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Between Parent Similarities in Child-Rearing Goals:
Relations to Parental, Marital and Individual Adult Well-being

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Between Parent Similarities in Child-Rearing Goals:

Relations to Parental, Marital and Individual Adult Well-being

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Craig Campbell. We married in our early undergraduate years of post-secondary education and in the span of 13 years together we have each pursued challenging career paths that we both find very rewarding. I come to the near end of my journey in Clinical Psychology knowing that Craig's continual support of me in this endeavor has made all the difference. When initially, I did not have the belief in myself to even consider such a feat, Craig dared me to dream. When our two beautiful children came into our lives, and they became our priority, Craig encouraged me to persevere, even in little steps. When I wanted to step no longer towards my goal, Craig held my hand. Emerson once wrote, "what lies before us and what lies behind us is nothing compared to what lies within us". For me, the support of the one who is beside me is also incomparable.

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Abstract

This study was designed to investigate aspects of the coparenting relationship between employed mothers and fathers within the same family. Similarities and dissimilarities in parenting goals between married or cohabiting couples with toddler or preschool-aged children were the main focus. One hundred thirty couples were recruited via advertisements posted in community agencies and also through published advertisements in parent-oriented magazines. Parents who each worked (or attended school) twenty-five hours per week or more and who had an eldest child between 24 and 60 months of age participated independently in an interview about their parenting goals and also responded to questionnaires about family well-being. Overall, the participants were a well-adjusted sample of parents, representing the demographics of the Canadian city from which the majority of the sample was taken.

A contextually-based vignette-style interview of parenting goals revealed moderate agreement between parents within the same family on parenting goals. Mothers and fathers reported parenting goals that were flexible and based on the behaviour displayed by the child. In particular, in responding to children's internalizing behaviour, parents attached greater importance to child-centred and relationship-centred goals than to parent-centred goals. In response to vignettes depicting externalizing child behaviour, parents endorsed greater importance for parent-centred goals than for either child-centred or relationship-centred goals. Similarity in parenting goals was higher for parents of toddlers than for parents of preschool-age children. Also, the greater the similarity in parenting goals between mothers and fathers the more satisfied mothers were with their parenting and their life in general. For fathers, greater similarity in parenting goals was related to greater satisfaction with their parenting only. Interestingly, although the degree of similarity in parenting goals was not related to marital

satisfaction, the relation between similarity in parenting goals and mothers' ratings of marital satisfaction was different depending on the support for parenting mothers received from their partners. The findings of the present study emphasize that not all differences between parents on child-related issues are harmful to family well-being and that it is important to consider both mothers' and fathers' perspectives within the area of coparenting. Clinical and research implications are discussed.

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Child-rearing activities consume a considerable amount of time and energy in the everyday lives of parents (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994; Statistics Canada, 2000). Traditionally, women have performed the majority of these child-related activities. In families in which women were solely responsible for raising children, there was little need for mothers and fathers to coordinate their efforts in parenting. However, with the dual income family now the norm (Statistics Canada, 2000), fathers now assume a much more direct role in the care of their children than did previous generations of fathers (Lamb, 1997; Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004; Silver, 2000). With contemporary fathers more involved in childrearing, more coordination and collaboration is required between parents in the task of raising their children (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Raymond, 2004). The coordination between mothers and fathers, in their role as parents, has become a growing area of study with many yet, unanswered questions (Feinberg, 2002; Margolin, Gordis, & John, 2001; Schoppe-Sullivan, Frosch, Mangelsdorf, & McHale, 2004).

The relationship between adults in the task of raising children is referred to as *coparenting* (Feinberg, 2002; McHale, 1995). Feinberg (2002) identified four components of the coparenting relationship: 1) the degree of parenting support offered from one parent to another; 2) differences and/or similarities between parents on child-rearing issues and values; 3) the division of everyday parental responsibilities; and 4) the management of family interactions between members (including exposing children to interparental conflict). In this study I examined two aspects of the coparenting relationship: similarities and dissimilarities between parents on child-rearing issues, in particular this study focuses on child-rearing goal, and parenting support.

With fathers more involved in raising their children than previous generations of fathers, there is more opportunity for differences to arise between mothers and fathers in regards to parenting matters (Cummings et al., 2004). Within the parenting literature, a dominant view assumes that any child-rearing differences are harmful to family well-being (McHale, 1995; Vaughn, Block & Block, 1988). Parental agreement has been seen as reflecting family organization, with high agreement indicating adaptive functioning and low agreement indicating disorganization (Simons, McCluskey, & Mullett, 1985). For example, McHale (1995) suggested that "optimal family functioning might reasonably be expected to involve the absence of disagreement" (p.184). Similarly, Vaughn et al., (1988) suggested that parental differences on child-rearing attitudes are reflective of family disharmony. Research in the area of differences in the family has primarily been studied from a pathologizing perspective, concentrating on destructive conflict within the family system as the main construct of interest. Studies that have focused on parental conflict have measured arguing (Kerig, 1996), children's perceptions of marital conflict (Osborne & Fincham, 1996), and frequency of disagreements (Jouriles et al., 1991). However, all of these studies assessed overt conflict. They addressed family members' perceptions of arguments or disagreements about child-focused issues. Inherent in the conceptualization of disagreement or conflict between two individuals is a difference of opinion from the other (Cox, Brooks-Gunn, & Paley, 1999). Few studies have investigated differences between parents that do not necessarily lead to overt conflict (Goodnow, 1995). An alternate perspective on the role of between parent differences posits such differences as a natural part of family life, and not necessarily reflective of family disharmony (Cummings & Wilson, 1999; Feinberg, 2002). For example, parents can have a difference of opinion over aspects of child-rearing that does not necessarily result in overt disagreement or

conflict (Kerig, 1996; Koestner, Walker, & Fincham, 1999). Researchers recognize the need for a more specific set of descriptors to differentiate between differences which are harmful to the functioning of individuals in the family and differences that are benign or even have a positive impact on family functioning (Cox et al., 1999).

Between parent differences (also referred to as interparental differences or dyadic dissimilarity) is a construct that reflects the difference (or conversely, the similarity) between parents over a certain issue, for example, child-rearing goals. Generally, each parent within a family reports her or his own perception of that issue and the degree of difference or magnitude of dissimilarity between parents is calculated. Although differences can exist between parents on multiple issues, the focus of this study is on between parental similarity and dissimilarity in child-related goals. Goals are conceptualized as parental social cognitions that are outcomes parents hope to achieve while interacting with their children in specific child-rearing situations (Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Hastings & Rubin, 1999). Because parenting goals are a cognitive construct, measuring similarity and dissimilarity in parenting goals allows for the possibility that parents may have differences that they have not thought about, discussed, or that have not resulted in overt conflict. This study was designed to investigate similarities and dissimilarities in parenting goals within married or cohabiting couples with pre-school aged children and their relations with marital, parenting and adult individual well-being. Although a plethora of studies have investigated the association between overt child-related disagreement between parents and child adjustment (e.g., Dadds & Powell, 1991; Jouriles et al., 1991; Mahoney, Jouriles, & Scavone, 1997; McHale, 1997; Zimet & Jacob, 2001), relatively little empirical research has studied the association with adult functioning (Fincham, 1998). Differences between parents on child-related issues may be important

to the extent that they negatively affect other components of family life beyond child adjustment (Feinberg, 2002). Additionally, few studies have investigated differences between parents that may not necessarily result in overt conflict and the coparental factors that may mediate or moderate the relation between these cognitive differences and adult adjustment.

This study was designed to test whether parents who are more similar in parental goals report higher parenting, marital, and life satisfaction than do parents who are less similar in parenting goals. It was hypothesized that this relation is mediated and/or moderated by coparental support. Coparental support is the perception that a partner provides support in the parenting role (Feinberg, 2002), and coparental support was expected to attenuate the negative relation between dissimilarity in parental goals and adult well-being. The relations between similarities and dissimilarities in parental goals, adult well-being, and coparental support were investigated in a cross-sectional sample of dual-income parents of first born preschool-age children through questionnaires and independent responses to interviews of parental goals.

There are numerous reasons why it is important to understand how parents negotiate the challenging years of early parenting and how it impacts adult well-being. The literature has clearly established that the transition to parenthood is a difficult period for many parents, however, for some couples, the well-established decline in marital satisfaction that follows the birth of children (Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Fincham & Beach, 1999; O'Brien & Peyton, 2002) is not merely a difficult period, but marks the beginning of the deterioration of the marriage. In fact, Canadian data indicate that the age at which children experience their parents' divorce is decreasing (Statistics Canada, 1998; 2005), so understanding the relation between parenting dissimilarities and well-being of mothers and fathers of preschool children is of growing importance. In addition, research has

established that the toll of balancing work and family responsibilities is paid by both women and men in terms of stress and strain (Costigan, Cox, & Cauce, 2003; Crouter & Manke, 1997; Higgins et al., 1994; Lee & Duxbury, 1998; Parke, 2004).

In the following sections the existing literature on the links between interparental differences on child-rearing goals and adult well-being and the possible mediators and moderators of these relations are reviewed. First, the general parenting literature is examined, establishing the existence of similarities and differences between men and women in parenting preschool children. Following this, the study of parenting goals is examined, including the link between parenting goals and parent behaviour, and differences that exist between men and women in this area. Prior to examining between parent similarities and differences in parenting goals, the rationale for choosing the preschool age range is explained. Next, studies examining between parent similarities and differences and adult well-being are reviewed and the potential of parenting support as a mediator or moderator is evaluated. Finally, conclusions and research hypotheses are stated.

Parenting Similarities and Dissimilarity between Men and Women

Research on fathering over the past number of decades has revealed that fathers and mothers influence their children in very similar ways (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004). Similar to mothers, paternal warmth and nurturance are key factors that are related to positive socialization outcomes for their children. Although there are many similarities between mothers and fathers there are also some important differences between men and women in regards to the ways in which they relate to young children (Emery & Tuer, 1993; Flouri & Buchanan; 2003; Lamb & Lewis, 2004; Parke & Tinsley, 1987; Russell & Russell, 1994). Children's lives are enriched through their involvement with the different styles of mothers and fathers (Emery, 1999; Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004). In

general, father involvement with preschool children is quantitatively less than mother involvement (Bouchard & Lee, 2000; Higgins et al., 1994; McBride & Mills, 1993; Statistics Canada, 2000). However, research has indicated that it is the quality, rather than the quantity of parent-child interaction that is related to child cognitive and social development (Parke & Tinsley, 1987). The types of roles mothers and fathers play also differ. Fathers tend to engage in more physical play with their children than do mothers. In contrast mothers tend to engage in more object-mediated and verbal play with their children than do fathers (Lamb & Lewis, 2004; MacDonald & Parke, 1984; McBride & Mills, 1993). Additionally, child care also involves emotional engagement, and research has found that women's disproportionate involvement in expressive tasks with their young children compared to that of fathers takes significant time and effort and is thus a potential stressor associated with depressive symptoms in women (Strazdin, Galligan, & Scannell, 1997). Also of importance are the differing views which mothers and fathers hold in relation to their children's behaviours, with mothers often reporting more child problems than do fathers (Duhig, Renk, Epstein, & Phares, 2000). Thus, parenting research clearly delineates various differences in parenting behaviour between men and women. Differences in parenting behaviour may be influenced by differences between men and women in parenting goals (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Hastings & Grusec, 1998). In the following section the literature on parenting goals is discussed.

Parenting Goals

In this study, similarities and dissimilarities in parenting goals, one type of parental social cognition, are studied in relation to adult well-being. Within the developmental and family psychology literatures a longstanding interest in the relations between parents' cognitions and their parenting behaviours is evident (e.g., Goodnow, 1984; Grusec, Rudy, & Martini, 1997; Rogers &

White, 1998; Sigel, McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Goodnow, 1992; Symonds, 1939; Turner & Harris, 1984). Parental cognitions include constructs such as attitudes (Holden, 1995), beliefs (McGillicuddy-DeLisi & Sigel, 1995), expectations (Goodnow, 1995), and goals (Hastings & Grusec, 1998).

Parental goals refer to the outcomes that parents hope to achieve in particular child-rearing situations (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Dix, 1991; Hastings & Grusec, 1998). Darling and Steinberg (1993) proposed a model of the way parenting goals are linked to parenting behaviour, parenting style and child outcome. These authors proposed that parenting goals predict parenting style, which is defined as the emotional climate in which the parents' behaviours are expressed (e.g., bursts of anger, frustration, tone of voice) and parenting behaviours, which are the actions parents take to reach their parenting goals (e.g., time-out, rewards). Goals thus serve as a vehicle through which parents translate global parenting values into specific parenting actions, and as a mechanism for organizing these actions (Bugental & Johnson, 2000). Unlike other parental social cognitions (e.g., attitudes) that have shown questionable links to parenting behaviours (Holden & Edwards, 1989), parenting goals have been found to be predictive of parenting behaviour when they are considered as situationaly dependent rather than as trait characteristics of the individual (Bugental & Johnston, 2000). Support for the parenting goals and parenting behaviour link of the model has been provided by a handful of studies over the past two decades (see Table 1).

The earliest study was conducted by Kuczynski (1984) and lent initial support to the parenting goal-behaviour link. The socialization goals of sixty four mothers were investigated in relation to the mother's choice of teaching technique for her four-year-old child. Mothers were asked to teach their children to do a simple sorting task and mothers' parenting goals were

experimentally manipulated by asking them to focus on short-term or long-term conditions. The effects of this manipulation on their subsequent parenting interactions were assessed via direct observation. Mothers in the short-term condition were told that their children's compliance to a sorting task would be observed while the mother was in the room and teaching the task; the mothers in the long-term condition were told that in addition to being observed while teaching the task the children would also be observed at the task for a period of time after the mother left the room. Results indicated that mothers in the long-term condition used reasoning more frequently and used it more often as an initial strategy than did mothers in the short-term condition. Contrary to predictions mothers did not engage in more power assertive behaviours in the short-term condition. The researchers hypothesized that mothers in both groups may have focused on immediate task demands, with the long-term group being conscious of both short and long term evaluation. Power assertive parenting behaviours were used more frequently by mothers of boys than by mothers of girls.

A series of studies conducted by Hastings and Grusec (1998) lend further support for the parenting goals and parenting behaviour link. These authors found that the parenting goals of mothers and fathers are important determinants of reported parenting behaviour during instances of parent-child conflict. Hastings and Grusec measured parenting goals along two dimensions, *centre of concern* and *immediacy of concern*. Centre of concern marks the focus of the goal on the needs of the parent, the child, or on the parent-child relationship. Immediacy of concern discerns whether the goal is short-term or long-term. This two-dimensional structure for categorizing parenting goals yields the following six categories: parent short-term, parent long-term, child short-term, child long-term, relationship short-term and relationship long-term (see Table 2). The links between parenting

goals and parenting behaviours were tested in three related studies.

In the first exploratory study, adults with and adults without children ($N = 103$) were read five brief vignettes describing difficult behaviour by a six year old (e.g., wanting to watch television before tidying toys), and were asked what they would do or say to the child to handle the situation (see Table 1). Then participants were given the list of six goals and asked to rate how important those goals were in each particular vignette. Factor analysis of parental responses to the vignettes yielded three broad factors of parenting behaviours: power assertion (including hurt, coerce, and control), reasoning (such as giving a rationale for the parenting behaviour), and responsiveness (including accept, negotiate, and provide affection). Parenting goals were found to be related to parenting behaviours in specific ways: participants who focused on parent-centred goals of obtaining compliance were most likely to report that they would use power-assertive behaviours compared to responsive or reasoning parenting behaviours. Power assertion was used less frequently when participants were concerned for the short-term relationship-centred or child-centred goals of negotiating an equitable resolution and promoting the child's current happiness than when parents were more concerned with an immediate end to the child's behaviour. Reasoning was most commonly reported when the long-term goals of socialization and building family bonds were of concern. Neither the gender of child nor the parent status (parent or nonparent) revealed significant effects. However, parental gender differences were found in parenting goals. Women were more likely to focus on goals related to child happiness and the equality and closeness of the parent-child relationship than were men. Men and women did not differ on the frequency of endorsement of parent-centred goals (Hastings & Grusec, 1998).

The second study by the same authors replicated the parental goal-behaviour link in a

sample that included only parents ($N = 96$) and used actual recent conflictual incidences between parents and their child, aged 5-7 years. Centre of concern for parenting goals was related to self-reported parenting behaviour. Again, parents concerned with parent-centred goals, reported using the least responsive and most dominating behaviour compared to parents more focused on child- or relationship-centred goals. Parents who focused on child-centred interests tended to report using reasoning behaviour and avoid dominating parenting behaviour, unlike the parents who were concerned with parent-centred goals. Parents who were most concerned with relationship-centred goals reported using the most responsive and least dominating parenting techniques compared to those parents who were most concerned with child-centred or relationship-centred goals. Again, parental gender differences were found. Fathers expressed more concern than did mothers for long-term socialization goals. Additionally, although some mothers were concerned with long-term relationship-centred goals during parent-child conflict, no fathers reported concern for long-term relationship-centred goals.

The aim of the final study conducted by Hastings and Grusec was to replicate the parental goal-behaviour link with an experimental study where centre of concern was manipulated and the effects of parenting behaviour recorded. The purpose of the manipulation was to determine whether parents formed their reported parenting goals as post hoc explanations for the behaviour they recalled using with their children, or if parental goals do precede parental behaviour. Results indicate that manipulating centre of concern of parenting goals had significant effects on parenting behaviour. For example, when led to focus on parent-centred goals of obtaining compliance, participants were most likely to endorse the use power-assertive behaviours (Hastings & Grusec, 1998).

Hastings and Coplan (1999) investigated the parent-centred and relationship-centred parenting goals of seventy-five mothers in relation to their preschool children (see Table 1). Mothers were read a series of five hypothetical vignettes of specific parent-child behavioural interactions (Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Mills & Rubin, 1990) and then were asked to rate the importance of six possible parenting goals in that situation. Hastings and Coplan found that parenting goals were associated with the nature of the child's behaviour. In vignettes that depicted child aggression, mothers reported that they would place more importance on parent-centred goals than on relationship-centred goals. Mothers reported parent-centred goals as less important when children were portrayed as defiant than when they were portrayed as acting aggressively. In terms of gender related findings, mothers of daughters placed significantly more importance on parent-centred goals than did mothers of sons. Also, among mothers of daughters only, parent-centred goals were rated more important than relationship-centred goals. Thus it appears that mothers may be less accepting of aggression and defiance from their daughters than from their sons.

Hastings and Rubin (1999) investigated, among other variables, how maternal characteristics were related to mothers' parenting goals and parenting behaviours measured two years later. Mothers' were presented with a series of vignettes adapted from the work of Hastings and Grusec (1998) and asked to describe how they would handle the situation. Mothers' responses to the vignettes were classified into type of parenting goal. The four parenting goals used in this study were parent-centred (stopping the child's behaviour; obtaining compliance or obedience), socialization (teaching a child important values, skills or lessons), social interactional (helping a child get along with others; teaching interpersonal skills), and empathic/relational (making the child fell happy or secure; focusing on the parent-child relationship). Mothers endorsing a more

authoritarian attitude than a protective attitude were likely to endorse parent-centred goals of immediately ending their child's disruptive or aggressive behaviour and were less likely to focus on socialization goals in those parent-child interactions. Their results suggest a relation between mothers' parenting behaviours and their socialization goals during parent-child interactions. Mothers reported that they would use more teaching to attain socialization goals; however they said they would avoid such techniques when their goal was strictly compliance from their child, nor did they use teaching techniques when they pursued more empathic/relational goals. Mothers were more likely to suggest behavioural means of control (parent-centred) with daughters than with sons.

A final study related to parenting goals investigated how parenting context is related to parenting goals (Coplan, Hastings, Lagacé-Séguin, & Moulton, 2002). In this investigation again, mothers of preschool age children ($N = 76$) were given a series of child behaviour vignettes (Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Mills & Rubin, 1990). Mothers were asked to rate the importance of five parenting goals for them in those situations. Two goals represented parent-centred goals and three goals represented empathic goals. Empathic goals were described as encompassing both a child-centred focus (addressing the child's needs) and a relationship-centred focus (reaching a mutual acceptable outcome and building love and trust). Similar to Hastings and Coplan (1999) parenting goals were associated with the type of child behaviour displayed in a given parenting context. Mothers reported feeling more likely to focus on parent-centred goals than empathic goals when children were described as more aggressive than when they were described as noncompliant, shy or engaging in prosocial behaviour. No significant effects of gender were found in this study.

Clearly parenting goals are related to self-reported parenting behaviours in a very specific way and as seen with parental behaviour, there are gender differences in parenting goals as well.

For example, two studies found that mothers report greater importance for parent-centred goals in relation to daughters compared to mothers of sons. The above studies also report a connection between parenting goals and child behaviour (e.g., aggression, non-compliance, shyness). Evidently, parents have different goals depending on the parenting context. However, only one of the studies (Hastings & Grusec, 1998) included fathers in their study and in that study the fathers represented one-third of the total sample (Hastings & Grusec, 1998). Clearly the parenting cognitions of fathers have received less attention than those of mothers.

Another important question is the way that mothers' and fathers' goals are related. Spousal similarities or differences on parenting issues are a relatively unmeasured component of the family system (Gable, Belsky, & Crnic, 1992) and an important aspect of the coparenting relationship. Individual cognitions of one family member can be influenced by dyadic processes that occur in families (Bugental & Johnson, 2000). In particular, no studies have examined between parent similarities and dissimilarities in parenting goals of their preschool-age children. The numerous reasons why parenting differences between mothers and fathers could arise during the toddler and preschool age range are outlined below.

Parenting Toddler and Preschool-age Children

The toddler and preschool years are a particularly important developmental stage for children and parents. This investigation focuses upon toddler and preschool-age children for several reasons. First, fathers of a child at this stage generally become more involved in child care compared to during infancy because sharing of child care is no longer constrained by the physical act of breast-feeding (Belsky, Rovine, & Fish, 1989; McHale, Lauretti, Kuersten-Hogan, & Rasmussen, 2000). Second, taking care of young children can be very intensive. Compared to

children of older ages, children at this age need added help with feeding, washing, and dressing and play with children at this stage is also more parent-involved (Statistics Canada, 2000). Third, although parenting can be challenging at all developmental stages, the toddler and preschool years are often particularly so because this is a time when children are becoming more autonomous and are increasingly trying to exert control over their environments (Crnic & Acevodo, 1995; Pope Edwards, 1995). Research confirms the widely held view, that conflictual interactions between parents and children are very common during the 2 to 5 year age range. Parent-child conflicts occur from 3.5 to 15 times an hour in families with young children (Dunn & Munn, 1985; Lee & Bates, 1985). Thus, there are ample opportunities during the toddler and preschool years for parenting differences to arise as parents may approach daily structure, limit-setting, discipline and affection in varying ways. For the newly developing family system, increased paternal involvement, intensive child-care demands, increased child autonomy, and frequent parent-child conflicts can make the negotiation of parental roles between partners an added challenge in the toddler and preschool-age range. It is with these factors in mind that in this study I used common, day-to-day scenarios encountered with preschoolers to elicit potential dissimilarities in parenting goals between parents and the relation to various indices of dyadic and individual adult well-being. The following section presents a discussion of adult well-being as it relates to dyadic dissimilarities in parental social cognitions.

Adult Well-being

Subjective well-being is the evaluation of an individual's own happiness or satisfaction, either with life in general, or in relation to specific life domains such as work or family (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). The concept of goals has proven important in understanding subjective

well-being (Diener et al., 1999). Research suggests that events, circumstances and demographic factors may affect subjective well-being primarily when they impede or facilitate progress towards goals (Diener et al., 1999). Individuals' behaviours can be best understood by examining goals: what people are typically trying to do and how well they are succeeding at it. The success with which an individual is able to attain their goals can potentially affect their emotions and life satisfaction (Brunstein, 1993; Diener et al., 1999). For example Emmons (1986) found that conflict among goals and ambivalence toward goals are associated with negative affect and lower life satisfaction. However, the empirical research has only investigated individual goal attainment as it relates to well-being but no studies to date have explored the association between an individual's parenting goals and their well-being. Furthermore, the association between parenting goals and adult well-being is complex in a two parent family. In this situation, there is an interplay of goal achievement between parents, where each parent brings his or her individual parental goal strivings to the same goal object (the child). Therefore, for any given parent, attaining parenting goals can be difficult when their parenting goals and those of their partner are dissimilar.

The mechanisms through which differences in goals can affect well-being has been addressed in terms of parent-child differences in goals (Dix, 1992), however, this conceptualization can also be extended to dissimilarities between mothers and fathers in parenting goals. If parents adopt goals that are compatible with or similar to those of their partner, coordination of interaction is likely to be straightforward. Both parents act in concert to achieve mutually desired outcomes. If the goals of parents are dissimilar however, coordination is more difficult such that behaviours that will achieve one parent's goal may result in failure to achieve the other parent's goal. This between parent difference in goals, therefore, may lead both parents to anticipate or experience goal

frustration leading to negative affect and stress.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of empirical research on parental social cognitions has focussed on the consequences for children (Bugental & Johnston, 2000; Grusec, et al., 1997; Sigel, et al., 1992). The relations between parental social cognitions and various indices of children's development are thought to be mediated through parent's behaviour (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Grusec, et al., 1997; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1992; Rubin & Mills, 1992). However, it is also important to take into consideration that parents are thinking beings whose actions and interpretations of events influence their own thoughts and feelings (Goodnow, 1988). The interrelations of parenting goals, parental behaviour and goal outcomes are hypothesized to relate to how a parent feels about him/herself as a parent, and as a marital partner (Rubin & Mills, 1992). A central hypothesis of this study is that dissimilarities between parents on child-rearing goals are also part of this complex interrelation that can influence parental well-being. Despite a lack of research on parenting goals, a few studies have investigated adult well-being as it relates to between parent differences in other parental social cognitions. The majority of studies have examined differences between parents on child-rearing attitudes in relation to varying indices of family well-being. Parental attitudes toward child-rearing reflect a subjective state of favour or disfavour towards a particular parenting issue (Holden, 1995), such as physical punishment. In contrast, parental goals reflect values that parents hold in regards to parenting outcomes and parental attitudes can exist within those goals. For example, a parent can have a parent-centred goal during a parent-child interaction and maintain an attitude for or against physical punishment within that goal.

Most attitude studies have used the Child-Rearing Practices Report (CRPR; Block, 1965), focussing on parental attitudes and discipline strategies. One subscale is designed to assess parental

differences on attitudes about discipline on the CRPR. In a seminal longitudinal study by Block, Block, and Morrison (1981), parental differences about child-rearing attitudes on the CRPR were related to ratings of marital distress two and a half years later. Additionally, ten years later, compared to parents whose marriages remained intact, parents who subsequently divorced had a significantly lower agreement score on the CRPR on initial evaluation. In another study, lack of parental agreement on attitudes about discipline measured by the CRPR was found to be associated with mild marital and individual distress in fathers of 4-6 year-old children, but not in mothers (Stoneman, Brody, & Burke 1989). This study suggests that parental differences between mothers and fathers may affect mothers and fathers dissimilarly, with fathers more susceptible to negative influence than are mothers. Additional evidence for possible mother/father well-being differences comes from studies which indicate that the less agreement about parenting philosophy between mothers and fathers, the more the mother engaged in and was responsible for parenting actions and the less involved the father was (McBride & Rane, 1998). However, the findings in the McBride and Rane study should be interpreted with caution, as agreement between parents was measured only as the mother's perception of agreement with her spouse and the father's perception of agreement was not taken into account. Clearly an important aspect of research in coparenting must include mother's and father's perspectives.

However, according to Holden (1995) and Holden and Edwards (1989) the findings of the above studies are questionable. These authors undertook a comprehensive appraisal of the conceptual, theoretical and measurement issues of parental attitudes. The authors concluded that existing measures of parental attitudes, including the CRPR, did not adequately predict parental behaviour, and were of questionable validity and reliability. These authors advocate for

measurement of parental social cognitions to be multidimensional, coherent, and contextually based.

Two additional studies that measured differences in parental child-rearing values of the behaviour they want their children to display found that similar parental expectations were not related to better marital satisfaction (Goldberg, 1990; Russell & Russell, 1994). Sigel et al. (1992) suggested that researchers may be looking at the wrong cognitions, selecting those with theoretical importance, but with less importance to everyday parenting. Given the paucity of research investigating interparental goals, it is anticipated that this study will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge on parental social cognitions and its relationship to adult well-being.

Coparenting as a Mediator and/or Moderator

As previously mentioned, coparenting is a construct that refers to the aspect of the relationship between parents in the coordination of raising their children (McHale, 1995). Coparenting can be differentiated from the marital relationship by its sole focus on child-rearing. Ironically, the most common reference to "coparenting" is within the literature on divorced families (e.g., Ehrenberg, Hunter, Elterman, 1996). The literature investigating coparenting in the context of divorce has primarily centred on aspects of the coparenting relationship that lead to failure (Kline, Johnston & Tschann, 1991; Maccoby, Depner, & Mnookin, 1990). Surprisingly, it has only been recently that research attention has been paid to the ways that intact couples negotiate their joint parenting and the positive aspects of the parent relationship (Belsky, Crnic, & Gable, 1995; Floyd, Gilliom, & Costigan, 1998; McBride & Rane, 1998; McHale, 1995; Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004).

The distinction between coparenting and marital processes appears to be an important one in understanding some of the intrafamily interactions that affect family well-being (McHale, Kuersten,

& Lauretti, 1996). Not all distressed parents argue in front of their children, and many parents who disagree about parenting are content with their marriage. Therefore, marital distress and coparental conflict are overlapping but also distinct as explained by Cowan and McHale (1996): "We need a more differentiated understanding of the various family processes and functions that constitute the phenomenon of coparenting. The coparenting relationship certainly involves sharing child-care tasks, and it is an important component of parents' marital relationship, but it is more than these. It is uniquely characterized by the parents' connection as parents, a connection that endures even if the marriage does not" (p.99).

Researchers have suggested that the extent to which parents support each other in the parenting role is one of the most important elements of the coparent relationship (Belsky et al., 1995; Gable, Belsky, & Crnic, 1995; McHale, 1997). A supportive coparental relationship presumably leads to satisfaction in various roles including marital, coparent and parent satisfaction. Belsky et al., (1995) defined supportive coparenting as instances when one parent behaves in a way that suggests that he or she agrees with the other parent's child-rearing strategy. According to Belsky, coparenting acts considered unsupportive consist of instances when one parent disagrees with the other parent about a child-related issue. Using an observational rating system based on this definition, researchers have reported associations between unsupportive coparenting and negative change in feelings of love and conflict over time (Belsky & Hseih, 1998). Another study involved the direct observations of families with toddlers during the demanding periods of mealtimes (Belsky, Putnam, & Crnic, 1996; Gable, Belsky, Crnic, 1995). Fathers were observed to support mothers twice as often as mothers supported fathers. Again, in the coding scheme used in these studies, "support" refers to agreement and disagreement is coded as unsupportive. An alternative

perspective views disagreement and unsupportiveness as distinct constructs. Parents who disagree on certain parenting issues can still display support to each other in the parenting role and couples who agree on parenting issues may display a lack of support to each other for other reasons.

Partners support each other in specific ways in their roles as parents and in their roles as marital partners; this plays an important part in coping with various stressors (Cutrona, 1997). It is necessary to move beyond general definitions of support to examine specific ways that partners support each other in their various roles (Cutrona, 1997). Two aspects of the coparenting relationship will be tested in this study as potential mediators and/or moderators. These potential variables are anticipated to aid in the understanding the means by which agreement is reached between parents as it relates to parenting goals and the circumstances under which disagreements are nonproblematic or alternatively, a source of concern (Bugental & Johnson, 2000).

The aspects of the coparenting relationship that are investigated in this study are the parenting alliance and parenting support. The parenting alliance, as indicated by Abidin and Brunner (1995), incorporates a broad array of the parent-to-parent relationship, including perceptions of each parent's investment in the child, the extent to which a parent values the other parent's involvement with the child, the degree of respect one parent has for the other parent in terms of child-related issues, and the amount and quality of the communication between parents within the parenting role. The quality of the parenting alliance has been found to be predictive of various aspects of child functioning, but has received limited study in relation to adult variables. Strong parenting alliance has been found to be associated with lower levels of parenting stress (Abidin & Brunner, 1995), and has also been found to be negatively associated with maternal depressive symptoms (Hughes, Gordon, & Gaertner, 2004).

A more narrow aspect of the coparenting relationship, parenting *support*, is also of interest in the current study, in light of Feinberg's (2002) proposal of four components of the coparenting relationship. Schoppe-Sullivan et al., (2004) studied the stability of observed supportive and undermining coparenting behaviours in parents of children across infancy to the preschool years. These investigators found modest stability in coparenting support across the three year span. Recently, Bouchard and Lee (2000) developed a measure of spousal support for the parental role, the Partner Support for Parenting Scale, which measures esteem support and availability support between parents. Esteem support (the extent to which a father perceived his partner to value his competence as a father) was related to fathers' involvement and sense of competence in the parenting role. Interestingly, availability support (the perceived availability of the partner to assist the father in his parental role) was not related to father involvement in this study. One reason may be that the frequent provision of support may inadvertently undermine a person's sense of competence in that role or activity (Beach, Fincham, Katz, & Bradbury, 1997). Similar to the findings of Bouchard and Lee (2000) regarding esteem support, McBride and Rane (1998) found that fathers who felt their wives had greater confidence in their parenting were more involved in child-rearing activities.

Additionally, Goldberg (1990) found that parental agreement on expectations for mature behaviour in their preschool-age child increased when husbands reported greater spousal support. Whereas esteem support appears to be more important than availability or practical support for men, the opposite may be true for women with young children. Given that, compared to men, women continue to contribute relatively more time and energy to family responsibilities (Statistics Canada, 2000), it is hypothesized that availability support is particularly important for well-being in mothers

(Crnic & Acevodo, 1995; Cutrona, 1997). Evidence from transition to parenthood and work-family role-conflict research suggests that mothers would like fathers to be more sensitive to family needs and to provide more practical support (Lee & Duxbury, 1998). In addition, this research suggests that fathers' contribution to care-giving responsibilities is positively related to the quality of the parenting experience in mothers (Cowan & Cowan, 1988), and that women value practical assistance in the context of work-family role strain (Steinberg & Gottlieb, 1994). In the present study, the contribution of parenting support as a moderator between parent differences in parenting goals and parent satisfaction, couple satisfaction and individual life satisfaction for both mothers and fathers were evaluated. Esteem support was predicted to be more important than availability support for fathers whereas availability support was hypothesized to be more strongly related to maternal well-being.

The Present Study

Although the majority of families in Canada are dual income families in which both parents are in the labour force and both assume responsibility for family care, little is known about the dissimilarities between parents in the same household over child-rearing issues that do not necessarily result in overt conflict This study was designed to a) examine parenting goals in mothers and fathers b) examine the links between similarity in parenting goals between parents within the same family to adult indices of well-being, c) test whether two aspects of the coparental relationship, the parenting alliance and partner support for parenting, mediate that relationship, and d) test whether two aspects of the coparental relationship, the parenting alliance and partner support for parenting, moderate that relationship. Therefore, the unique contributions of this study to the family psychology literature are four-fold. First, this study will extend current findings investigating

parental social cognitions to fathers. Second, this study was designed to measure a dyadic level variable, examining the relations between parents within a family, rather than looking at differences between mothers and fathers in general. Third, this study was designed to investigate the potential mediating and/or moderating influence of the parenting alliance and of a partner's support for parenting and distinguish this support construct from agreement. Fourth, information about how dissimilarities between parents, that may, but do not necessarily result in overt conflict, are related to adult well-being will help to broaden the existing understanding of conflict in the family. Following are the specific hypotheses proposed.

Hypotheses

Parenting goals and child gender. Based on the work involving parenting goals by Hastings and colleagues (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Coplan, 1999; Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Hastings & Rubin, 1999) and Kuczynski (1984) conflicting results have been found in terms of type of parenting goal and child gender. It is expected that the findings in this study will help to disentangle the conflicting findings related to parenting goals and child gender and it is also expected that findings previously only related to mothers self-report of parenting goals and child gender will also extend to fathers. More specifically, in the current study it is hypothesized that mothers and fathers of daughters will rate parent-centred goals as equally important as will mothers and fathers of sons.

Parenting goals and child behaviour. Additionally, it is hypothesized that similar to previous findings for mothers, parenting goals for fathers will be related to the parenting context such that in situations where a child displays aggressive behaviour, parent-centred goals will be reported as most important compared to either child-centred or relationship-centred goals. Further,

it is hypothesized based on previous research that both mothers and fathers will report relationship-centred goals as equally important across all parenting contexts.

Similarity in parenting goals and adult well-being. A further hypothesis, based on the literature suggesting all differences within the family are detrimental to family well-being (McHale, 1995; Simons et al., 1985; Vaughn et al., 1988), predicts that parents who are more similar in parenting goals will report being more satisfied with their lives, more satisfied with their parenting and more satisfied with their marriage than parents who have less similar parenting goals.

Mediator hypotheses. A next set of hypotheses of this study test a mediator model suggesting that the relation between parenting goal similarities and adult well-being scores would be explained, either in part of in full, by coparenting variables. Specifically, the partner support hypothesis predicts that the link between similarity in parenting goals and adult well-being can be accounted for by the extent to which partners support one another in the role as parents. This hypothesis will be supported if the strength of the relation between similarity in parenting goals and adult well-being decreases once partner support for parenting is taken into account. The parenting alliance hypothesis predicts that the link between similarity in parenting goals and adult well-being can be accounted for by the strength of the parenting alliance. This hypothesis will be supported if the strength of the relation between parenting goal dissimilarity and adult well-being decreases once parental alliance is added to the equation.

Moderator hypotheses. A final set of hypotheses test a moderator model of the same two co-parenting variables. The moderator model suggests that under certain coparenting conditions such as partner support for parenting or parenting alliance, the relation between dissimilarity in parenting goals and adult well-being will be attenuated. Specifically, the partner support hypothesis predicts

that partner support for parenting (including both subscales, esteem support and availability support) will moderate the relationship between differences in parenting goals and adult well-being such that those parents who are less similar in parenting goals will report being more satisfied with their lives, their parenting, and their marriage when the coparenting variable of partner support is high. A sub-hypothesis of the partner support moderator hypothesis predicts that the moderating effect of esteem support for parenting will be stronger for men than for women. A second sub-hypothesis predicts that the moderating effect of availability support will be stronger for women than it is for men. Similarly, the parenting alliance hypothesis predicts that the parenting alliance will moderate the relationship between dissimilarities in parenting goals and adult well-being such that parents who are less similar in parenting goals will report being more satisfied with their lives, their parenting, and their marriage when the coparenting variable, the parenting alliance is high.

Method

Participants

The participants for this study included a community sample of dual-income couples with toddler and/or preschool-aged children ($N = 130$). Participants were eligible for the study if a) they were the first-time biological or adoptive parents of toddlers or preschoolers (18 to 60 months) who were living with them, b) the family did not have a second child who was older than the target child, c) both partners were either employed for pay 25 or more hours per week, or were full-time students, d) both parents agreed to take part in the study, and e) neither the parents, nor the child had a significant physical or cognitive disability requiring exceptional care circumstances, nor was the family a stepparent family.

Families who had toddler or preschool-age children were recruited because fathers have

more of an opportunity to be involved in the care of their child at this age, compared to infancy (Belsky, Rovine, & Fish, 1989). Additionally, this is a unique developmental stage that involves considerable potential for conflictual interactions between parents and children (Crnic & Acevodo, 1995). Parents who had a toddler or preschool aged child and an older child were excluded from the study to allow for parenting goal dissimilarity in first-time parents who perhaps have not yet had the opportunity to work out goal differences by parenting another child first. Dual-earner parents were chosen for this study because in these families, fathers are typically more involved in child-care than in traditional families (Belsky et al., 1989; Lamb. 1997) and therefore there are more opportunities for parenting goal dissimilarity to emerge. In addition, dual-income families represent the majority of Canadian families (Statistics Canada, 2000). Finally, parents or children, who had a significant physical or cognitive impairment, or parents who were separated or divorced at the time of the study were excluded from the study because research suggests parenting in these families is unique and a measure of differences in parental goals may not be applicable (Amato & Keith, 1991; Fine & Kurdek, 1994; Goldberg, 1990; Kessler & Forthofer, 1999; Rogers & White, 1998).

Demographic information about the families can be found in Table 3. Multiple recruitment strategies were used in this study. Just over half of the sample was recruited through advertisements posted in local community agencies such as day-care centres, physicians' offices, family community centres, museums, university bulletin boards, and in two parenting magazine/newspapers (56.3%). The rest of the sample was recruited at a community parenting event.

The average family income of participants in the present study (average total family income range = $80,000-99,999) was in keeping with dual-income families from the metropolitan centre

from which the majority were recruited (Ottawa average total family income = $86, 182; Statistic Canada 2000b). However, this average total income is higher than that of the average Canadian dual-income family (average total Canadian family income = $78, 524; Statistics Canada, 2000b). In terms of occupational category, the most common occupational category identified by both fathers and mothers was professional, followed by technical for fathers and "other" for mothers. Due to clerical errors, nearly 18% of families were not asked their ethnicity. As can be seen in Table 3, of those asked, most defined their ethnicity as Canadian/Caucasian, with 15.8 % of mothers and fathers defining their ethnicity as Canadian/Minority, consistent with categories outlined in Canadian Census data (Statistics Canada 2003).

Measures

Parenting Goals

Mothers and fathers completed an interview on parenting goals. Holden and Edwards (1989) noted that measurement of parental social cognitions through the method of vignettes contextualizes parent-child interactions and circumvents the problem of poor or inaccurate parental recall of actual events. Following these recommendations, a scale measuring parenting goals was adapted from Hastings and Grusec's (1998) measure designed for school-age children. The Parenting Goals Measure is a first person, contextually-based vignette style interview, followed by a scale to elicit parent-centred, child-centred or relationship centred goals. Parents were presented with five vignettes of mild, commonly occurring child misbehaviour (e.g., the child refuses to put on his/her coat, the child hits his/her friend, the child yells that the parent is mean) and asked to describe the way that they would react to the child. They were next presented with a list of parenting goals (e.g., two parent-centred goals, two child-centred goals and two relationship- centred goals) and asked to

rate how important each goal would be for them if they were the parent in the vignette. Hastings and Grusec (1998) reported that over 95% of parents' freely reported goals could be coded reliably into these goal categories. Furthermore, Hastings and colleagues (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Coplan, 1999; Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Hastings & Rubin, 1999) demonstrated the factor structure, reliability, and convergent validity of the vignette-style parenting goals measure.

Initial pilot testing on 8 sets of parents was completed prior to data collection in order to determine the appropriateness of the vignettes to parents of preschool children, the understandability of the measure, and the diversity of responses between parents. A copy of the pilot questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. Parents reported that the vignettes describing parent-child conflictual interactions were typical of their everyday experiences with their child. No parents indicated a key parent-child conflictual interaction typical to this age range that was not captured in the vignettes. In general, parents indicated that the vignettes were clearly worded and easy to understand. A few changes were made in the wording of the instructions and the description of one of the parenting goals based on pilot feedback. In particular, the sentence reminding parents of the vignette before responding to the importance of the goal was expanded, because some parents indicated that a longer reminder of the vignette situation was needed. Additionally, the responses of some parents indicated that the relationship-centred goal ("to maintain a loving and trusting relationship with my child") may be rated as important because of social desirable reasons, as opposed to actually linking it to their parenting goal in the vignette. To avoid or minimize possible social desirability effects, the word "loving" was omitted from the phrase but maintains the idea of a relationship-centred goal. Thus, the goal was "to maintain a trusting relationship with my child".

Based on pilot data, one vignette was excluded from the measure because parental responses

to the vignette revealed very little variability in parenting goals between mothers and fathers. This vignette offered a "moral" issue (a child bringing home someone else's toy from day-care and not wanting to return it) and as such, parenting responses and goals in these situations are likely more scripted, as are responses to child safety issues by parents (Hastings & Grusec, 1998). The psychometric properties of the modified Parenting Goals Measure (PGM; see Appendix B for a copy of the PGM) were examined in this study, including test-retest reliability on a sub-sample of parents.

Following confirmation of the adequate psychometric properties of the PGM, the individual parent responses to the PGM were used to create a dyadic level variable to answer the questions posed in this study in regards to the association between level of agreement between parents on parenting goals and adult well-being. In order to statistically analyze the degree of similarity in responding to the PGM for mothers and fathers, the intraclass correlation was calculated (Maguire, 1999; McGraw & Wong, 1996; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). Numerous studies have used the intraclass correlation when data on individual variables have been collected to ask research questions that are dyadic (Deal, Halverson, & Wampler, 1993; Kenny & Acitelli, 1994; Tolson & Urberg, 1993). The calculation of the intraclass correlation involves calculating the degree of match between each partner's score on the PGM. This resulting score for each dyad represents the similarity between each mother and father in the same family on parenting goals and can range from –1 to +1. Thus an individual intraclass correlation score that is near +1 indicates that for that mother-father dyad there was a high degree of match between both respondents. One primary advantage of the calculation of the intraclass correlation in measuring similarity is that the resulting scores can be used in standard statistical techniques (Maguire, 1999). It is important to note that the intraclass correlation

coefficient does not specify the direction of the difference between mothers and fathers scores, so it is difficult to ascertain which member of the dyad indicated more or less importance to the parenting goals (Maguire, 1999). For the purposes of this study, similarity in parenting goals is used to predict different indices of adult well-being.

Adult Well-being

As subjective well-being is not a unidimensional or unitary construct, and researchers generally advocate for examining different types of indicators (Diener et al, 1999), two components of well-being were measured in this study: life satisfaction and domain satisfaction. Within domain satisfaction, two specific areas were evaluated, marital satisfaction and parental satisfaction.

Satisfaction of the respondent's life as a whole was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLS; Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985). This five item, one factor scale assesses the satisfaction of the respondent's life as a whole. A copy of the SLS can be found in Appendix C. Pavot and Diener (1993) reviewed the psychometric properties of the SLS and reported adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$) and adequate test-retest reliability over a two month period $r = .64$ to $r = .82$. Test-retest reliability of $r = .54$ was found over a four year period (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Normative data for the scale show good convergent validity with related measures, including measures using a different methodological approach to measure life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Marital adjustment was measured using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Satisfaction Subscale. (DAS; Spanier, 1976). The DAS is a 32-item self-report measure of marital adjustment for married or cohabiting couples. The original DAS is composed of four subscales: Consensus, Satisfaction, Cohesion, and Affectional Expression of which only the Satisfaction subscale was used for the

purposes of this study in order to guard against item overlap across variables. Hunsley, Pinsent, Lefebvre, James-Tanner, and Vito, (1995) compared the 10-item Satisfaction subscale of the DAS to the other three short-forms of the DAS (One-item Short Form, Six-item Short form, Seven-item Short form). Both the DAS-7 and the Satisfaction subscale were found to be equally effective at assessing the construct of marital adjustment (Hunsley et al., 1995). A copy of the DAS-Satisfaction Subscale can be found in Appendix D. Hunsley et al. (1995) reported evidence suggesting that the construct validity of the DAS was conserved using only the Satisfaction subscale. The Satisfaction subscale is internally consistent with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .81 to .83 (Hunsley et al., 1995; Kurdek, 1992) and is moderately stable over time. Test-retest reliability coefficients reported by Kurdek (1992) ranged from .60 (women) to .64 (men) over a one year period, and from .49 (women) to .52 (men) over 3 years. In terms of validity, the Satisfaction subscale of the DAS was found to be an independent dimension of marital quality, accounting for most of the variance in the relations between the DAS and other measures of relationship quality (Spanier, 1976). Finally, Hunsley et al. (1995) found that the Satisfaction scale of the DAS reproduced correlation values obtained with the overall DAS in terms of relationship with other marital measures.

Satisfaction in the domain of parenting was assessed using the Parenting Satisfaction Scale (PSS; Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985). The PSS contains three 15-item subscales, assessing satisfaction with partner parenting (PSS1), satisfaction with the parent-child relationship (PSS2), and satisfaction with own parenting (PSS3). The third subscale of the PSS was administered for the purposes of this study, as there appeared to be a possibility of item overlap for Subscales One and Two with the proposed moderator variable. For PSS-Subscale 3, parents indicate the extent to

which they agree with the statements on a four point Likert-type scale with anchors ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (see Appendix E for a copy of the measure). The PSS was normed on a national United States sample of parents of school age children and provides standardized *t* scores and percentiles. Subscale 3 is internally consistent with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1989). Test-retest reliability coefficients over two years revealed moderate stability for the PSS3 (.64). The PSS also correlates in the expected direction with various measures of child and family well-being (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1989). Finally, scores on the PSS differentiate families in terms of both child and family adjustment.

Co-parenting Variables

Co-parenting support was measured using the Partner Support for Parenting Scale (PSPS; Lee & Bouchard, 1999). This eight-item scale measures the extent to which a parent feels their spouse or partner provides support: by their confidence in the partner's competence in the parental role (esteem support) and by their availability to assist in the parental role (availability support; see Appendix F for a copy of the measure). Parents are asked to rate the frequency of their partner's behaviour on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (almost never) to 7 (almost always). Sample items from the measure include, "My partner tells me he/she values me as a parent" and "My partner does what he/she can to make things easier for me as a parent". The PSPS was created on the basis of marital interaction research. Developed for and used with fathers of young children, these scales are internally consistent with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .89 for esteem support and .87 for availability support. The factors were supported using factor analysis and are related in expected ways to measures of father and couple adjustment (Bouchard & Lee, 2002; Lee & Bouchard, 1999). Because these scales have not been used with mothers, the psychometric

properties of the PSPS were evaluated in this study for both fathers and mothers, as was the factor structure of the measure.

Due to the lack of established psychometric properties for the PSPS for mothers, the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM; Abidin & Brunner, 1995; Konold & Abidin, 2001) was also completed by parents as a measure of co-parenting (see Appendix G). This 20-item, two factor measure asks parents to rate on a five-point Likert-type scale their agreement to statements regarding respect and communication of the other parent towards them in the parenting role. The PAM has established psychometric properties for mothers and fathers (all alpha coefficients exceed .95) and test-retest reliability shows moderate stability over a 4-6 week interval (Abidin & Bruner, 1995; Konold & Abidin, 2001). The PAM was recently normed on a sample of 1, 224 parents and provides standardized *T* scores and percentiles (Konold & Abidin, 2001).

Demographic Information

Parents were asked to complete a brief measure of demographic information, asking their age, gender, years of marriage or cohabitation, education, ethnicity, employment category, and family income. The demographics questionnaire can be found in Appendix H.

Design and Procedure

Recruitment

Varied recruitment strategies were utilized in order to maximize sample size and to ensure as representative a sample as possible (Karney et al., 1995; Markman, 1992). Within the Ottawa region, a range of community agencies permitted advertisements for the study to be posted (see Appendix I for the advertisement). These agencies included day care centres, parent resource centres, family doctor offices, dental clinics, museums, community centres, skating arenas, grocery

stores, and the University of Ottawa campus. To maximize variability in socioeconomic status, specific areas within the city of Ottawa were targeted. In addition to recruitment through community agencies, families were also recruited through ads in a local, monthly newspaper, *Capital Parent*, and through a national parenting magazine, *Today's Parent*. Some of the families were recruited when they attended a family-oriented event in the Ottawa area.

Interested families contacted researchers by telephone and received further information about the study and participant eligibility. The telephone protocol can be found in Appendix J. If a parent was interested and eligible to participate, their partner was also contacted to invite participation. At that time, parents were given the option (if they lived in the Ottawa area) to either complete the Parenting Goals Interview in person, either at their home or at their place of employment, or to complete the interview over the phone, without their partner present in the same room. Parents also received a questionnaire package either in person (if the interview was done in-person) or in the mail (if the interview was completed over the phone). In the case of the questionnaires being mailed to participants, they were asked to return them using the postage-paid, self-addressed return envelopes provided.

Procedure

Data were collected between February 2001 and June 2002. Initially during data collection, parents were offered the choice of having a researcher come to their home or work, or meeting a researcher at the University of Ottawa to complete the interviews and questionnaires. However, when recruitment began to expand nationally, this option was no longer possible for some families. For these families another option was made available: to complete the interview independently over the phone (without their partner present in the same room) and have the questionnaire package

mailed to them. As this strategy was far less time consuming and more convenient for families, this option was then routinely offered to local families as well. For completion of the Parenting Goal Measure, parents were read each of the hypothesized vignettes and were instructed to imagine that it was their child in depicted in the vignette. Their child's name was used in the vignette to aid in further contextualizing the scenario. Immediately following this the parents were then asked by the researcher to rate the importance of each of the six parenting goals based on their earlier responses to each scenario.

The questionnaire package was identical for all families and contained four copies of the consent form; two copies for each parent (one each to keep and one each to return to researchers). A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix K. The package also contained questionnaires for each parent. Finally, a cover letter emphasizing the importance of independent responding and outlining additional instructions was included in the package. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix L. The importance of independent responding was also emphasized during the initial telephone contact with parents who agreed to participate. In addition, researchers made a point of emphasizing to parents the importance of each parents' unique perspective on co-parenting issues to encourage further, independent completion of questionnaires.

Once questionnaires had been returned to researchers, participants received a list of community agencies or national contacts that provide family services as a reference in case they were experiencing any difficulties at the time of the study. The national and local list can be found in Appendices M and N, respectively. Participants were also provided with a $30.00 honorarium and their children received stickers. Questionnaires were returned by mail within an average of 2 weeks for local participants and within an average of 3 weeks for out of province participants.

Participants who did not either contact researchers or return their packages by mail within 2 weeks (or 3 weeks for out of province participants) of having received them received a reminder telephone call. The reminder telephone protocol can be found in Appendix O. At this time, parents were asked whether they had questions about any of the items and researchers worked with parents to make arrangements for the collection of questionnaires. A second reminder telephone call was made to parents within two weeks of the first reminder.

In total, 258 families requested more information about the study. Of these, 117 families did not meet eligibility criteria (i.e., oldest child outside of the specified age range, not working or going to school 25 hours per week). Of the 141 eligible families, eleven (7.8%) initially agreed to participate but did not complete participation. Of these 11 families only one couple was excluded from the study because the father declined to participate. As a result, 92.2 % ($N = 130$) of eligible families participated in the present study.

Results

In the first section, data screening and analyses of the psychometric properties of the measures are presented. Next descriptive data are presented and comparisons of sub-groups within the sample are described. Finally, test of hypotheses are presented and the results explained. Analyses were conducted using SPSS 12.0.1 for Windows software.

Data Screening

The first step involved data screening for accuracy of data entry, missing values, univariate and/or multivariate outliers, and for violations of assumptions in terms of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Formal tests of collinearity were not required as none of the variables were highly correlated with Pearson correlation coefficients above .90 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001).

Mothers

The mother data set had 9 items with missing values. There were four missing items on the Satisfaction subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; 3.07 % of mothers), two missing items on the Parenting Satisfaction Scale (PSS; 1.54 % of mothers), one missing item on the Partner Support for Parenting Scale (PSPS; 0.77 % of mothers) and two missing items on the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM; 1.54 % of mothers). There were no missing items on the Parenting Goal Measure (PGM) as this was administered by a researcher either in person or over the phone. As the percentage of missing data was low and appeared to be random (there were no differences between mothers who did and who did not have missing values) missing items were assigned item means. Analyses were conducted twice, once with imputed mean values for missing data and once without the change in mean values. The pattern of results did not change; therefore all cases were included in the analyses reported.

In total, three variables violated the assumptions of normality. The DAS, the SLS, and the PAM were mildly to moderately negatively skewed. To correct for negative skewness, the variables were transformed using a strategy that reflects the variable and then a square root transformation is applied. Analyses which included the DAS, SLS, and the PAM were conducted twice, first using the raw scores and then again using the transformed variables. No meaningful differences were found. For this reason and because of concerns over interpretation of transformed data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), analyses using untransformed variables are reported here.

Four univariate outliers, two on the DAS, one on the SLS, and one on the PAM were found in mothers' responses. To allow retention of maximum cases while minimizing potential distortions to solutions, they were recoded to *z*-scores of ±3. Recoding eliminated outliers and substantially

reduced skewness. To determine the effect of the remaining skewness on results, analyses were repeated with and without recoded variables. No significant differences were found. Therefore, untransformed values are reported for all analyses.

Data were also checked for multivariate outliers for each analysis. When multivariate outliers were present, the analysis was run twice to compare the results between samples that did and did not include multivariate outliers. Multivariate outliers were excluded if they had an impact on the pattern of results. The presence of multivariate outliers and the impact on the data are reported in the description of results with which they are associated.

Fathers

The father data set had a total of 8 items with missing values. The DAS had four items with missing values (3.08% of fathers), the PSS had two missing values (1.54% of fathers), the PSPS had one missing value (0.77% of fathers) and there were two missing values on the PAM (1.54% of fathers). Missing items were assigned item mean values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Again, analyses were conducted with and without imputed mean substitution for missing data, and the pattern of results were identical. Therefore cases with missing data were retained.

The same three variables violated assumptions of normality for fathers as did for mothers. The DAS, the SLS, and the PAM were moderately negatively skewed. To correct for negative skewness, the variables were transformed in the identical manner as negatively skewed mother data and analyses were run twice with transformed and raw data. Again, no meaningful differences were found; therefore analyses are reported using untransformed data.

For father data, five univariate outliers were identified, one on the SLS, three on the DAS, and one on the PAM. These outliers were recoded to z-scores of ±3 but there were no differences in

the results when univariate outliers were recoded. Thus, original values were retained. Similarly, multivariate outliers were retained unless their inclusion led to different results. These are described in the results section with which they are associated.

Psychometric Properties of Measures

The psychometric properties of the measures used in the current study were examined in several ways. Internal consistency was examined for both mothers and fathers. For those measures with less well-established psychometrics, test-retest reliability was calculated on a subsample of participants to determine the stability of the measures over a 4-6 week period. Means and standard deviations were examined and where possible the means of the current sample were statistically compared to those found in other studies with similar sample characteristics.

Parenting Goals

Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha for the PGM can be found in Table 4. Internal consistency for mothers' responses to the measure was (α = .87) and for fathers' responses it was (α = .88). Test-retest reliability was calculated for a subsample of parents (n = 35; 18 mothers and 17 fathers). As additional funding for a longitudinal component to this study was received after approximately one-third of the sample was collected, the next consecutive 18 families who participated were asked if they would agree to being contacted approximately one month later to complete two of the measures for a second time. These families were not selected for any other characteristic. All of these families agreed, except for one father who was unavailable. Results indicate a positive, strong correlation between mothers' responses to the measure the first time and 4-6 weeks later, indicating that mothers answered the measure similarly at both intervals ($r(18) = .74$ $p<.001$ (2 tailed)). A positive, moderately strong correlation between fathers initial responses to

the PGM and six weeks later was also found ($r(15) = .57$ $p<.05$ (2 tailed)), also indicating a similarity in responses by fathers at both times.

In the current study, the degree of similarity in parenting goals between mothers and fathers was used as the independent variable in hypotheses testing. To statistically analyse the degree of similarity in responding to the PGM for mothers and fathers, the intraclass correlation was calculated (Maguire, 1999; McGraw & Wong, 1996; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979) using the one-way random model (SPSS 12.0.1) to determine the degree of match between each partner's score on the PGM. The resulting score for each dyad represents the similarity between each mother and father in the same family on parenting goals and can range from –1 to +1. One primary advantage of the calculation of the intraclass correlation in measuring similarity is that the resulting scores can be used in standard statistical techniques (Maguire, 1999). Thus for the purposes of this study, similarity in parenting goals is used to predict different indices of adult well-being.

Adult Well-being

Means, standard deviations and internal consistency coefficients were calculated for the SLS, the DAS and the PSS used in the present study. These statistics can be found in Table 4. An examination of means and standard deviations for the SLS indicates that most mothers and fathers rated their life as *slightly satisfied* to *satisfied.* This level of life satisfaction is consistent with the widely replicated finding that, in Western countries, most nonclinical groups are above the neutral point on the scale and fall somewhere between *slightly satisfied* to *satisfied* on this measure (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Cronbach's alpha for this measure was ($\alpha = .90$) for fathers and ($\alpha = .89$) for mothers.

Internal consistency of the DAS-S was ($\alpha = .88$) for mothers and ($\alpha = .86$) for fathers. To

determine whether couple satisfaction scores found in the present sample were similar to those reported by Hunsley et al (1995) for a nonclinic community sample, an independent samples *t* test was conducted comparing the mean obtained by Hunsley et al. (1995) and the mean obtained in the current study. The mean for the whole sample (mothers and fathers) was used because Hunsley et al., (1995) reported means and standard deviations for the combined sample of men and women. Results indicate that the scores on the DAS from the current study are similar to those from the sample published by Hunsley et al. (($M = 39.4$, $SD = 4.9$), $t\ (196) = 0.78$, $p > .05$ (two-tailed)).

Internal consistency was calculated for the PSS-Subscale 3 to be ($\alpha = .75$) for mothers, ($\alpha = .67$) for fathers, and ($r = .71$) for the combined sample (mothers and fathers). These coefficients are lower than the conventionally acceptable level of $r = .80$. The test developers of the PSS, Guidubaldi and Cleminshaw (1985), reported Cronbach's alpha for the PSS-Subscale 3 to be $\alpha = .82$ for a combined sample consisting of 574 mothers and only 70 fathers. Alphas were not reported separately for mothers and fathers. It is possible that a higher alpha existed for mothers in their sample and in addition to the disproportionate representation of women to men; this may have contributed to a higher and more adequate overall alpha reported by Guidubaldi and Cleminshaw (1985). It is important to remember that, even though a scale may have satisfactory psychometric properties for one gender, one cannot assume that the scale will have similar properties for the other gender. This issue, along with interpretation issues associated with a lower alpha will be addressed in the discussion. Further, an independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine whether levels of parenting satisfaction reported by parents in the present sample were similar to those reported in the Parenting Satisfaction Scale manual. Results indicated that parents in the present study reported being more satisfied with their own parenting than did parents from the Guidubaldi and

Cleminshaw standardization sample ($M = 40.13$, $SD = 6.36$), $t\ (641) = 26.42$, $p<.001$ (two tailed). It is important to reiterate that the standardization sample contained almost 90% mothers (89.1%), included almost equal number of married to divorced parents (53.0% and 47% respectively), and had parents of children who were school-age, whereas the current study includes equal fathers and mothers, the children are toddlers and pre-schoolers, and also comprises 100% married parents.

Coparenting

The means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the PSPS can be found in Table 4. Internal consistency was adequate for mothers ($\alpha = .88$) and for fathers ($\alpha = .85$). Because the PSPS is a newly developed scale that has previously been used only with fathers, further examination of its psychometric properties were conducted. Prior to using subscale scores, it was necessary to determine whether the factor structure obtained in samples of fathers would be obtained in this sample. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted separately on mothers' and fathers' data to determine subscale item loadings for each gender. The analysis yielded a single factor structure so a total support score rather than subscale scores (of esteem and availability) are used in subsequent analyses. To determine the construct validity of the PSPS, correlations between the PSPS and the PAM were examined (see Table 5). Positive associations between the PSPS and the PAM provide convergent validity for the PSPS.

Additionally, test-retest reliability was conducted on the PSPS using the same sub sample of parents that were recruited to conduct the test-retest analysis on the PGM. Thirty five parents completed the PSPS approximately 4-6 weeks following their initial completion of the measure. Results indicate a positive, moderately strong correlation between parents responses to the measure the first time and 4-6 weeks later, indicating that parents answered the measure similarly at both

intervals (r (35) = .59 p<.01 (2 tailed)).

Examination of the means and standard deviations of the PAM for fathers and mothers in Table 4 reveals that both parents report a high level of parenting alliance. Unlike the sample reported by Konold and Abidin (2001), mothers' and fathers' responses to the PAM in this study did not demonstrate a significant difference in perceived level of parenting alliance t (130) = 0.16, p>.05 (paired groups t test). However, an independent samples t test between the mean of the current sample and that of the sample reported by Konold and Abidin indicate a significant difference between means for both mothers (M = 80.2, SD = 15.00), t (663) = 4.40, p<.001 (two tailed) and fathers (M = 82.7, SD = 12.1), t (300) = 3.18, p<.001 (two tailed). Mothers and fathers in the current study reported a higher level of perceived parenting alliance than did mothers and fathers in the Konold and Abidin sample. Differences between the samples such as age of child (1-19 years, M = 10.9) and marital status (30% separated, widowed, and/or remarried) may account for these differences. Comparison of the current sample to those from a recent study (Hughes, Gordon, & Gaertner, 2004) with similar demographic characteristics to the present one (primarily Caucasian, married parents from moderately higher socioeconomic groups) revealed no significant difference between means for either mothers (M = 83.5, SD = 14.68), t (227) = 1.63, p>.05 (two tailed) or fathers (M = 84.43, SD = 11.6), t (227) = 1.48, p>.05 (two tailed).

Overall, adequate psychometric properties of the measures used in the current study were found. The PSPS was extended to a new sample (mothers of preschool children) and the PSPS and the PGM were found to be reliable over a six-week period for both mothers and fathers. In terms of marital satisfaction, parents in this sample are similar to couples described in Hunsley et al. (1995). Likewise, levels of life satisfaction in the current sample are similar to other non-clinical samples of

adults described by Pavot and Deiner (1993). In the current sample, internal consistency reliability of the measure of parenting satisfaction, particularly for fathers, was found to be slightly lower than conventional levels. As mentioned earlier, differences in sample characteristics between the current sample and that described by Guidubaldi and Cleminshaw (1985) may account for the lower alpha level. Implications of this for the current study will be addressed in the Discussion section.

Sample Description

Parenting Goals

Examination of the means and standard deviations of the three parenting goals reported in the PGM reveal that across parenting contexts, both mothers and fathers rated parent-centred goals as least important followed by child-centred goals and then relationship centred goals (see Table 6). Regarding the degree of similarity between mothers and fathers on the PGM (the PGM-icc), overall mothers and fathers reported moderate agreement across parenting goals and parenting situations (see Table 4). The range of agreement between parents on parenting goals was fairly variable, from quite similar (.88) to fairly divergent (-.27).

Adult Well-being

In terms of ratings of life satisfaction (SLS), participants reported themselves as satisfied with their lives. Mother and father life satisfaction ratings were significantly related (see Table 5). Likewise, according to participant responses on the DAS, they described themselves as generally satisfied with their couple relationships. Examination of Pearson correlation coefficients between mother and father ratings on Table 5 reveals that women who reported being satisfied with their couple relationship tended to have husbands who also reported being satisfied with their couple relationship. According to parental responses to the PSS, parents reported fairly high satisfaction

with their own parenting performance. Significant associations between mother and father PSS ratings indicates that women who reported being satisfied with their parenting performance tended to have husbands who also reported being satisfied with their parenting performance.

Coparenting

Responses to the PSPS reveal that mothers and fathers perceived moderate to high levels of support from their partners in the area of parenting (see Table 4). Mother and father ratings on this measure were significantly correlated (see Table 5). Additionally, parental responses to the PAM indicate scores within normal limits. Significant associations between mother and father ratings on the PAM were found and can be seen in Table 5.

Group Differences

Prior to hypothesis testing, a number of tests of group differences were performed to assess whether differences arise due to recruitment strategy, child age, child gender, parent gender, number of children in the family, and the number of years a couple had been married or living together.

Recruitment Strategy

As stated earlier, families were recruited in two broad ways, through advertisements posted in the community or in a national parenting magazine, and through a community family event, a parenting fair. The differing recruitment strategies resulted in participants being recruited primarily from the Ottawa region (approximately 75%) and a smaller percentage recruited nationally. As the exact number of couples that came from outside the Ottawa area was not recorded, differences between those from outside the Ottawa area compared to those participants recruited from the Ottawa area could not be calculated. The implications of this will be addressed in the Discussion section. Group differences according to recruitment strategy were calculated. The results of

independent groups *t* tests used to compare ratings on all variables across recruitment group can be found in Table 7. Results reveal that none of the independent groups *t* tests were significant indicating there are no differences on any of the variables as a function of recruitment strategy. Therefore, participants recruited through both methods were pooled into one group for further analyses.

Child Age

To examine the possibility of differences on the independent and/or dependent variables as a function of child age, a series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed comparing the ratings of parents with 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children. As there were only 3 five-year-old children, four- and five-year old- children were combined for the analyses. The results of these analyses can be found in Table 8. Results revealed no significant differences in ratings by mothers or fathers of overall parenting goals (PGM), the adult well-being variables (SLS, DAS, PSS), or the coparenting variables (PSPS, PAM) as a function of child age. However a significant difference was found on parent agreement for parenting goals (PGM-icc) according to child age. Similarity in parenting goals was statistically greater for parents of two year old children than it was for parents of children in the 4-5 year age range.

Child Gender

To assess the role of child gender in any differences on the independent and/or dependent variables, independent groups *t* tests were conducted. The results of these analyses can be found in Table 9. No significant differences were found on any of the independent or dependent variables in the study as a function of the gender of the child.

Parent Gender

Independent group *t* tests comparing mother and father responses to the dependent and independent variables in the study yielded one difference. Mothers reported being significantly more satisfied with their parenting than did fathers (see Table 10).

Number of Children

Within the sample of families who participated, half of the families had one child younger than the target child (51%) and 3% of the families had a third child, also younger than the target child. Independent group t tests comparing families with more than one child to families with only one child were conducted. No significant differences were found on any of the variables as a function of number of children each couple was raising (see Table 11).

Number of Years Cohabiting or Married

To assess whether the number of years the couple had been together or married was associated with any of the independent or dependent variables, an independent samples t-test was conducted. As can be seen in Table 3, the number of years parents had been together ranged from 3 to 18 years, with a mean of 8 years. Given the established association between the birth of a first child and a decrease in marital satisfaction (Cowan & Cowan, 1992; O'Brien & Peyton, 2002) and that the age at which children face parental divorce is declining, and to establish appropriate sample sizes per group, a cut off point of six years was established. Results of the analysis, depicted in Table 12, indicate that there are no significant differences on important variables in the study as a result of whether parents have been together (married or cohabiting) less than six years or more than six years.

Hypothesis Testing

Parenting Goals and Child Gender

In terms of replicating the finds of Hastings and colleagues, an independent groups t-test comparing mothers' responses to parent-centred goals as a function of child gender was conducted, and the same analyses was conducted for fathers. Mothers of daughters ($M = 5.86$ $SD = 1.72$) did not rate parent-centred goals as more important than did mothers of sons ($M = 5.81$ $SD = 1.68$) in the present sample t (128) = .152, $p > .05$ (two tailed). Fathers of daughters ($M = 5.73$ $SD = 1.60$) did not rate parent-centred goals as more important than did fathers of sons ($M = 5.58$ $SD = 1.65$) in this sample t (128) = .545, $p > .05$ (two tailed). Thus the results from this large sample of parents in regards to parent-centred goals and child gender support the findings from Coplan et al.,(2002) and Hastings & Grusec (1999). In the present study, mothers of daughters did not rate parent-centred goals as more important than did mothers of sons. Similar results were also found for fathers.

Parenting Goals and Child Behaviour

To examine whether strength of endorsement/ratings of importance of parenting goals vary as a function of the type of child behaviour and parent gender a series of two-way ANOVAs were conducted. Table 13 presents ratings of agreement with different types of goals (parent-centred, child-centred, and relationship-centred) across the five different vignettes, in which the child is depicted as yelling, screaming, hitting, crying, or behaving in a shy way. Essentially, the first three vignettes include externalizing behaviours and the last two refer to internalizing behaviours. Results revealed that parental responses to parent-centred, child-centred and relationship-centred goals differed significantly as a function of the child behaviour depicted in the vignettes; however there was only a statistically significant effect of gender for one type of parenting goal, relationship-

centred goals. The interaction of parent gender and type of child behaviour was not significant for any of the three parenting goals.

Tukey HSD post-hoc test reveals that parents rated parent-centred goals as significantly more important in response to hitting than in other contexts. Parents rated child-centred goals as significantly more important in response to child internalizing behaviour than in situations depicting child externalizing behaviour. Child–centred goals were rated by parents as more important in the vignettes depicting mild externalizing behaviour (yelling or screaming) than in the more severe externalizing child behaviour (hitting). Finally, in terms of relationship centred goals, both mothers' and fathers' rated relationship centred goals as most important in the situation where the child is depicted as expressing common internalizing behaviour (crying at swim lessons) and least important when the child is displaying severe child externalizing behaviour (hitting). Significant differences between mothers' and fathers' responding was also found. Fathers consistently rated relationship-centred goals as less important compared to mothers for each of the parenting contexts.

Similarity in Parenting Goals and Adult Well-being

The next hypothesis proposed, based on the literature suggesting all dissimilarity within the family is detrimental to family well-being (McHale, 1995; Simons et al., 1985., Vaughn et al., 1988), predicts that parents who are more similar in parenting goals will report being more satisfied with their parenting, more satisfied with their marriage and more satisfied with their lives than parents who have less similar goals.

Mothers. In testing the association between similarity in parenting goals and satisfaction with parenting, marriage, and life, no multivariate outliers were identified for mothers. Standard multiple regression was used with similarity in parenting goals as the predictor, and the PSS, the

DAS, and the SLS as separate criterion variables. The results of these analyses can be found in Table 14. Results indicate that for mothers, the more similarity of parenting goals between mothers and fathers, the more satisfied mothers are with their parenting and the more mothers are satisfied with their life in general No association between similarity in parenting goals and mothers' marital satisfaction was found.

Fathers. Four multivariate outliers were identified for fathers and excluded from the analyses because of their impact on results. In these four cases, fathers reported extremely low scores on the SLS and the DAS. As results from Table 14 indicate, the more similar parents are in parenting goals, the more satisfied fathers are with their parenting. For fathers, there was no association between similarity in parenting goals and either marital satisfaction or life satisfaction.

Next, two coparenting variables were hypothesized to be potential mediators and/or moderators of the relation between similarities in parenting goals and adult well-being. In the mediator analyses partner support for parenting (PSPS) and parenting alliance (PAM) were tested separately as a mediator of the relation between similarity in parenting goals and parenting satisfaction and life satisfaction for mothers, and as a mediator of the link between similarity in parenting goals and parenting satisfaction for fathers. In the moderator analyses, partner support for parenting (PSPS) and parenting alliance (PAM) were tested separately as a moderator of the relation between similarity in parenting goals and each of the three indices of adult well-being, parenting satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Because the PAM contains one item that refers explicitly to shared goals (i.e. my child's other parent and I have the same goals for our child) analyses using the PAM were conducted twice, once with this items removed and once with it included to determine if any differences existed due to possible item overlap with the PGM-icc. No

differences existed due to item overlap, thus the following results of the mediator and moderator hypotheses are based on the full 20-item measure of the PAM.

Mediation Model

To test the mediation model, Standard Multiple Regression (SMR) analyses were conducted for mothers and fathers data separately. Four conditions must be met to support a mediation model (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First the predictor (PGM-icc) must be significantly associated with the hypothesized mediator (PSPS or PAM). Second, the predictor (PGM-icc) must be significantly associated with the dependent variable (SLS/DAS/PSS). Third, the mediator (PSPS or PAM) must be significantly associated with the dependent variable (SLS/DAS/PSS). Finally, the impact of the predictor (PGM-icc) must be diminished after controlling for the mediator (PSPS or PAM). These four criteria were tested first by inspection of the correlation matrices, then with Standard Multiple Regression (SMR).

Mothers. Examination of the pattern of correlations in Table 5 reveals that the hypothesis that partner supports for parenting mediate the relation between similarities in parenting goals and parenting satisfaction was not supported for mothers. Specifically, the PSPS was not correlated with the PGM-icc (criterion 1). The same pattern of results was found when the mediation model was tested for mothers with the SLS as the criterion variable and with the DAS as the criterion variable. Again, due to the lack of association between the PSPS and the PGM-icc, the mediation hypothesis was not supported.

Similarly, the PAM was also not correlated with the PGM-icc (criterion 1) for the mediation model involving parenting alliance and the PSS, DAS, or the SLS as the criterion variables. Thus the mediation hypothesis involving the PAM was not supported.

Fathers. Examination of the pattern of correlations provided in Table 5 for fathers' responses to the variables reveals that, similar to mothers, father's responses to the PSPS and the PAM were not correlated with father scores on the PGM-icc (criterion 1). Thus, the mediator hypotheses for fathers were not supported for the PSS in relation to either coparenting variables (PSPS or PAM).

Moderation Model

Aiken and West (1991) suggested a method for centring variables as multicollinearity can be problematic when testing for moderator effects (Holmbeck, 1997). Centering variables is a statistical process that involves a transformation of scores from their raw or natural form to deviation scores by subtracting the sample mean from each respondents' score on the variable. A revised mean of zero is produced which has been shown to eliminate multicollinearity effects when testing a moderator effect (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003; Holmbeck, 1997). Because the results of regression analyses were identical using centred and noncentred values, results reported here are based on analyses using noncentred values. In order to demonstrate that a third variable moderates a relation, a statistically significant interaction between the moderator variable and the predictor variable must be demonstrated (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

It was predicted that partner support within the parenting realm moderates the relation between parenting similarity or dissimilarity in parenting goals and three different components of adult well-being: parenting satisfaction, marital satisfaction and life satisfaction. Thus, the moderator hypothesis involving parenting satisfaction predicts that under conditions of high parenting support, low agreement between parents on parenting goals would not be associated with lower levels of parenting satisfaction. This suggests that if parents support each other in the

parenting role, then dissimilarity in the parenting role would not be related to decreases in satisfaction in parenting.

Similarly, the moderator hypothesis involving marital satisfaction predicts that when levels of parenting support are high then dissimilarity in parenting goals would not be related to lower levels of marital satisfaction. Finally, the moderator hypothesis involving life satisfaction predicts that high levels of partner support for parenting and low levels of parenting agreement for parenting goals would not be associated with lower levels of life satisfaction.

To test the moderator hypotheses, hierarchical multiple regression (HMR) analyses were conducted to examine parenting satisfaction scores, dyadic satisfaction scores, and life satisfaction scores separately for mothers and fathers. In each HMR, similarity in parenting goals and the moderator variable were entered before the interaction term. HMR results testing the potential moderator of partner support for parenting on the relation between similarity in parenting goals and life satisfaction, marital satisfaction and parenting satisfaction can be found in Tables 15 to 17 for mothers and for fathers.

Mothers. Five multivariate outliers were identified and excluded from analyses focussing on partner support for parenting for mothers because of their impact on the results of HMRs involving the SLS, DAS, and PSS ratings. One participant reported extremely low scores on the SLS, the PSS, and parental agreement on parenting goals was also extremely low. A second participant reported extremely low scores on the SLS and the PSPS. For a third participant, SLS scores were low, PSPS scores were extremely high and parental agreement on parenting goals was also extremely low. For the fourth participant, reported scores on the PSPS were extremely low and parental agreement on parenting goals was also extremely low. The fifth participant whose scores represented multivariate

outliers reported extremely high scores on the DAS, the PSPS and again parental agreement on parenting goals was extremely low.

For maternal ratings of satisfaction with life, there were significant main effects for similarity in parenting goals and partner support for parenting; however, no significant effect for the PGM-icc X PSPS interaction was found indicating a lack of support for the moderator hypothesis (see Table 15). As can be seen in Table 16, for maternal ratings of marital satisfaction, the main effect of similarity in parenting goals was not significant; however partner support for parenting was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, there was a significant effect for the PGM-icc X PSPS interaction demonstrating that the relation between similarity in parenting goals and maternal ratings of marital satisfaction was different depending on the support for parenting mothers received from their husbands. For maternal ratings of parenting satisfaction (see Table 17), there were significant main effects for similarity of parenting goals; however, there was no significant PGM-icc X PSPS interaction, indicating a lack of support for the moderator hypothesis.

In terms of the PAM as a potential coparenting moderator in the relation between dissimilarity in parenting goals and mothers' life, parenting, or marital satisfaction, six multivariate outliers were found in total and excluded from analyses. Four participants reported extremely high scores on the PAM and also on the DAS; one participant reported extremely low scores on the SLS and the PAM and for the last participant scores on the PAM and on parental agreement on parenting goals was extremely high. As reported in Tables 18 to 20, results of the analyses indicated that for mother's responses to the SLS, DAS, and PSS, no significant effect for the PGM-icc X PAM interactions were found. This indicates the moderator hypothesis predicting parenting alliance as a moderator in the relation between dissimilarity in parenting goals and either life satisfaction, marital

satisfaction and parenting satisfaction was not supported for mothers.

Regression lines were plotted in order to discern the significant interaction found for mothers involving the PSPS. Simple regression lines for high versus low levels of PSPS were plotted and a slope analyses was completed (Aiken and West, 1991). The unstandardized regression coefficients produced in the final block, when both main effects and the interaction were entered, were used to calculate the regression lines. Figure 1 demonstrates graphically the role of PSPS as a moderator of the relation between similarity in parenting goals and marital satisfaction for mothers. As shown in Figure 1, PSPS moderated the relation between parent similarity for parenting goals and ratings of maternal marital satisfaction. In keeping with the hypothesis, less similarity in parenting goals was related to a higher level of marital satisfaction when partner support for parenting occurred more frequently but had less of an impact when partner support for parenting occurred less frequently. A slope analysis was conducted using high and low values of the centred PSPS, which were calculated by using one standard deviation above and below the mean (Aiken & West, 1991). An interaction term including the predictor and the new values of the PSPS (high PSPS, low PSPS) was subsequently created. SMR was used to test the significance of the slope from zero (see Table 21). The low PSPS regression line was found to be significant from zero, while the high PSPS regression line was not statistically different from zero. These findings indicate that when frequency of partner support for parenting was low, less similarity in parenting goals was related to low marital satisfaction; however when partner support for parenting was high, less similarity in parenting goals between parents was not significantly related to higher marital satisfaction.

Fathers. Three multivariate outliers were identified and excluded from analyses focussing

on partner support for parenting for fathers because of their impact on the results of HMRs involving the DAS. Two participants reported extremely low scores on the DAS and on the PSPS and for the third participant scores on the PSPS and the PGM-icc were extremely low.

As can be seen from Tables 15 to 17, for father responses to the SLS, DAS, and PSS no significant effect for the PGM-icc X PSPS interactions were found indicating the moderator hypothesis predicting partner support for parenting as a moderator in the relation between dissimilarity in parenting goals and either life satisfaction, marital satisfaction and parenting satisfaction was not supported.

Four multivariate outliers were found and excluded from analyses focussing on the PAM as a potential moderator in the relation between dissimilarity in parenting goals and the various indices of adult well-being (SLS, DAS, and PSS) for fathers because of their impact on the results of HMRs involving these variables. Two participants reported extremely low scores on the PAM and the PGM-icc, while two other participants reported very high scores on the PAM and extremely low scores on the DAS and the PGM-icc. For father responses to the SLS, DAS, and PSS, no significant effect for the PGM-icc X PAM interactions were found (see Tables 18 to 20). Thus, the moderator hypothesis predicting parenting alliance as a moderator in the relation between dissimilarity in parenting goals and either life satisfaction, marital satisfaction and parenting satisfaction was not supported for fathers.

Discussion

In the present study a community sample of dual income couples with an eldest child 2-5 years of age was recruited through community announcements. Participant couples completed an interview in which they rated the importance of parenting goals to specific child-rearing situations.

In addition, parents completed self-report measures of adult well-being and two aspects of their coparenting relationship, coparenting support and the coparenting alliance. The degree of agreement between parents on parenting goals, calculated using the intraclass correlation coefficient, was the main variable of interest in this study.

This discussion is organized to address the following: 1) the demographic characteristics of the sample, 2) the findings related to the psychometric properties of the measures, 3) the description of the sample, 4) group differences, 5) the results of the analyses related to parenting goals and child gender, 6) the results related to parenting goals and child behaviour, 7) the association between agreement in parenting goals and greater satisfaction with life, parenting and marriage, 8) the results of mediator and moderator hypothesis tests involving the two coparenting variables. The discussion section ends with an analysis of the strengths and of the limitations of the study and concludes with an examination of possible practice implications.

Sample Demographics

The sample demographics are comparable to the average dual-income Canadian family within the Ottawa region, the area from which the majority of the sample was recruited. This sample is comparable to the sample demographics of other studies that have investigated parenting goals within families (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Coplan, 1999; Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Hastings & Rubin, 1999; Kuczynski 1984). As Ottawa is a relatively affluent region, the sample has a higher income than the national average income for dual income families.

Measures

The psychometric properties of all scales were examined in this study. In addition, particular attention was paid to the psychometric properties of scales that were either modified or less well-

established. Overall, results of pilot testing supported the construct validity of the PGM. Additionally, internal consistency was found to be acceptable for both mothers and for fathers on the PGM. Test-retest reliability calculated on a subsample of participants indicated similarity between mothers and fathers responding initially and six weeks later. Overall, the psychometric properties obtained in the current study suggest that the PGM is a reliable and stable measure that can be extended to fathers and can be used to measure the importance of parenting goals in specific and common child-rearing situations.

The Partner Support for Parenting Scale had not previously been used on a sample of mothers. Internal consistency of the PSPS calculated for mothers and fathers was good, indicating that items in the scale seemed to measure the same construct. Because factor analysis supported a single factor solution, the total score was used measuring general support offered from one parent to the other in regards to parenting matters. Support for the construct validity of the PSPS was demonstrated through the positive association of the PSPS and the PAM. Finally, test-retest reliability conducted on a subsample of participants indicated that the PSPS was answered by parents in a similar manner within a six week interval. Thus, the results of the present study indicate that the PSPS is a stable and reliable measure that can be used with mothers as well as fathers and can be used as one indicator of the coparenting relationship, support given by one parent to the other parent in regards to their role as a parent.

The Parenting Satisfaction Scale (subscale 3), although a well-established measure of a parent's satisfaction with their own child-rearing skills, revealed slightly lower than anticipated internal consistency for fathers and for mothers. As noted earlier, considerable differences exist between the standardized sample used by Guidubaldi and Cleminshaw (1985) and the current

sample. The standardization sample contained only a small percentage of fathers (10%), an equal number of divorced parents and married parents and included children of school-age. Research suggests that parenting ability may temporarily decrease following separation and/or divorce, and with it parenting satisfaction (Forehand, Thomas, Wierson, & Brody, 1990; Tein, Sandler, & Zautra, 2000; Rogers & White, 1998). Internal consistency of the parenting satisfaction measure in the current study appears to be similar to that of other studies including mothers and fathers (Thompson & Walker, 2004; Rogers & White, 1998). However it is important to note that lower internal consistency for fathers in the current study may have attenuated links between this measure and the other variables of interest in the study. Thus, in interpreting results of analyses using this scale, its lower internal consistency should be borne in mind.

Description of Participants

Adult well-being. In this sample of dual-income families with toddler and preschool-age children, both mother and father ratings of their overall satisfaction with life was in the slightly satisfied to satisfied range, similar to other published non-clinical samples of adults (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Mother and fathers ratings of marital satisfaction were within the nondistressed range as were both mother and father ratings of parenting satisfaction. Mothers and fathers in this sample rated their own parenting satisfaction to be higher than that of the PSS standardization sample (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985). The differences in sample demographics mentioned earlier may account for mean differences in parenting satisfaction between the standardized sample and the current sample of married, dual-income mothers and fathers.

For each index of adult well-being, (life satisfaction, couple satisfaction, and parenting satisfaction), significant associations between mother and father ratings were found indicating that

mothers and fathers who reported higher satisfaction in any of those areas of their lives also had partners who reported higher satisfaction in that area.

In terms of parents' responses to the measure of parental alliance, overall, mothers and fathers reported their parenting alliance to be within the non-problematic range. Similar to the PSS, parents in the current sample reported a higher level of perceived parenting alliance than did mothers and fathers in the Konold and Abidin (2001) sample. Again, important differences exist between the sample reported by Konold and Abidin and the current sample that may account for these differences. First, approximately 20% of the Konold and Abidin sample were divorced or widowed, second, the majority of the children were school-age or older, and again the sample was comprised of more mothers than fathers. Regardless, the findings from this sample of married parents of preschool-age children indicate that the current sample is a well-functioning sample.

Participants reported their view of their partner's support for parenting to be moderate to high in this sample of dual-income parents, similar to previous studies (Bouchard & Lee, 2000). Mother and father ratings on both the measure of parenting alliance and the measure of parenting support were significantly moderately correlated indicating that mothers who reported higher parenting support or parenting alliance also had husbands who reported higher parenting support and a higher parenting alliance.

Parenting goals. Across all vignettes, mothers and fathers rated relationship-centred goals as most important to them in the child-rearing situations, followed by child-centred goals and then parent-centred goals. Mothers' and fathers' responses to the PGM were moderately positively correlated, indicating that mothers who rated goal importance as high also tended to have partners who rated goal importance as high. The mean or average degree of similarity between mothers and

fathers in responding to the importance of the goals across the vignettes was moderate, but there was some variability in similarity. This indicates that parents ranged from being quite similar in parenting goals in the specific child-rearing situations to having quite divergent goals related to child-rearing.

Summary. Overall, parents in the current sample described themselves as well-adjusted in terms of their life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and their parenting satisfaction. Mothers and fathers also described their coparenting relationships in positive terms and their agreement on socialization goals for their children to be generally high. Mother and father ratings on all variables were significantly correlated indicating an overlap in how each parent perceives these different aspects of themselves, their relationships, or their families. Some ratings of parents in the current sample (PSS, PAM) suggest that they are generally better-adjusted than parents described in previous samples. It is important to note that this is likely a function of the differing sample characteristics, especially the under-representativeness of fathers and the inclusion of parents, regardless of marital status. The current sample includes couples in which both partners are willing to participate, are married, and living together with their toddler or preschool-age child.

Group Differences

No differences were found on any variables as a function of child gender or recruitment strategy, number of children per family, or number of years the couple had been cohabiting or married. The gender of the child did not yield differences in terms of similarity in parenting goals, adult well-being or in terms of coparenting alliance or support. Additionally, whether parents were recruited through advertisements or through a community parenting event, no systematic differences were found. The majority of the sample was recruited from the Ottawa area; however,

some recruitment was done across the country through advertisement in a national parenting magazine. Sample size did not permit analyses of possible regional variation. This lends some uncertainty as to the generalizability of the sample to matching the demographic characteristics of the Ottawa region. Regardless, the vast majority of the sample was from the Ottawa region, and the parents who responded to the study ad in the national parenting magazine would likely need to be affluent enough to afford the subscription to the magazine.

Two group differences were noted, highlighting the importance of considering child age and parent gender within the coparenting area of study. Parents' responses to the PGM indicate that similarity in parenting goals is greater for parents of two year old children than for parents of older children, in the 4-5 age range. This finding is interesting in that it indicates that parents do not necessarily come to agree on parenting goals over time and through practice in parenting together. One explanation may be that dissimilarity in parenting goals do not come to light as often when a child is 2 years old and there is perhaps less opportunity for dissimilarity to arise compared to a 4 or 5 year old child who is fully verbal, has begun to interact more with others, and goes to school. Alternatively, it may be that given the high demands of parenting two-year old children, parents coordinate their efforts more closely than they do with children at a later stage of development who have outgrown the intense behaviours of the two-year-old stage. It is also possible that parents of 4-5 year old children are more likely to have more than one child (i.e. a younger child than the 4-5 year old child) and thus have less time and opportunity to negotiate their child-rearing goals. Previous studies investigating parenting goals have not investigated parenting goals as a function of child age, and there appears to be no other studies that have explored between parent similarity or dissimilarity in goals at any age. Difference between parents' degree of agreement on parenting

goals according to child age highlights the importance of considering specific developmental stages in coparenting research and therefore it is important not to assume that even subtly different stages, such as the toddler stage and the preschool stage, involve the same coparenting dynamics.

A second group difference found in this study was related to parent gender and parenting satisfaction. Mothers reported being significantly more satisfied with their parenting than did fathers. This result is consistent with other research that has found that in general, mothers report greater feelings of parenting satisfaction, even across cultures and age of parent than do fathers (Bornstein et al., 1998; Thompson & Walker, 2004). Determinants of parental satisfaction differ for men and women. Some authors have suggested that fathers' relationships with their children are tied more closely to varying aspects of their marital relationship than is the case for mothers (Rogers & White, 1998). Additionally, research has suggested that fathers' commitment and involvement seems to be higher with sons than with daughters and studies indicate that marriages with sons are less likely to end in divorce than are marriages with daughters (Elek, Hudson, & Bouffard, 2003). Although compared to fathers, mothers often report more strain and argument with their children they also report greater satisfaction. It is possible then that parenting is both more demanding and more rewarding for mothers than for fathers. Undoubtedly, the replication in the current study of mothers reporting more gratification from their parenting role than do fathers underlines the need to consider both mothers and fathers in parenting research.

Parenting Goals and Child Gender

Previous research investigating parenting goals has found conflicting results in terms of type of parenting goal and child gender. Hastings and Coplan, (1999) and Hastings and Rubin, (1999) found that mothers of daughters rated parent-centred goals as more important than did mothers of

sons. In contrast, Kuczynski (1984) found that mothers of boys tended to use power assertive behaviours more often than did mothers of girls. Coplan et al. (2002) and study 3 of Hastings and Grusec (1998) did not find differences in parent-centred goals as a function of child gender. The results of the current study did not reveal any differences in rating of parent-centred goals as a function of child gender for mothers or for fathers. Thus, the findings from this study are consistent with the findings of Coplan et al., (2002) and Hastings and Grusec (1998). Aside from the methodological differences in the Kuczynski study that possibly account for the different findings, it is difficult to appreciate why the earlier studies by Hastings are in contrast to later studies involving the same author and those of the current study. Examination of the sample characteristics and methodology of these studies appear very similar, apart from subtly different descriptions in the vignettes used to capture the parenting goals and the larger sample size used in the current study. This larger sample size lends the greatest support for the current finding being most representative of actual gender related findings in relation to parenting goals. However, clearly more research is warranted to replicate this finding with a similar sample and sample size.

Parenting Goals and Child Behaviour

Studies by Hastings and Rubin (1999) and Coplan et al., (2002) have found an association between the type of child behaviour depicted in the vignettes and parenting goal. Specifically, in response to internalizing child behaviour such as sadness, or social withdrawal/shyness, mothers were found to endorse greater importance for child-centred and relationship-centred goals than parent-centred goals. Parent-centred goals were endorsed as more important when children were depicted as displaying externalizing behaviour such as aggression. Similar and compatible findings were found in this study of toddler and preschool age children and these findings were extended to

fathers. Both mothers and fathers rated parent-centred goals as significantly more important in the context depicting their child displaying an act of aggression towards another child (hits friend with a toy), than they did in other contexts. Mothers and fathers rated child-centred goals as significantly more important in the situations depicting child internalizing behaviour (crying and shyness) than they did in situations depicting mild child externalizing behaviour (screaming/hitting). Child-centred goals were rated as more import in the vignettes depicting mild externalizing behaviour (yelling) than in the more severe externalizing child behaviour (hitting someone).

Finally, both mothers' and fathers' responses indicate that they view relationship centred goals as significantly more important in situations portraying internalizing behaviour or mild externalizing behaviour than in the situation describing severe child externalizing behaviour (hitting a friend). However fathers rated relationship-centred goals as significantly less important than did mothers across all vignettes. These results extend the findings of Hastings and Coplan (1999) indicating that mothers tend to adapt their goals to match the type of behaviour their child is displaying. Fathers also appear endorse different parenting goals according in response to different types of behaviour. Adaptability according to the behavioural display of a child is no doubt a parenting strength (Hastings & Coplan, 1999).

Although the importance of relationship-centred goals is high for both mothers and fathers across a variety of parent-child situations, when their child acts out aggressively toward others the importance of maintaining a trusting relationship with their child lessens and the goal of stopping the behaviour becomes paramount. Thus it appears that for more extreme externalizing child behaviours such as physical aggression, stopping the behaviour is more important than is teaching the child more appropriate ways to handle the event or learn from the circumstances (Hastings &

Rubin, 1999). Therefore, parenting goals appear to be situation-specific, where parenting goals steer parental responses according to differing child-rearing contexts or behaviours (Bugental & Johnson, 2000).

Taken together the results of descriptive analyses of the Parenting Goals Measure indicate that this measure can be used as a reliable indicator of what a parent hopes to achieve in specific and very common child-rearing situations with their toddler or preschool-age child. Overall, there was considerable consistency between the findings reported in previous studies and those of the current study. The results of this investigation also reliably extend study of parenting goals to fathers, indicating important similarities and dissimilarities between mothers and father in the outcomes that they hope to achieve during parenting interactions with their children.

Similarity in Parenting Goals and Adult Well-being

Between parent similarity in parenting goals was associated with maternal life satisfaction and parenting satisfaction. More specifically, the greater the similarity in parenting goals between mothers and fathers within the same family, the more satisfied mothers were with their parenting and with life in general. For fathers, the more similar their parenting goals were to their partners' the more satisfied fathers were with parenting. Interestingly, similarity in parenting goals was not related to marital satisfaction for either mothers or for fathers.

Thus, one aspect of the coparenting relationship, similarity in parenting goals between mothers and fathers was related to both mothers' and fathers' satisfaction with their own parenting performance. It is possible that when there are similarities between parents within a family on parenting goals in specific child-rearing situations that those goals may be more successfully achieved and thus, impact on how the parent feels about her/his parenting ability. For mothers,

these positive emotions may extend to her life in general, especially in light of traditional gender socialization, which often lends women to allocate more salience to their identity within the role of mother (Rogers & White, 1998).

Interestingly, there was no impact of parent goal similarity on marital satisfaction. Although research supports a link between the marital and parenting domains (Erel & Burman, 1995; Grych & Fincham, 2001) there are a number of reasons why the parenting domain may not be as tightly linked. First, the parenting role has a permanency outside of the marital relationship. This is clearly evidenced in separated and divorced parents where parenting satisfaction is independent of marital satisfaction. Second, the marital relationship often develops much earlier than the parenting one and therefore may absorb less impact from dissimilarity between parents, especially, when the sample of individuals is well-adjusted as are the participants in the current study. Third, the marriage relationship is a dyadic relationship, whereas the parenting relationship is a larger family system and at the very least is triadic in nature (Gable et al., 1992; Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004). This has led to the conceptualization of marital and coparenting relationships as more complementary than comparable (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004). Given these distinctions between parenting and marital relationships it is plausible to consider that a less well-functioning sample, either with parents who are less well-established as a marital couple, or with parents with greater dissimilarity in parenting goals could create such a negative scenario as to impact on marital satisfaction. Although it is difficult to untangle the theoretical links of the parenting and marital relationship, this study reveals that for well-functioning parents of preschool children lack of perfect agreement in parenting goals between parents is not associated with problems in the marital relationship.

A further implication for the above findings is that lack of absolute agreement on parenting issues is not problematic for family well-being. The literature is only beginning to disentangle the conditions under which dissimilarity between parents over child-rearing issues is harmful to family functioning and the conditions under which dissimilarity is not harmful or even positive (Cowan & Cowan, 2002). Results from this study indicate that when parents agree on parenting goals to a modest degree (i.e. there is not one hundred percent agreement), there is no evidence of difficulties in the marital domain for mothers or for fathers. However, only modest agreement within the coparenting domain is related to lower contentment within the parenting role for women, and even more so for men. Furthermore, modest similarity on parenting goals appears to be related to mothers' satisfaction with their lives in general. Further study is needed to replicate these findings and to determine the clinical significance of such a relation.

Mediator Model

The mediation model involving two aspects of the coparenting relationship, coparenting support and coparenting alliance was tested in the relation between similarity/dissimilarity in parenting goals and adult well-being. It was hypothesized that a relation between parenting goal similarity and satisfaction in adult roles could be mediated by coparenting support. However the data revealed no association between similarity in parenting goals and marital satisfaction, and a link with life satisfaction for mothers only. The mediation model was not supported with either coparenting variable (PSPS or PAM) for mothers or for fathers. This finding indicates that in well-adjusted families with young children, neither coparenting support nor coparenting alliance accounts for relations between the degree of agreement between parents on parenting goals and indices of parental satisfaction for mothers and fathers, or life satisfaction for mothers.

For this sample of parents with moderate similarity on parenting there were few links between similarity in goals and adult well-being, and in the case of a significant link, coparental variables were not a mediator. In future research it will be necessary to determine whether there are links in families with less similarity in parenting goals. That is, support for the mediator variable of high coparenting support or alliance may be found when greater between parent dissimilarity exists for parenting goals. Thus, given the lack of relation between similarity in parenting goals and satisfaction measures, it is important to test whether these coparenting variables fit a moderator hypothesis.

Moderator Model

In this study, two coparenting variables were tested as potential moderators of the relation between similarity in parenting goals and adult well-being: partner support for parenting and parenting alliance. For the three adult satisfaction variables, only one moderator interaction term was significant. The relation between similarity in parenting goals and mother's ratings of marital satisfaction was different depending on the support for parenting mothers reported receiving from their partners. More specifically, less similarity in parenting goals between parents was related to lower marital satisfaction when the frequency of partner support for parenting was low. Thus, when coparenting support is low, lack of similarity in parenting goals is associated with lower marital satisfaction for mothers. This finding lends support to the view of coparenting support as a resilience mechanism (Feinberg, 2002) and accordingly may be one target for prevention in regards to marital unhappiness or dissatisfaction.

This finding also lends some evidence to the "spillover" hypothesis (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004), which posits that some aspects of the coparenting and marital relationships are

interrelated within the family system. The finding in this study suggests that mothers view coparenting support as a factor that is connected to the satisfaction they feel in regards to their marriage relationship, when lack of similarity exists between themselves and their partner in regards to parenting goals for their child. In contrast it appears that fathers may not view coparenting support as important to their contentment within the marital relationship. This postulate would be in keeping with social norms. However, as the nature of the analyses do not allow for causal inferences, it is important to remember that the direction of influence could be from the coparenting relationship to the marital relationship or from marital relationship to the coparenting relationship.

Strengths of the Present Study

This study represents one of the few studies to examine parenting goals in the setting of a mother-father dyad. Although a growing interest in parenting goals exists within the parenting socialization literature (Bugental & Johnston, 2000), this is the first known study to make one of its inclusion criteria the parent dyad. Parke (2004) argued that it is important to go beyond the individual level of mother, father, or child, and consider relationships among family members as important units of analyses. Family members influence each other in complex ways, and it is paramount for family well-being that researchers within the family domain endeavor to understand this dynamic. Furthermore, goals are a common concept in individual psychology however, during the transition to parenthood, goals often shift for women and for men (Salmela-Aro, Nurmi, Saisto, & Halmensmaki, 2000). The investigation of parenting goals within the family context is an important aspect of adult well-being and this study contributes to the exploration of the link between parenting goals and parenting well-being.

A central aim of this study was to investigate similarity and dissimilarity in parenting from

a non-pathologizing perspective and to include fathers to an equal degree as mothers as fathers are still underrepresented in child and family research (Costigan & Cox, 2001). It is important to study not only the ways in which lack of similarity between parents is problematic, but also the conditions under which dissimilarity between parents is acceptable or even valued (such as when coparenting support is present). Furthermore, with fathers more involved in child-rearing than previous generations of fathers (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004), the study of coparenting relationship has gleaned even more importance for present day families.

In terms of methodology, the results of this study further demonstrate the validity and reliability of the use of context-specific child behaviour vignettes to elicit parenting goals. Given parenting attitudes and practices have been shown to be poor predictors of parenting behaviour (Holden & Edwards, 1989) and parenting goals have been shown to be better linked to parenting practices (Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Hastings & Coplan, 1999; Hastings and Rubin, 1999; Coplan et al., 2002), a psychometrically sound measure of parenting goals is important in the study of parenting and adult or child outcomes. In the current study the vignette-style interview (Hastings and Grusec, 1998) was modified and formalized into the Parenting Goal Measure. The results of this study have extended the use of this methodology to fathers and have supported the construct validity and test-retest reliability of the measure.

Overall results reveal that the sample of parents in the current study is generally very comparable to those parents who have been participants in previous parenting research. Furthermore, the measures used in this study have either been previously well-established in terms of their psychometric properties or confirmed to have adequate psychometric properties in the current study. Therefore, the lack of significant findings in relation to the coparenting mediator and

moderator hypothesis of partner support and parenting alliance are likely substantive and not a result of poor methodology.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although the participant characteristics of the current study match the population from which they were drawn in terms of income, ethnicity, and general functioning, the generalizability of the findings to less well-functioning families with a lower income status is unknown. A number of factors may have led to an over-representation of well-adjusted parents. First, a self-selection bias tending to over-represent high functioning parents is not uncommon in parenting research (Costigan & Cox, 2001). One way to overcome this bias would be to investigate using a clinical sample of families. A second factor that may have led to the over-representation of well-adjusted parents may be the method of data collection. As with any self-report measures and interviews a concern exists that participants will answer in a socially desirable way, in an effort to present themselves more favourably than might otherwise be the case. The participants of the current study appear to be a high functioning group of individuals and families, and socially desirability may play a small part in the overall demographic characteristics of this sample. The use of behavioural observation either in vivo or via video recording is one way to reduce this influence as is the diary recording methods, where parents keep a diary for a specific period of time of common parent-child interactions, what their goals were in those parenting situations and what parenting behaviours were used. Additionally, a limitation of the study is the lack of ethnic diversity of the sample, which limits the extent to which the results can be generalized to other cultures. Future direction in this area might initially include a comparison of parenting goals across cultures to determine the differences and similarities between cultures and whether the existing literature on parenting goals

could be generalized, in part, to other cultures.

Given the fact that the parenting goals in this study were on the whole very similar and the mediator and moderator hypothesis were not supported, except in one circumstance, it is a possibility that the sample was too homogeneous in their parenting goals. If the parent dyads were more divergent in their goals then a mediator or moderator hypothesis might have shown more of an influence on marital or life satisfaction. Similar to this, it may also be that due to the high-functioning status of the participants and thus lack of variability on the satisfaction measures that resulted in the lack of support for the mediator and moderator hypotheses. This is indeed an area for future research. Furthermore, study of parenting goal similarity and dissimilarity across developmental stages would also highlight the continuity and discontinuity of parenting goals as children grow and parent-child interactions become more complex. Parents' change in goals and related coordination of goals across development would be an interesting area for future research.

Research Implications

Further research is needed to explore the intricacies of parenting goals and the influence of these goals on the parent dyad, on parent individual functioning, and ultimately to child adjustment. The investigation of parental goal intentions during interactions with their child is a new area of study and research to date indicates that this line of research indeed warrants further investigation. The current research has raised some interesting aspects of similarity and dissimilarity in parenting goals at different child ages. Replication of the similarity and dissimilarity in parenting goals between the stages of toddlerhood and preschool would be important as would a longitudinal look at changes in parenting goals that would help to elucidate the nature of parenting goals as parent-child interactions change. A second important research implication to note from the findings of this study

is the consideration of reporting mother and father psychometric data rather than assuming that a certain parenting inventory is measuring the same construct in both mothers and fathers. Again, important differences exist between mothers and fathers in relation to their individual roles as parents. Within the study of the family and especially within the study of coparenting, both mothers and fathers perspectives need to receive equal and separate consideration.

Practice Implications

The results have several practice implications as the adjustment to coparenting is an important developmental task for parents with young children and this period often coincides with the deterioration of the marriage for some couples (Feinberg, 2002). First, high functioning parents tend to be more similar than different in their parenting goals to specific child-rearing situations. Second, lack of perfect agreement on parenting goals does not necessarily negatively influence the parent dyad. Third, in disagreements between parents over parenting issues, it may be more salient to intervene at the level of the parenting goal rather than the parenting behaviour that follows the goal intention. Parents in the current study endorsed more similarity in parenting goals than dissimilarity, therefore, it may be the case that parents may differ more on the coordination of the parenting goal rather than the goal itself, and thus realization of goal agreement may facilitate the coordination of the goal between parents. Fourth, parents tend to be more parent-centred in their focus when children engage in more severe externalizing behaviour such as showing aggression towards another child. Thus parents tend to want to immediately end their children's aversive behaviour and appear much less concerned with the socialization of values or skills that could lead to self-regulation (Hastings & Rubin, 1999). Although a parent-centred response may be appropriate in some circumstances (i.e. injury to the other child) at other times a child-centred

approach may help to teach the child empathy, develop feelings of remorse for their actions, and induce growth in the area of self-control. Also, a more child-centred approach may de-escalate parental coercive behaviour that is associated with more parent-centred behaviours such as control and punishment. Fifth, although dissimilarity may exist between mothers and fathers on parenting goals, when fathers are supportive to their partners in their parenting role, ill effects do not spill over into the marital relationship for mothers. Thus teaching couples how they can support each other in their parenting role, despite having dissimilarity in parenting goals for a particular parent-child interaction may help to lessen the impact on the marital system for mothers.

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Table 1

Studies Investigating Parenting Goals and Parenting Behaviour

Study & Sample	Parenting Goals	Findings
Kuczynski (1984) 64 mothers; *M* =33 years 4 year old children (32 girls, 32 boys) 68% BA or higher	Short vs. long-term	Mothers in long-term condition used reasoning and nurturing more than mothers in the short-term condition Power assertive parenting behaviours used more often by mothers of boys than mothers of girls
Hastings & Grusec (1998) Study 1 103 parents and nonparents Majority Caucasian Age of child not reported	Short vs. long-term goals Parent-, child-, relationship-goals	Parent-centred goals linked to greater ratings of power assertive behaviours and less endorsement of reasoning and responsive parenting behaviours Long-term child and relationship-centred goals associated with parental reasoning Women more child and relationship-centred than men
Study 2 65 mothers, 31 fathers (*M* = 36 years) 5-7 year old children Most completed post-high school education		Parent-centred goals associated with dominating and power assertive parenting behaviours Child-centred goals associated with reasoning and less dominating behaviour Relationship-centred goals associated with more responsive and least dominating behaviour

Table 1(continues)

Studies investigating Parenting Goals and Parenting Behaviour

Study & Sample	Parenting Goals	Findings
Study 3 97 parents and nonparents (M = 35years) Majority Caucasian		Manipulation of goals had significant effect on parenting behaviour: parent-centred goals associated with power-assertive behaviour; relationship-centred goals linked with least power assertive behaviour; child-centred goals linked with reasoning No gender differences found
Hastings & Coplan (1999) 75 mothers Preschool age children (40 boys, 35 girls) Majority Caucasian Middle class Primarily 2-parent families	Parent-centred goals Relationship-centred goals	Parenting goals linked to child behaviour Mothers of daughters rated parent-centred goals as more important than did mothers of sons Mothers placed more importance on parent-centred goals in response to child aggression than on relationship-centred goals Mothers less focused on parent-centred goals in response to child non-compliance
Hastings & Rubin (1999) 65 mothers 2-year old children Majority had post-high school education	Parent-centred goals Socialization goals Social interactional goals Empathic/relational goals	More reported empathic/relational goals in response to child withdrawal More reported parent-centred and socialization goals in response to child aggression

Table 1 (continues)

Studies investigating Parenting Goals and Parenting Behaviour

Study & Sample	Parenting Goals	Findings
Majority Caucasian All two parent families		Parenting goals related to parenting behaviour Parent-centred goals endorsed more with daughters than with sons
Coplan, et al., (2002) 76 mothers Preschool children 41 boys, 35 girls Primarily Caucasian 89% two-parent families	Parent-centred and empathic goals	Mothers endorsed parent-centred goals more often in response to aggressive child behaviour compared to noncompliant, shy or prosocial behaviour A greater focus on empathic goals in relation to child shyness, than to other child behaviour

Table 2

Hastings and Grusec's (1998) Two-Dimensional Structure for Categorizing Parenting Goals

	IMMEDIACY OF CONCERN	
CENTER OF CONCERN		
	Short-term	Long-term
Parent	Wanting to control, change or end a child's current behaviour; wanting to meet a parent's wishes or agenda. e.g., I need to have peace and quiet	Wanting to have an obedient or respectful child; wanting to ensure a given behaviour is not repeated in the future. e.g., I'll make sure he listens next time.
Child	Wanting to understand a child's point of view in a given situation; wanting to promote child happiness. e.g., I want to find out what's making her so upset.	Wanting to teach a child values, societal rules, or important lessons for the child's future benefit. e.g., She needs to understand that she can't give up on things so easily.
Relationship	Wanting to reach fair and equitable resolutions to an interaction; wanting to promote everyone's happiness. e.g., I want us to be able to enjoy doing this together.	Wanting to build or maintain love, trust, and close family connections. e.g., I hope she realizes that I'll always be here to help her through hard times.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Families (N= 130)

Variables	*M* (*SD*)	%	Range
Age of parents	33.97 (4.81)		22-54
Father	35.04 (5.19)		24-54
Mother	32.90 (4.14)		22-45
Total years married/cohabiting	8.05 (3.05)		03-18
Age of child (in months)	37.00 (10.76)		18-60
Weekly hours in paid employment or in studies	39.05 (7.53)		25-70
Father	41.76 (7.49)		25-70
Mother	36.33 (6.55)		25-60
Families with more than one child		50.8%	
Ethnicity			
Canadian/Caucasian		84.2%	
Canadian/minority		15.8%	
Income of family			
Less than $19,999		0.8%	
$20,000 to $39,999		5.8%	
$40,000 to $59,99		14.2%	
$60,000 to $79,999		18.8%	
$80,000 to $99,999		23.5%	
Greater than $100,000		35.8%	
Occupational category			
Managerial		16.2%	
Professional		40.4%	
Technical		11.9%	
Administrative		08.8%	
Clerical		03.1%	
Retail		01.2%	
Other (including full-time study)		18.1%	

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach's Alpha Levels for Variables

Measure	*M*	*(SD)*	Range	alpha	*N*
Mothers					
PGM	3.68	(0.43)	1-5	.87	130
SLS	27.00	(5.54)	8-35	.89	130
DAS	39.73	(5.89)	19-49	.88	130
PSS	53.98	(8.91)	26-75	.75	130
PSPS	43.33	(7.87)	19-56	.88	130
PAM	86.30	(11.24)	48-100	.95	130
Fathers					
PGM	3.64	(0.47)	1-5	.88	130
SLS	26.83	(5.00)	10-35	.90	130
DAS	39.90	(5.65)	18-48	.86	130
PSS	53.09	(7.23)	35-70	.67	130
PSPS	44.45	(6.71)	23-56	.85	130
PAM	86.51	(9.63)	51-100	.94	130
PGMicc	0.48	(0.25)	-0.27 - 0.88	n/a	130

Note. PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002, Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale-Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999; PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995); PGMicc = The intraclass correlation between mothers and fathers responses to the PGM.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations among Variables for Mothers and Fathers

	PGM	SLS	DAS	PSS	PSPS	PAM	PGMicc
PGM	**.55****	.24**	.03	.194*	.09	.13	.03
SLS	.05	**.37****	.61**	.45**	.46**	.54**	.23**
DAS	.03	.64**	**.76****	.35**	.68**	.59**	.01
PSS	.29**	.27**	.15	**.35****	.26**	.43**	.19*
PSPS	-.03	.31**	.57**	.30**	**.50****	.77**	-.07
PAM	.10	.44**	.70**	.30**	.67**	**.64****	.14
PGMicc	-.03	.05	.02	.30**	-.04	.12	n/a

Note. Values above the diagonal are based on mother ratings, values below the diagonal are based on father ratings, and bolded values on the diagonal are Pearson correlation coefficients between mothers and fathers on the same variables.
PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings& Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale, Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995). PGMicc = The intraclass correlation between mothers and fathers responses to the PGM.

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviations for the PGM by Parenting Goal and Parent Gender

Parenting Goal	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
	Mothers	Fathers
Parent-Centred	2.69 (1.38)	2.77 (1.36)
Child-Centred	3.83 (1.22)	3.72 (1.17)
Relationship-Centred	4.52 (0.87)	4.42 (0.86)

Note. Means represent the average of both goals in each vignette measuring the same centre-of concern. PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998).

Table 7

Independent t tests for Comparisons of Variables Across Recruitment Group

Variables	*M*	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)
Recruitment Strategy	Advertisements		Parent Show/Other	
PGM	110.27	(13.55)	107.34	(13.20)
SLS	27.03	(5.24)	27.10	(4.94)
DAS	40.27	(5.05)	39.20	(6.37)
PSS	53.68	(8.41)	53.94	(7.65)
PSPS	44.30	(6.87)	43.29	(8.13)
PAM	87.21	(10.01)	85.30	(11.40)
PGM-icc	.48	(.26)	.51	(.22)

Note. PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale- Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale-Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995); PGMicc = The intraclass correlation between mothers and fathers responses to the PGM.

Table 8

ANOVA: Comparisons of Variables Between Parents with Children Aged 2, 3, 4 and 5 Years

Variables	Age 2 ($n = 47$) *M*	(*SD*)	Age 3 ($n = 39$) *M*	(*SD*)	Ages 4 & 5($n = 44$) *M*	(*SD*)
Mothers						
PGM	109.15	(11.16)	109.87	(14.38)	109.17	(11.82)
SLS	27.98	(5.33)	26.74	(4.65)	26.18	(6.38)
DAS	39.89	(6.3)	39.64	(4.8)	39.64	(6.43)
PSS	43.19	(5.14)	42.95	(4.71)	42.51	(6.35)
PSPS	44.23	(7.84)	42.36	(7.57)	43.23	(8.29)
PAM	87.30	(10.27)	84.54	(12.53)	86.82	(11.13)
Fathers						
PGM	108.72	(14.11)	109.89	(14.02)	110.00	(12.77)
SLS	27.60	(3.74)	26.82	(5.56)	26.02	(5.61)
DAS	40.11	(5.57)	39.46	(6.41)	40.07	(5.11)
PSS	42.89	(3.88)	42.85	(4.50)	41.21	(5.20)
PSPS	44.89	(6.77)	43.56	(6.50)	44.77	(6.91)
PAM	86.17	(9.39)	85.92	(11.11)	87.41	(8.58)
PGM-icc	$.58_a$	(.23)	.51	(.25)	$.45_b$	(.25)

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$
PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale-Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995); PGMicc = The intraclass correlation between mothers and fathers responses to the PGM.

Table 9

Independent Groups t tests for Comparisons of Variables Across Child Gender

Variables	*M*	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)
Child Gender	Girls		Boys	
Mothers				
PGM	108.23	(13.28)	110.53	(12.20)
SLS	27.32	(4.70)	26.64	(6.38)
DAS	40.25	(5.47)	39.15	(6.33)
PSS	43.00	(5.52)	42.50	(5.78)
PSPS	44.24	(8.03)	42.30	(7.64)
PAM	85.83	(11.86)	86.85	(10.57)
Fathers				
PGM	108.82	(14.01)	109.31	(14.15)
SLS	26.36	(5.15)	27.36	(4.82)
DAS	39.84	(5.67)	40.08	(5.29)
PSS	42.42	(4.33)	42.02	(4.88)
PSPS	44.65	(6.47)	44.23	(7.02)
PAM	86.39	(8.96)	86.66	(10.41)
PGMicc	.48	(.27)	.49	(.22)

Note. PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995) ; PGMicc = The intraclass correlation between mothers and fathers responses to the PGM.

Table 10

Independent Groups t tests for Comparisons of Variables Across Parent Gender

Variables	*M*	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)
Parent Gender	Mothers		Fathers	
PGM	109.29	(12.79)	109.05	(14.02)
SLS	27.00	(5.54)	26.83	(5.00)
DAS	39.73	(5.90)	39.90	(5.65)
PSS	43.77	$(5.63)_a$	42.23	$(4.58)_b$
PSPS	43.33	(7.88)	44.45	(6.71)
PAM	86.31	(11.25)	86.52	(9.63)

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$.
PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995).

Table 11

Independent Groups t tests for Comparisons of Variables Across Number of Children Per Family

Variables	*M*	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)
Children Per Family	1 Child		2 or 3 Children	
Mothers				
PGM	108.54	(12.46)	110.02	(13.17)
SLS	26.34	(5.70)	27.63	(5.36)
DAS	39.48	(6.12)	39.97	(5.72)
PSS	43.87	(5.14)	41.70	(5.91)
PSPS	43.03	(8.35)	43.62	(7.45)
PAM	85.45	(11.75)	87.14	(10.76)
Fathers				
PGM	110.02	(14.19)	108.12	(13.90)
SLS	26.58	(4.59)	27.08	(5.39)
DAS	39.75	(5.39)	40.15	(5.59)
PSS	43.30	(4.05)	41.20	(4.86)
PSPS	44.66	(7.22)	44.25	(6.23)
PAM	86.28	(10.62)	86.74	(9.64)
PGMicc	.50	(.24)	.47	(.25)

Note. PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995) ; PGMicc = The intraclass correlation between mothers and fathers responses to the PGM.

Table 12

Independent Groups t tests for Comparisons of Variables Across Number of Years Parents were Married or Cohabiting

Variables	*M*	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)
Years together	Less than 6		More than 6	
Mothers				
PGM	107.18	(16.80)	109.88	(11.64)
SLS	26.93	(4.64)	27.02	(5.79)
DAS	40.43	(5.28)	39.54	(6.06)
PSS	41.71	(4.39)	43.06	(5.91)
PSPS	43.46	(8.04)	43.29	(7.87)
PAM	84.45	(9.65)	87.21	(9.57)
Fathers				
PGM	113.34	(14.53)	107.63	(13.63)
SLS	27.10	(5.40)	26.74	(4.88)
DAS	39.21	(5.42)	40.21	(5.50)
PSS	41.79	(3.90)	42.38	(4.80)
PSPS	44.33	(6.35)	44.49	(6.86)
PAM	84.45	(9.65)	87.21	(9.57)
PGMicc	.50	(.18)	.48	(.26)

Note. PGM = Parenting Goals Measure (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995) ; PGMicc = The intraclass correlation between mothers and fathers responses to the PGM.

Table 13

2-way ANOVAs: Comparisons of Type of Goal with Type of Child Behaviour Depicted in Each Vignette and Parent Gender

	Yells		Screams		Hits		Cries		Acts shy	
	M	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*
Parent-Centred										
Mothers	5.84	$(1.69)_a$	5.45	$(1.66)_a$	7.22	$(1.47)_b$	4.16	$(1.88)_c$	4.24	$(1.86)_c$
Fathers	5.66	$(1.62)_a$	5.71	$(1.75)_a$	7.09	$(1.43)_b$	4.42	$(1.95)_c$	4.77	$(2.22)_c$
Child-Centred										
Mothers	7.24	$(1.47)_a$	7.0	$(1.67)_a$	7.51	$(1.34)_b$	8.26	$(1.53)_c$	8.34	$(1.63)_c$
Fathers	7.25	$(1.59)_a$	6.96	$(1.72)_a$	7.36	$(1.41)_b$	7.90	$(1.49)_c$	7.80	$(1.65)_c$
Relationship-Centred[a]										
Mothers	9.12	$(1.42)_a$	8.98	$(1.47)_a$	8.82	$(1.75)_b$	9.36	$(1.10)_c$	8.97	$(1.44)_a$
Fathers	8.96	$(1.38)_a$	8.75	$(1.57)_a$	8.53	$(1.84)_b$	9.17	$(1.14)_c$	8.78	$(1.47)_a$

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Tukey post honestly significant difference comparison.
[a]Means for mothers and fathers responses to relationship-centred goals differed significantly at $p < .01$.

Table 14

Standard Multiple Regression: The Relation Between Dissimilarity in Parenting Goals and Indices of Adult Well-being.

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	β
Mothers *(N = 130)*			
PGM-icc			
PSS	.009	.004	.194*
DAS	.000	.004	.012
SLS	.010	.004	.233**
Fathers *(N = 126)*			
PGM-icc			
PSS	.017	.005	.311**
DAS	.004	.005	.070
SLS	.003	.005	.061

Note. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSS R^2 = .037 for Mothers; DAS R^2 = .000 for Mothers; SLS R^2 = .054 for Mothers. PSS R^2 = .090 for Fathers; DAS R^2 = -.003 for Fathers; SLS R^2 = -.004 for Fathers.
** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Table 15

HMR: Partner Support for Parenting as Moderator of the Relation Between Similarity in Parenting Goals and Life Satisfaction (SLS)

Variables		*B*	*SE B*	β
Mothers *(N* =125*)*				
PSPS				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	4.70	2.03	0.20*
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	5.09	1.80	0.22**
	PSPS	0.32	.05	0.47**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	18.34	14.70	0.80
	PSPS	0.47	0.18	0.69**
	PGM-icc X PSPS	-0.30	0.33	-0.61
Fathers *(N* =130*)*				
PSPS				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	0.94	1.78	0.05
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	1.18	1.70	0.06
	PSPS	0.24	0.06	0.32**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	-7.96	14.86	-0.39
	PSPS	0.14	0.170	0.18
	PGM-icc X PSPS	0.21	0.33	0.47

Note. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999). PSPS R^2 = .042 for Step 1 Mothers (*ps* < .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .218 for Step 2 Mothers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .005 for Step 3 Mothers (*ps* > .05). PSPS R^2 = .002 for Step 1 Fathers (*ps* > .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .100 for Step 2 Fathers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .003 for Step 3 Fathers (*ps* > .05).

** p < .01; * p < .05

Table 16

HMR: Partner Support for Parenting as Moderator of the Relation Between Similarity in Parenting Goals and Marital Satisfaction (DAS)

Variables		*B*	*SE B*	β
Mothers *(N* =125*)*				
PSPS				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	1.65	2.28	.07
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	2.27	1.70	0.09
	PSPS	0.51	0.05	0.67**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	44.27	13.38	1.75**
	PSPS	0.99	0.16	1.30**
	PGM-icc X PSPS	-0.96	0.30	-1.77**
Fathers *(N* =130*)*				
PSPS				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	0.98	1.67	0.05
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	1.07	1.39	0.06
	PSPS	0.41	0.05	0.56**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	6.64	12.54	0.35
	PSPS	0.47	0.14	0.64**
	PGM-icc X PSPS	-0.13	0.28	-0.31

Note. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al, 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999). PSPS R^2 = .004 for Step 1 Mothers (*ps* > .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .448 for Step 2 Mothers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .042 for Step 3 Mothers (*ps* <.01). PSPS R^2 = .000 for Step 1 Fathers (*ps* > .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .318 for Step 2 Fathers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .008 for Step 3 Fathers (*ps* > .05).

** p < .01; * p < .05

Table 17

HMR: Partner Support for Parenting as Moderator of the Relation Between Similarity in Parenting Goals and Parenting Satisfaction (PSS)

Variables		*B*	*SE B*	β
Mothers *(N* =130*)*				
PSPS				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	7.41	3.38	.19*
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	7.72	3.30	0.20*
PSPS		0.25	0.09	0.22*
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	34.47	27.04	0.90
	PSPS	0.56	0.32	0.49
	PGM-icc X PSPS	-0.61	0.61	-0.75
Fathers *(N* =130*)*				
PSPS				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	5.47	1.56	0.27**
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	5.69	1.49	0.31**
PSPS		0.21	0.06	0.30**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	-5.82	13.00	-0.32
	PSPS	0.08	0.15	0.19
	PGM-icc X PSPS	0.26	0.29	-0.65

Note. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999). PSPS R^2 = .037 for Step 1 Mothers (*ps* < .01); $R^2\Delta$ = .077 for Step 2 Mothers (*ps* < .001) R2Δ = .040 for Step 3 Mothers (*ps* < .05). PSPS R^2 = .088 (*s* < .001) Step 1 Fathers; $R^2\Delta$ = .091 (*ps* < .001) for Step 2 Fathers; $R^2\Delta$ = .004 (ps>.05) for Step 3 Fathers.

** p < .01; * p < .05

Table 18

HMR: Parenting Alliance as a Moderator of the Relation Between Similarity in Parenting Goals and Life Satisfaction (SLS)

Variables		*B*	*SE B*	β
Mothers *(N* =125*)*				
PAM				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	4.87	2.05	0.21*
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	3.35	1.78	0.15
	PAM	0..27	.04	0.51**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	17.69	20.59	0.76
	PAM	0.35	0.12	0.66**
	PGM-icc X PAM	-0.17	0.24	-0.66
Fathers *(N* =130*)*				
PAM				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	0.97	1.81	0.05
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	0.13	1.71	0.01
	PAM	0.20	0.05	0.37**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	-10.35	22.01	-0.51
	PAM	0.15	0.13	0.26
	PGM-icc X PAM	0.12	0.25	0.54

Note. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); SLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995). PAMS R^2 = .044 for Step 1 Mothers (*ps* < .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .253 for Step 2 Mothers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .003 for Step 3 Mothers (*ps* > .05). PAM R^2 = .002 for Step 1 Fathers (*ps* > .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .132 for Step 2 Fathers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .002 for Step 3 Fathers (*ps* > .05).

** p < .01; * p < .05

Table 19

HMR: Parenting Alliance as a Moderator of the Relation Between Similarity in Parenting Goals and Marital Satisfaction (DAS)

Variables		*B*	*SE B*	β
Mothers *(N* =125*)*				
PAM				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	1.67	2.30	.07
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	-0.45	1.79	0.02
	PAM	0.37	0.04	0.64**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	29.20	20.59	1.15
	PAM	0.54	0.12	0.93**
	PGM-icc X PAM	-0.34	0.24	-1.24
Fathers *(N* =130*)*				
PAM				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	1.95	1.79	0.10
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	0.63	1.40	0.02
	PAM	0.34	0.04	0.64**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	11.20	18.22	0.56
	PAM	0.40	0.11	0.75**
	PGM-icc X PAM	-0.12	0.21	-0.57

Note. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al, 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995). PSPS R^2 = .004 for Step 1 Mothers (*ps* > .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .406 for Step 2 Mothers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .010 for Step 3 Mothers (*ps*> .05). PAM R^2 = .009 for Step 1 Fathers (*ps* > .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .401 for Step 2 Fathers (*ps* < .001); $R^2\Delta$ = .002 for Step 3 Fathers (*ps* > .05).

** p < .01; * p < .05

Table 20

HMR: Parenting Alliance as Moderator of the Relation Between Similarity in Parenting Goals and Parenting Satisfaction (PSS)

Variables		*B*	*SE B*	β
Mothers *(N* =130*)*				
PAM				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	4.49	2.16	0.19*
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	3.29	2.02	0.14
	PAM	0.21	0.05	0.38**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	27.37	23.24	1.13
	PAM	0.35	0.14	0.63*
	PGM-icc X PAM	-0.28	0.27	-1.06
Fathers *(N* =130*)*				
PAM				
Step1				
	PGM-icc	6.75	1.63	0.35**
Step 2				
	PGM-icc	6.00	1.54	0.31**
	PAM	0.18	0.04	0.34**
Step 3				
	PGM-icc	-21.33	19.65	-1.10
	PAM	0.03	0.12	0.05
	PGM-icc X PAM	0.31	0.22	1.48

Note. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al., 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); PSS = Parenting Satisfaction Scale Subscale 3 (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985); PAM = Parenting Alliance Measure (Abidin & Bruner, 1995). PAM R^2 = .034 for Step 1 Mothers (*ps* < .05); $R^2\Delta$ = .145 for Step 2 Mothers (*ps* < .001) R2Δ = .007 for Step 3 Mothers (*ps* >.05). PAM R^2 = .088 (ps < .001) Step 1 Fathers; $R^2\Delta$ = .091 (*ps* < .001) for Step 2 Fathers; $R^2\Delta$ = .004 (ps>.05) for Step 3 Fathers.

** p < .01; * p < .05

Table 21

SMR: Slope Analyses of Maternal DAS Scores

Variables		*B*	*SE B*	β
PSPS High				
	PGM-icc	4.51	2.70	-.18
	PSPS High	0.51	.05	.67**
	PGM-icc X PSPS High	-0.96	.30	-.34**
PSPS Low				
	PGM-icc	9.98	2.94	.40**
	PSPS Low	0.50	.05	.67**
	PGM-icc X PSPS Low	-0.96	.30	-.37**

Note. All variables have been centred. PGM-icc = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al, 2002; Hastings & Grusec, 1998); DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PSPS = Partner Support for Parenting Scale (Lee & Bouchard, 1999).
** $p < .01$

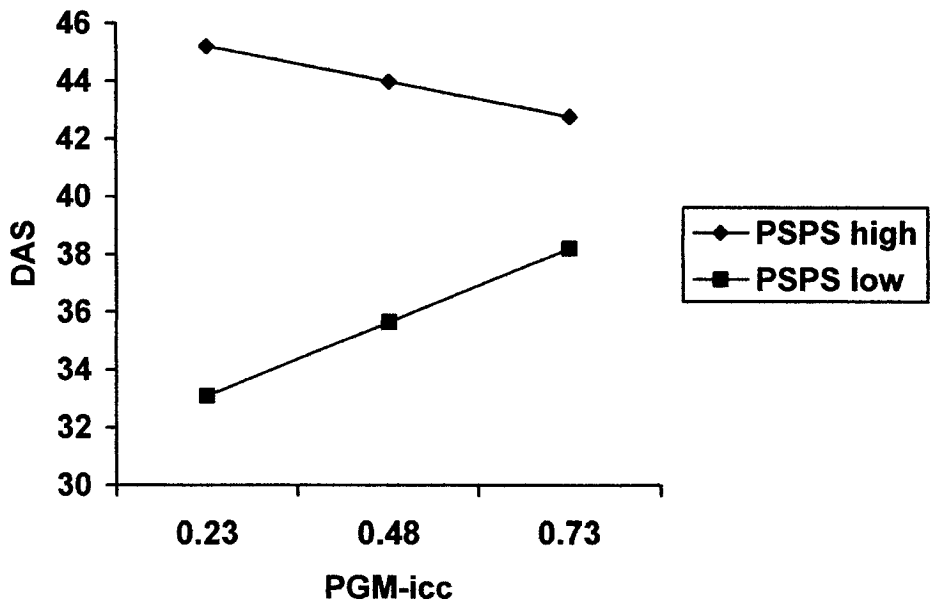

Figure 1. The moderating role of Partner Support for Parenting on the relation between dissimilarity in parenting goals (PGM-icc) and mother ratings of marital satisfaction. PSPS high = high frequency of partner support for parenting; PSPS low = low frequency of partner support for parenting. DAS = Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Satisfaction Subscale (Spanier, 1976); PGM (icc) = Parenting Goals Measure-intraclass correlation (Coplan et al., 2002, Hastings & Grusec, 1998).

Appendix A

Pilot Questionnaire for the Parenting Goals Measure

1. How long did it take you to complete the measure? _____

2. Where the instructions to Part A easy to understand? If not, please indicate why.

_____

_____

3. In your opinion, were there any vignettes that seemed difficult to understand? If so, which one(s) and why?

_____

_____

4. In your opinion, are there key parent-child conflictual interactions that are typical to the toddlers and preschoolers that were not captured in these vignettes? If so, please describe.

_____

_____

5. Were the instructions to Part B of the measure clear to you?

_____

_____

6. Were the parenting goals indicated in Part B easy to understand?

_____

_____

7. Please list any words used in this measure that were unclear to you.

_____

_____

8. In deciding what you would do, as a parent in the vignette situations and what your goals would be, would this measure be easier to understand if you were shown a videotape of a parent and child engaged in the interactions described?

_____

_____

9. Do you think the Parental Goal measure would be easier to do if you did it on your own, without an interviewer ? Why or why not?

_____

_____

Appendix B

Parenting Goals Measure

PART A. Below are a number of situations that occur with toddler and preschool-age children. Imagine that the situations involve you and your child. I will read each situation and then, in only one or two sentences, describe what you would do or say to handle the situation.

1. You are preparing supper. (Child's name) comes into the kitchen and demands an ice cream cone because she/he is hungry. When you offer her/him some crackers and carrot sticks instead and remind her/him that the meal will soon be ready, she/he yells that you are mean.

Describe what you would do: I would...

2. It is raining heavily. You have set out (child's name) 's rain clothes. She/he screams that she/he does not need a coat.

Describe what you would do: I would...

3. (Child's name) and his/her friend are playing in the family room while you clean up the kitchen. You hear screams and run to discover the children pulling a favourite toy – (Child's name) grabs the toy and hits his/her friend with it.

Describe what you would do: I would...

4. At the beginning of her swimming lesson (child's name) begins to cry and refuses to go in the water.

Describe what you would do: I would...

5. You are visiting family friends who your child knows well. (Child's name) refuses to leave your lap and will not play with the other children.

Describe what you would do: I would...

PART B. In responding to children, parents have different goals. Based on your answers in A, please listen to the following goals and rate the extent to which each of the goals listed below would be important to you in each parenting situation.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
Not at all important **Important** **Very Important**

In the situation where your child demanded ice cream before supper and yelled that you are mean, how important is it to you:
a) ____ to get my child to behave properly
b) ____ to reduce my own discomfort
c) ____ to make my child happier
d) ____ to help my child get along better in life
e) ____ to teach my child that it is possible for the two of us to work together on a problem
f) ____ to maintain a trusting relationship with my child

In the situation where your child refused to wear her/his rainwear, how important is it to you:
a) ____ to get my child to behave properly
b) ____ to reduce my own discomfort
c) ____ to make my child happier
d) ____ to help my child get along better in life
e) ____ to teach my child that it is possible for the two of us to work together on a problem
f) ____ to maintain a trusting relationship with my child

In the situation where your child grabbed the toy from her/his friend and hit her/his friend with it, how important is it to you:
a) ____ to get my child to behave properly
b) ____ to reduce my own discomfort
c) ____ to make my child happier
d) ____ to help my child get along better in life
e) ____ to teach my child that it is possible for the two of us to work together on a problem
f) ____ to maintain a trusting relationship with my child

In the situation where your child refused to go into the water at swim lessons, how important is it to you:
a) ____ to get my child to behave properly
b) ____ to reduce my own discomfort
c) ____ to make my child happier
d) ____ to help my child get along better in life
e) ____ to teach my child that it is possible for the two of us to work together on a problem
f) ____ to maintain a trusting relationship with my child

In the situation where your child refused to leave you lap while visiting family friends, how important is it to you:
a) ____ to get my child to behave properly

b) ____ to reduce my own discomfort
c) ____ to make my child happier
d) ____ to help my child get along better in life
e) ____ to teach my child that it is possible for the two of us to work together on a problem
f) ____ to maintain a trusting relationship with my child

Appendix C

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)

Below you will find 5 statements you can either agree or disagree with. Using the scale from 1 to 7 please circle the appropriate number.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree
5 = Slightly Agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly Agree

In most ways my life is close to my ideal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The conditions of my life are excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am satisfied with my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
So far I have gotten the important things I want in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix D

Dyadic Adjustment Scale-Satisfaction Subscale (DAS; Spanier, 1976)

Thinking about your relationship with your partner, please indicate the frequency with which the following occurs:

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
1. How often do you discuss or have considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Do you confide in your mate?	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Do you ever regret you married (Or live together?)	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Every day	Almost every day	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
8. How often do you kiss your mate?	1	2	3	4	5

9. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "Happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

●	●	●		●	●	●
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfectly Happy

---

10. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? (Check one)

____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and *would go to almost any length* to see that it does.

____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do all I can to* see that it does.

____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do my fair share* to see that it does.

____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I can't do much more than I am doing* now to help it succeed.

____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I refuse to do any more than I am doing* now to keep the relationship going.

____ My relationship can never succeed, and *there is no more that I can do* to keep the relationship going.

Appendix E

Parenting Satisfaction Scale-Subscale 3 (PSS; Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985)

For each of the statement below, please CIRCLE the number of the category that most closely represents how you feel about your child. You may choose to strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = disagree
4 = strongly disagree

1.	I wish I did not become impatient so quickly with my child.	1	2	3	4
2.	I wish I were a better parent and could do a better job of parenting.	1	2	3	4
3.	I am upset with the amount of yelling I direct towards my child.	1	2	3	4
4.	I am satisfied with my child-rearing skills.	1	2	3	4
5.	It pleases me that having a child has kept me so young.	1	2	3	4
6.	Sometimes I feel I am too critical of my child.	1	2	3	4
7.	I think my child would consider me a good parent.	1	2	3	4
8.	I wish I gave my child more individual attention.	1	2	3	4
9.	I am dissatisfied with the way I express love to my child.	1	2	3	4
10.	I am satisfied with the amount of time I can give my child.	1	2	3	4
11.	I feel uncomfortable with the way I often discipline my child.	1	2	3	4
12.	Sometimes I feel I should provide more supervision for my child.	1	2	3	4
13.	Being a parent has brought me a lot of work and heartaches.	1	2	3	4
14.	I wish that I were more consistent in my parenting behaviours.	1	2	3	4
15.	The most difficult years of my marriage have been the child-rearing years.	1	2	3	4

Appendix F

Partner Support for Parenting Scale (PSPS; Lee & Bouchard, 1999)

Using the following scale, please indicate the frequency with which your partner has behaved in the following ways with you, in your parenting role, over the past few months.

	Almost Never 1	Very Rarely 2	Rarely 3	Sometimes 4	Often 5	Very Often 6	Almost Always 7
My partner...							
1. tells me he/she values me as a parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. is available to help me in parenting when I need it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. lets me know he/she likes the way I am with our child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. does what he/she can to make things easier for me as a parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. feels that I have good parenting skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. believes that I am a competent parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. is there when I need him/her for help in parenting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. makes me feel like I can talk him/her about anything when it comes to our child	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix G

Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM; Abidin & Brunner, 1995)

DIRECTIONS: The questions listed below concern what happens between you and your child's other parent. Although you may not find an answer which exactly describes what you think, please circle the answer that comes closest to what you think.

YOUR FIRST REACTION SHOULD BE YOUR ANSWER.

Example:	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
My child's other parent and I share parenting tasks. (If you seldom share parenting tasks, you would circle "2")	5	4	3	2	1

	SA	**A**	**NS**	**D**	**SD**
1. My child's other parent enjoys being alone with our child.	5	4	3	2	1
2. When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together.	5	4	3	2	1
3. My child's other parent and I communicate well about our child.	5	4	3	2	1
4. My child's other parent is willing to make personal sacrifices to help take care of our child.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Talking to my child's other parent about our child is something I look forward to doing.	5	4	3	2	1
6. My child's other parent pays a great deal of attention to our child.	5	4	3	2	1
7. My child's other parent and I agree on what our child should and should not be permitted to do.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I feel close to my child's other parent when I see him/her play with our child.	5	4	3	2	1
9. My child's other parent knows how to handle children well.	5	4	3	2	1
10. My child's other parent and I are on good terms.	5	4	3	2	1
11. My child's other parent believes I am a good parent.	5	4	3	2	1
12. My child's other parent makes my job of being a parent easier.	5	4	3	2	1
13. My child's other parent sees our child in the same	5	4	3	2	1

way I do.					
14. My child's other parent and I would basically describe our child in the same way.	5	4	3	2	1
15. If our child needs to be punished, my child's other parent and I usually agree on the type of punishment.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I feel good about my child's' other parent's judgement about what is right for our child.	5	4	3	2	1
17. My child's other parent tells me I am a good parent.	5	4	3	2	1
18. During pregnancy, my child's other parent expressed confidence in my ability to be a good parent.	5	4	3	2	1
19. My child's other parent and I have the same goals for our child.	5	4	3	2	1
20. When there is a problem with our child, we work out a solution together.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix H

Demographics

1. Please indicate your gender: Male ○ Female ○

2. What is your age? _____ Years

3. How many children do you have living at home? _____ Not living at home? _____

4. Please describe your child/children:

	Age	**Child's Gender**		**Living with you?**
Child # 1	_____	Male ○	Female ○	Yes ○No ○
Child # 2	_____	Male ○	Female ○	Yes ○No ○
Child # 3	_____	Male ○	Female ○	Yes ○No ○
Child # 4	_____	Male ○	Female ○	Yes ○No ○
Child # 5	_____	Male ○	Female ○	Yes ○No ○

5. Do any of your children have a chronic illness or disability?

Yes ○ No ○ If yes, please specify _____
(If you need more room, please use the back of this page)

6. How many years have you and your partner been together?

living together - not married	_____ Years	Not applicable ○
married	_____ Years	Not applicable ○
overall	_____ Years	

7. Approximately how many **hours per week** do you currently work outside the home (for pay) or go to school?

_____ Hrs/Week

8. Which of the following best describes your financial situation:

	Me	**My partner**	**Total Family Income**
Less than $10,000	○	○	○
$10,000 to $19,999	○	○	○
$20,000 to $29,999	○	○	○
$30,000 to $39,999	○	○	○
$40,000 to $49,999	○	○	○
$50,000 to $59,000	○	○	○
$60,000 to $69,999	○	○	○
$70,000 to $79,999	○	○	○
$80,000 to $89,999	○	○	○
$90,000 to $99,999	○	○	○
$100,000 or more	○	○	○

9. Which of the following categories best fits the work you do:

Managerial	○
Professional	○
Technical	○
Administrative	○
Clerical	○
Retail	○
Other _____	○

10. What is your ethnicity? _____

11. How did you hear about the study?

Poster	○
Media	○
Daycare	○
Parenting Show	○
Other _____	○

Appendix J

Telephone Protocol for Parents

Hello, may I speak with Mr/Ms._____ please? Hello Ms._____, my name is _____, I'm calling about a study being conducted by researchers at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Catherine Lee, about how dual-income families with young children meet the challenges of family life. Participation in the study involves taking part in a brief interview about parenting and completing a questionnaire asking parents about the ways they work together in caring for their child and their satisfaction with differing areas of their life. Each person receives $10 for participation in the interview and $15 for completing the questionnaire. If both partners complete the questionnaires, an additional $10 per couple is paid. We are looking for a specific group of parents. *Is it something that would interest you?*

(If no) *Thank you for your time. Goodbye.*

(If yes) Is it OK with you if I ask you some questions to see if you fit the description?

(If yes): go to CRITERIA

(If no): Would there be a better time for me to call back?

(If yes): Write down the time, date, name, and number to call. Thank you very much - I'll call you back then.

(If no): OK. Sorry to have disturbed you. Bye.

CRITERIA

1) Are you currently living with your spouse/partner?

If yes: Go to question 2

If no: I'm sorry, but we are looking for parents who are currently living with a spouse/partner. Thank you for your interest in the study.

2) Do you currently have any children 18 months to 5 years of age living in your home?

If yes: Go to Question 3.

If no: I'm sorry but we are looking for parents who have children 18 months to 5 years of age living with them. Thank you for your interest in the study.

3) Are you currently employed (i.e., working for pay) 25or more hours per week?

If yes: Go to question 4

If no: Are you a full-time student?

If yes: Go to question 4.

If no: I'm sorry but we are looking for employed parents or full-time students. Thank you for your interest in the study.

4) Is your spouse/partner currently employed 20 or more hours per week?

If yes, Go to question 5.

If no: Is your partner a full-time student?

If yes, Go to question 5.

If no: I'm sorry but we are looking for parents who have partners who are employed or are full-time students. Thank you for your interest in the study.

Do you think your partner would consider taking part in the study with you?

If yes participant is eligible. Continue with PROTOCOL.

If no: I'm sorry but we are looking for families in which both parents are willing to participate. Thank you for your interest in the study.

PROTOCOL

You and your partner are eligible to participate. *Is it something that would interest you?*

If no: *Thank you for your time.*

If yes: If you both agree to take part, we will schedule a convenient time for the interview. You can either come to our office at the University of Ottawa, or if you prefer, I can come to your home. I'd like to ask questions of you and your partner about your parenting. That would take about 15-20 minutes each. I would give you each $10 after the completion of the interview.

I'd also bring each of you a questionnaire which asks you about your relationship with your partner, how you see your child's behaviour, how you are feeling as an individual, as a parent, and as a partner, as well some background information. The responses you give will be kept in strictest

confidence. To remain anonymous, we ask that you not to put your name on the questionnaire. It should take 40-45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You are, of course, free to leave any question blank. Ideally we'd like one partner to complete measures while the other takes part in the interview, then I can take the questionnaires with me and pay you for your participation before I leave. If that is not convenient to you, I can provide each of you with a stamped addressed envelope so that you can mail the questionnaire later.

Each questionnaire is identified with a code number. When we receive your completed questionnaire, we will mail you $15. Similarly, when we receive your partner's questionnaire, will send him/her $15. Once we have received both questionnaires, we will send you an additional $10.

Does this sound like something you might like to do?

(If yes),

Is your partner available for me to describe the study to him/her?

(If no), Would there be a better time for me to call back?

Write down the time, date, name, and number to call. Thank you very much - I'll call your partner back then.

(If yes), review the following with the partner:

I have just been talking to your partner about a study being conducted by Dr. Catherine Lee at the University of Ottawa, about how dual-income families with young children meet the challenges of family life. You and your partner are eligible to participate. If you both agree to take part, we will schedule a convenient time for the interview. You can either come to our office at the University of Ottawa, or I can come to your home. I'd like to ask questions of you and your partner about your parenting. That would take about 15-20 minutes each I would give you each $10 after the completion of the interview.

I'd also bring each of you a questionnaire which asks you about your relationship with your partner, how you see your child's behaviour, how you are feeling as an individual, as a parent, and as a partner, as well some background information. The responses you give will be kept in strictest confidence. To remain anonymous, we ask that you not to put your name on the questionnaire. It should take 40-45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You are, of course, free to leave any question blank. Ideally we'd like one partner to complete measures while the other takes part in the interview, then I can take the questionnaires with me and pay you for your participation before I leave. If that is not convenient to you, I can provide each of you with a stamped addressed envelope so that you can mail the questionnaire later.

Each questionnaire is identified with a code number. When we receive your completed questionnaire, we will mail you $15. Similarly, when we receive your partner's questionnaire, will send him/her $15. Once we have received both questionnaires, we will send you an additional $10.

Does this sound like something you might like to do?

If yes, book the appointment (See lab calendar)

Appendix O

Telephone Protocol Reminder

Hello, may I speak to _____. This is _____ from the University of Ottawa Coparenting Study. **(remind participant who you are if s/he seems hesitant)**.

As we have not received your questionnaire, I'm calling to find out if you have any questions. **Answer any questions the participant may have, if you are unable to comfortably or accurately answer the question, please tell them a senior researcher will call them back, then mark this on the tracking sheet so it will get done.**

If participant has mailed questionnaire: Thank you very much, we appreciate your help and will mail the money to you when the questionnaire arrives. Your participation will help us better understand how parents work together in caring for their children. Thanks again!

If participant has not mailed questionnaire: We appreciated your help in taking part in the interview. We understand that you life is very busy and would be grateful if you would send in the questionnaire.