearly demonstrate that the primary school child at a Boys' Town, relative to the child from the wider community lacks interest and motivation in school. This results in the child performing poorly academically. The child experiences difficulty in concentrating in class, solving problems and accepting rules. His disposition towards his schoolwork can be summarized as follows:

- Unwilling to exert himself.
- Does not apply himself immediately when homework and assignments

are given,

- Completes work untidily and incompletely.

Observation of the primary school child's dedication and problem solving clearly demonstrates that he is not intent on communicating with the world. His actions of ascribing significance to matters (exerting himself, attaining the freedom and planning his future) are all of insufficient quality. It is evidently clear that the primary school child at a Boys' Town does not develop as he ought to be and neither does he learn according to his potential.

The development of the child at a Boys' Town while he is in primary school also depends on a healthy parent – child relationship. The primary school child still depends upon the parent and is strongly influenced by them while placed at a Boys' Town. The child's involvement with the world outside his family home also entails new responsibilities for the parent. For example, the parent has handed over of parental duties, participates in the child's treatment plan and maintains contact with he institution. Although the primary school child lives apart from his parent his relationship with them is not adversely affected. Furthermore he attributes satisfactory meaning to this relationship. His relationship with the parents still remains a vital anchorage point for his relation with the school and peers.

An important aspect of the primary school child at a Boys' Town is the formation of peer-relationships. In chapter six it was observed that the primary school child is constantly involved in an interactive relationship of acceptance and rejection with his peers. There is little question that the peer group relationship is indispensable, which consequently has an enormous impact on the child's self – realisation. Relative to primary school pupils from the wider community the primary school child at a Boys' Town also needs a peer–group to actualise his significance and orientation. In respect of the primary school child at a Boys' Town, relationships with the peer-group are both positively and adversely affected by their attribution of meaning.

7.4.2 EXPERIENCING

When the home life has been disrupted by placement at a Boys' Town and having experienced the turmoil of a problematic family situation, one wonder how the child fares at a Boys' Town. In view of his traumatic separation from family, the primary school child can reasonably be seen as being vulnerable to impaired performance in school.

The analysis of interview data indicated that the primary school child at a Boys' Town experiences feelings of anxiety about separation from both his family and neighbourhood. Every child at a Boys' Town consciously or unconsciously feels some ambivalence towards his parents that is 'wanting them' but at times wishing to be rid of them. This must be seen against the background, that the familiarity of the child's home, the place he sleeps, his former peers and school and the neighbourhood to which he is accustomed have special meaning in the child experiencing of his world and his place in it.

Relative to the primary school child from the wider community, the primary school child at a Boys' Town does not have pleasant experiences and is unhappy and lonely. Emanating from these unpleasant experiences are feelings of helplessness, distrust and worthlessness. Regardless of how good or bad a Boys' Town is for the primary school child, the child usually leaves his family against his will and feels a quality of helplessness that are reminiscence of the helplessness of early childhood (pre – primary school).

In terms of his relationship with his peers the primary school child at a Boys' Town experiences both acceptance and rejection. The primary school child experiences of acceptance are from peers that are of his developmental age. It has been frequently observed that the primary school child manifested inappropriate behaviour when rejected by secondary pupils. The primary school child responded by withdrawing from social interaction and expressed feelings of hostility and aversion towards the secondary school pupils.

It has been observed in chapter six that the primary school child at a Boys' Town did not experience praise from teacher, remedial teachers and tutors because of the poor performance in schoolwork. The child often felt

dissatisfied and angry with himself and as a result, experiences at school were limited and less intense.

Clearly the primary school child at a Boys' Town experiences an unfulfilled longing to be recognized and accepted in his own right. This unfulfilled longing to be accepted and recognized is often directed at adults and peers in his immediate life world. As a result of his unpleasant experiences with family, peers and schoolwork, the primary school child at a Boys' Town experiences his life world as worthless.

7.4.3   INVOLVEMENT

Placement at a Boys' Town has restrained the primary school child's experience in a 'real world.' Group living and group involvement in all aspects (except for the teacher – child relationship and one to one counseling) makes little room for individuality. The child is realistically dependent on adults (who are not his parents) for his nuturance and care and lacks familiarity with the outside world. He responds with profound fear of the unknown and the strange world that lies ahead of him. The time between leaving his family and becoming familiar with and safe in the new situation, he is a frightened child regardless of what superficial impression he may give. Given that the child experiences sustained separation from his home and family, he has reason to shy away from meaningful human relationships. In this context his involvement in relationship at a Boys' Town is not of choice but out of necessity.

In terms of schoolwork an attitude of indifference and lack of motivation mark his involvement. The primary school child's unwillingness to learn is often associated with a multitude of factors such as incorrect education from his previous school, truancy, inconsistency in parenting as well as rejection from the peer group. Lack of involvement in his schoolwork and reluctance to learn is the result of continual experiences of failure in the learning situation. Seen pedagogically the primary school child in a Boys Town under actualises his intellectual potential by his limited involvement with the learning task. Even though the primary school child attributes some meaning to his schoolwork he may still encounter problems in his involvement with his

schoolwork such as educational backlog and lack of specialized teachers.

Within this context the primary school child at a Boys' Town is constantly experiencing problems, obstacles and anxieties.

In the elucidation of the essences of actualisation evidently the primary school child at a Boys' Town experiences his life world unfavourably concerning primary school children from the wider community. Also parents of the primary school at a Boys' Town display undesirable attitudes that adversely affect his involvement with them. Along with the foregoing he experiences rejection pupils older than him and experiences the outer world as a threat whilst at the same time feels secure at a Boys Town.

7.5 THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD'S RELATION WITH HIMSELF

The primary school child at a Boys' Town is expected to function at Piaget's Concrete Operational level, and affectively he is concerned with achieving a sense of industry while at the same time needs to develop a positive image of himself. At a Boys' Town his relationship formation is focused on his world of experience and is involved with adults (who are not his parents), teachers and an intact peer group. The primary school child's formation of relationship is the means whereby he comes to know his world. Apart from coming to know his world the primary school child must also come to know himself, since it is true that he will become what he thinks he is. It is for this reason then that the ultimate aim of a Boys' Town is the self-actualization of the child as person in his own right. The aim is to help the child to become the best he is able to become within his capabilities and potential.

At a Boys' Town the primary school child finds himself in a world that he has to share with other children, a world of norms and accepted standards. It is this world that he has to come to terms with and which will determine how he will perceive his own worth. Information from chapter six indicated that the primary school child's self image is to a great degree influenced by what occurs at a Boys' Town (pedagogic situation). The harshness of secondary school children and the peer leaders have a profound impact on him. Furthermore this rejection he experiences diminishes his sense of belonging.

The acceptance he experiences from peers of his age level is of little compensation to his self-worth.

Success in academic work is of importance and only those who reach above 'a prescribed standard' are positively rewarded for their efforts or are seen by a Boys' Town as adequate in the face of academic demands. The primary school child at a Boys' Town cannot, for one or a number of reasons achieve such standards with ease. There is little chance of the primary school child having rewarding experiences in an environment such as a Boys' Town. The primary school child is put at an unfair disadvantage because of failure to meet these expectations. All too often the child is thrust into an educational setting in which he is expected to achieve at a level beyond his potential and capabilities. Under such circumstances the development of positive self – attitudes become extremely difficult. Table 6.8 (page 132) clearly indicates experiences of failure are directly related to a development of negative self – esteem. Within this regard, actualisation of academic potential in the primary school child having a negative self – image is virtually impossible.

7.6   THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD'S RELATION WITH HIS PARENT

It is important to recognize the concept of 'significant other' has various parameters of which the significant adult is but one facet in the life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town. This concept of 'significant adult' represents for the child at a Boys' Town the recognition that in a fragmented and differentiated world not all persons with whom the child interacts with have identical or compatible perspectives. In order for action to precede the child must attribute meaning to these relationships. Within this context, the primary school child attributes significant meaning to his relationship with his family.

The family as a unit with its dynamic functions has and will always be part of the child's life, equilibrium and his sense of identity. Each relationship within the family has had its place, whether primarily positive or negative in the child's psychic equilibrium. The familiarities of the home, siblings, grandparents and neighbourhood to which he was accustomed to, have had especial meaning to the child's experiencing of his world and his place in it.

Any aspect of human interaction and of the environment in which the child experiences continuity is lost, when he leaves it. The family is then perceived by the primary school child at a Boys' Town as the 'significant other' and a source of influence for the child. As a source of influence the parents have a potentially strong impact on the life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town. Perhaps what is most important to reiterate at the outset is that parents are the preeminent significant adults in the life of the primary school child at a Boys' Town.

However the findings in chapter six reflected that the primary school child did not experience his home upbringing as a place of safety. His relationship with his parents was not based on trust and confidence that consequently led to an unstable affective relationship. The child's affective relationship with the parent is further restrained by the conflict within the family as expressed by results in table 6.3 in chapter six (page 143).

Regarding the actualisation and the exercise of authority in the family, authority was investigated through the family functioning report and interviews. The results reflected that the primary school child showed little respect for parental authority and discipline before admission to a Boys' Town. Besides the foregoing, the reasons for the primary school child's admission at a Boys' Town indicated a need for authoritative guidance. Authoritative guidance is therefore vitally important in helping the child to arrive at a responsible acceptance of his situation at a Boys' Town and achieve adulthood.

Finally it could be stated that a Boys' Town could be seen as an extension of the primary school child's domestic life world. In this respect a Boys' Town reconstitutes and restores the education at home, in a sense that a Boys' Town aims at the extension and a reconstruction of the family tasks. While allowing the child to act independently in constituting his own life world, a Boys' Town upholds the values and norms of the community.

7.7   THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD'S RELATION WITH HIS PEERS

A crucial aspect of the primary school child's life world at a Boys' Town

seems to be his relationship with peers. At a Boys' Town, peers approximate in size and age, whereas at home there is a hierarchy with siblings being older or younger. Within this context differences in competencies at home are expected, but in his peer group at a Boys' Town the primary school child need only show he is at least equal with others. In contrast to the home where the primary school child had to be love – worthy, within the peer group at a Boys' Town the child is expected to be respect–worthy, competitive and competent. It is evident from data extrapolated from interviews and group–work and observation that the penalties of failure are self–esteem components of humiliation, rejection and derogation from others and self. These differences in expectation between home and peer – group are due to the former placing a high premium on behaviour while the latter places it on performances.

In view of the above there is little question that the peer – group of the primary school child at a Boys' Town is important as it replaces the family as a major source of feedback. Furthermore it also provides self – esteem, mutual support, standards, opportunities to practice and rehearsal of tasks in preparation for life after living at a Boys' Town. It is within the peer group of primary school children that the child's identity seems to be secured and his sense of self – importance, which had been lost when he left the family situation, is regained.

The primary school child's experience and involvement in his peer group create opportunities for a learning relationship to develop. This learning does not refer to upbringing, because it does not take place under the authority of an adult. It must also be noted that this learning relationship manifests itself as a phenomenon of becoming. The primary school child at a Boys' Town in the course of becoming wants to become someone like others. It is within this context that the child's modes of being are experienced in his relationship with his peers.

Along with the above, it must be noted that the stability of the peer group is not easily maintained, because of shifts in child population and turnover of staff. Intake demands from the community and financial considerations to fill vacancies expeditiously often pressure administrators to compromise

established guidelines for therapeutically and educationally balanced peer –
groups. Staff turnover that is not easily controllable adds to the disruption or
discontinuity of relationships and group functioning.

7.8   CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion drawn from the foregoing is that the primary school child at a
Boys' Town in constituting his life world does not create a new life world but
in renewing of an existing life world in which significance unfolds. However in
his involvement with teachers, peers and parents he has unpleasant
experiences such as unhappiness, worthlessness and discontent. The result
of these unpleasant experiences restrains the primary school child in his
becoming and the meanings attributed are negative. The conclusion drawn
from the above is that the child experiences his life world as one of doubt
and uncertainty. It is understandable then that the primary school child at a
Boys' Town will not arrive at a fully – fledged adulthood as a result of his
distorted world relationships. The primary school child at Boys' Town is
poorly adjusted to his situation and inadequately orientated to his life world of
relations. Consequently his actualisation, is badly affected, since no child
can realize himself effectively without positive relationships, especially a
positive relationship with himself.

Furthermore, there is proof of a developmental lag that in the primary school
child's learning performance that does not coincide with his potential. The
nature of discrepancy was seen in terms of the quality of actualisation of the
primary school child's development. These discrepancies need to be
continually assessed and evaluated to ascertain the reasons for the child's
present action or inaction. It is therefore necessary to examine the child's
experiential world; probing the child's affective and cognitive interpretation of
meaning pertaining to himself and the realities of life.

The tasks and function of a Boys' Town in the life world of the child is all
embracing and includes the following:

- imparting of knowledge,
- transference of skills and

- imparting of norms, ideals and attitudes

The consistency of reporting of problems concerning the affective involvement with parents and the bullying of the child by secondary school children is troubling. It calls for greater and more personal attention to the primary school child's care and security while at a Boys' Town. Effort should be made to search for ways to support, guide and strengthen relationships to convey to the child a sense of being loved and cared for. All of which is so important in the child's becoming

7.9   RECOMMENDATIONS

The life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town incorporates the relationships of the present investigations, specifically concerning the influential role of the self esteem, the perception of family functioning, the child's relationship with his peers and scholastic achievements. Since the self—concept is the focal point of relationships in the life world of the child, intervention with the purpose of enhancing the child's concept of himself must be effected. Thus, intervention at the level of enhancing the child's concept of himself may serve to influence positive outcomes for the child's academic achievement. Intervention also contributes to the reduction of anxiety as a result of the child's removal from his home, family and community peers.

It has also been demonstrated that the primary school child is involved in school activities for a considerable amount of time at a Boys' Town. As a result a Boys' Town plays a critical and decisive part in the formation of the primary school child's self – concept. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated in chapter six that the primary school child develops a predominantly negative concept of himself while at a Boys' Town. The conclusions derived from the previous chapter can be combined with two goals that is enhancing self esteem and including parents as partners in the child's treatment plan. This is important to support the child that he may progress on his way towards independent self-realization. It is hoped that a programme of change is designed in such a way that these goals are attended to. Within this context the following recommendations are highlighted.

primary school child's security and dependency with their teachers and professional staff. There is however empirical evidence to suggest that children in institutions enter the teacher-child relationship with expectations and orientations derived from their maternal attachment relationship. This relationship with the teacher in child-care is however independent of the child's maternal attachment (Goosens & Ijzendoorn, 1990:836, Howes & Hamilton, 1992: 876).

6.4.4.2. COMMENTS

Although the institution had an open-policy regarding peers from the community visiting the boys, friendship contact conducted after school hours or on weekends was limited. The following observations were made in these regards:

- The primary school pupils were reluctant to invite friends to the institution, but were willing to accept invitations to visit or attend birthday parties of their friends in the community.
- Much of the free time that was available to the child was spent on sports coaching and life-skills programmes. Pupils however welcomed this as friends from the community were invited to attend/participate in these programmes.
- The primary school pupils were afraid that the bigger boys would embarrass them in the presence of their community friends (one pupil was afraid because his peer leader threatened to tell his friends from the community of his bed- wetting if he did not improve on his behaviour).
- Remedial and tuition classes were conducted after school and this was done during the child's free time.
- Almost all the primary school pupils were unaware of the rules that existed regarding friends that visited at the institution.
- The pupils were of the opinion that the community had a misconception of what a Boys' Town is all about. Pupils felt that some members of the community referred to the institution as 'juvenile prison,' 'a reform school,' 'an orphanage' or 'an industrial school'. Unfortunately some contacts with community members were not friendly. Several pupils

- mentioned local hostility or complaints perhaps exacerbated by incidents arising when boys abscond from the institution.

6.4.5 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE NOMINATIONS DIRECTED AT PEERS RESIDING BOTH AT A BOY'S TOWN AND FROM THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Figure 6.3
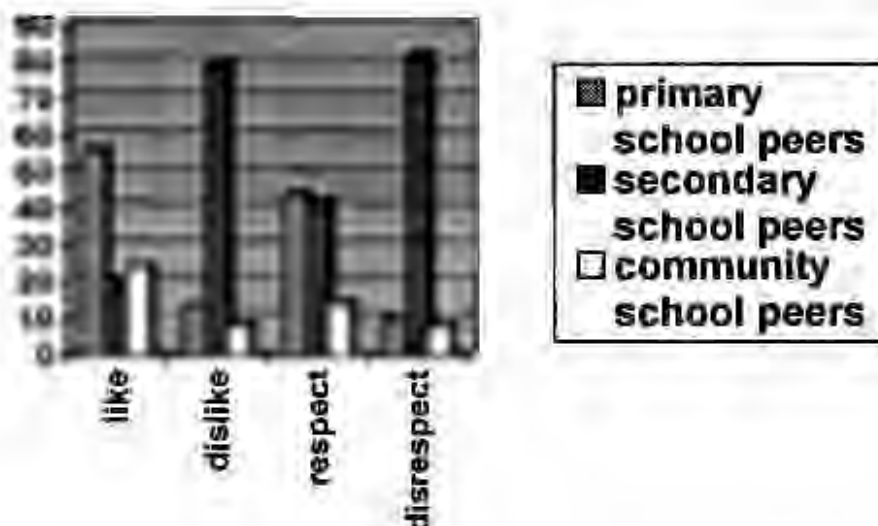
6.4.5.1. INTERPRETATION

Graph Three indicated that 28% of primary school pupils preferred peers from the community while 56% preferred primary school children from a Boys' Town. In addition 20% of the primary school children also preferred peers from the secondary school standards from the institution to be their friends. The unexpected nomination toward secondary school pupils may be attributed to the child's sibling/s who are in secondary school standards.

Given the preceding factors that prevented peers from the community visiting the child at a Boys' Town, the primary school child had an average of 30-45 minutes free time per day to either engage in recreational activities or entertain friends before supper was served.

Nevertheless the primary pupils were appreciative of being sent to religious institutions in the community. The researcher observed that the religious institutions seemed quite active generally, and were extremely helpful in discharging an impersonal moral duty towards the residents of the institutions. Furthermore the local cinema manager enjoyed a reciprocal relationship with the boys.

The overall percentage of positive mixed -- sex nominations amounted to 3%. This low percentage of mixed-sex nomination indicated the 'cleavage' that existed in the institution amongst the primary school children at a Boys' Town. This was predictable and in keeping with studies that indicate a marked 'cleavage' in children's' friendship especially in the latency period (Clarke & Friedman, 1987:489).

The above clearly encapsulates the dynamics at play in peer relationships between primary school pupils at a Boys' Town. In so doing there are several important cautions that should be raised regarding the findings of the present study. Firstly, the definition of 'well liked' and 'disliked' relied on the child's nomination of how much he interacted with the other children. Although the primary school child's nomination of others has been found to correspond with observational measures in group-work, discrepancies between the child's nominations and the degree to which they interact with his peers exist. Moreover young children's' nominations can be quite fluid and changeable.

6.4.4.2   CONCLUSION

In conclusion the 'unrestricted' measure was specially administered to indicate friendship groups available to the primary school child living at a Boys' Town. Results based on the 'unrestricted' sociometric data indicate that the dormitory was the single most important peer relationship network for the primary school child at a Boys' Town. Although the primary school child had contact with peers from the community, these friendships were seldom conducted after school hours or during the weekends. Associations with these children from the community also proved to be problematic for the primary school child.

6.5.1 THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD WITHIN THE PEER GROUP SYSTEM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN A BOY'S TOWN.

As already indicated earlier (pages 67-69) the primary school child is subject to a peer – group system of self – government. The peer-group system of self-government at Boys' Town is structured in such a way that the primary school child seems to be systematically disadvantaged. Data from interviews and group-work indicates that the primary school child grappled with the 'system of qualification' and 'pocket money.' The system of qualification entails a daily evaluation of the child's behaviour, schoolwork, performance and general attitude. This process determines his pocket money and progress with the system in acquiring leadership status. A peer leader conducted this daily evaluation of the child. According to the primary school child the 'bigger boys' and peer leaders knew how to use the system against them. Because of their relative powerlessness primary school children at the institution were easier to manage and punishment such as withdrawal of privileges was generally practiced on the primary school child. The general picture of the peer-group of self-government at the institution as perceived by the primary school child can be traced to the peer counselors/leaders' management of the "court system." The court system is a judicial inquiry into the child's misbehaviour. The child was of the opinion that the peer-group system of self-government offered them very little guidance in group activities. Whatever contributions made by the peer leadership council were not reflective of any peer-role patterns directed towards group goals. The following are comments extracted from interviews and group-work sessions.

- 'Leaders get the smaller boys to do their chores/house-jobs (cleaning of the living environment) for them.'

- 'Leaders do not return anything they take from us, especially our pocket money.'

- 'Leaders do not punish other leaders when they hit us.'

- 'They influence the smaller boys to smoke.'

- 'Leaders do not know how to evaluate the boys.'

Furthermore, the researcher observed that peer council meetings (page 68) which form an integral part of the peer-group system of self-government seemed to consume too much time. This seeming waste of valuable time was due to several causes:

- The primary school child talked off the point during these meetings.
- The chairpersons of these meetings are too inexperienced in thought organization and too insecure in technique of procedure to conserve time in decision making.
- The teachers and professional staff remained in the background of these meetings; as a result concrete suggestions made by the professional team are relatively small.
- Meetings often encroached on general schoolwork activities. The more industrious primary school children felt the inconveniences.
- A general observation may be made by the researcher, that a self-government programme tends to encourage fault finding and tattling. As a result group friction seemed to run in epidemics.

The above indicates dramatically that a proper integration of the peer- group system for primary school children had not been achieved at this Boys' Town. Furthermore, the efforts of the teachers and the professional staff were being continually undermined by life in the dormitory. The peer leaders were ineffective in positively influencing the primary school child because they supported and accentuated misbehaviour. The peer group system of self-government plays an important role in the life world of the primary school child at a Boys' Town. For instance the peer-group dispenses praise, reproachment, acceptance or rejection on a wide scale. The question of whether the benefits of maintaining primary school children at Boys' Town out-weigh the risks of serious harm remains open to debate. The results of the study suggest that the primary school child view his stay at a Boys' Town both positively and negatively.

6.5.2. CONCLUSION

These findings relate to the degree of predictability in the primary school child's attitude toward the peer-group system of self-government. As reflected in Figure 6.3 the primary school child at a Boys' Town preferred peer leaders who are at the same grade as they are and dislike those who are higher in standard than them. Within this context the researcher noted that the primary school children were targeted for doing most of the chores in the dormitory. The next most frequent state observed was that the primary boys 80 % (12 /15) chose his primary school peer as his leader. What this indicates is that given an antecedent event when either the primary school child or a bigger boy are both delegated a task, it seems that the primary school child remains consistent whereas the bigger boy alternates between an active and passive state. A consequence of this resultant pattern is that the 'bigger boys' make or break the harmony in the dormitory. Also implicit in this finding is the notion that the primary school child rejects the peer group system of self-government as implemented by the institution. Clearly when attitudes are so predictable it also implies that the institution is providing the primary school child with fewer opportunities for development. In the field of youth care the programme of self-government offers a vast and promising area of exploration for adolescents and youth. Until studies are undertaken which will examine it's potential at different age-levels, over extended periods of time, and under varying conditions, the peer-group system of self – government in it's present form is unacceptable for the primary school child at a Boys' Town

6.6   ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN A BOY'S TOWN

Comparisons of the mean scores for scholastic achievement reveal that primary school children from the wider community performed significantly better than the primary school children from a Boys' Town. The school performances of the primary school children from both care backgrounds were appraised on three occasions. The child's previous school record (1996) constituted the baseline for interpreting the child's level of academic performance.

Tables 6.10 to 6.15 indicate that the overall performance for mathematics primary school child at a Boy's Town was particularly low. Nevertheless, their performance in other subjects were somewhat equivalent to that of the primary school child from the community school of Seatides Primary School but lower than that of La Mercy Primary School.

The relationship between self-worth and academic achievement, however, is most pronounced when measures of academic-self were employed on the Self- Esteem Inventory. The validity of these findings, especially concerning primary pupils in a Boy's Town, may be demonstrated by a trend of statistical equivalent outcomes yielded on the school-academic sub-scales. Analyses of the sub-scales indicate differences in scores for primary school children from both the communities' (10.78), and at a Boys' Town (8.5). Furthermore, Pearson's Rank Order Correlation (page 132) between the sub-scales, school/academic and general/self was calculated for pupils from both backgrounds. This assessed the degree of association between the general self and academic performances. The results obtained were significant; for example pupils from a Boys' Town obtained -0.16 as compared with 0.5 for pupils from the community. This suggests that the primary school child at a Boys' Town has a lower self-esteem level in school related matters than the child from the wider community. In addition, the primary school child at a Boys' Town perceived himself as inadequate and unable to handle problems occurring in the school situation. Problems were approached fearfully with the initial premise that he does not have the ability to overcome the lack of initiative and helplessness in the face of crisis and when decision making is

necessary. As indicated in Table 6.8 the positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement was evident for children in the wider community.

There is however considerable uncertainty, regarding the causes of low educational achievements of children in institutions. The findings suggest that the child's early history before entry into a Boys' Town may have profound effect on the educational attainment in middle childhood. Children who can be presumed to have experienced poor parenting and had been compulsorily removed from their parents did not appear to have recovered educationally. Several studies suggest that children in institutions such as a Boy's Town had a poor start in schooling. This variable influences their school performances (Dinnage & Pringle, 1967:135).

Furthermore a conceptualization of family dynamics may also provide a plausible explanation for the poor academic performances of the primary school child at a Boys' Town. The absences of parental stability and supportiveness are among the factors that negatively impact on the educational achievement of the child at a Boys' Town. The intimate interaction within the home significantly influences the academic achievements of children from the wider community. A primary source of achievement motivation is assumed to flow from the kind of relationship that has been established between parent and child.

Most of the primary school children in a Boys' Town had experienced a great deal of discontinuity in schooling. 9/15 boys had been in two different primary schools and 2/15 had been at least in three schools before coming into the institution. In this instance 3/15 remained in the same school prior to admission to a Boy's Town. It seems that not only does contact with family become attenuated but children also lose contact with familiar sights and sounds of neighbourhood, friends, schoolmates and teachers.

Information derived from a series of sequential interviews conducted by the researcher identified the following factors regarding poor academic achievement.

- Pupils were expected to remediate educational backlog (sometimes 1-2 years) in one to two weeks.

- Teachers are not suitably qualified to manage behavioral problems in the classroom.

- Remedial classes conducted after school hours were merely an extension of mainstream teaching.

- Homework was completed during remedial classes.

- Recreational time was insufficient.

- Books were stolen, mislaid and willfully damaged prior to examinations.

Academic failure therefore emerged as a single most dramatic factor for the primary school child at a Boys' Town. At the time of the study a substantial number (9/ 15) of primary school children who entered a Boys' Town, were attending classes in grades lower than their appropriate age level. Within this context 2/15 boys were educationally handicapped by at least two full years. Their performance was far behind their counterparts in the community in ability to understand and keep up with learning demands even though the intelligence quotient was between 90-105. Information extrapolated from the child's Individual Treatment Plan (ITP) revealed a history of anxiety, school difficulties, poor achievement and a progressive increase in school problems. These problems included truancy, acting out behaviours such as temper tantrums and aggressiveness. The largest category of handicap was related to poor study-habits with 13/15 boys indicated as having problems in this area. The school difficulties could not be attributed to low intelligence as the criteria for admission to a Boys' Town stipulated a minimum intelligence quotient score of 90.

However, it must be stressed that while some pupils were motivated in school and schoolwork for most of the primary school children the school experience was a drawn-out contest with teachers and others in authority.

6.7 SUMMARY OF SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM A BOY'S TOWN AND PUPILS FROM THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The results of the analysis of scores for scholastic achievement reveal that the primary school pupil form the wider community performed significantly better academically than the pupils from a Boys' Town. The findings of the School-Academic sub – scale on the Self – Esteem Inventory (page 132), also demonstrated a similar trend of statistical equivalent outcome. The outcome of the School – Academic sub – scale was found to be significantly different for pupils from a Boys' Town and for pupils from the wider community.

The performances in individual subjects as indicated by the report cards reflect that the primary school child at a Boys' Town was assessed to be below average as compared to his peers in the wider community. The following tables and figures provide a comprehensive overview of the scholastic achievements.

Scholastic performances of grade five pupils from a Boys' Town and from two community schools namely Seatides and La Mercy Primary during the Second Term (1996).

Table 6.10.

	La Mercy Primary	Seatides Primary	Boys' Town
	Mean	Mean	Mean
English	61	56	57
Afrikaans	53	56	43
Mathematics	49	50	28
General Science	64	53	37
History	61	45	49
Geography	57	58	42
Total	57	53	42

Table 6.11

Scholastic performances for grade five pupils at a Boys' Town and from two community schools namely Seatides and La Mercy Primary at the year end (1996)

	La Mercy Primary	Seatides Primary	Boys' Town
	Mean	Mean	Mean
English	72	59	46
Afrikaans	59	62	30
Mathematics	54	47	26
General Science	61	61	34
History	48	63	26
Geography	61	63	27
Total	59	56	31

Figure 6.4 reflects a constant decline in schoolwork performances for pupils from a Boys' Town. Performance declined from an average of 42% in the first quarter to 31 % in the final quarter. In comparison primary pupils from the wider community performed consistently at 58 % for pupils at La Mercy primary and 53 % for pupils at Seatides Primary. Pupils at a Boys' Town consistently experienced problems in Mathematics and General Science that invariably depressed their percentages below the 40 % for the third and fourth quarters.

Scholastic Performances for grade six pupils at a Boys' Town and from the community schools namely Seatides and La Mercy Primary during the second term (1996).

Table 6.12

	La Mercy Primary	Seatides	Boys' Town
	Mean	Mean	Mean
English	69	54	46
Afrikaans	66	64	46
Mathematics	59	54	42
General Science	60	53	45
History	61	60	41
Geography	60	53	44
Total	62	56	44

Scholastic Performances for grade six pupils at a Boys' Town and from the community namely Seatides and La Mercy Primary at the year end (1996).

Table 6.13

	La Mercy Primary	Seatides Primary	Boys' Town
	Mean	Mean	Mean
English	64	55	36
Afrikaans	71	61	37
Mathematics	58	56	35
General Science	63	55	35
History	56	53	33
Geography	57	58	35
Total	61	56	35

Cumulative summary of scholastic performance during the year (1996) for
Grade Six primary school children resident at a Boys' Town and from two
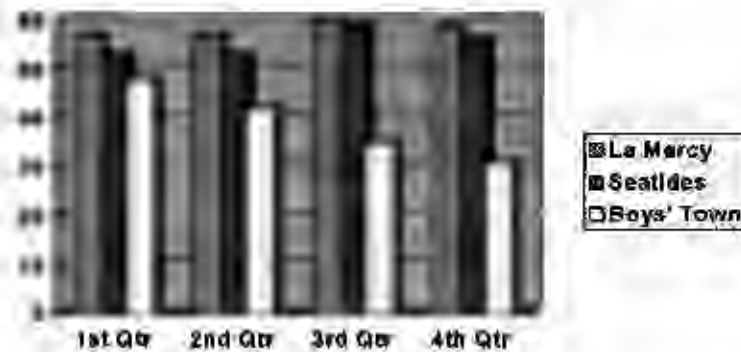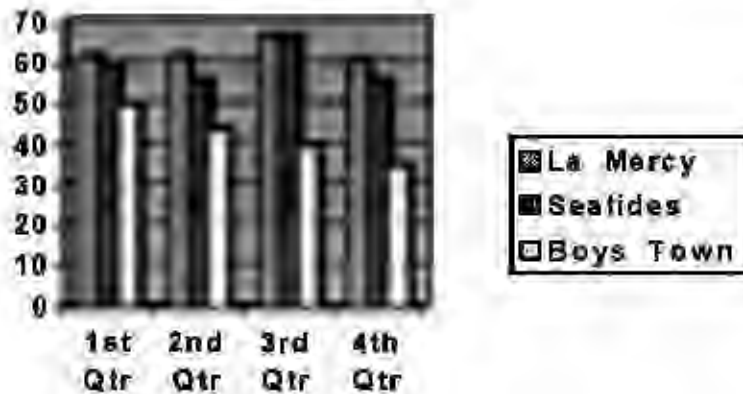community schools namely Seatides and La Mercy Primary.
Figure 6.5

Figure 6.5 reflects a constant decline in scholastic performances for pupils
residing at a Boys' Town. Performances for the third and fourth quarter
were below the 40 % mark. However scholastic performances for pupils
from the community remained consistent at 50 % and 60 % for pupils from
Seatides and La Mercy Primary respectively. Negative and disruptive
behaviour by 4 pupils can account for the poor performances during the
third and fourth quarter. These pupils sporadically absconded from the
institution and were frequently guilty of truancy. In this regard, one pupil was
returned to the custody of his parents, one pupil was transferred to a place
of safety and one pupil to a school of industry.

Scholastic Performances for grade seven pupils at a Boys' Town and from community schools namely Seatides and La Mercy Primary during the second term (1996).

Table 6.14

	La Mercy Primary	Seatides Primary	Boys' Town
	Mean	Mean	Mean
English	69	60	48
Afrikaans	57	50	33
Mathematics	62	41	30
General Science	65	57	32
History	71	45	33
Geography	58	45	30
Total	63	48	43

Scholastic Performances for grade seven pupils living at a Boys' Town and from the wider community at the year end (1996).

Table 6.15

	La Mercy Primary	Seatides Primary	Boys' Town
	Mean	Mean	Mean
English	69	72	45
Afrikaans	59	56	38
Mathematics	59	42	27
General Science	71	56	35
History	72	30	19
Geography	66	23	16
Total	66	44	30

Figure 6.6 reflects a gradual increase in schoolwork performances for pupils at a Boys' Town although the overall percentage remained below the 30 % level. Comparatively pupils from the wider community performed consistently at 65 % for pupils at La Mercy Primary and 45 % for pupils at Seatides Primary. Pupils at a Boys' Town experienced problems in all six subjects. Of these subjects, performances in Geography and History were below the 20 % level.

The marginal improvement in the third and fourth quarter can be attributed to the employment of a mathematics and Afrikaans remedial teacher.

6.8. CONCLUSION

Although the procedures used in the various sub-sections differ from traditional repertory techniques, some of the objections that have been made about these techniques may also apply to its modification. For example during the investigation the interpretation of the child's responses was problematic. Since the procedures used in the study were concerned with the uniqueness and idiosyncrasies of the child's life – world, the results cannot be compared with established norms as determined by Coopersmith (in Bickrum, 1991:179 - 181) regarding self-esteem. This also applies to family functioning in Beavers et al (1988:81). However, despite these criticisms, the techniques were considered to have potential for assessing children in an institution such as a Boy's Town. For example, it is notoriously difficult to obtain reliable information from children on any sensitive subjects since the tendency is to offer answers they assume are required by the researcher. The problem of obtaining accurate information was exacerbated when the information sought was either not consciously acknowledged by the child or was of a potentially disturbing nature. When this was the case natural defense mechanisms, operated to repress essential information. Undoubtedly, a child's view on his affective state and current emotional climate within a Boys' Town falls into this category. Yet, it is exactly this sort of information that is essential to teachers, remedial tutors and administrators so that optimum arrangements can be made for the child.

Furthermore the results of the study must be interpreted with caution. Although the sample was roughly representative of the population from which it was drawn, it was nevertheless small. Generalization was therefore limited and it was not possible to conduct additional quantitative analyses because of the small sample size. Also one of the constraints on the study was that the researcher had no opportunity to conduct in – depth interviews. Another caution that must be considered is that there is no way of knowing precisely the direction of effect. For example, the nature and the relationship between frequency of contact that the child has with the parent and the child's rating of his parent. Within this context, the findings could not indicate whether visits had a positive effect on the family functioning. What the study

did demonstrate was the ability of the primary school child to discriminate between different aspects of family functioning and parental care.

However, the results of the study did show conclusively that the primary school child from a Boys' Town and primary school children from the community differ considerably in terms of the conception of themselves, their relationships with their parents and to their schoolwork performance.

7.9.1 <u>FAMILY</u>

Treatment at a Boys' Town without parental involvement is unlikely to effect lasting change. At least three major reasons can be cited

I.   Most of the child's behaviour is maintained by the effect on the environment notably the family. The child's new behaviour pattern developed at a Boys' Town can be maintained most effectively by persons in the child's natural environment.

II.   Prior to admission to a Boys' Town, parents often feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with the child's behaviour. Their feelings of helplessness, guilt, rage and hate may cause further family discord if parents do not receive the necessary counseling

III.   At least some of the problems in the family may have been responsible for the child's problematic behaviour. Unless counseling with the parent occurs, the feelings of guilt and self blame may cause undue stress on an already unsteady family.

The perception of family roles and relationships may be enhanced in two major ways, depending on the factors that influence family functioning. An attempt to assist the child whose poor perceptions of family functioning stems primarily from his sense of a lack of identity or belonging must be made. Efforts to boost and strengthen the self-concept and self-esteem of the child since these describe the sense of self identity and self-image of the child in the family must take several forms:

❑ Parents are contacted weekly by the institution and receive weekly written reports on the child's progress. Any disciplinary action is discussed with the parent. This practice has the additional benefit of modeling limit setting and disciplinary procedures for the parents.

❑ Monthly case reviews are held with the parent and the child. The child's progress at school or problems in the programme is discussed. The child's treatment and educational plan are reviewed and modified with suggestions from the parent.

❑ Regular home visits should be an integral part of the programme. This

gives the parents an opportunity to practice new skill and the child a chance to find a niche in the family structure, as well as demonstrate any changes in the self.

Conduct school conferences with the parents. Problematic behaviours in class are discussed with the parent. Furthermore, parents are taught to understand school testing results and homework assignments.

7.9.2. PEERS

Primary school children at a Boys' Town possibly need, even more than their peers in the wider environment, to develop and rehearse their powers to hold their own in the dormitory or at the school, since the programme of peer – government as implemented at a Boys' Town tends to diminish rather than enhance the primary school child's power.

❑ Special teaching and counseling situations may have to be created in which the primary school child can practise using their power to hold on to their own in the dormitory where the most intense and pervasive relationship occurred.

❑ While a dormitory – styled institution may be used constructively with certain age groups for example adolescence, primary school children at a Boys' Town should be placed, if possible, in care away from the bigger boys and in situations they find least threatening. However if this cannot be achieved special dormitories should be designated to house only primary school children.

❑ Efforts to change not only the wider community's perceptions of a Boys' Town, but also their perception of the primary school child, his needs, and how these needs can be best met by the community should be made. Furthermore it will require the development of collaborative efforts to share the institution's resources with the community. In the context of a wide and growing range of community needs.

❑ Flexible rules to facilitate friends from the wider community visiting the primary school child after school hours and during the weekends should be formulated.

❑ To minimize the high levels of conflict between the primary school child and the secondary school pupils a watered down progamme of self – government should be implemented exclusively for the primary school child. The possibility of developing a differential approach to accommodate the personality and character traits as well as the child's individual needs can be considered. There should be consistent adult supervision in this environment instead of peer or group leaders.

❑ This programme of self government should base limits on realistic and reasonable grounds and set a relatively small number of limits according to the child's developmental phase. Since limit testing is ever present and it is vital that the Boys' Town programme establishes limits that are based on the realities of life at a Boys' Town rather than on abstract considerations such as the infamous 'court system.' Teachers and subject tutors should assist the primary school child towards actualisation by concentrating and appreciating the minor successes in the child's domain of strength and interests.

7.9.3. <u>SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENTS</u>

❑ Teachers and professional staff should have a sound knowledge of the developmental phases of the primary school child.

❑ Teachers at a Boys' Town should be trained in observation methodology. The objective is to obtain an increased insight into the child and his problems, so that learning situations can be constructed to foster the child's intellectual development. This will enable the teacher to support the pupil by way of guided actualisation to self–actualisation.

❑ Educators, especially teachers and subject tutors who believe that certain children do not learn nor benefit from a Boys' Town will probably have little success in teaching them. When teachers have positive views of pupil's abilities and his becoming, the latter are likely to respond in positive ways. Primary pupils develop best in the company of teachers who see them as possessing relatively untapped abilities and who invite them to realize their potential.

❑ During the admission phase of a child to a Boys' Town an educational plan to assist the child towards adequate actualisation should be developed. An educational plan should include the following:

1. The child's present level of performance.

2. Annual goals and short – term objectives.

3. Evaluation procedures.

4. Specific educational services for example remedial education.

5. Related services such as physio and speech therapy.

6. Extent to which the child will participate in the educational plan.

Goals of the individual educational plan should be specifically related to the discharge plan of the child from a Boys' Town. The educational plan should be based on thorough assessment of the educational needs of the child by members of the staff who are working with or who are responsible for the academic progress of the child. At quarterly intervals, generally during case conferences the educational plan for each child should be re – evaluated and the child's ability to use the programme should be assessed. The school experience should also be reviewed to determine the extent of its co – ordination and integration with other treatment elements for each child. Care should be taken to ensure that the parents and legal guardians are included in the planning to discuss what is best for the child.

The group of pupils under consideration here comprises the majority of primary school children at a Boys' Town. These pupils have specific learning difficulties of reading, spelling and handwriting. Having a good process of screening and assessment facilitates identification of such children.

❑ Any child considered to have such problems should be checked by a general practitioner for visual and hearing difficulties. Furthermore, the in house educational psychologist or the psychologist services of the department need to assess the primary school child requiring corrective or compensatory education so that appropriate intervention could be identified for example primary school children from an ethnic group or an impoverished area may require compensatory education.

❑ The development of junior life skills for latency age children should be implemented at a Boys' Town. The teaching of junior life skill to the care of latency-age children can be a positive step towards more realistic planning for the child whatever his discharge plan may be. Junior life skills curricula can facilitate the development of self esteem, self sufficiency and relationships in the primary school child at a Boys Town. Learning from junior life skills can help the primary school child develop confidence and build a foundation based on competency learning. This vital life skills is necessary for the primary school child to get a head start that he will undoubtedly need as he moves towards independence during adolescent years.

❑ Social workers to encourage primary pupils during group work to develop the habit of praising themselves, being their own evaluator to ensure a positive self – concept in spite of the child's limitations and weakness.

❑ Teachers and tutors should guide the primary school pupil to use self-praise, not only to reinforce the relevant behaviour and the feeling surrounding the behaviour, but also to teach the pupil a new set of self referent concepts.

The primary school child at a Boys' Town represents a unique revelation of the meaning that he attaches to himself, particularly in his mode of 'playing.' It is true that the primary school child's involvement with the things in the world is especially apparent in play. Sadly at a Boys' Town the primary school child is restrained in his experimental world by the fact that he is permitted 30 – 45 minutes of play per day. Therefore it is recommended that:

❑ Play should not be used as an incentive or to reinforce good behaviour. Ample time should be set aside for play and recreation time. It is also recommended that the number of remedial sessions conducted after school hours be evaluated to facilitate 'free time' to engage in play.

7. 10. FUTURE EXPLORATIONS AND CONCLUSION

From a pedagogical study of the primary school child the parent - child relationship is of the utmost importance. Further exploration is indicated towards developing new services to support continuous interaction between natural parents, and children at a Boys' Town. Such exploration should continue to examine the relationships between parents and group process that focus on the family as a total unit. It is within this context that future work should consider developmental differences in children's understanding of conflict in the family and how these differences may affect the child at an institution particularly at a Boys' Town. Possible direction for future research should also focus on the life world of the secondary pupil as well. Scientific areas of future research may include:

1. The long term effects of institutional care on former residents of a Boys' Town.

2. The perception of the child's attitude towards a Boys' Town.

3. The teacher – pupil relationship while the child is at a Boys Town.

As more children are admitted in childcare institutions such as a Boys' Town these questions form an important research agenda for the future.

It is also important not to lose sight of the fact that many primary school children at a Boys' Town in the study reported being lonely. Indeed the number of children reporting extreme loneliness and dissatisfaction with the programme of self – government was small. However, it is hoped that the present study will serve to stimulate further inquiry into the causes and ramifications of loneliness and dissatisfaction of the primary school child at Boys' Town. Further research to replicate and extend the findings regarding peer – relationships at a Boys' Town should be encouraged.

REFERENCES

Bandura, A. 1977. Social foundations of thought and action: A Social Cognition Theory. Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Incorporation,

Beard, R. M. 1969. An outline to Piaget's developmental psychology. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Beavers, R., Hampton, W., Robert, R. & Hulgus, Y. F. 1985. The Beavers systems approach to Family Assessment. Family Process, 24 (3) 398-405.

Beavers, R., Hampton, W., Robert, R. & Hulgus, Y. F. 1988. Comparing the Beavers and Circumplex Models of Family Functioning. Family Process, 27 (1) 85–92.

Beavers, R., Hampton, W., Robert, R. & Hyman . S 1994. The age of recall effects on family of origin. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 20 (1) 61–67.

Bickrum, S. 1991. An investigation of some psychosocial variables in children from foster-care, residential care and naturalistic backgrounds. Unpublished thesis. Durban: University of Durban–Westville.

Bishop, E. B., Rosen, L. A. & Miller, C. D. 1996. Evaluation of the Boys' Town Motivational System in a United States school setting. International School Psychology, 17 (2) 14-32.

Burns, R. B. 1982. Self – Concept Development and Education. London:Hold, Rinehart and Winston Publishers.

Chassin, I., Presson C. C., Young, R. D. & Light, R. 1981. Self – Concept of institutionalized adolescents: a framework of Conceptualizing labeling effects. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 90 (2) 143 – 151.

Clark, A.J. 1987. Improving Intellectual Competence, Academic Achievement and Self-Esteem of Pre-Adolescents in a Children's Home. Unpublished thesis. University of South Africa.

Clarke, S. A. & Friedman,S. 1987. Child Development: Infancy through adolescence. New York: Wiley.

Conger I. J. 1991. Adolescence and Youth: Psychological Development in a Changing world Fourth Edition. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Coopersmith, S. 1967. The Antecedents of Self – Esteem. San Francisco: W H Freeman and Company.

Craig, G. J. 1983. Human Development. Third Edition. New Jersey : Prentice – Hall Incorporation, Englewood Cliffs.

Crain, W. 1992. Themes of Development: Concepts and Application. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Incorporation, Englewood Cliff.

Damon, W. & Hart, E. D. 1982. The Development of Self – Understanding from infancy through adolescence. <u>Child Development</u>, 53 (4) 841–864.

Dinnage, R & Pringle, K.M.1967. Residential Child care: Facts and Fallacies. London: Longmans.

Douglas, T. 1986<u>. Group Living</u>: <u>The application of group dynamics in residential setting</u>. London : Travistack Publishers.

Droz, R. 1976. <u>Understanding Piaget</u>. New York: New York International University Press.

Dunn, R. 1984. <u>Sibling studies and the developmental impact of critical incidents</u>. In Baltes, P. B. and Brim Jn. O. J. (editors). Life span developmental behaviour. Florida: Academic Press Incorporation.

Erikson, E. H. 1968. Industry, <u>youth, and crisis</u>. New York: Norton.

Essen, J., Lambert, L. & Head, J. 1976. School attainment of children who have been in care. <u>Child Care, Health and Development</u>, (3) 339–351.

Fansel, D. 1975. Parental visiting of children in foster–care: Key to discharge. <u>Social Service Review</u>, 49 (4) 493–514.

Fansel, D. & Shinn, E. B. 1978. <u>Children in foster–care</u>: <u>A longitudinal investigation</u>. New York : Columbia University Press.

Feinberg, H. 1954. Achievement of children in orphan homes as revealed by the Standard Achievement Test. <u>Journal of Genetic Psychology</u>, Volume, 85: 217–229.

Fogel, A. & Melson, L. G 1988. <u>Origins of nurturance, developmental, biological and cultural perspective on caregiving</u>. Hillsdale: N.J.L. Erlbavin Associates.

Freud, S. 1936. <u>Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety</u>. London: Hogarth Press, Travistock Square.

Fromm, E. 1985. <u>The art of loving</u>. New York: Harper and Row.

Gardner, H. 1996. The concept of family: Perception of children in foster–care. <u>Child Welfare,</u> 75 (2) 161-182.

Garret, B. I. 1970. <u>Developing the conviction in the child that he is worthwhile</u>. In Ston , D. H. (editor). Foster–care in question. New York: Child Welfare League of America Incorporation.

Gil, E. & Bogart, K. 1982. An exploratory study of self – esteem and quality of 100 children in foster care. <u>Child and Youth Service Review</u>, 4 (4) 351–363.

Gordon, I. J. 1975. <u>Human Development</u>: <u>A transitional perspective</u>. London: Harper and Row Publishers.

Goossens, F. A. & van Ijzendoorn, M. H. 1990. Quality of infant's attachment to professional caregivers : Relation to infant –parent attachment and day–care characteristics. Child Development, 61 (3) 83 -837.

Govender,V. & Janzen,Z. 1991. A study of total Institutions: A followup on Erving Gofman's study of inmates by observing the Boys Town institution broadly. Unpublished thesis, Durban: University of Natal

Hamachek . D. E. 1979. Psychology in Teaching, Learning, and Growth. Second Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Incorporation.

Holman, R. 1975. The place of fostering in Social Work. British Journal of Social Work , 5 (1) 3–29.

Hoghughi, M. 1988. Treating Problem Children: Issues, Methods and Practices. With Lyons, J , Muckey, A and Swianston, M. London : Sage Publications.

Howes, C. & Hamilton, C. E. 1992. Children relationships with Child Care teachers: Stability and concordance with material attachments. Child Development, 63 (4) 867–878.

Isaac, M., Leon, G. H. & Kline, M. 1987. When is a parent out of the picture: Different custody, different perception. Journal of Family Process 26 (2) 101–110.

James, W. 1966. Psychology the briefer course. New York: Harper and Row.

Johnson, P. R., Yoken, C. & Voss, R. 1995. Family foster placement: The child's perspective. Child Welfare , 71 (5) 385–483.

Kufeldt, K., Armstrong, J. & Dorosh, M. 1995. How children in care view their own and foster parents. Child Welfare, 75 (3) 695–715.

Littner,N. 1975. The importance of natural parents to the child in placement. Child Welfare, 53 (3) 225–231.

Kagan, R. & Schlosberg, S. 1989. Families in perpetual crisis. New York: Norton.

Kool, S. B. 1994. Observation of children's patterns of interaction in Residential Child Care. unpublished dissertation. University of Natal: Durban.

Long, B. H., Ziller, R. C. & Bankes, J. 1970. Self – Other Orientations of institutionalized behaviour – problem adolescents. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 34 (1) 43–47.

Louw, D. A. 1995. Human Development. Cape Town: ABC Printers.

Lynch, M. D. 1981. Self – Concept in children. Cambridge : Bullinger Press.

Maier, H. W. 1969. First edition. Three theories of child development. New York: Harper and Row.

Maier, H. W. 1978. Second edition. Three theories of child development. New York: Harper and Row.

Maier, H. W. 1981. <u>Developmental Group Care of Children and Youth</u>: <u>Concepts and Practice</u>. New York: Harper and Row.

Mallon, G. 1992. Junior life –skills: An innovation for latency–age children in out of home care. <u>Child Welfare</u> 71 (6) 585595.

Mayer, M. F., Richman, I. H. & Balcerzak, E. A. 1978. <u>Group care for children: Crossroads and transition</u>. New York: Child Welfare League of America.

Morgan, C. T. 1986<u>. Introduction to Psychology</u>. Seventh edition. London : Mc Graw–Hill Book Company.

Moss, S. Z. 1969. How children feel about being placed away from home. <u>Children</u> , 13 (4) 155– 157.

Moss, S. Z. & Moss, M. S. 1984. Threat to place a child. <u>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</u>, 54 (2) 168–173.

Mudaly, B. S. 1984. <u>The life–world of youth in a children's home</u>. Unpublished thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Muller, R. & Steyn, P. V. 1992. <u>Residential care of children in South Africa with specific reference to Boys' Towns SA</u>. Human Science Research Council: Pretoria.

Mussen, P. H., Janeway, J.C., Kagan, J. & Huston, A. C. 1990. <u>Child development and Personality</u>. New York : Harper Colins Publishers.

Page, R. & Clark, R. A. 1977. Who Cares? Young people in care speak out. <u>Journal of Social Work Today</u>, 9 (6) 14–18.

Papalia, D. E. & Old, S. W. 1975. <u>The child's world Infancy through to adolescence</u>. Second Edition. New York: Mc-Graw -Hill Book Company..

Papalia, D. E. & Old , S. W. 1993. <u>The child's world Infancy through to adolescence</u>. Sixth Edition. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill Book Company.

Parfit, J. 1968. <u>Studies in child development</u>. <u>The community 's children</u>. Bristol: Western Printing Services.

Polsky H. W. 1962. <u>Cottage Six</u>: <u>The Social System of Delinquent Boys in Residential Treatment</u>. New York: John Wiley &Sons Inc.

Polsky, H. W. & Claster, D. S. 1968. <u>The Dynamics of Residential Treatment</u>: <u>A Social System Analysis</u>. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Pringle, M. K. 1980. <u>The needs of children</u>. London: Hutchinson.

Prosser, H. 1976. <u>Perspectives on Residential Child–Care : An Annotated Bibliography</u>. New Jersey: NFER Publishing Company Limited.

Raman, C. & Suchanandan, A. 1996. Boys' Town Annual - Programme Evaluation. (Schedule A).

Raman, C., Morar, T. & Suchanandan, A. 1994. Boys' Town Training Manual.

Rosenberg, M. 1979. Conceiving the Self. New York: Basic Books.

Richard, M. K. & Schlosberg, S. 1988. Permanence and family support: Changing practice in Group Care. Carmen , G. & Small, F. W. (editors). When love is not enough: Creating a context for change. Washington: Child Welfare League of America Incorporation.

Rutter, M. 1981. Maternal Deprivation : Reassessed. Second Edition. England: Penguin Books Limited.

Samuels, S. C. 1977. Enhancing self–concept in early childhood : Theory and Practice. New York : Human Science Press.

Schuster,C.S. & Asburn,S.S. 1986.The Process of Human Development: A holistic life-span approach. Third Edition. Boston: Little Brown Company.

Shaffer,D.R. 1992. Developmental Psychology :Childhood and Adolescence. Pacific Grove: Calif Brooks Cole Publishers.

Simmons, G, Gumpet, J. & Rothma, B. 1973. Natural parents as partners in child– are placement. Journal of Social Casework 54 (4) 10 –110.

Taylor, T. L. 1980. Community based Homes. Sholevar G, Bensor, R M and Blinder , B (Editors. In Emotional Disorders in children and adolescents. New York: International Medical Publishers.

Triseliotis, J. 1983. Identity and security in long term adoption and fostering. Adoption and Fostering, 7 (1) 22–31.

Van den Aardweg, E.M. & Van den Aardweg E.D. 1988. Dictionary of Empirical Education / Educational Psychology. Pretoria: F.E.E. Enterprise.

Vrey, J. D. 1979. The self–actualising educand. Pretoria: university of South Africa.

Wagner, C. L. & Killman, D. 1986. Developing positive self–concepts in institutionalized children with severe behaviour disorder. Child Welfare, 65 (2) 165–176.

Wells, L. E. & Marwell, G. 1976. Self –Esteem: It's conceptualization and measurement. Beverly Hills: Sage Publishers.

Yamato, K. 1972. The child and his image. New York: Houghton–Mifflin.

Youngleson , M. J. 1973. The need to affiliate and self–esteem in institutionalized children. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 26 (3) 280–286.

Zigler, E., Balla, D. & Watson N. 1972. Developmental and experiential determinants of self–image disparity in institutionalized and non–institutionalized retard and normal children. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 23 (1) 81–87.