

**SMALL VOICES IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE: CHILDREN OF
STEPFAMILIES AND THE FAMILY RELATIONS BUTTON SORT**

by

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Abstract

Children are often the small voices in a family, especially when a biological family disintegrates and a new stepfamily forms. A projective technique, the Family Relations Button Sort (FRBS)TM (Carter, Piper, Ho & Ransby, 2000), is a way that children can express their perceptions of family dynamics and family members. Twenty-eight children from stepfamilies and 32 children from intact families, between the ages of 6 and 11, participated. The children were administered the FRBSTM and FACES IIITM for Children (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985), and basic demographic information and a family genogram were obtained. Statistical analyses were done with small proportion tests, independent sample t-tests, and kappa approximations. Independent raters were able to discriminate between stepfamily children and intact family children. Children of stepfamilies choose larger numbers of buttons, as well as more white and primary coloured buttons. Intact family children are more likely to include pets. Post hoc analyses show that children from both family groups choose buttons for family members based on likes, associations, favourite colours, physical and personality attributes, as well as feelings. Button arrangements show close or distant relationships, and stepfamily children are more likely to omit a family member.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background to the Problem.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	2
The Family Relations Button Sort.....	3
Family Adaptability and Cohesion.....	4
Stepfamilies.....	5
The Delimitations.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
Outline of the Research Problem.....	8
Justification of the Study.....	9
Summary.....	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
History of Family in Canada.....	11
Stepfamilies.....	14
Stepfamily Relationships.....	16
Stepparent and stepchildren relationships.....	16
Stepparent and biological parent relationships.....	18
Stepsibling relationships.....	19
Stepfamily Dynamics.....	20
Effects of Stepfamilies on Children.....	22
The Stepfamily Cycle.....	23
The Early, Middle and Later Stages of the Stepfamily Cycle.....	24
Stage 1.....	24
Stage 2.....	24
Stage 3.....	25
Stage 4.....	26
Stage 5.....	26
Stage 6.....	27
Stage 7.....	27
Four Different Types of Stepfamilies.....	28
Aware families.....	28
Immersed families.....	28
Mobilized families.....	29
Action families.....	29
Working Through the Stages.....	30
Projective Techniques.....	30
The history of projective techniques.....	30
Problems associated with projective techniques.....	32

Benefits and usefulness of projective techniques.....	33
The Button Game.....	36
Differences Among Children from “Normal” and “Clinical” Groups	37
Button based results	37
Family dynamics in normal and clinical samples	38
The Family Relations Button Sort.....	38
The FRBS and children of separation and divorce	40
FACES III.....	41
Summary.....	42
 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	43
Statement of the Problem	43
Population and Sampling Procedures.....	44
Participants	44
Testing materials	44
Procedure.....	45
The recruitment	45
The testing process	46
Administration Procedures	47
The FRBS: button based protocol.....	47
The FRBS: pattern based protocol	48
Picture taking and demographics.	49
Administration procedure for FACES III for children.....	49
Debriefing.....	50
Reliability Analysis	50
Scoring The Protocol.....	51
Button based analysis	51
Pattern based analysis.....	51
Profile based analysis	52
Hypotheses.....	52
 CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	54
Preliminary Analysis	54
Hypotheses.....	54
Post Hoc Analyses.....	59
Family types	59
Omission of family members	59
Family member placement	61
Lines vs. clusters	64
Button choices.....	65
Feelings	69
Siblings and FACES III family types.....	71

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	72
Interpretations of the Results.....	73
Who children considered to be family	73
Perceptions of feelings and relationships	75
Colour choices.....	77
Why children chose buttons	79
FACES III for children: adaptability, cohesion and family types.....	79
The stepfamily cycle and the FRBS.....	80
Limitations of the Study	81
Recommendations for FRBS.....	83
Implications for Counselling	86
Future Research.....	89
Conclusion.....	91
References.....	93
APPENDIX A: TARGET BUTTONS OF THE FRBS.....	97
APPENDIX B: VISUAL CUE CARD FOR FACES III FOR CHILDREN	98
APPENDIX C: CIRCUMPLEX MODEL	99
APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET	100
APPENDIX E: LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT	101
APPENDIX F: LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR PRINCIPALS/TEACHERS.....	102
APPENDIX G: AGENCY/PRINCIPAL/TEACHER PERMISSION SLIP.....	103
APPENDIX H: LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR PARENTS.....	104
APPENDIX I: PARENT PERMISSION SLIP.....	105
APPENDIX J: RECRUITMENT POSTER.....	106
APPENDIX K: INTER RATER SCORE SHEET FOR THIRD JUDGEMENT.....	107
APPENDIX L: CHILD FRBS BUTTON ARRANGMENT PICTURES.....	108
APPENDIX M: GENOGRAM OF CHILD AO.....	114

List of Tables

Table 1: Age Distribution of Children.....	55
Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for Dependant Variables.....	57
Table 3: Independent Raters Results.....	60

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In our western society, there has traditionally been a biological mother and a biological father working together to raise children. However, the nuclear family with biological parents is not as commonplace as it once was, and there are now many single parent families and stepfamilies (Milan, 2000; Ross, Scott, & Kelly, 1996; Visher & Visher, 1998). What happens when the security provided by biological parental relationships are no longer there, when separation occurs, when new parental partnerships are formed? What happens when family life, its routines and rituals, its daily tasks and chores, are disrupted by the addition of new family members who have different ways of doing things? Children are often the small voices when parental separation and re-partnership occurs and when their known and understood world completely changes.

While children may have small voices, they have definite perceptions of their families, regardless of what type of family they belong to. They have their own thoughts as to what is happening within the family, what are problem areas, what are areas of contentment and satisfaction, who they like and do not like, and who others like and do not like (Carter, Piper, Ho & Ransby, 2000; Kowal, Kramer, Krull & Crick, 2002; Thiessen, 2002). Unfortunately, these perceptions are not always acknowledged as children may not be able to express themselves. Children "...have not yet developed the abstract reasoning abilities and verbal skills needed to adequately articulate their feelings, thoughts and [behaviours]" (Hall, Kaduson & Schaefer, 2002, ¶1). This study seeks to use the projective technique, the Family Relations Button Sort, to discover how children view their families and what happens within them. This study endeavours to give those small voices a bigger voice.

Background to the Problem

Projective tests are used with children because they provide a great deal of useful information. They help to gain understanding of children's personal experiences as well as access into their unique world. They also help psychologists and other professionals who work with children to better understand children's frame of reference, personality traits, and how they interact with their perceptions (Groth-Marnat, 1999). Projective techniques can be very effective with children because they tend to be more enjoyable and fun than traditional objective tests that use paper and pencils. They also allow children to clearly express thoughts and feelings that they may be unable to put into words (Klepsch & Logie, 1982). Projective techniques can be especially effective for children who do not want to discuss their problems and would rather work on a fun task or activity.

Statement of the Problem

Goldenberg & Goldenberg (2000) believe that children who suffer from psychological problems often have difficulties within their families. Whether children are acting out their distress because of marital discord, child abuse, or their frustration with the unhealthy boundaries in their family, they do so mostly because there is some disharmony in the family. However, even though children's problems are often related to the family that they live in, most of the objective and projective techniques focus more on children's personality and pathology rather than on assessing the family (Groth-Marnat, 1999). Very few child assessments provide information about family members, relationships, and what happens within the family. There is a need for an assessment tool that adequately provides information on children's perception of their family members

and their relationships towards one another. The development of a fun, moderately priced, quick and easy to use assessment for children about their families, has been lacking. The Family Relations Button Sort™ (Carter et al., 2000) may fill this void. It is hoped that through this study, the Family Relations Button Sort, or FRBS, will be able to identify children from stepfamilies versus intact families, as well as to observe the impact of family dissolution and then reformation on children's perceptions of their family dynamics and members.

The Family Relations Button Sort

There has been limited research on the Family Relations Button Sort, therefore, this is a preliminary study on the new version of the previously known "Button Game". The FRBS is generally administered to children, but is versatile enough to be used with adults, couples and families. It can be a very effective way of observing family dynamics. In this newly standardized qualitative assessment, buttons are used to take on the characteristics of various family members because it is believed that children project their perceptions and meanings onto the buttons (Carter et al., 2000).

The FRBS consists of 240 buttons, 48 which are target button and 192 which are non-target or plain buttons with a round shape, solid colour and no decorations or embellishments. The buttons are placed into four categories of colour, including white or pearl coloured buttons, gold or brass coloured buttons, black buttons and primary coloured buttons. They have also been categorised into three levels of abstraction: plain or non-target, abstract, and concrete (Carter et al., 2000).

The buttons are poured from a box onto a tray so that the children can see them better and to gain better access to them. Children are then asked to choose buttons that

represent whoever they consider to be family. After they have chosen all of their family members, they are asked to explain their choices. The children are then asked to arrange the buttons in a way that shows the assessor how the family members relate to one another (Carter et al., 2000).

Thiessen (2002) conducted a study on the FRBS to ascertain differences in perceptions of family between children of divorce and children from intact homes. Thiessen's study was done in conjunction with this stepfamily study, with the researchers working together on aspects of the study including literature reviews, data collection, statistics and so on, although each thesis was done separately. As both researchers collected data, some children have been assigned numbers and some have been assigned letters. Data from the intact family children was used in both studies.

Family Adaptability and Cohesion

One of the best objective resources currently available to observe the structure and dynamics of the family is the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scales III (FACES III). There is also a children's version, FACES III for Children (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985). FACES III assesses cohesion, which is the degree to which family members are either separated from or connected to their family. Healthy families exhibit cohesion by being either connected or individuated (separated), unhealthy extremes show signs of enmeshment or disengagement. This assessment also observes family adaptability, which explores how flexible or adaptable the family is to change. It considers the power structure, hierarchy and the rules of the family when faced with stressors of various kinds. Healthier families typically show patterns that are either structured or flexible,

meaning there is room for change. The unhealthy extremes are either rigid or chaotic, leaving little or too much room for exploration (Olson et al., 1985).

Stepfamilies

The number of stepfamilies around the world is increasing at a rapid pace. There are challenges in stepfamilies that are not found in intact families. These include difficulties in the blending of old and new family members and their perceptions, and how this blending affects family dynamics and relationships (Papernow, 1998). Stepfamilies can impact children in a variety of ways, especially as children often have little control in their lives. Children may experience difficulties and conflict with stepparent and stepsibling relationships, broken emotional bonds with their biological parents, unknown roles and expectations, lowered well being and adjustment, lowered school performance and behaviours, lowered initiative and sociality, loyalty problems, and feelings of anger, confusion and betrayal (Hanson, Lanahan, & Thomson, 1996; Martin, Anderson & Mottet, 1999; Visher & Visher, 1998; White, 1994). Because of the numerical increase of stepfamilies, there needs to be more research into the possible short and long term effects of stepfamilies on children.

The Delimitations

The purpose of this study is to validate the Family Relations Button Sort, and to compare differences in perceptions of family between children from stepfamilies and children from intact families. Comparisons of the results from FACES III for Children and the FRBS are made between 28 children who are from stepfamilies and 32 children from intact families, with both male and females participants in each family group. The children in this study were in grades 1 to 5, with ages ranging from 6 to 11.

Definition of Terms

Following are the various terms that are used throughout the study, and their definitions. Included are relevant terms from both the FRBS and FACES III for Children, to provide greater understanding and insight.

Adaptability: Family adaptability is defined as “the ability of a marital or family system to change it’s power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress” (Olsen et al., 1985, p.1). It is essentially how flexible the family is, and how able they are to change. There are four types of adaptability, ranging from low to high, including rigid, structured, flexible, and chaotic. Rigid adaptability includes authoritarian leadership, strict discipline, roles that seldom change and too little change. Structured adaptability includes leadership sometimes shared, somewhat democratic discipline, stable roles, and change when demanded. Flexible adaptability includes shared leadership, democratic discipline, role-sharing change and change when necessary. Chaotic adaptability includes lack of leadership, dramatic role shifts, erratic discipline and too much change (Olson, 2000).

Button Based Protocol: This is the prescribed first protocol for the FRBS. The children pick buttons from the tray to represent various family members. Children express what made them choose the buttons for each family member. The aspects of the family members the children choose to focus on through the buttons are analysed, as well as shape, colour and abstraction.

Cohesion: Cohesion is “the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another” (Olsen et al., 1985, p. 1). It is how much family members are emotionally separated or connected to each other in the family unit, including alignments and

boundaries. The four types of cohesion include disengaged, separated, connected and enmeshed, with levels of cohesion ranging from low to high. Disengaged cohesion includes more focus on self than family, little closeness and loyalty, and high independence. Separated cohesion includes focus on both self and family, low to moderate closeness, some loyalty and interdependence. Connected cohesion includes focus on self and family, moderate to high closeness, high loyalty, and interdependence. Enmeshed cohesion includes focus on family, very high closeness, very high loyalty and high dependency (Olson, 2000).

Family Group: This study has two family groups, a stepfamily group and an intact family group.

Family Type: FACES III for Children assesses what family type the children belong to. There are 16 family types, with each type based on both adaptability and cohesion. Four family types are considered balanced (Flexibly Separated, Flexibly Connected, Structurally Separated and Structurally Connected), 8 are considered mid-range (Chaotically Separated, Chaotically Connected, Flexibly Enmeshed, Structurally Enmeshed, Rigidly Connected, Rigidly Separated, Structurally Disengaged and Flexibly Disengaged) and 4 are considered unbalanced (Chaotically Disengaged, Chaotically Enmeshed, Rigidly Enmeshed and Rigidly Disengaged) (Olson, 2000).

Pattern Based Protocol: The second protocol of the FRBS, the children place their family members on a sheet of paper according to how everyone feels about each other and their relationships. Children verbally express the patterns of placement, such as distance between buttons, clusters, and where and why members are placed. The assessor

analyses how children place family members on the paper and what they say about these positions.

Profile Based Protocol: The third protocol of the FRBS, the assessor qualitatively looks at how children perceive their individual relationships and family as a whole by looking at button choices and family arrangement patterns. Themes can be developed, and quantitative information can also be gathered.

Projective Technique: Lindzey defines a projective technique as “an instrument that is considered especially sensitive to covert or unconscious aspects of behaviour, it permits or encourages a wide variety of subject responses, is highly multi-dimensional, and it evokes unusually rich and profuse data” (as cited by Rabin, 1981, p.11).

Intact Families: These families have a mother and father, and have never experienced any kind of separation, divorce, or remarriage.

Stepfamilies: These families have a mother figure and father figure, and have gone through previous separation or divorce changing the original family structure as some members may have left and new members may have been added.

Outline of the Research Problem

This study hopes to increase the validity of the Family Relations Button Sort as an assessment tool, and to also observe the differences between children from intact families and children from stepfamilies from the children’s perspective. The FRBS and FACES III for Children are designed to gain a better understanding of children’s perception of the family and family dynamics. The information gathered for this study will be compared within each family group as well as between the two family groups. This study also hopes to add to the still limited research and literature on stepfamilies.

Justification of the Study

This study is important because minimal research has been done on this projective assessment tool for children. The FRBS assessment (Carter et al., 2000) offers an opportunity for child therapists and other professionals to analyse children's perceptions of their feelings about family members, as well as family relationships and dynamics, and to enable therapists to work better with children. Further research and development will enhance this tool for use with children and families.

The FRBS and FACES III for Children are both quick and easy to administer, and give detailed results about children's experiences. The FRBS (Carter et al., 2000) was chosen as there is a need for assessments that do not involve drawing, paper and pen questionnaires, or direct questions that may be perceived as intimidating and threatening. It provides children with the opportunity to talk about their family and each family member in a unique way. The questions that are asked by the assessor are important because they inquire into areas that are not likely to be overtly discussed, but still allow children to let their feelings show by hiding behind the buttons they have chosen. Another important feature of the FRBS is that it does not involve deception. FACES III for Children (Olsen et al., 1985) was chosen because it is an expeditious and objective method to gain information about the daily workings of the family and family dynamics. FACES III for Children was also used for comparison with the children's responses to the FRBS.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provides an introduction to some of the issues related to assessing children's perceptions about their whole family and individual family members. It

discusses the importance of family and why stepfamilies are important to study. Also included is a component on projective techniques and the need of one for children that focuses on families, as well as introductions to both the FRBS and FACES III for Children, terms of the study and finally, why this study is important.

The following review of the literature in Chapter 2 will provide the reader with information about the history of families in Canada, the impact of stepfamilies on children, the cycles that stepfamilies go through, the history of projective techniques, the benefits and limitations of projective techniques, further details and insight about FACES III for Children, the history and research previously completed on the “Button Game” and the development and research done for the Family Relations Button Sort.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Family in Canada

The concept of family is changing, and there have been several factors that have influenced the rise of stepfamilies in Canada. It is important to understand the history of family in Canada, to understand how social trends led to the increase of stepfamilies and what may happen to families in the future, gaining insight and understanding to an ever-increasing phenomenon.

Milan (2000) reports on the history of families in the 20th Century, and the changes in family over this period of time. During the past 100 years, marriage in Canada was mostly thought of as a commitment to last a lifetime, and the traditional nuclear family was considered normal. Even so, families were often flexible, growing and shrinking as needed due to various circumstances. Families would often take in orphans, the elderly, newlyweds with limited resources, and even boarders. There were also spousal deaths, those who never married, single parents, childless couples and even common-law partners.

During the early 1900s, although it was rare, couples could end their marriages by legal separation, annulment, and divorce. However, divorce laws were limiting, and divorces were allowed only when there was proof that one partner committed adultery. These restrictive laws contributed to the fact that divorce rates were extremely low for this time. Although the rate of divorce was low, families still experienced dissolution. Some spouses, usually the male partner, deserted their families. Poor health problems, disease and limited medical knowledge lead to high death rates during this time. The death of a spouse created single parent homes and possibly remarriage later. Single

spouses often remarried because of need for help with young children, domestic chores, labour and finances (Milan, 2000).

The Depression during the early 1930s created high unemployment and hardship for many families. People did not want to or were unable to get married because of financial or social responsibilities, and during this time, marriage and fertility rates dropped. At the end of the 1930s and into the early 1940s during World War II, marriage rates increased for several reasons. Economic conditions improved because of government spending on war efforts, and single men fearing they would be more likely than married men to be conscripted into the war, married hastily. The rate dropped during the next few years while the men were away at war, and then rates once again greatly increased as men returned and couples were reunited. These high marriage rates led to what is known as the baby boom. It is believed that the increase in the economy and employment rates, and general stability were favourable to raising families (Milan, 2000).

During the post war period, family living arrangements were also changing, with few relatives and extended family members living in a single household. The middle of the century saw the majority of families comprised of parents and dependant children, with the husband employed outside of the house and the wife who cared for the children inside the home. Around this time, 14% of marriages were remarriages, due in part to war widows remarrying. The divorce rate also greatly increased for a temporary amount of time, probably because impulsive wartime marriages disintegrated. The divorce rate then decreased and remained low during the 1950s (Milan, 2000).

During the early 1960s, marriage rates once again declined, partly because women often married older men, and there were fewer men available because of low birth rates during the Depression and morbidity in World War II. The economy was also slow during this time, which may have caused delay in marriages. Fertility rates began to decline and the decline has continued until now. By the mid 1960s, the economy had improved and baby boomers were becoming old enough to marry, and marriage rates once again increased. They reached a high point in 1972 and then steadily declined over the next 25 years. Some people choose not to marry and remain single, and many couples now live in common law relationships rather than becoming married (Milan, 2000).

The Divorce Act in 1968 allowed divorce to be “no-fault”, and could occur after 3 years of separation. After the implementation of the Act, divorce rates increased 6 fold. In 1986, the Act was amended to allow for a minimum of 1 years separation. The divorce rates also increased after this amendment, but then declined. The decline may be due in part to people being reluctant to marry in the first place, and couples choosing separation rather than divorce, unless a partner wants to remarry (Milan, 2000).

The fertility rate decline is contributed to contraception and women working outside of the home. While women are having fewer children, the rate of women who do not have children at all is no higher than in the beginning of the 20th Century. Women are tending to have children later, and teenage pregnancy rates have dropped (Milan, 2000).

Many years ago, single parent homes were often the result of spousal death. Now, it is more often the result of divorce, separation and having children outside of a

union, as these things are now more common and socially acceptable (Milan, 2000). Because divorce rates have increased dramatically over the last century and into this century, remarriage is now more common. In comparison to those who lose a spouse through death, divorce allows two people rather than just one, to become eligible for remarriage. Also, divorced people are more likely to remarry than those who are widowed. In 1997, it was found that 34% of marriages had at least one partner who had been married before, and in almost half of these, both of the partners have already been previously married. However, remarriage rates have decreased, because of common-law partnerships and women having greater economic independence than in the past (Milan, 2000).

Men are more likely than women to remarry after divorce for a variety of reasons. Men tend to marry younger women, with the difference between ages in second marriages being greater than in first marriages. Because men tend to marry younger women, this creates a bigger pool of women for men. Women also tend to gain custody of the children, and this may interfere with finding another partner. However, many couples in new partnerships have children from previous relationships. Many families have children as a result of the biological couple's union and children from the women's previous relationship (Milan, 2000).

Stepfamilies

In our society and other cultures around the world, the phenomenon of stepfamilies is increasing, and the impact of stepfamilies is becoming relevant. Ross, Scott, and Kelly (1996) authored a report on The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, in Canada. It was found that in 1994 and 1995, for 4 673 000

children ages 0 to 11, only 8.6% were living in stepfamilies. Approximately 5% of children were living with both biological parents and stepsiblings from a parent's previous relationship. Children living with one biological and one stepparent totalled 4.3%. Children living with other two parents families, including children with two adoptive parents, one biological and one adoptive parent, two foster parents, two stepparents and one adoptive and one stepparent, totalled 1.2%. Ross et al. (1996) believe that because of the climbing rate of divorce, more children are growing up with a stepparent. They also believe that many of the young children from the study will later on experience some time of parental separation, therefore many will spend time living in a step or blended family.

In the United States, the U.S. Census Bureau believes that over one half of the U.S. population is, has been, or will be in a stepfamily. Based on demographics, it appears as though 1300 new stepfamilies are created everyday in the United States. It is predicted that by 2010 there will be more stepfamilies than any other kind of families (as cited in Visher & Visher, 1998). Because of the influence of our southern neighbours by geographical location and media, Canada has often shared culture trends and may be closely following US stepfamily trends.

Although there is a significant increase in stepfamilies and the subsequent societal impacts, there are major and significant gaps in research (Pill, 1990). Stepfamilies also remain invisible and hidden, and receive little attention from society, including public policy makers, legal systems, educators and media (Visher & Visher, 1998). There is a continuing need to do further studies on stepfamilies as they increase at a rapid pace and

will significantly affect society. Research will increase general awareness about stepfamily concerns and issues, and benefits can be known and shared.

Stepfamily Relationships

Stepparent and stepchildren relationships. Being a stepparent, and a successful one, can be a difficult task. The relationships between stepparents and children can be considered the most problematic relationships of the stepfamily. It is an involuntary relationship, and because of this, development of relationships and bonding is one of the major tasks of stepfamilies (Ganong, Coleman, Fine & Martin, 1999). Ganong et al. (1999) note that some stepparents may not be fond of children, and they may be self-focused and immature. This creates obvious problems in stepparent relationships when children need nurturing, love and support from the significant adults in their lives. They found that some stepparents do not seek affinity, or attachment with their stepchildren. These stepparents were not unkind and they did not ignore their children, but neither did they attempt to build the relationship.

The reasons for this lack of relationship building included the biological parent disallowing a relationship to develop in case the courting couple's relationship did not work out. Also, the stepparent may spend a great deal of time and effort courting the biological parent, therefore not paying as much attention to the children. Stepparents may not perceive their role in the child's life that way, and only provide income and support towards the biological parent in child rearing. They may also lack time. Some of these stepparents are early affinity seekers, unfortunately, these stepparents stop trying to build the relationship shortly after they all begin living together as a family. This may have occurred because they do not view relationship building as part of their role. Some

stepparents become discipliners, which interferes with affinity (Ganong et al., 1999).

Hanson et al. (1996) found that stepparents are not as likely to have strong attachments to their stepchildren, which can result in decreased economic and social resources for their stepchildren.

Two other factors that affect stepparent and stepchild relationships are children's ages and stepparent gender. Research shows that young children below the age of nine are more willing to accept a stepparent than older children (Pill, 1990). A mother's remarriage to a stepfather is associated with greater contact, a better relationship with the father figure, and more parental support. Stepmother families have more difficulties than stepfather families. A father's remarriage is associated with lower relationships with both the biological mother and stepmother, and children perceive lower support from parents. Researchers are not sure why this occurs (White, 1994).

Some stepparents try very hard to maintain good relationships with all the stepfamily members and can have a positive impact on everyone in the family, even when stepparents face adversity inside and outside the family. Stepparents can be singled out, rejected by stepchildren, rejected by their partner's previous mate, and they can even be rejected by others who have not been stepparents. Mediators, judges, and attorneys may view stepparents in a negative light, and often as interfering. Stepparents are the often forgotten members that take care of the house and children which are not their own (Visher & Visher, 1998).

Many stepparents can provide a great number of parental benefits to their stepchildren. Some stepparents provide certain affinity behaviours to their stepchildren and stepfamilies, which include group activities, fun one to one time, use of humour,

communicating one to one, expressing love and affection, praise and encouragement, advocacy for their stepchildren, and making them feel like family (Ganong et al., 1999). Stepparents can be beneficial to children because they can be second parents, role models, and providers of flexible and effective communication, which are positively related to child satisfaction (Martin et al., 1999). Biological parents can facilitate stepfamily relationships by encouraging activities, helping the stepparent and stepchild understand each other, and by mediating disputes. This in itself involves all family members and makes them a part of the process and development as a family (Ganong et al., 1999).

Stepparent and biological parent relationships. Any couple can face relational difficulties, and stepfamilies provide some unique challenges for couples trying to maintain a productive and lasting relationship. People may assume that remarriage should be more successful than first marriages because of gained experience, maturity, and the motivation to avoid another family break-up. However, statistics show that the re-divorce rate is actually higher for subsequent marriages than for first marriages. Remarriages also end faster than first marriages. This suggests that the first years can be challenging and explosive for the remarried family (Pill, 1990).

While some researchers and clinicians do not believe that children increase the possibility of divorce in remarriage families, others believe that stepfamilies with children have a higher divorce rate. The couple may not have the time to build and strengthen their relationship, instead they end up spending time with child concerns (Pill, 1990). The couple may also have difficulty trying to balance the needs of the adults and parenting responsibilities. Stepparents often have obligations to biological children

outside of the stepfamily residence and these demands can cause conflict between the stepfamily couple, and can create jealousy in previous partners (Howell et al., 1998). If there are children from a previous partner, it is not as easy to resolve differences, create interaction patterns, and redefine family culture. These things are usually done between the adult couple before children are born (Hanson et al., 1996). Previous partners can also be the cause of conflict as non-custodial biological parents may intrude into the stepfamily, causing difficulties (Howell et al., 1998). The demands on stepfamily relationships can be difficult and place added pressures on the relationship that can be difficult to work through.

Stepsibling relationships. Little research has been done on sibling relationships within stepfamilies, therefore little is known about the impact of stepsiblings on children and on the stepfamily in general. White (1994) found that research regarding sibling relationships is both limited and speculative. White also found that biological sibling contact in adulthood is lower when there have been step or half siblings. While the reasons why this occurs are not clear, it has been hypothesised that this happens because of tension and lack of cohesion in stepfamilies. There can also be a great deal of conflict and stress between siblings (Howell et al., 1998; White, 1994). It has been found that siblings often try to prevent their stepsibling from engaging in attachment activities and forming relationships to their stepparents. Siblings may also demand time and attention from their biological parents that may have gone toward their stepsiblings (Ganong et al., 1999).

Stepfamily Dynamics

A stepfamily is not like an intact family, and should not be regarded or treated as one. The combination of old and new members will have an impact on interactions and dynamics in different ways from intact families. Research clearly shows that stepfamilies have a great deal of stress between parent and stepparent relationship, biological parent and child relationships, stepparent and child relationships and between stepsiblings (White, 1994). Unity and emotional bonds in stepfamilies are different from nuclear or intact families because the members come from varying backgrounds, and affection and relationship bonds are split across different households (Pill, 1990). When becoming a new family, adults and their children bring history and a different type of living style, which needs to be incorporated. This can have an effect on roles, norms and expectations, and these are often less clearly defined in stepfamilies (Hanson et al., 1996). Initially in a stepfamily, there can be problems such as what to call a stepparent, what is expected for affection between family members, and grief over the loss of previous family relationships (Howell et al., 1998).

Disengagement, cohesion and effort to maintain family relationships are different in stepfamilies than in intact families. Disengagement tends to be more predominant in stepfamilies. There tends to be more disengagement between parents and children, and when parents are parenting. Up to one third of adolescents in stepfamilies disengage themselves emotionally and physically from their families (White, 1994). Cohesion in stepfamilies is always lower than and never reaches the same higher levels found in intact families (Bray & Berger, 1993). Members of stepfamilies report that their families

require deliberate and continuing effort, including the need for more attention for a longer duration of time, and that there is a more intense focus on the family (Pill, 1990).

Visher and Visher (1998) found that there are seven differences in the structural characteristics between first marriage families and stepfamilies. The first is that the family comes together as a unit after both parents and children have experienced significant losses and change. The second is that adults and children in the stepfamily become a family while experiencing incongruence. Incongruence occurs at individual, marriage and family life levels. The third is that both the adults and children have different expectations that were originally made in previous families, and they are now trying to fulfil those expectations in their new family. The fourth is that parent and child relationships take priority over the new relationship between the couple. Bonds between parents and children usually last longer and are stronger than the remarried couple's relationship. This tends to be the reverse in first marriage families. The fifth is that stepfamilies are not as autonomous as intact families, because there is a biological parent existing in another family. The sixth is that children can often be members of two families. This may work well for some children and families, but if there is a great deal of conflict, it can also be very difficult. The seventh is difficulty with the legal system. Because most legal systems do not accept or reluctantly accept that there can be more than two parents, they often do not recognise the legal relationship between stepchildren and stepparents. This means that stepparents often have responsibilities for, but not rights to their stepchildren. They may lose a relationship with a stepchild, even though that relationship may be important and significant to both the child and adult. Visher and Visher (1998) believe that if stepfamilies are to be integrated in a successful manner,

these seven differences require stepfamilies to accomplish tasks that result from the coming together as a stepfamily.

Effects of Stepfamilies on Children

Out of all the family members, children may be the most impacted by the formation of a stepfamily. They often do not have the coping skills available to adults, and do not have control over what happens in their lives. While remarriage and stepfamilies are able to increase economic and social resources in the family, children from stepfamilies show the same number of adjustment problems as children from single parent families, and more adjustment problems than children from intact families. This may be due to the overall conflict in the family, which can come from various sources. Sources include conflict between children and stepparents, conflict over the responsibilities and rights of non-resident biological parents, conflict between biological and stepparents, role and discipline problems, conflict between siblings and even sexual conflict. Children from stepfamilies may be more negatively affected by conflict than children in other types of homes because they have already gone through family break-up (Hanson et al., 1996).

Conflict is negatively related to children's well being. Through social modelling, children can learn the same negative strategies by imitating negative parental behaviours. In addition, conflict is a stressor on children, affecting their adjustment. Parental conflict may have indirect effects on children including preoccupation by parents. This preoccupation can lead to limited emotional availability, and can reduce the effectiveness and consistency of discipline. Parental conflict may also create loyalty problems for children, as children may take sides with a parent, or may be pressured to choose sides.

Children's well being is affected in the areas of school performance, school behavioural problems, initiative, and sociability. Children from stepfamilies often do worse in these areas, even without conflict in their stepfamily, than do children from an average two parent home (Hanson et al., 1996). Conflict can also create lower self-esteem in children (Martin et al., 1999). Children may feel angry, confused and betrayed because of a parent's previous choice to divorce, and emotional bonds between the parent and child may be damaged (White, 1994).

The Stepfamily Cycle

Patricia Papernow (1998) has proposed a model for the development of Stepfamilies, called the Stepfamily Cycle. According to Papernow, "[it] draws on Gestalt and family systems theory to illuminate the process by which boundaries (individual, intergenerational, couple, interfamilial) move from biological to "step". It provides a developmental map that delineates the stages involved in forming nourishing, reliable relationship among steppeople, and establishing a workable stepparenting role. It describes the impact of stepfamily history and structure on individual role development, as well as the role of individuals in the family in furthering developmental movement." (p. 12-13). The Stepfamily Cycle describes seven different stages, including three Early Stages, two Middle Stages and two Later Stages. Each stage has its own Dangers and Dilemmas as well as Developmental Tasks (Papernow, 1998) that must be worked through, in order for the family to proceed to the next developmental stage. Papernow states that "[just] as in biological development, stages of stepfamily development do not happen neatly and precisely – a family may move ahead in one area but remain at a much earlier stage of development in another...stepfamilies and their members slip back and

forth between stages, moving to earlier stages of development in times of crisis or when new challenges present themselves” (p. 17).

In the Early Stages of Stepfamily development, stages 1, 2 and 3, the structure of the family is biologically arranged and organised, with “common ground” being between biological parents and children (Papernow, 1998, p. 381). In the Middle Stages, stages 4 and 5, the family goes through change as they move from biological relationships to an operational and functioning stepfamily. During the Later Stages, stages 6 and 7, the family experiences a loosening of biological relationships, and they move towards new step relationships as well as boundaries within those new relationships. The family has a united feel as well as a sense of intimacy, and the family is able to give to its members.

The Early, Middle and Later Stages of the Stepfamily Cycle

Stage 1. Fantasy: the invisible burden. During this first stage, new stepfamily members bring unrealistic expectations, fantasies and wishes into the new family. These fantasies are the result of earlier loss, previous family histories, the hope associated with starting a new family, and lack of knowledge and understanding about what a stepfamily and its dynamics are really like. The Dangers and Dilemmas of this stage occur when the fantasies of the members start to become requirements, and there is a burden placed on the family that does not allow information about the family to be shared. The Developmental Task of this stage is “[to] bring awareness and to articulate the fantasies, wishes and shoulds each member has for the new family. To let go of (and grieve for) unrealistic hopes” (Papernow, 1998, p. 381).

Stage 2. Immersion: sinking versus swimming. Different family members perspectives become more apparent during this stage, including those of adults, children,

biological members and step members. These perspectives can create such things as bewilderment, anxiety and strain in the family, as well as intense and painful emotions. The non-biological children and adults can experience greater discomfort than biological members. The Dangers and Dilemmas of this stage are the unrealistic fantasies that are now seen as failures rather than the fantasies that they really are. This can cause shame as well as blame to occur, which does not allow effective communication to take place and in turn can lead to little or no progress through the stage. The Developmental Task is for members to try and keep working through this sometimes difficult and uncomfortable stage in order to hear the various feelings and experiences of the family members (Papernow, 1998).

Stage 3. Awareness: mapping the territory. Papernow (1998) deems this stage as the most critical for the successful completion of the Cycle. Exploration of each family member's perceptions and needs must occur. There is a development of mutual understanding, which helps members to make decisions together. Individual family members are able to construct a type of map of the area that they live in, separately and together. The Dangers and Dilemmas are that feelings may be difficult to expose because they may be experienced as shameful or harmful. Fantasy, shame and blame may inhibit families and take them back to Immersion or may speed them on towards Mobilization and Action. Developmental Tasks include the necessity of members to correctly and truthfully name personal feelings and needs, and to have a correct picture of where the other members occupy territory. "The task is to maintain enough curiosity...and empathy...in the face of differences and disappointments, so that each member's joys, pains, suggestions, and requests can be voiced and heard" (Papernow, 1998, p. 383).

Stage 4. Mobilization: exposing the gaps. As the family starts to voice differences more openly, as well as influencing each other when it comes to issues that are the result of step relationships, there is more conflict in the family. This stage can begin with a stepparent standing up for something that is important to them. Dangers and Dilemmas in this stage include feelings of pain and shame that may move the family back into the Awareness Stage or even further back to the Immersion Stage. These feelings may also move the family prematurely into the Action Stage. The conflict that may be experienced in this stage can feel like failure for a biological parent, especially after what may have seemed like peace in the earlier stages. Developmental Tasks include learning to confront differences between various groups including the differences of “family cultures” that members bring into the stepfamily, differences between biological and step members’ needs, different experiences of adults and children in the family without producing shame or blame, and to also begin change while at the same time keeping the family together (Papernow, 1998, p. 384).

Stage 5. Action: going into business together. This stage requires a lot of work for the stepfamily. The family has all the information that they need to accomplish different things such as creating new rules, finding traditions applicable to their new family, and finding family activities for all members to participate in. The biological relationships will become less firm and unyielding, and step relationships will form better boundaries. The Dangers and Dilemmas of this stage are that adults and couples may try to move through the earlier stages too quickly because of the earlier conflicts, and may find themselves in this stage even though they have not done the work required for the previous stages, including getting to know the needs of the members and getting to know

each other personally. While this can result in the adult couple becoming a solid and unified unit that makes rules and regulations for the family, the children can experience depression, resentment, and overwhelming feelings because of the new enforced rules and regulations. Families experiencing this problem must return to the Awareness Stage before further development along the Cycle can continue. Developmental Tasks need the understanding found in both the Awareness and Mobilization stages to be used for the family's new rituals, ways of acting, and customs for all members of the stepfamily. New ways of being and relating must be found, although older ways of being and relating from original biological relationships will still be there (Papernow, 1998).

Stage 6. Contact: intimacy and authenticity in step relationships. During this stage, the family is now enjoying a peaceful and rewarding time with each other. Communication between step members is now more agreeable and enjoyable. Stepparent roles and relationships have become more solid, intimate, and accepted by all the family members. Dangers and Dilemmas may occur when adults in the family find the growing intimacy difficult to deal with, if they have originally come from dysfunctional families. To cope with this, they may create a crisis that will actually make the family move back into earlier stages. Development Tasks include the family enjoying their new peace and rewards together, continuing awareness when new problems come up, and to continue helping stepparent relations and roles grow (Papernow, 1998).

Stage 7. Resolution: holding on and letting go. The family has now become an operational unit of relationships, with members feeling like a family. Issues and problems that once created a great deal of conflict no longer require the same kind of attention. Biological and step relationships now move easily in the family and

boundaries are more adaptable and flexible than even intact families. Children become secure even though they may belong to more than one household and are exposed to various types of relationships and customs. Dangers and Dilemmas – while it may seem that this is the end phase of the Cycle, there may still be new areas of concern that occur such as new babies, changes in child custody and significant life events such as weddings. These changes can bring up old issues between biological and step relationships, and the family may go back to previous stages. Developmental Tasks – the now mature stepfamily needs to hold onto its relationships while working through grief issues that may be present, such as sharing custody and step relationships. Life changes may present issues and conflicts that need to be worked through by both the adults and the children (Papernow, 1998).

Four Different Types of Stepfamilies

Papernow (1998) believes that there are four stepfamily types, and that these types are based on how the family deals with their early years together as well as their coping styles when dealing with differences.

Aware families. Aware Families enter into stepfamily life with expectations that are realistic. They do not need to spend a large amount of time in the Fantasy or Immersion Stage, and can move into the Awareness Stage quickly where family members gain mutual understanding. This mutual understanding allows these families to move easily into the Actions Stage without having to deal with lots of conflict in the Mobilization Stage.

Immersed families. Immersed Families cannot move quickly because of their fantasies of how the family should function, the fantasies being based on how biological

families function. While these families may move easily through the Fantasy Stage, they find themselves experiencing difficulty in the Immersion Stage. During the Immersion Stage, these families function as if the stepparents can be incorporated into the already existing biological units of relationships between biological parents and their children. The stepparents who are outside of these biological relationships usually lead the family into the Mobilization Stage, where conflict is experienced, and the family goes back to the Awareness Stage where they can complete the necessary tasks together as a family (Papernow, 1998).

Mobilized families. Mobilized Families, like Immersed Families, can also have unrealistic fantasies as they enter the new family unit. It appears as though these families begin their new life in the Mobilization Stage, with both step and biological issues being heard and struggled with right away and in an open fashion. Mobilized Families that cannot be successful can experience unending conflict or dissolution (Papernow, 1998).

Action families. Action Families start together without a great deal of conflict. The main unit in this type of family is the new adult couple, and they are able to come to agreement right away on rules and regulations within the family. The main voice can be a stepparent who has strong characteristics. While it may seem that this type of family will be successful, especially with clear rules and a together adult couple, Awareness Stage work does not get done and the new set of rules do not work. Children in this family can become depressed or start to have behavioural problems, which is an indication of problems in the family and “[these] families either extrude children early, or must go back to the Early Stages in order to reach Resolution” (Papernow, 1998, p. 237-238).

Working Through the Stages

The amount of time it takes for families to work through each stage and through the entire Stepfamily Cycle varies. The difference in movement through the stages is for the most part based on the amount of time families spend in the Early Stages. Fast Paced families are often Aware Families, and usually take one to two years to work through the Early Stages, one to two years to work through the Middle Stages and one to two years to work through the Later Stages, taking around 4 years to complete all stages. Average Families usually take two to three years to work through the Early Stages, two to three years to work through the Middle Stages and one to two years to work through the Later Stages, taking around 7 years to complete all stages. Slow or Stuck families usually take four or more years to work through the Early Stages, two, three or even more years to work through the Middle Stages, and one to two years to work through the Later Stages, taking nine or more years to work through all the stages. Average and Slow or Stuck families may consist of Immersed, Mobilized, or Action family types, and some of these families may never actually reach the Later Stages of the Cycle (Papernow, 1998, p. 387).

Projective Techniques

The history of projective techniques. Unknown to most people, projective techniques have a long and illustrious past. Throughout history, many have tried to understand others by their interpretations of the world around them. Such instances can be seen in Christian Biblical parables, Hindu Upanishads, Sufi stories, and Greek oracles which all discuss narrative information and the importance of interpretation (Groth-Marnat, 1999). The growth and development of modern day projective techniques as we

know and understand them, took place during the early 1900's for use in clinical psychology (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000).

Projective techniques often used psychoanalytic theory. The assumption was that many aspects of a person and their inner world are not available to the conscience, therefore objective measures such as inventories and questionnaires are limited. To gain an accurate view of a person, unconscious defences and conscious resistances must be bypassed, thus an indirect approach such as projective techniques are required because “[through] symbolic creation, individuals depict important themes, dynamics, and attitudes” (Groth-Marnat, 1999, p. 499). Expressions of inner dynamics are more likely to occur when there are vague and unstructured stimuli. However, inner dynamics are likely to cause anxiety, so the person must distance themselves by “externalizing onto the outside world”, which is able to reduce the anxiety (Groth-Marnat, 1999, p. 499).

To those who preferred more objective measurements, the early users of projective techniques were considered artists who were able to combine behaviours and feelings. These so-called artists were more interested in understanding people and their meanings, rather than scientific objectivity and validation. Even though projective techniques were not designed using traditional psychometric methods, almost all projective techniques were created for use in clinical applications and settings (Macfarlane & Tuddenham, 1951).

During the 1940s, projective techniques were taken from clinical settings and applications and expanded for use in areas such as opinions, attitudes and market research. These adaptations were considered controversial, and experienced many reservations from other professionals in the field. Because of the controversy, use of the

techniques dropped off after the 1950s. During the 1980s, projective techniques were rediscovered by academic researchers (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000). Within the past ten to fifteen years, there have been new developments in this area. Computer programs are now commonly being used for projective techniques, such as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Piotrowski & Keller, 1993; Clark, 1995). New and unique approaches as well as diagnostic formulations have been made for drawing and thematic tests. There has also been an increase in attendance at national and international meetings for projective assessments. Literature reviews show recent re-interest in projective assessments, and major textbooks on psychological assessments show a “continued interest” in projective techniques (Piotrowski & Keller, 1993, p. 180). Furthermore, projective drawings are one of the top ten most used tests among clinicians (Groth-Marnat, 1999).

Problems associated with projective techniques. Unfortunately, projective testing is often met with resistance and criticism. Rather than being known for their many benefits, many professionals believe that they should only be used with extreme caution, or not at all. “Psychometric limitations, lack of training opportunities, and the obscure qualities of the instruments have restricted their use among therapists” (Clark, 1995, p. 311). There are also issues with “...validity problems, interpretation problems, and the possibility that these techniques may expose areas that people want to keep concealed” (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000). When looking at validity, one assumption of projective techniques is that client performance is based on their basic inner world rather than by other factors. Responses are basic, general, and not influenced by other extraneous factors. Another assumption is that projective tests are thought to access personality

traits the same way every time, regardless of how different personalities may be.

However, critics believe that even if the information from a projective technique is a valid form of showing personality or other factors, the test may not be comprehensive enough to allow a reduction of information (Macfarlane & Tuddenham, 1951).

Critics of projective techniques also believe that interpretation reports confound both the technique and the interpreter, and that interpretations make these assessments non-scientific because of their subjectivity and their vagueness (Macfarlane & Tuddenham, 1951). Another potential problem area when using projective techniques is that administrators can influence the assessment. Masling (1997) writes “the evidence clearly demonstrates that the two people in the testing situation come to that interaction with a background of interests, needs and fears and each influences, and is influenced by, the other” (p.260). There are many different ways that a researcher’s own personality and characteristics influence both the administration and the interpretations. Administrators can easily influence clients by their subtle cues, without either knowing it. It has been found that administrators have more positive interpretations if clients appear interested in and approving of the test (Masling, 1997).

Benefits and usefulness of projective techniques. Projective techniques do provide some major benefits, even in comparison to objective psychometric testing. There are certain limitations to objective testing. Often, answers depend on ability, the willingness of a client to answer truthfully and respondents not “faking” responses. Therefore, objective tests can be “less adequate” than projective tests (Masling, 1997, p. 264). A main assumption is that important facets of a person and their personality are not clear to consciousness, which makes questionnaires and inventories limited (Groth-

Marnat, 1999). Projective data has more accurate predictions regarding long-term behaviours than objective test data (Masling, 1997). Clinicians that use projective techniques believe they are valid and useful because of the reports of other clinicians that use them. They disregard any statistical findings that are less than helpful in this area, on the basis that statistics are not able to reveal complex and multifaceted data (Macfarlane & Tuddenham, 1951). Contrary to what is thought and expected, researchers have found consistency of projective technique responses (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000). It has been found that “careful examination of the literature demonstrates the lack of empirical basis for condemning either projective or objective tests” (Masling, 1997, p. 265). Projective techniques should not be discounted as less informative and beneficial than objective techniques.

As mentioned previously, projective techniques in the past have borrowed a great deal from psychoanalytic theory. Therefore, it is believe that expressions are more likely to occur when people interpret stimuli that are unstructured, whether verbal or visual, and the respondents make sense out of the stimuli by their own thoughts, feelings, imagination and experience because of vague directions, unstructured tasks and an unlimited amount of responses (Clark, 1995; Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000; Groth-Marnat, 1999). Information is gathered in a variety of ways including association, construction, completion, choice, ordering, and expression (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000; Clark, 1995).

Because projective techniques bypass the unconscious, they can reveal a great deal about a person. Projective tests can communicate internal dynamics, attitudes, themes, predispositions, and conflicts (Groth-Marnat, 1999). They can also disclose thoughts, emotions and feelings, and memories (Groth-Marnat, 1999; Waislow, 1995).

They illuminate fantasy, the true self, object relation and representations, abilities, characteristics, inner and outer life, ego strengths, defence mechanisms, relationships between the unconscious and symptom formation, problems, conflicts and symptoms (Waislow, 1995).

There are several major uses for projective techniques, especially within therapeutic settings. They are used to help provide understanding of clients, and to provide observation time while a client does the projective task. Projective techniques can be used for enhancing the counselling relationship because they are a way, other than talking, for clients to express themselves. Multiple ways of expression are available and at the same time, clients are able to find non-threatening ways to minimise their defences. Projective techniques also reveal the thoughts, feeling, memories, needs and other inner characteristics previously mentioned. Treatment planning is another use, as the techniques provide decisions for continuing therapy, referral or the need for further evaluation. Being aware of personal areas of concern can also save time and speed up the therapeutic process. Projective techniques are also a source of collateral information. They can be used with other sources, including other projective techniques, behavioural observations, verbal information from parents, spouses, teachers and other relevant people, records from school and work, and with objective tests. Hypotheses can be formed, and tentative information from a projective technique can be made for further exploration and confirmed at a later time (Clark, 1995).

There are other benefits to using projective techniques. As clients use a projective test, they are communicating both verbally and non-verbally, which is frequently indirect. This indirect communication can help avoid direct contact with something that is

emotionally difficult, it can help to loosen inhibitions and defence mechanisms, and it can assist with therapy resistance and with fear of a personal relationship with a therapist (Waislow, 1995). People are able to express feelings and thoughts that would otherwise be difficult to discuss by structured, direct questions (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000).

Due to the multiple formats of communication, projective tests can be considered universal because there are no structured stimuli and language barriers. They are used around the world because they appeal to people of different languages and cultures (Piotrowski & Keller, 1993). Clients may find help with personal insight, awareness and introspection. Projective techniques are often fascinating and captivating for respondents, they can provide and generate ideas, they are versatile, and they can even be fun (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000).

The Button Game

The origin of the Family Relations Button Sort dates back to World War I, but there has been little documentation on the “Button Game”. It is based on the idea of projection, coined by Freud, and integrating Bowlby’s (1982) attachment theory and ecosystemic play therapy (Carter et al., 2000). The main belief behind the invention of the Family Relations Button Sort is that children will form either secure, avoidant or anxious attachments with various people in their lives (Bowlby, 1982). The FRBS was created to measure family feelings towards one another by tapping into the unconsciousness of the child in order to get a picture of how the child perceives attachments with various family members. Observing how the children position family members does this. Attachments can often be inferred from the data, particularly if the child’s comments are taken into consideration (Carter et al., 2000).

Delphine Yau (1989) is the only known person to have written preliminary research on the Button Game, while attempting to validate this projective test. Although her research used far more buttons, she found that there were significant differences between the button choices of children from “normal” families and children from “clinical” samples. Normal children were considered to be those not presently showing symptoms of psychopathology, whereas clinical children were either receiving psychological services in a social welfare agency or receiving in-patient psychiatric treatment in a hospital. In her research, she discovered many important things that further helped develop this assessment tool. These include the fact that two blind raters were able to discriminate between normal children’s button presentations and clinical children’s presentations, with a hit rate of 95.3% accuracy. She also observed that certain buttons were predominantly chosen, regardless of the group, and that these buttons were generally chosen to represent mothers, siblings or themselves. There was no predominant button choice for fathers.

Differences Among Children from “Normal” and “Clinical” Groups

Button based results. Yau (1989) used buttons with various dimensions including shape, colour, pattern, size, overall look, degree of transparency and type of material. She found that there were button choice differences between the two groups. Children from the normal group generally used two or more button dimensions such as colour, shape and material to describe their family members. Children from the clinical group tended to use only one or two dimensions, and it was rare for children in the clinical group to use more than two dimensions. Yau (1989) also found that normal children used colour to represent a member’s gender, personal characteristics and the person’s

relationship with the child, discussing the person's likes and dislikes more than clinical children did. As well, normal children used the shape and design of the buttons to represent many more aspects of family members, including such things as members ages, clothing, size, and wishes, more than clinical participants did.

Family dynamics in normal and clinical samples. Yau (1989) discovered different aspects of the family dynamics in normal versus clinical children. Normal children gave more positive descriptions of their family. Clinical children were generally more negative about their family, discussing family distance, negative feelings towards members and making scattered, chaotic patterns when asked to place their family by degrees of closeness.

Other significant findings included how children perceived their family members and involvement by family members, both which correlated with the degree of positive attributes reported by the children. The more positively children saw their family members, the more likely that the children were involved with them on an emotional level. Normal children perceived parents and siblings in a more positive light than clinical children and were considered by raters to be more emotionally expressive. The degree of a positive perception of mothers and their involvement with the children was correlated significantly with a high amount of emotional expressiveness (Yau, 1989).

The Family Relations Button Sort

Overall, Yau (1989) contributed detailed information on the Button Game by validating its use and the important findings related to it. Similarly, testing was done by Carter, Piper, Ho and Ransby (2000), also known as the Therapeutic Tools Research Group, with a standardised set of buttons that was designed from the results of Yau's

work. The buttons used in the following research by Carter et al. (2000) was used in this study.

Carter, Piper, Ho and Ransby (2000) used three types of buttons, including plain or non-target, concrete and abstract. Plain buttons, which are often seen on clothing, have two or four holes, are round, have no detailed design, and are one plain colour. Concrete buttons have a concrete design, such as an animal or a clock with one or more colours, while abstract buttons are any other buttons that are colourful, do not have four holes in them and are not flat, and can have singular or multiple colours.

Children were given clinical interviews and asked to do a Kinetic Family Drawing. When comparing the interview, the Kinetic Family Drawing and the drawing with the buttons, the results were significant. From this, the Therapeutic Tools Research Group designed four categories of colour including white/pearl, gold/brass, black and primary, as well as the three levels of abstraction, which are plain, concrete and abstract buttons (Carter et al., 2000).

Carter, Piper, Ho & Ransby (2000) found that that children tend to choose abstract and concrete buttons over plain buttons. Black buttons are selected half as often as other colours and choosing an abstract black button is highly unusual. They also found that white buttons are associated with positive feelings, and that brass buttons are associated with positive attributes about ninety-six percent of the time. As well, they have found some age differences in the way children arrange and chose buttons. Older children are more likely to choose abstract buttons and are more likely to place their family in a cluster when positioning them. Younger children are more likely to place their family arrangement in a line, rather than in a cluster. Twelve percent of children did

not even place themselves into the cluster. They also found that girls tended to choose more abstract buttons than boys (Carter et al., 2000).

The FRBS and children of separation and divorce. When comparing children of divorce with children of intact families, Thiessen (2002) found that children of divorce were more likely to leave out a parent when choosing buttons for family members. They were also more likely to consider and include extended family members as part of their family, but were less likely to include pets as part of their families. There were no differences between the two groups of children regarding their button colour choices. Children from divorced families had less balanced levels of cohesion but there were no differences in adaptability between the two groups of children. Thiessen (2002) also had independent raters look at pictures of the children's button sorts, button sorts and FACES III results, and button sorts, FACES III results and transcripts of data collection. The raters could tell the difference between children of divorce and children of intact families.

In Thiessen's study (2002) it was found that children from both intact families and divorced families often chose buttons for family members based on personality traits and characteristics, abilities, activities, likes, appearances, relationship with that person, and because they liked particular buttons even though they may not have known why. Children of divorce tended to place themselves or other family members between parents, while children of intact families did not. Some children of divorce also found it difficult to place their parents on the page because they were not sure where to place parents or themselves because of conflict and loyalty issues.

FACES III

The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES) is a self-report, clinical rating scale for families. Developed by David Olson and his colleagues and based on the Circumplex Model, it is the third version in a series of scales. FACES III scales were "...developed to assess the major dimensions of the Circumplex Model and to provide an instrument with high levels of reliability, validity, and clinical utility" (Olson et al., 1985, p. 2). It was developed for clinical assessment as well as for research purposes.

The Circumplex Model (Olson et al., 1985) classifies families into sixteen family types by combining the four levels of cohesion and the four levels of adaptability. Cohesion is how much family members are separated or connected to each other in the family unit. The four types of cohesion include disengaged, separated, connected and enmeshed. Family adaptability is how flexible the family is, and how able they are to change. There are four types of adaptability including chaotic, flexible, structured and rigid. Eight of the sixteen types family types are considered to be mid-range, four are considered to be extreme and four are considered balanced. The third dimension of the Circumplex Model is communication, which promotes action and change in cohesion and adaptability. Families that are balanced have better communication skills than extreme families (Olson et al., 1985).

The main version is intended to assess families across their life cycle, including just married couples without children to retired couples. Its readability and use was designed for adolescents ages twelve and up, and adults. It is a twenty item inventory with ten cohesion items and ten adaptability items, with a five point Likert type response

to each question. The children's version is also a twenty item inventory, and is essentially the same as the main version but it is written in language that is easier for children younger than twelve years old to understand. The children's version was used for the present research. The forms are both easy to administer and score. After the form is administered, the numbers for cohesion and adaptability are tallied and mapped onto the Circumplex Model, which indicates where the children's perception of their family fits within the sixteen different types of families.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed 100 years of history of families in Canada, and recent literature on stepfamilies including relationships between various step and biological members, step family dynamics, problems and benefits, and Papernow's (1998) Stepfamily Cycle. The history of projective techniques was discussed, as well as limitations and benefits. Button assessments and research by Yau (1989), Carter et al. (2000), and Thiessen (2002) was examined. As well, basic information about FACES III and its relationship to the Circumplex model was reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter reviewed literature related to stepfamilies, the Stepfamily Cycle, projective techniques, the Button Game and the FRBS, FACES III and family cohesion and adaptability. The following outlines the procedure for investigating children's perceptions of family and the validity of the Family Relations Button Sort. The purpose of this study is to compare differences in perception of family members and family relationships between children from stepfamilies and children from intact families, to validate the Family Relations Button Sort, and to ascertain whether an administrator of the FRBS will be able to differentiate between children belonging to stepfamilies from children belonging to intact families. The study will compare the results of children of stepfamilies to children in intact families, in terms of button choices, button arrangements, and FACES III for Children answers.

Statement of the Problem

It is important that the FRBS be able to discriminate between children from stepfamilies and children of intact families, and to show how children think about and perceive their families. This is helpful to clinicians because there may not be any access to family information or history. It is essential that child or family therapists understand how children perceive their families in order to make progress in counselling, especially as children's families impact them and their behaviours in so many ways. The FRBS may be a tool that is needed to not only discriminate between the two groups, but to also provide valuable information about the way children view their family members and relationships. It can show both differences and similarities among children's perceptions of their family members.

Population and Sampling Procedures

Participants. Sixty children participated in this study, of which 32 were from intact families and 28 were from stepfamilies. Some children have siblings or stepsiblings who also took part in the study. The children were between the ages of 6 and 11, and were in grades 1 to 5. Stepfamily children were from families whose parents have remarried or are living common-law, and this new family unit has existed for six months or more. Children from intact families were from families that have never experienced any kind of separation, divorce, or remarriage. Children from an elementary school in the Delta School District voluntarily participated in this study, as well as children recruited from professionals and word of mouth in the Lower Mainland and the Northwest Coastal Region of British Columbia, Canada. The children who were given parental permission to participate in the study were entered into a draw to win a \$100.00 and a \$50 gift certificate at Toys R Us.

This study was part of a larger project with another researcher, and therefore some children have numbers and some have letters assigned to them. The numbers and letters are used to protect their identity. Pseudonyms are also used for the children as well as their family members, once again for privacy purposes and to protect family identities. Data from the intact family children was shared for both studies.

Testing materials. A total of 240 buttons make up the FRBS button kit. Plain buttons are defined as buttons that have two or four holes, are circular, and are plain in colour and shape. There are 48 white buttons with two holes, 48 white buttons with four holes, 48 grey buttons with four holes and 48 brown buttons with four holes. All of the plain buttons with two or four holes are used as non-target buttons. There are also 48

target buttons, trademarked as the FRBS, which belong to the four categories of colour and are concrete or abstract buttons. Out of the 48 target buttons, 24 buttons are abstract and 24 buttons are concrete (Appendix A).

FACES III for Children was used, as well as a visual representation of the five point scale answers for the assessment (Appendix B). The visual representation used buttons for a consistent theme, and each answer category had the corresponding amount of buttons for clarity. After FACES III was administered, the numbers for cohesion and adaptability were added and mapped onto the Circumplex Model, which indicates where the children's perception of their family fits within the sixteen different types of families (Appendix C). A demographic sheet was also used to collect basic demographic information and a genogram (Appendix D).

Procedure

The recruitment. A letter of recruitment (Appendix E) was sent to the Delta School District. Once permission was granted from the Delta School District, principals, teachers and school counsellors from various primary classes were approached through letters asking if they had students who were in stepfamilies or original two-parent homes (Appendix F). Principals and teachers were also given permission slips to sign, which allowed children in their school and classrooms to participate (Appendix G). Principals and teachers who had children from their school and classrooms that participated in the study were entered into a draw for a \$50.00 meal gift certificate along the beach in White Rock, B.C. Once the school board, principals and teachers agreed to allow the children of their schools and classrooms to participate, letters of information (Appendix H) and permission slips and information on obtaining the results of the study (Appendix I) were

sent to the parents or guardians of the children. The teachers were not to inform the researcher of which type of family the children belonged to. The children were seen only after the permission slips had been returned and parental approval had been given.

As not enough children were able to participate from the Delta School District, various agencies that work with children were approached. The same information and permission forms were used as for the school district, and a recruitment poster was used for agencies (Appendix J). Children were also recruited by word of mouth.

The testing process. The children who received parental approval for participating in the study were taken individually during class time, to a private room for administration purposes. Information was given to the children explaining that they were going to help the researcher with a study about how children think about their families by answering questions and doing some tasks. Children were told that they could choose not to participate if they do not want to, and that they could leave at any time. Children were also told that their parents had given them permission to be in the study. Both parents and children were informed that if there were any problems as a result of the research, Dr. Joanne Crandall would meet with the children and families to debrief the situation.

Children recruited through agencies or word of mouth were met in their homes, and the administration was done in a quiet place without other people close by to avoid distraction and children falsely responding because of family members being near. These children were told the same information as the children who were seen from the schools. Parents and children in the Northwest region were informed that if there were any problems as a result of the research, a designated counsellor from Children's Mental Health would meet with the children and families to debrief the situation.

Administration Procedures

The interactions with the children were recorded by audiotape. All of the children's responses were transcribed to gather information for themes and for independent raters. When the researcher and children were ready to begin, the researcher informed the children that their voices would be recorded, and after pressing the record button, verbally began by saying:

“Thank you for coming to help me with my study. I am studying what children think about their families. Your teacher and parents thought that you might be interested in helping me learn more about children and their families. Today, I will begin by asking you to play a game with buttons”

The FRBS: button based protocol. The FRBS follows the protocol developed by The Therapeutic Tools Research Group (Carter et al., 2000). In this protocol, the researcher is referred to as the assessor.

The assessor took the box of buttons and the tray and said:

“Here is a box: it contains buttons of different shapes, sizes and colours.”

The assessor opened the box in front of the child and touched and moved the buttons inside the box in a clockwise direction. The assessor used her dominant hand to pick up a handful of buttons and slowly allowed the buttons to drop through her fingers, back into the box. The assessor then brought the box closer to the child, and placed it directly in front of the child, while saying:

“I would like you to use the buttons to introduce your family members' to me.

This helps me to learn about you and your family.”

The assessor then poured the buttons onto a tray and said:

“I would now like you to choose one button for each member of your family.

Please use a different button for each family member. Please tell me when you have finished.”

At any time if the child did not tell the assessor when he/she had finished, the assessor asked:

“Are you finished?”

The assessor noted the child’s response with audio recording.

If the child did not choose a button to represent him or herself the assessor said:

“I would like you to also pick a button out for yourself. Pick a button that shows me who you are. Please tell me when you have finished.”

Once all of the buttons had been chosen, the assessor introduced the button protocol sheet by saying:

“Here is a piece of paper. Put your family members on this sheet of paper. Tell me who each button is, and what made you choose each button.”

The FRBS: pattern based protocol. After this the child was told:

“Thank you for showing me your family. As we know, each family is different from one another. Family members may have different feelings for one another. For example, in a family, a mom and dad may feel one way towards one another, while mom and daughter/son may feel another way towards another. Now that you have picked out the buttons for your family members, could you put the buttons in a way that explains how each person in your family is feeling towards one another? Please tell me when you have finished.”

When the child indicated that he or she had finished, the assessor said:

“Could you please explain how you have put your buttons?”

The assessor recorded the sequence of the buttons presented and the child’s verbatim descriptions.

Picture taking and demographics. After the administration of the FRBS, a picture was taken of the child’s Button Sort choices and arrangements. Each child was asked to give some demographic information, including a mini genogram (Appendix D). The genogram information, who the family members were, was later confirmed with parents or guardians.

Administration procedure for FACES III for children. After the FRBS was completed, the children were given the following instructions:

“Now I am going to ask you some questions about your family and you can answer with a number. One means that this almost never happens in your family or is almost never true, two means once in awhile it happens or is true, three means that it sometimes happens or is sometimes true, four means that it frequently happens or is frequently true, and five means it almost always happens or is almost always true. When I say the sentence you can point to the number and say it for me. Do you understand?”

The researcher then asked a sample question “My family likes to go to the park?” and asked the children to respond using the cue card, to ensure that the children understood the procedure. Because of the age variability and the differences in reading and comprehension ability, the twenty questions from FACES III for Children were read

aloud by the researcher to all the children, and the visual cue card was displayed to make answering simpler for the children, as well as more reliable (Appendix B).

Debriefing. Debriefing occurred individually as soon as the data collection was complete, and before they went back to their classrooms or families. During the debriefing, the children were asked how the process was for them. They were asked how the researcher could help to make this easier for other children to do, what they liked best and what they liked least of the tasks. They were also asked if there was anything that they would like to add now that they were done. The debriefing ended by providing the children with an opportunity to ask questions or make comments.

Children were then asked to keep what they did confidential among their peers for two weeks, just in case someone in their school was also a participant. However, they were told that they could talk to their teachers or parents about what transpired. This did not apply to children who were recruited outside of the school system.

Reliability Analysis

In order to ensure reliability, two raters who were Master of Arts Counselling Psychology students, and who were blind to the groups that the children were in, were employed. The raters were asked to give their judgement three times. They were given score sheets (APPENDIX K), and were asked to fill out whether they thought each child was from an intact family by writing I, or whether the child was from a stepfamily by writing S. For the first task, the raters independently looked at the pictures of the button choices and arrangements (APPENDIX L), and from the information in the pictures alone, they were to try to discriminate whether the children were from stepfamilies or intact families. This was to determine if the FRBS could be used as a discrimination tool.

Second, the raters looked at the pictures of the button choices and placements and the FACES III responses together, to see if FACES III for Children would be able to provide valuable and discriminatory information about the two family groups. The third task was to look at pictures of the button choices and arrangements, the FACES III responses, and the written transcripts explaining what made the children choose certain buttons and arrangements. Percentages of agreement between raters were explored.

Scoring The Protocol

The data was observed on three levels: button based, pattern based and profile based, according to Yau's methodology (1989). Scoring was done individually, within family groups and between family groups.

Button based analysis. The first level of analysis observed why the children chose particular buttons to represent family members. Dimensions of the buttons were observed, such as level of abstraction and colour, as well as what aspects of the family members the children chose to point out through the use of the buttons. After these were looked at on an individual level, the data was looked at within family groups and then compared between the two family groups. Frequency counts were done to observe how often a particular button dimension was used, as well as personal aspects.

Pattern based analysis. The next level of analysis observed how children placed their family members on the page and what the children said about these positions. The distance between buttons, whether they were placed in a linear or clustered manner, where members were placed in relation to their roles, and where members were placed according to feelings, were all taken into consideration. The children's verbal explanations were assessed, and themes were made according to the patterns that

emerged. Frequency counts were also done. Comparisons were made within and between family groups.

Profile based analysis. The final level of analysis observed how the children perceived their individual relationships with family members and between family members, by looking at the children's explanations, button choices and button positions qualitatively.

Hypotheses

This study hypothesised that:

- (1) Children of stepfamilies would choose larger numbers of buttons than children of intact families
- (2) Children of stepfamilies would be more likely to add in extended family members and pets than would children from intact families
- (3) Children from intact families would be more likely to choose primary, white and gold coloured buttons to represent their family members, as these colours are associated with positive attributes of family members. Comparatively, children from stepfamilies would be more likely to choose dark, abstract, and the dark abstract buttons together, as these types of buttons have been associated with negative feelings.
- (4) Children from intact families would be more likely to show balanced cohesion and adaptability on FACES III than children from stepfamilies
- (5) Two independent raters would be able to discriminate between the children from intact families and the children of stepfamilies on three levels at a level greater than chance. These include (a) their judgement based on pictures of

the FRBS alone, (b) their judgement based on the FRBS pictures and FACES III scores together, and (c) their judgement based on FRBS pictures, FACES III scores and written transcripts.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

Children for the study were recruited throughout the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, Canada, at an elementary school, as well as by contacts through Counselling Agencies and word of mouth. Children were also recruited by word of mouth in the Northwest Coastal Region of British Columbia, Canada. There were 28 children from stepfamilies and 32 children from intact families, for a total of 60 children. The participants consisted of 25 females and 35 males, with 15 females and 13 males in the stepfamily group, and 10 females and 22 males in the intact family group. The children ranged in ages from 6 to 11 years old, and were in grades 1 through 5. The age distribution of the participants is included in Table 1.

FACES III (Olsen et al., 1985) was tested for reliability. On the cohesion scale, the mean was 3.72 and the alpha was .62. On the adaptability scale, the mean was 2.78 and the alpha was .63. FACES III testing indicates there were no problems with reliability.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis one, children of stepfamilies would choose larger numbers of buttons when compared to children of intact families, was supported $t(58) = -4.84, p < .001$. Children from stepfamilies were more likely to choose larger number of buttons for their button based protocol than children from intact families. Overall, children of stepfamilies tend to have larger numbers of family members because of step relationships, however, until this study was done, it was not known if children would include people other than

Table 1

Age Distribution of Children

Family Group	Number of Children in Age Category					
	6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years
Stepfamily Children	3	2	2	8	9	4
Intact Family Children	4	5	7	9	6	1

basic family members in their button sorts. Means and standard deviations for dependant variables are included in Table 2.

Hypothesis two, children of stepfamilies would be more likely to add in extended family members than would children from intact homes, was not supported statistically, $\chi^2(1) = 2.98, p = .08$. However, 21% of children from stepfamilies added extended family members to their protocol as compared to 6% of intact family children. Children of stepfamilies would be more likely to add in pets than would children from intact homes, was not supported statistically, $\chi^2(1) = 2.31, p = .13$. Children from stepfamilies included pets in their button based protocols 25 % of the time, while children from intact families included pets in the protocol 44% of the time.

Hypothesis three, children from intact families would be more likely to choose primary, white and gold coloured buttons than stepfamily children, as these colours are associated with positive attributes of family members, was partially supported. Children from intact families did not choose more white buttons than children from stepfamilies, $\chi^2(4) = 5.37, p = .25$. Rather, it was found that children from stepfamilies chose more white buttons, $t(58) = -2.06, p = .04$. Children from intact families did not choose more gold buttons than children from stepfamilies, $\chi^2(3) = 3.08, p = .38$. Children from stepfamilies were significantly more likely to choose primary coloured buttons than their intact family counterparts, $\chi^2(4) = 11.12, p = .04$; $t(58) = -2.38, p = .02$. Children from stepfamilies would be more likely to choose dark, abstract, and dark abstract buttons together as these types of buttons have been associated with negative feelings, was not supported. There was no significant difference between stepchildren and intact children for choosing dark buttons, $\chi^2(3) = 2.94, p = .40$. There was also no significant

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Dependant Variables

	Number Of Buttons*	Extended Family Members ^a	Pets ^a	Primary Colours ^{a*}	White Colours ^{a*}	Gold Colours ^a	Dark Colours ^a	Abstract Buttons ^a	Dark and Abstract ^a	Cohesion Scaled Scores ^b	Adaptability Scaled Scores ^b
Children from Stepfamilies (<i>n</i> = 28)											
<i>M</i>	6.57	0.21	0.25	1.79	1.43	1.43	1.04	0.75	0.32	3.21	5.54
<i>SD</i>	2.18	0.42	0.44	1.42	1.14	1.00	0.96	0.75	0.55	1.23	1.64
Children from Intact Families (<i>n</i> = 32)											
<i>M</i>	4.59	6.25	0.42	1.01	0.90	1.10	0.74	0.75	0.34	4.26	5.35
<i>SD</i>	0.71	0.25	0.50	0.79	0.83	0.94	0.73	1.05	0.79	1.48	1.76

^aExtended Family Members, Pets, Colours, Dark Buttons, Abstract Buttons, Dark and Abstract Buttons are mean frequencies.

^bScores for FACES III are item means, item ratings range from 1-8.

* *p* < .05

difference between stepchildren and intact children for choosing abstract buttons, $\chi^2(3) = 2.36, p = .082$.

Hypothesis four, children from intact families would be more likely to show balanced cohesion on FACES III than children from stepfamilies, was not supported. As FACES III raw scores show balanced levels of cohesion for the middle ranges, families reporting extreme cohesion scores show less balance in the family environment. For that reason, the cohesion scores from intact families was expected to be more in the middle ranges than stepfamilies, because intact families were expected to have more balanced family environments. There were no significant differences between the two family groups in the variability of cohesion scores, $F(32, 28) = 0.66, p < 0.05$ (see Hays, 1973, p. 450) Children from intact families would also be more likely to show balanced adaptability on FACES III than children from stepfamilies, was not supported. As above, FACES III raw scores show balanced levels of adaptability for the middle ranges, and adaptability scores from intact families was expected to be more in the middle ranges than stepfamilies. However, there were no significant differences between the two family groups in the variability of adaptability scores, $F(32, 28) = 0.75, p < 0.05$ (see Hays, 1973, p. 450).

Hypothesis five, two independent raters, who were Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology students, would be able to discriminate between the children from intact families and the children from stepfamilies at a level greater than chance. The discrimination occurred on three different levels, the raters examined the FRBS pictures alone, secondly the raters examined the FRBS pictures and the FACES III scores together, and thirdly, the raters examined the FRBS pictures, the FACES III scores and

the typed transcripts together. While there was significant agreement between raters, see Table 3, the FRBS should be used with caution when used for discrimination purposes.

Post Hoc Analyses

Family types. One would expect that there would be significant differences between FACES III family types when comparing children from stepfamilies to children from intact families. However, it was found that there were no significant differences in family types between the two groups, $\chi^2(11) = 8.62$, $p = .66$. With the exception of three children, two from intact families and one from a stepfamily, all other children from both intact and stepfamilies had FACES III family types considered either balanced or mid-range.

Omission of family members. Omissions were an important part of some children's button sorts. When children chose buttons for who they considered to be family, children from stepfamilies were significantly more likely to omit a family member than children from intact families, $\chi^2(1) = 15.65$, $p < .001$. Only one child of an intact family left out a family member. In comparison, 46% of stepchildren left out one or more family members. Some stepchildren actually left out a biological mother or father, even though they had regular contact with these parents. It was interesting to note that the omitted biological parents did not live in the same household as the child.

Many children did not include their stepparents. For example, two sisters, Child AM, a ten-year-old female, and Child AN, a nine-year-old female, both left out their stepmother even though they spent almost equal amounts of time at the father and stepmother's household as at the mother and stepfather's household. Some children left out their stepsiblings even though they lived with them or saw them on weekends or

Table 3

Independent Raters Results

	Discrimination on Three Levels		
	Button Pictures	Pictures & FACES III	Pictures, FACES III & Transcripts
Percent Agreement	75	52	78
<i>Kappa</i>	.53	.17	.58

holidays. This can be seen in a group of 3 biological siblings who live with another group of 3 biological siblings in a stepfamily. Four out of the six children in this stepfamily left out some or all of their stepsiblings. Two children from different stepfamilies, Child AS, an eleven-year-old female, and Child 28, a nine-year-old female, did not include their mothers as they were deceased.

Family member placement. Children from both intact and stepfamilies placed family members in their pattern based protocol in a variety of ways. Children from intact families placed their parents together 72% of the time. While this percentage of children is relatively high, it was surprising to find that the remaining children, 28%, placed their parents apart. When parents were placed apart, some of the children placed themselves and/or their siblings between the two parents. However, most of the children placed their parents with the children in the family that the parent had a close relationship with, or liked best. For example, Child N a ten-year-old female said: (R is for researcher, C is for child)

C: "...my dad is with my dog, cause he likes my dog. Um, then my mom is with [my brother] because he's the youngest and she always stays by him..."

Child 54, a six-year-old female, put her and her mom, and her dad and older brother together and said:

C: "Mom feels really good towards me, and dad feels really good toward my brother."

Child I, a nine-year-old male, put himself and a sibling by his mom, and another sibling by his father, and said:

C: "...Samuel, is probably closer to my dad, and my brother, Alex, he's probably more closer to my mom, because they're sort of the same people."

R: "...I noticed you're over here"

C: "because I'm closer to my mom, as well."

Child C, a seven-year-old male, put his brother and his dad together, and his mom and himself together and said:

C: "I put my brother and my dad over here, and my mom and me over there".

R: "ok, and what made you want to put your dad and your brother together over here"

C: "My dad sort of likes my brother more"

R: "Ya? And what made you want to put your mom and you over here"

C: "...cause...my mom likes me more".

It was interesting to note that these families were considered to be balanced or midrange, even though in the button arrangements, parents were placed with family members other than their spouses.

The vast majority of stepchildren, 89%, placed their parents apart. Most commonly, the parents were with whoever their current partner was. A few children placed their biological parents together. Two stepchildren, Child 7, a nine-year-old male, and Child AU, a seven-year-old male, placed their parents together, but they were the biological parents of the children and the reason they were in the stepfamily category is because one of the parents of each family had a child or children with a previous partner. Only one stepchild, Child AL, a ten-year-old male, placed his parents together even though his parents lived in separate households, and his father has a wife. He also placed himself next to his parents, possibly indicating a wish for a united family.

While it may have been expected that a large number of stepchildren would have placed themselves in the middle of the biological parents or between the two new

families that may have emerged, this was not the case. Only two children placed themselves between their biological parents. Child AJ, a ten-year-old female, placed herself in the middle of the arrangement with her family and stepfamily members around her. The child explained:

C: "I put myself in the centre, because the feelings show that everything is directed at me as well as others"

R: "Everything's directed at you?"

C: "All the feelings"

R: "Oh, all the feelings are directed at you"

C: "Good or bad, no matter what, I share some of the feelings that they do"

Child AV, an eleven-year-old male, placed himself distinctly between the two families.

Child 35, a ten-year-old male, and Child 36, an eight-year-old male, placed all of the siblings between the biological parents. Only one child, Child 38, a six-year-old female, placed herself between a biological parent and a stepparent, saying:

C: "I like playing with the girls and I'm close to Roberta (stepmom) and my mom"

R: "I see that dad is far from mom, does he not get along with her?"

C: "well sometimes he does, but not always".

It is interesting to note that Child 35, Child 36 and Child 38 are biological siblings in a stepfamily.

Children from both stepfamilies and intact families placed themselves in a variety of locations near various family members in their button pattern protocols. Many of the children placed themselves next to others in a way that indicated family dynamics. Child

U, an eight-year-old male, put himself, his sister and his dog together, and then put his dad and mom together in another cluster, saying:

“These three, me, my sister and my dog, um, I’ve put them in this way because we get along well, and my mom and dad, sort of fight sometimes, like, argue like... they fight so, like, stuff, like, I thought they’re going to a place, sometimes they fight, and sometimes my dad says swear words in front of me...”.

Child 28, a nine-year-old female whose mother is deceased, placed the buttons with herself first, then her stepmom, dad, and two older brothers. When asked to explain how she put the buttons, she said:

C: “Ok, because I love my mom, and then my dad, and then Andy’s ok, and then, Mark’s, well...”

R: “The farthest away?”

C: “Ya, because he’s the meanest to me”

Child 14, a nine-year-old male, placed himself next to everybody in a cluster, because:

“I put us in a group because we all love each other and no one’s mean to each other”

Stepfamily children usually placed themselves next to biological family members, with about half of the children placing themselves next to their biological mother.

Lines vs. clusters. Some children used lines and some used clusters when arranging their families in the pattern based protocol. Nineteen of the children arranged their buttons into one or more lines. A line consisted of three or more buttons, to distinguish them from a cluster. Out of the 19 children, 9 were from intact families and 10 were from stepfamilies. Nine children were males and 10 were females, with 4

children between the ages of 6 and 8 years old, and 15 children between the ages of 9 and 11 years old.

Forty-one children arranged their pattern based protocol into one or more clusters, 23 children were from intact families and 18 children were from stepfamilies. There were 26 males and 15 females, with 19 children between the ages of 6 and 8 years old, and 22 children between the ages of 9 and 11 years old.

Button choices. Button choices for the button based protocol were made by the children for a variety of reasons. Some children chose all of their buttons based on the same reasoning, and some children employed a variety of different reasons when choosing buttons for family members. Most children made button choices on associations, where the buttons they chose somehow reminded them of people. The associations may have reflected a favourite colour of a person, or a physical attribute such as freckles. There may have been an association with a personality or character attribute, such as kindness or even laziness. Buttons may have reminded children of something people like or like to do such as sewing or sailing. Associations were also used for pets, as children often chose cat and dog buttons for their pets. Feelings were also a factor in button choices, however, some of the button choices were based on overt feelings, while other were based on subconscious feelings.

Some children used colour and colour associations that reminded them of their family members, when picking out buttons. Child 6, an eight-year-old female, chose all of her buttons based on colours:

C: "...I chose that one because my mom has brown hair and it's kind of gold and she likes the colour gold...and my dad likes wearing grey a lot, so I chose that colour...I chose this one for my brother because he has dark, dark, dark, dark

brown hair and likes the colour brown...I chose this one for my cat because she has some grey on her but I didn't want to choose the same one for my cat as my dad and I chose this one for my dog because he has some gold on his coat...I chose this one for me because I like pearl colours a lot".

Child 8, a nine-year-old female chose a red star for her mother and said:

"...this would be my mom because she likes red, and she always looks up at the stars a lot, and she likes stars a lot because they are mostly bright".

Child 29, a nine-year-old female chose a red circular button for her dad, saying:

"And I chose this one for my dad because red is one of his favourite colours".

Likes and dislikes were another reason children gave for button choices. Many of the children were aware of what their family members liked, and correspondingly, made their button choices based on those likes. Child 1, an eight-year-old male, chose a yellow sun shaped button for his father:

"Mm, this one 'cause my dad likes working in the sun".

Child 5, a nine-year-old male, chose a button that looks like black thread because:

"...well, he likes to knit stuff, my dad".

Child U, an eight-year-old male, chose a black star for his father and a black skull for himself, saying:

"This one is my dad, because it's his favourite colour, it's black, and dark is um, a man's colour...I chose this as me, because I like scary stuff, and scary faces"

Child AP, an eleven-year-old male, also chose his buttons based on what he felt the people in his family liked:

“I picked this because [my sister] likes makeup...I chose this for my dad, because he likes hiking...because [mom] likes apples a lot...I chose this for [my stepsister], because she likes teddy-bears and stuffed animals.

Many of the children picked buttons for their family members based on physical attributes, which can be seen in the following examples. Child Q, a nine-year-old female, chose her buttons based on sizes;

“...this one is my dad because he is the tallest and the biggest, and this one’s my mom cause she’s um, about * size, and my sister is the same size as my mom, and that’s me because I’m the smallest”.

Child 18, a seven-year-old male, chose buttons based on the skin colour of his family members. He chose all non target buttons and when asked what made him chose each button he said:

“Because I wanted to do the skin colour...because my dad’s white, I’m black, my sister’s black, my brother’s black and my mom’s black”.

Child AV, an eleven-year-old male chose a polka dot bear for his uncle’s girlfriend, because:

C: “She’s spotty”

R: “She’s spotty?, oh ok”

C: “Well, she does have some freckles”.

Many of the chosen buttons represented aspects of family members personality or character traits. These aspects appeared to stand out to the children enough to be a main reason for choosing certain buttons, whether positive, negative, or even humorous from an adult’s perspective. Child AE, a ten-year-old female, chose a white heart for her mother and a clock for her father because:

“She’s like the mom I’ve had all my life and white is a sign of purity for me, and she’s pure and an example of peace to me”.

“Dad always likes to be on time. If he’s late, he fusses a lot”.

Child 14, a nine-year-old male chose a black star for his father saying:

“[My] dad, ‘cause I think he’s a star’ cause he always spoils us and everything and he’s always nice”.

Child AL, a ten-year-old male, chose a non-target grey button for his stepsister:

“...because she, * I do her homework, like, Megan doesn’t, is, she’s sometimes kind of lazy...and she, um, she um, doesn’t get her, like she doesn’t do stuff that people want her to do sometimes”.

Child A0, a nine-year-old female, chose a gold coloured button with an anchor on it, saying:

“...my stepdad, the um, anchor, because it sits in the water and he likes to sit a lot”.

Child AS, an eleven-year-old female, chose a big round red button for her brother and a clock for her stepbrother:

“[A red] button for my brother, cause he’s always mad...I picked the red button because fire **, cause he’s always mad at me and [my brother]”.

“... I never see Shawn, I want him to spend more time with us...but he never does”.

Children also used a variety of other attributes and associations when choosing their buttons for various family members. Many of them can be considered interesting and quite thought provoking. Child AD, an eleven-year-old male, chose a gold button

with a six-sided star for his father because his father was Jewish. Child AU, a seven-year-old male, chose a black skull button for his father, because his father scared him:

R: "Ok, here's your dad"

C: "Know why?"

R: "Why?"

C: "He scares me a lot"

R: "He scares you a lot?"

C: "Ya"

R: "How come?"

C: "it's like, it's like, when he brings [my brother] home, he told him to hide, and you know what he putted, he put *, like ahhhh (child screams), he made him scare me"

R: "ohhh"

C: "scare me with my brother".

This child also chose a stop sign button for his half brother, because his brother always told him to stop doing things. Child W, a nine-year-old male chose a stop sign for his little brother, saying:

"...this one's for like um, my little brother, cause he's young, he yells out "stop" a lot, and um, so he kind of does bad things, not always, but sometimes he does".

Child H, a nine-year-old male, chose a red star for his mom:

"...and that one is my mom, she's my friend, she's my best friend, she's a star".

Feelings. The FRBS represented the feelings of family members towards each other, both in button choices and button arrangements. Child 25, a ten-year-old female,

placed her mother, a black star, completely separate from the rest of the family. The researcher questioned the child about this, and the child responded:

“Cause like, remember I was little, and every time mom and dad would fight I would cry, and also like just before they broke up mom pulled a knife on dad because she was pregnant, and um, I thought she was gonna like, kill dad or something and it really freaked me out, so I did something good. I called the cops and like seven or eight of them came”.

This child lives with her father, and her siblings live with her mother, but her buttons are arranged based on feelings rather than who lives with whom. In this case, the buttons and arrangement represented the child’s memories and feelings, providing important and useful information to the researcher. Child 28, a nine-year-old female from an intact family, chose plain non target buttons for her brothers and told the researcher:

“...I took two plain ones for my brothers, cause I don’t really like my brothers, cause they’re mean to me”.

Child AO, a nine-year-old female, chose a sun type button for her father, saying:

“...my dad as the sun because when I see him I get really happy and it makes me, um, think of happy things, like the sun”.

While some children may consciously be aware of their feelings towards family members, some children may have a more difficult time understanding this, as is the case for Child 29, a nine-year-old female. This child originally left out her stepsiblings, but when asked to include any family members who were missing, she chose all black buttons for her stepsiblings. While her responses to what made her choose those buttons were neutral, the black colours indicated negative feelings towards those 3 stepsiblings.

Siblings and FACES III family types. There were 13 pairs of siblings in the study, as well as 2 sets of 3 siblings, for a total of 15 sibling groups. Only one pair of siblings actually had matching family types on FACES III for Children.

In conclusion, there was partial support for the hypotheses. Post hoc analyses revealed useful information, such as who children considered to be family through choices and omissions. While children made button choices for a variety of reasons based mostly on associations, children revealed feelings about family members by descriptions of button choices and by placement of buttons.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter will examine the results found in the previous chapter, as well as possible explanations and interpretations of the results. It will consider the limitations of the study and areas for future research with the FRBS. As well, this chapter will explore recommendation for the FRBS and implications for counselling.

In this study of 28 children from stepfamilies and 32 children from intact families, there were varying results. Children of stepfamilies chose larger numbers of buttons than children of intact families, however, they did not add more pets and extended family members than children of intact families. Children of stepfamilies chose larger numbers of white buttons and primary coloured buttons than children of intact families, but there were no significant differences between the children of the two family groups for choosing gold coloured buttons. There were no significant differences between the two family groups for choosing dark, abstract and dark abstract buttons. There were also no significant differences between the two family groups on FACES III levels of cohesion and adaptability, as well as FACES III family types. Independent raters were able to discriminate between children of the two family groups looking at FRBS arrangement pictures, pictures and FACES III scores, and pictures, FACES III scores and transcripts of data collection with the children. Overall, there was partial support for the hypotheses, and the FRBS did show some discrimination between the two family groups.

In the post hoc analyses, buttons patterns portray relationships. Distant or set apart button placements and missing buttons represent broken relationships or relationships with difficulties. Close button placements represent close relationships, especially biological relationships in a stepfamily. Button choices are often the result of associations, often based on favourite colours, likes, physical attributes, personality

attributes, other attributes and associations, and feelings. Out of 15 sets of siblings from both intact and stepfamilies, only one sibling set from an intact family had a matching FACES III family type.

Interpretations of the Results

Who children considered to be family. Children considered different people as family members, and included or left out people as they felt was appropriate to signify who was family to them. Most children chose nuclear and biological family members, although they did chose stepfamily members and extended family members discriminately. Stepfamily children included more people than intact family children did. Logistically, it makes sense that stepfamily children would choose more buttons to represent those they considered to be family. In a stepfamily, two families meld together, which can make them twice the size of intact families. There can be stepsiblings, stepparents and half-siblings. Step and half relationships contribute to large families, which in turn would lead stepfamily children to choose more buttons. However, considering that stepfamily children chose more people as family members, they were significantly more likely to omit a family member. There appears to be a relationship between whom children consider or not consider to be family, and how the children feel about those family members. Omissions will be further discussed.

It was surprising to find that most of the children, even the youngest ones, knew exactly who all the stepsiblings, half-siblings and stepparents were, as well as their names and their ages. This was the case even though they sometimes hardly knew these family members. They were able to keep better track of who was who in the family than the researcher was. This shows that children realise more and pick up more than we think

they do. However, while the children know who is who, because there can be so many people, it does create complexity to the idea of family and the roles everyone plays.

Considering how big a stepfamily can be and the clarity the children had about stepfamily members and extended family members, it was surprising that the children did not add in extended family members as expected. New parental partnerships and many extended family relationships, both step and biological, could make stepfamilies confusing to children. Not in the sense of “who is who”, but rather, who is their family. Children can be exposed to as many as 6 sets of grandparents because of step relationships, not counting all the aunts, uncles and cousins. Appendix M, a genogram of Child AO, a nine-year-old female, shows how complicated and extensive stepfamilies can be and extended family members are not even included in the genogram. Because there are already so many members in the stepfamily, children may not consider extended biological or stepfamily family members such as grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles to be family, and they therefore were not included. It could also mean many buttons to choose, and children may find it easier to include a smaller circle of whom they consider family, or who they like. While children may consider extended family members of their step relationships as close, they may see these people only as part of their stepfamily’s relationships, not theirs.

It was believed that children from stepfamilies would be more likely to add in pets because of problematic and broken family relationships, and that these children would seek affinity with pets to fill emotional and relationship needs with a safe and comforting furry friend. Animals can be a consistent factor in a world of change and upheaval, and provide friendship and comfort when adults and other family members cannot. Pets were possibly not included as expected because stepfamily children may have less access to

pets. They may have been given away in the process of separation, divorce, and then remarriage of parents. With many more people in a stepfamily, parents may be unwilling to have pets in their already large and busy family. It may also be that children of intact families have more stable households, and therefore pets would be part of this stability and considered as family members more often than stepfamily children who may go back and forth between homes. As with extended family members, children may want to include a smaller circle of who they consider to be family.

Perceptions of feelings and relationships. Children were able to portray through the button arrangements their perceptions of relationships in the family, and how other family members felt towards one another. Buttons placed close together showed togetherness and closeness in relationships, while buttons that were placed apart showed conflict and separateness in relationships. Not only did the children arrange the buttons in a close or distant pattern, most of the time they were able to verbally convey to the researcher the closeness or distance of the relationships.

This was noticeable in the arrangements of intact family children who placed their parents apart. When children placed parents apart, it was usually because one parent strongly identified with one child in the family, and was next to that child. The children noted how the parent felt connected to the child, and some even noted that their parents liked that particular child more than they liked the others. There may be underlying conflict in the marriage, and parents may have unhealthily identified with their children. The parents may also simply have favourites or strong attachments with some of their children, and may not even be aware of how obvious it is to the other children. Perceptions and feelings were also noticeable in how stepfamily children placed their parents. The majority of stepchildren placed their biological parents apart, with the

parents often next to their current partner if they had one. The stepchildren were aware of the broken as well as close relationships, and were able to display these relationships through the button pattern arrangement.

Children also displayed their perceptions and feelings by choosing to leave out certain family members. While only one intact family child left out a family member, thirteen stepfamily children left out biological and stepfamily members. When children left out biological parents, it was the parent that they did not live with even though they had regular contact with them. Also of interest was that none of the four stepchildren who lived equal amounts of time at both parents omitted a biological parent. While these stepchildren may perceive a togetherness and unity in family even though they live in two households, the stepchildren who spend most of their time in one household may perceive fractures and disunity in the relationships. The children may no longer feel that the absent parent is a part of the family, or a parent figure, especially if the current household parent is with another partner. The children may feel abandoned, unwanted, unloved, angry, all towards the parent who is not living in their household anymore. Some parents who do not live with their children after parental separation do not spend time with their children, whether in quality or quantity. This has a direct effect on the children, and how they perceive their parents and parental relationships. This is an important factor for non-resident parents to note and be aware of. They need to see how important it is to spend time on their relationships so the children know they are loved, cared for, and are still part of the family even though they may no longer live together.

Children's perceptions and feelings towards stepfamily members are found through inclusions or omissions of buttons. When children included stepfamily members, buttons that were chosen for step relationships varied with some being

associated with more positive feelings and some being associated with more negative feelings. The best indication of negative perceptions and feelings were through omissions. In fact, some stepfamily children left out stepparents and stepsiblings even though they had regular contact with them or even lived with them. Conflict is inevitable in any family, even between biological members. Stepfamilies can be created without the consent of children and they may experience a sense of powerlessness and lack of control. There may also be issues of step members vying for affection and relationships with biological members in the stepfamily. This can result in feelings of resentment, anger, frustration, anxiety and depression. Unfortunately, these feelings may continue into their stepfamily relationships, especially if other step members feel the same way or are difficult to get along with

Colour choices. Primary, white and gold coloured buttons are associated with positive feelings, while dark, abstract and dark and abstract button choices are associated with negative feelings. Therefore, it was surprising that stepfamily children chose more primary and white coloured buttons than intact family children, and that stepfamily children did not choose more of these types of buttons than children did from intact families. Children have different kinds of relationships and feelings towards family members, whether from intact or other kinds of families. Perhaps children from stepfamilies have more people to make relationships with, and are able to pick and choose those relationships easier than in an intact family, which may result in more satisfying relationships. Because it appears as though children left out family members when there were perceptions of conflict and brokenness in the relationships, it may be that the family members included in children's button sorts were perceived in a more positive light, which was portrayed through the button colour choices. All relationships

have some conflict, especially when people live together, and stepfamily relationships may not be as negative and difficult as portrayed by the media, television shows and regular gossip.

While there may not have been significant differences in all colour choices between the two family groups, colour did have an impact at an individual level. Children chose colours at conscious and unconscious levels. At conscious levels, children chose coloured buttons based on associations. They chose buttons that represented skin colour, hair colour, colours of clothing, as well as favourite colours of family members. Some coloured buttons overtly symbolized things, such as the child who chose a yellow coloured button that looked like the sun because her father liked working in the sun, the child who chose a white button for her mom because white symbolized purity and peace and the child who chose a red button for her brother because he was often angry. In more unconscious ways, children picked coloured buttons to represent feelings and perceptions at a deeper level. This is evident in the child who chose a black coloured button for her mother and shared how her mother threatened her father with a knife and how the child had to phone the police. Another child chose a black button that had a thread pattern. It is a button that children do not often choose, and the button choice was based solely on a hobby, that his father liked to knit. Another child chose all black buttons for her stepsiblings, yet gave neutral responses as to why she chose the buttons. These black buttons could represent hidden conflict, negative experiences, and negative feelings and perceptions on the part of the child. There were many button colour choices made by the children that symbolized feelings towards family members, whether black, white, gold or primary coloured.

Why children chose buttons. Children chose button for family members based on a variety of factors, most often through associations such as likes, colours, physical attributes, personality attributes, other attributes and associations, as well as feelings. As previously discussed, children chose colours to represent family members in some way, representing how the children felt about these members. Children chose buttons to represent what family members liked, such as items, hobbies, collectables, activities and so on. Children chose buttons based on physical attributes of members, including such things as size, skin colour, hair colour, gender, and freckles. Children also based their button choices on various attributes and associations, such as personal quirks, habits, types of activities they engaged in, behaviours and beliefs. Although children chose buttons based on a variety of reasons, the button choices overall appeared to represent how they perceived their family members, and how they felt towards them. Some children let the researcher directly know about their feelings, and that they liked or did not like certain people. Some children told of negative or difficult situations involving certain family members, and chose buttons to represent those experiences and feelings. Some of the buttons indirectly represented perceptions and feelings.

FACES III for children: adaptability, cohesion and family types. It was theorised that there would be greater cohesion and adaptability on FACES III for intact families than stepfamilies, and that there would be differences between the two groups on FACES III family types. However, there were no significant differences between the two family groups. While some of the stepchildren mainly resided with one biological parent and visited the other biological parent on occasion, some of the stepchildren spent significant or equal amounts of time at both residences. This made it difficult for the children to answer the questions of FACES III for Children because each family had different rules,

roles, ways of doing things, and running the household. The children would try to consider both households when answering the questions, or they would just choose one household and ignore the other. Because some children may not have accurately portrayed what was happening in the family because of a left out household or combined households, this may explain why there were no significant differences in family types between stepfamilies and intact families.

Another possibility is that stepfamilies simply may do better with cohesion and adaptability than expected. As cohesion is how much family members separate or connect to each other, stepfamilies may have to work harder at cohesion in order to make sure their family functions in a reasonable way, both with the daily running of the household and with relationships. As adaptability is how flexible the family is and how they are able to change, it may make sense that families who have gone through separation and then remarriage have learned to adapt and be flexible in their new family situation. Families who have remained intact may have been cohesive and adaptable enough to avoid separation and remarriage in the first place.

The stepfamily cycle and the FRBS. The Stepfamily Cycle by Patricia Papernow (1998) is a comprehensive model for stepfamilies. It elaborates on and gives great detail about stages and stepfamily types. It reveals what it is like within a stepfamily, the experiences that members go through, and how to resolve some of the conflicts and issues that they face. The Stepfamily Cycle is a valuable tool for anyone working with stepfamilies. When using the FRBS, administrators can consider the Stepfamily Cycle. Button arrangements may reveal where a stepfamily is within the stages. For example, when stepfamilies are in the earlier stages, children's button patterns may show separateness of step and biological relationships. In the later stages of the Cycle, children

may arrange their patterns into a more cohesive whole, combining step and biological relationships together. Button choices may show the same, with children from families in the earlier stages picking out buttons that show conflict and painful emotions in the relationships because of anxiety, unrealistic expectations and disappointment. Button choices made when families are in later stages may reflect better communication and greater intimacy. The FRBS may also reveal information about the type of family in the Stepfamily Cycle that children belong to.

Limitations of the Study

As previously noted, children of stepfamilies chose more buttons than children of intact families. Because stepfamily children choose larger amounts of buttons, this could have an effect on other button choices and therefore the results, creating a confound. If stepfamily children choose more buttons overall than children from other family types, it could effect the number of coloured buttons, abstract or concrete buttons and plain non-target buttons chosen. It could also effect how many buttons children choose for extended family members and pets. This confound could effect the overall results of this and other studies using the FRBS, and should be taken into consideration when evaluating the results.

Many children who chose larger numbers of buttons to represent their family became confused as to which person was which button. The children would try to remember, and if they did not remember, some would make a button description fit a person that they did not originally choose for a particular button. Even after the researcher tried to take this factor into consideration, and kept track of members for children, they still found it difficult to give reasons as to why they chose each button. This produced poor results of the children who chose many members.

Some of the children came from stepfamilies that had two biological parents and half-siblings. These children were born into the family after the stepfamily was established. Because of this, they would have a different experience of family than children who were present at the formation of the stepfamily. These children may not have experienced the same kinds of loss and change that their half-siblings and other stepchildren might, and their perceptions of family would be expressed differently in the FRBS.

While FACES III for Children is a worthwhile assessment to use when working with children and their families, there was some difficulty using this assessment during the study. Some of the younger children found the wording of the questions difficult to understand, and would often ask the researcher to repeat the questions. The researcher used a visual aid with the children when they were answering the questions, so it was easier for them to respond. Each of the five answers had a picture of buttons underneath them to show how often the activity or dynamic they were being questioned about, occurred. For example, the answer “almost always” had 5 buttons, the answer “sometimes” had 3 buttons and “almost never” had 1 button. The children could answer using the words, or could point to the visual representation of the answer. Even with the visual aid, children still found it difficult to answer the questions. They found the Likert type answers difficult, especially with opposing scale answers. This caused confusion for both the younger and older children, and sometimes the children did not know how to answer the questions.

The other difficulty that occurred with FACES III has previously been mentioned. Stepfamily children are regularly exposed to more than one household, which made it difficult for children to answer the questions. Some children reported what was

happening only in one household and some combined more than one household. It is believed that the discrepancy in the answer of the FACES III assessment caused inaccurate results in the study. It would have been beneficial to do a separate FACES III assessment for each family, especially if the children spent significant amounts of time with both families. This could also explain why independent rater agreement dropped when the FRBS pictures and FACES III results were compared together for discrimination between the two family groups.

This study did not take into consideration ethnicity and the effects it has on family. Most of the children were of Caucasian descent, and came from middle class backgrounds. One child came from a family that had a black parent and a white parent, another child came from an Asian family, and three children came from East Indian families. These children make up a very small percentage of the sample population, and it would be worthwhile to have larger amounts of children from various cultures to examine how families of varying ethnic backgrounds affect children's perception of family.

Recommendations for FRBS

There are some noteworthy areas to consider for the future development of the FRBS. The buttons of the FRBS are relatively all the same size. Some children tried to find buttons that were of different sizes to represent family members, but had a difficult time doing so. Yau (1989) included different sized buttons, and found the children did use size to represent family members. It may be worthwhile to explore this, as different sizes can represent people with power and authority, those without it, and if there is a problem with power and power displacement in the family.

The display of the FRBS buttons is a concern. Currently, the buttons are in a tin, and are then poured out onto a tray with the buttons falling randomly. While this in itself may not be a problem, there are many non-target buttons mixed in with the target buttons, which makes it difficult for the children to see the target buttons. Some children did not feel comfortable looking through all the buttons, even when prompted to do so by the researcher. Because of this, it is very possible that the children would have picked different buttons to better represent their family members but did not do so because they could not see all the target buttons available. The researcher found that as children picked buttons amongst all the non-target buttons, they would sometimes find buttons that they liked better for a person that had already been chosen for, and would exchange the old button for a new button. This also created a challenge because stepchildren can pick a large amount of buttons, and if they changed their minds several times, it became very confusing to them which button represented which person. The confusion occurred even though the researcher kept track of which button represented which family member. The switching that occurred as children discovered out of sight buttons on the tray, interrupted the flow of the process. Therefore, because of the large amount of non-target buttons, the way both target and non-target buttons are randomly displayed in the tin and in the tray once they are poured out, and because children rarely choose non-target buttons, it is recommended that the buttons be displayed in a different manner. During her research, Yau (1989) displayed the buttons on a board so the children could easily see and then choose which buttons they wanted for their family members. This allows children to quickly scan all the buttons available to them and to choose their buttons with ease. It also makes the process simple and easy, and allows the projective process to occur without delays, changes, confusion or misunderstanding. Displaying the buttons would

make the buttons easily visible and accessible, and would be extremely beneficial to this assessment.

During the study, there were also some concerns as to the administration of the FRBS. The children are asked to pick a button for each person they consider to be family. They then put the buttons on a piece of paper and named who each button was and what made them choose that button. While this may work for children who do not include many family members, it does not work for most stepchildren or children who like to include numerous extended family members. Some children chose so many buttons, that they had no possible way to keep track of who each button was, as their memory and cognitive skills are not great enough at this stage of their development. This created a great deal of confusion and frustration for some of the children. It appeared as though they would try to remember who each button was, and would just randomly pick someone and then make the button description fit. It was very disruptive to the assessment process. A recommendation is that the FRBS administration be changed in this area. Children can be asked to pick a button for each member of their family, and as they pick the buttons, the assessor can write down who each button is so the assessor can prompt children if they need help remembering who each button represents. It would also be very helpful for the children to state what made them choose each button as they are chosen, so the children do not have to try and remember after choosing many buttons.

Another difficulty for many of the children occurred when they were asked to “place members on the piece of paper that tells me how they feel about each other”. This statement was confusing to many of the children. Some children just sat and stared at the buttons and piece of paper until they were prompted by the researcher. Many children told the researcher that they did not understand what the researcher meant or was asking

them to do. It was very difficult to explain what this task of the FRBS was, without suggesting to the children what to do, as suggesting could affect the assessment outcome.

Before asking the children to do this task, there is a statement of how people have different kinds of relationships. This also seemed to confuse the children. It is recommended that this section of the FRBS be reworded, to make it less confusing so children of younger ages can understand as well. It would also be beneficial to list some alternate ways of explaining the task for children who do not understand the first time, so the researcher is not contaminating the task in any way by making inappropriate suggestions as to what is to be done. It may also be helpful for the administration protocol to be worded differently for primary and elementary age groups.

While knowing who children consider to be family is important, it is very important to know who is missing from the family. Assessors are to note who is missing from the FRBS, but there is no standardized way of obtaining this information. The assessor could ask the children at a later time, or could ask parents or guardians, but this information may not always be easy to obtain. It would be helpful to ask the children to pick buttons for left out people, and then add them to the arrangement. Thiessen (2002) used this method, and asked the children if anybody was missing. If there was, the children picked buttons for those people, and then put them into the arrangement. Adding this dimension to the FRBS would provide even more insight into the child's perceptions and feelings of family members, family dynamics and family relationships.

Implications for Counselling

The FRBS offers many advantages to both counsellors and children. For counsellors, the FRBS is moderately priced, easy to transport and easy to use. Those who are beginners or experts in the areas of assessment administration and therapy can use it.

It is simple, easy to administer, and easy to examine the results yet it provides a great deal of information. Use, support and further research of the FRBS will implement local support and encouragement of professionals in Canada, especially in this American dominated field. As well, the FRBS is and will continue to be based on norms in the local community, rather than on the norms of other countries and cultures.

The FRBS is a valuable tool for working with children as there are limited assessments for children and their families from children's point of views. It is a fun activity that children often enjoy, and is a good starting point for the therapeutic relationship. Using the FRBS can provide a task that allows children to get to know their counsellors, to feel more comfortable in their new therapy surroundings, and to build rapport. It allows counsellors to know how and where to begin working with children, as the FRBS provides some basic background information

The FRBS can help children to express in a projective way what is occurring in the home environment, and that expression gives counsellors access to what children feel, experience and perceive. Because children exist within the context of their families, they learn from their families and the relationships that occur within them. Families help shape who children become, and contribute to their development in a variety of ways including conflict solving, relationship building, roles, and how they see life and the outside world in general. Families can contribute directly or indirectly to children's problems, often by not recognizing what children need or by not knowing how to help them. Parents may lack the knowledge that relationships that are void of intimacy, comfort and love, adversely affect their children. Because of this, it is helpful for counsellors to be aware of the environment children live in, and the FRBS can provide this information.

The FRBS can be helpful when working with families. The FRBS can provide valuable information about a family in general, its dynamics, problems, strengths and even the wishes of the members. Counsellors can administer the FRBS to the children or to the whole family when doing family therapy. Not only can the FRBS show what the family is currently like and experiencing, it can also be used to show what members would like to see happen and what they want their family to be like. The gathered information can be helpful in setting goals for the family counselling process.

The FRBS can be very versatile. It can be useful in a variety of settings, such as counselling offices, schools, hospitals, clinics and so on. As well as being used in a variety of settings individually with children and with families, it can be used in groups. This could include therapeutic groups as well as school, sports and club groups. The FRBS can overtly reveal conflict, frustration and negative feelings between members, as well as areas of strength, bonding and positive feelings. The information from the FRBS can be shared within the group and used to explore feelings that are not directly expressed, to promote greater understanding of the members individually and within the group, and to better improve group dynamics and functioning.

Counsellors must be aware that the FRBS button choices and arrangements can reveal things on several levels. When children choose buttons and then arrange the buttons to show how family members feel about each other, they base choices and arrangements on a variety of reasons. Most of the family arrangements reveal actual feelings that occur between family members, whether negative or positive. However, some show wishes of what the children want, and want to see happen. As well as arrangements, button choices for family members can also reveal what the child wishes

for. Counsellors should carefully note the wishes of the children, and should differentiate wishes from actual family dynamics and interactions.

Future Research

The FRBS is a relatively new assessment tool with very little research done to date, therefore, there are many areas that can be pursued for future research. An area that deserves further research would be gender differences, and how girls and boys perceive family, family members, dynamics and family relationships differently. This could include how girls and boys choose buttons, what types of buttons they choose and how they make their arrangements. Girls and boys may place themselves differently in the arrangements and next to different people, as there may be differences in how girls and boys relate to and feel about various family members such as opposite and same gender parents. There may also be differences in perceptions of how other family members feel about them.

Another area to pursue in further research is birth order. Because family members often have various roles, children's birth orders may affect how they fit into and view their families. As in gender differences, birth order may affect how they feel about other, and how others feel about them. Children of different birth orders may perceive the family differently, and how they fit into that family.

Most of the children in this study were from what would be considered normal families. There was no known violence or abuse that occurred within these families. Clinical families, those with children who have experienced neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and even sexual abuse, should be studied. The differences between clinical and normal families should also be compared, to see if there are significant differences in how children choose buttons, what made them choose their buttons and

how they arrange their buttons. This could be a fascinating study that reveals a great deal of information about how children perceive families that they have suffered in.

One group of family that has not yet been studied extensively but is rapidly growing, especially as same-sex marriages are now becoming more legally and socially accepted, are same-sex parent families. Same-sex parent families do not fit into the nuclear family cast, with a supposed mother and father figure. These parents have to adopt, use surrogate mothers, obtain sperm and egg donations, or have children by way of a previous dual sex marriage. They may use the same or different methods to have more than one child. All these factors, and having two parents of the same gender, may affect how children perceive their families.

Culture can greatly influence a family. Some cultures highly value community and collectivism, some value individualism. Some believe multigenerational living arrangements are beneficial while some do not. With evident cultural groups in the Lower Mainland of B.C. and Canada, such as Asian, Native, East Indian, African Canadian, and those from European decent, it is important to take into consideration and further investigate the differences in family of various ethnicity's, and children's experiences in these different types of families.

An area of interest would be to further develop the FRBS for use with whole families. While the FRBS is designed as an assessment for children and holds allure for that particular group of people, it could also be used for adults. It can be a fun and non-threatening activity for the whole family to participate. It is simple, yet can provide information even adults may not have been aware of. When combining the FRBS data of whole families, it could provide a very rich source of information for families to learn

about themselves, and for counsellors to use in the family counselling process. It would be a worthwhile pursuit to further investigate the use of the FRBS for whole families.

Conclusion

This study provided some useful information about stepfamilies, while increasing the validity of the Family Relations Button Sort. While the FRBS did reveal what children thought about their family members and family dynamics, there are some aspects of this projective technique that can be improved upon. There are also some areas to further research using the FRBS, such as gender differences, birth order differences, same sex and different sex parent differences, cultural differences, differences between clinical and normal families, and use with whole families. This quick, easy and moderately priced assessment is recommended for use with counsellors to build rapport, and to find out valuable information about children and their family environment, which will provide a starting point and overall plan for counselling with children.

Working with children is both a joy and a challenge. It is a joy to experience children's unique ways of looking at the world, it is a challenge when they may not be able to verbally express their insights. Understanding their inner world, their thoughts, desires, feelings, perceptions, wishes, struggles, dreams and hopes, is key to understanding and working with children. Understanding children's inner worlds within the context of their family is paramount. The relationships and happenings within a family have a significant impact on who children are and how they relate to those they come into contact with and society in general. The Family Relations Button Sort, as a projective technique, allows children's inner worlds to be expressed in a delightful and thoughtful manner. Common everyday objects, buttons, project onto a piece of paper

visual representations of what children's families, and their experiences within families are like. The buttons allow children to express those experiences, something children don't normally have a chance to do. Children are allowed to be children, they can express themselves through play, which is considered to be their language. Conflicts, peace, brokenness, intimacy, struggles, joys, admiration, dislike, they are all expressed through play and the buttons, portraying the experience of family for children. This portrayal gives the small voices of children their much deserved bigger voices.

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APPENDIX A: TARGET BUTTONS OF THE FRBS




APPENDIX B: VISUAL CUE CARD FOR FACES III FOR CHILDREN


1. Almost Never




2. Once In A While




3. Sometimes



4. Very Often



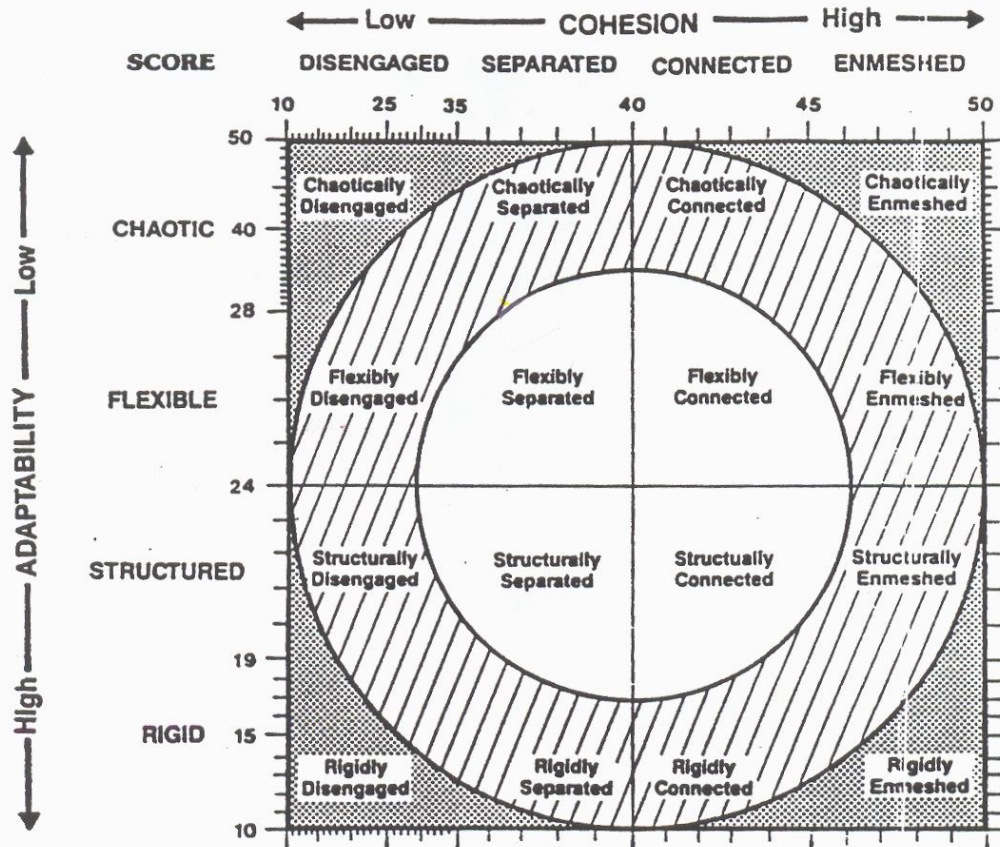
5. Almost Always



The visual cue cards are arranged vertically, each enclosed in a decorative border of colorful paper links. Each card features a frequency label at the top and a corresponding number of buttons in the center. The buttons are green with four holes and a black outline.

APPENDIX C: CIRCUMPLEX MODEL

CIRCUMPLEX MODEL OF MARITAL & FAMILY SYSTEMS



In plotting the couple or family into the Circumplex Model, mark the specific location that most accurately reflects the actual scores.

BALANCED
 MID-RANGE
 EXTREME

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

Gender: M F

Age:

Birth date:

Grade:

Parents: Married, divorced, re-married

Siblings: Names and Order of birth from oldest to youngest.
Please indicate whether the sibling is a biological or step sibling

Oldest: _____

Mini-genogram placement:

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT/AGENCIES

Study: The Family Relations Button Sort with Children from Divorced Families and with Children from Stepfamilies

Investigators: Carissma Nance Coelho, M.A. candidate, Dept. of Counselling Psychology (538-3353)
Shannon Thiessen, M.A. candidate, Dept. of Counselling Psychology (888-3054)
Trinity Western University

Supervisor: Dr. Joanne Crandall, Department of Counselling Psychology, Trinity Western University (524-2225)

Thank you for the opportunity to share this letter with you. We are two students from the Master of Arts Counselling Psychology program at Trinity Western University. Both of us are currently in our last semester of studies, and are now in the process of doing a joint study for our Theses. Our study will be done using the Family Relations Button Sort. This is a new assessment tool being developed here in the lower mainland by four Psychologists at the Therapeutic Tool Research Group, and is currently in the process of being trademarked. We are excited to be working with this group and their new assessment tool, as we believe the Family Relations Button Sort can be a fun and valuable tool to use when working with children and their families. The Family Relations Button Sort can measure family feelings towards each other and their relationships from the child's perspective, by the types of buttons they choose and how they organize the buttons in relationship to one another. It can provide valuable information to the therapists using it, showing family dynamics and relationships, and helping to make therapy more focused. It allows children in verbal and non-verbal ways to tell what their family life is like, giving them an active part in the therapeutic process.

We are going to be studying how children from divorced families and children from stepfamilies, as well as children from intact families, complete the Family Relations Button Sort. We are seeking permission from the School District to pursue our research with students grades 1 to 4. We will also seek teacher and parental permission. We wish to work with 90 children, 30 children who are currently from divorced families, 30 children who are currently from stepfamilies, and 30 children from intact families. We will need approximately 30 minutes with each child during the school day and we will need about three weeks to finish our data collection. For each child we will administer the Button Sort and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales for children, known as FACES III for children, which is a family assessment that asks basic questions about the family. The sessions will be audio taped (not videotaped) for study purposes. We will be the only ones to have access to these tapes and these tapes will be kept locked up during the study and destroyed at the end of the study. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times, and the parents may withdraw their children and the children may withdraw themselves at any time if they wish to do so. If there are any problems as a result of this study Dr. Joanne Crandall has offered to meet with the child and/or family to debrief the situation. The only potential risk associated with this research is the small possibility that in some children emotions such as anger or sadness may be elicited. All efforts will be made to help the child work through any negative feelings. Potential benefits for the children include gaining a greater awareness of their family situation, their feelings towards family members and their perspective of the family as a unit. Families can feel free to discuss the child's experience at home in order to gain an understanding of their child's views. Our study proposal has passed through and been approved by the Ethics Committee at Trinity Western University, to ensure that no child or person will be harmed in any way by our study.

If you are interested in letting the children from your school district/agency participate in this study, please call Cris at 538-3353. You can also contact our supervisor, Dr. Joanne Crandall, at 524-2225. We look forward to working with you in the near future.

Regards,

Cris (Carissma) Nance Coelho

Shannon Thiessen

APPENDIX F: LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR PRINCIPALS/TEACHERS

Study: The Family Relations Button Sort with Children from Divorced and Stepfamilies

Investigators: Carissma Nance Coelho, M.A. candidate, Dept. of Counselling Psychology (538-3353)
Shannon Thiessen, M.A. candidate, Dept. of Counselling Psychology (888-3054)
Trinity Western University

Supervisor: Dr. Joanne Crandall, Dept. of Counselling Psychology, Trinity Western University
(524-2225)

Thank you for the opportunity to share this letter with you. We are two students from the Master of Arts Counselling Psychology program at Trinity Western University. Both of us are currently in our last semester of studies, and are now in the process of doing a joint study for our Theses. Our study will be done using the Family Relations Button Sort, which is a new assessment tool being developed here in the lower mainland by four Psychologists at the Therapeutic Tool Research Group. We are excited to be working with this group and their new assessment tool, as we believe that the Family Relations Button Sort can be a fun and valuable tool to use when working with children and their families. The Family Relations Button Sort can measure family feelings towards each other and their relationships from the child's perspective, by the types of buttons they choose and how they organize the buttons in relationship to one another. It can provide valuable information to the therapists using it, showing family dynamics and relationships, and helping to make therapy more focused. It allows children in verbal and non-verbal ways to tell what their family life is like, giving them an active part in the therapeutic process. We are going to study how children from divorced families and children from stepfamilies complete the Family Relations Button Sort, as well as children from intact families. We are seeking permission from you to pursue our study with students in your classroom.

To be a part of this study, the children need to be in grades 1 to 4 and:

1. Currently from a divorced family
 - a) the custodial parent has not remarried
 - b) the custodial parent has been divorced for a year or more
- or 2. Currently from a stepfamily
 - a) the custodial parent has remarried or is living common-law
 - b) the stepfamily has existed for a year or more
- or 3. Currently from an intact family
 - a) the child's family has never experienced any kind of separation, divorce or remarriage

We will need approximately 30 minutes with each child, and wish to work with them during the school day. We may not see every child who has been given permission before the school year ends. The Family Relations Button Sort, as well the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales for children known as FACES III for children, will be administered. All sessions will be audio taped (not video taped). Confidentiality of the tapes and of the children will be maintained at all times. The tapes will be locked during the study, and destroyed after the study is finished. The parents may withdraw their children and the children may withdraw themselves at any time if they wish to do so. The only potential risk associated with this research is the small possibility that in some children emotions such as anger or sadness may be elicited. All efforts will be made to help the child work through any negative feelings. Potential benefits for the children include gaining a greater awareness of their family situation, their feelings towards family members and their perspective of the family as a unit. Families can feel free to discuss the child's experience at home in order to gain an understanding of their child's views.

If you know of any children in your classroom that fit one of the three categories, and are willing to allow them to participate during your class time, please call Cris at 538-3353. You can also contact our supervisor, Dr. Joanne Crandall, at 524-2225. We will then contact the children's parents for permission. Teachers who have children from their classroom participating in the study, will be entered into a draw for a \$50.00 dinner gift certificate to Charlie Don't Surf, along the beach in White Rock. We look forward to working with you.

Regards,

Cris (Carissma) Nance Coelho

Shannon Thiessen

APPENDIX G: AGENCY/PRINCIPALS/TEACHER
 PERMISSION SLIP FOR CHILDREN
 AND INFORMATION ON OBTAINING RESULTS FOR THE STUDY

Study: The Family Relations Button Sort with Children from Divorced and Stepfamilies

Investigators: Cris (Carissima) Nance Coelho, M.A. candidate,
 Department of Counselling Psychology (538-3353)
 Shannon Thiessen, M.A. candidate,
 Department of Counselling Psychology (888-3054)
 Trinity Western University

Supervisor: Dr. Joanne Crandall, Department of Counselling Psychology
 Trinity Western University (524-2225)

I, _____, have read and understand the description of the study, and I willingly allow the children attending this agency/organization to participate in the study on the Family Relations Button Sort done by Cris (Carissima) Nance Coelho and Shannon Thiessen. I understand permission will be obtained from the children’s parents, the children’s identity will be protected, only the researchers will have access to identifiable data, and that the children can choose not to participate at any time without consequence.

Signature _____ Date _____

I understand that in order to obtain results of this study, I must leave a mailing address or e-mail address below:

There will be a draw for a \$50.00 dinner gift certificate at Charlie Don’t Surf, along the beach in White Rock, for administrators giving permission for children attending their organization to be involved in the study. If you are interested in the draw, please leave your name and number.

 Name Phone Number

Also, we may be unable to see all of the children before school closes. If you do not mind being contacted during the summer months, this will allow us to contact your child.

Check any that apply:

- I can be contacted during the summer months
- I do not consent to the children’s participation in the study
- I do not wish to be entered into the draw
- I do not wish to be contacted during the summer months

APPENDIX H: LETTER OF RECRUITMENT FOR PARENTS

Study: The Family Relations Button Sort with Children from Divorced and Stepfamilies

Investigators: Carissma Nance Coelho, M.A. candidate, Dept. of Counselling Psychology (538-3353)
Shannon Thiessen, M.A. candidate, Department of Counselling Psychology (888-3054)
Trinity Western University

Supervisor: Dr. Joanne Crandall, Department of Counselling Psychology, Trinity Western University
(524-2225)

Thank you for the opportunity to share this letter with you. We are two students from the Master of Arts Counselling Psychology program at Trinity Western University. Both of us are in our last semester of school, and are now doing a study together for our Theses. We are doing our study on a new assessment, which is being made here in the Vancouver area, and is called the Family Relations Button Sort. It is a fun and valuable tool to use when working with children and their families, and can show how people feel about each other and the family relationships from a child's point of view. It can also help counsellors when they work with children and their families. We are looking for children to be a part of our study.

To be a part of this study, your child needs to be between grades 1 to 4, and :

1. Currently from a divorced family
 - a) the custodial parent has not remarried
 - b) the custodial parent has been divorced for a year or more

or

2. Currently from a stepfamily
 - a) the custodial parent has remarried or is living common-law
 - b) the stepfamily has existed for a year or more

or

3. Currently from an intact family
 - a) the child's family has never experienced any kind of separation, divorce, or remarriage

We will spend about 30 minutes with your child during the school day, and have already received permission from your child's teacher and from the School District. Your child will be asked to do the Family Relations Button Sort. We will also have them answer questions from another family assessment, called the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales for children, or FACES III for children. All the sessions will be audio taped (not video taped). The tapes will be kept private and locked, and will be destroyed at the end of the study. Your child's identity will be kept private at all times. You may take your child out of the study at any time, or your child may remove him or herself from the study at any time. We may be unable to see your child before the school year ends, however, if you would still like your child to participate in this study it is possible to do so during the summer months. If there are any problems as a result of this study, Dr. Joanne Crandall has agreed to meet with your child or with the family to debrief the situation. The only potential risk associated with this research is the small possibility that in some children emotions such as anger or sadness may be elicited. All efforts will be made to help the child work through any negative feelings. Potential benefits for your child include gaining a greater awareness of their family situation, their feelings towards family members and their perspective of the family as a unit. Families can feel free to discuss the child's experience at home in order to gain an understanding of their child's views. Our study has been approved by the Ethics Committee at Trinity Western University, to ensure that no child or person will be harmed in any way by our study.

If your child participates in the study, his or her name will be entered into a draw for a \$100.00 and \$50.00 gift certificate at Toys R Us. If you interested in letting your child participate, please call Cris at 538-3353. You can also contact our supervisor, Dr. Joanne Crandall, at 524-2225. We look forward to working with your child.

Regards,

Cris (Carissma) Nance Coelho

Shannon Thiessen

APPENDIX I: PARENT PERMISSION SLIP FOR CHILDREN
AND INFORMATION ON OBTAINING RESULTS FOR THE STUDY

Study: The Family Relations Button Sort with Children from Divorced and Stepfamilies

Investigators: Carissma Nance Coelho, M.A. candidate, Dept. of Counselling Psychology (538-3353)
Shannon Thiessen, M.A. candidate, Department of Counselling Psychology (888-3054)
Trinity Western University

Supervisor: Dr. Joanne Crandall, Department of Counselling Psychology, Trinity Western University
(524-2225)

I, _____, have read and understand the description of the study, and I willingly allow my child to participate in the study on the Family Relations Button Sort done by Cris (Carissma) Nance Coelho and Shannon Thiessen. I understand that my child's identity will be protected, and only the researchers will have access to identifiable data. I understand that my child can choose not to participate at any time without consequence.

Signature _____

Date _____ Phone _____

I understand that in order to obtain results of this study I must leave a mailing address or e-mail address below:

Also, we may be unable to see all of the children before school closes. If you do not mind being contacted during the summer months, contact information will allow us to reach your family.

Check any that apply:

I can be contacted during the summer months

I do not consent to my child's participation in the study

I do not wish to be entered into the draw

I do not wish to be contacted during the summer months

There will be a draw for a \$100.00 and a \$50.00 gift certificate to Toys R Us. If you would like your child to be entered into the draw, please leave you name and phone number below.

Name

Phone Number

APPENDIX K: INTER RATER SCORE SHEET
FOR THIRD JUDGEMENT

Rater Score Sheet C	
Child ID	Assessment with Picture, FACES & Transcript
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
17	
18	
20	
21	
25	
28	
29	
33	
35	
36	
37	
38	
A	
B	
C	

APPENDIX L CHILD FRBS BUTTON ARRANGMENT PICTURES



Child 1



Child 2



Child 3



Child 4



Child 5



Child 6



Child 7



Child 8



Child 9



Child 10



Child 11



Child 12



Child 13



Child 14



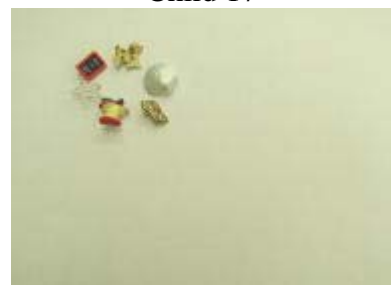
Child 15



Child 17



Child 18



Child 20



Child 21



Child 25



Child 28



Child 29



Child 33



Child 35



Child 36



Child 37



Child 38



Child A



Child B



Child C



Child D



Child F



Child G



Child H



Child I



Child K



Child M



Child N



Child O



Child P



Child Q



Child S



Child U



Child W



Child X



Child AD



Child AE



Child AJ



Child AK



Child AL



Child AM



Child AN



Child AO



Child AP



Child AQ



Child AR



Child AS



Child AT



Child AU



Child AV

APPENDIX M: GENOGRAM OF CHILD AO

