

PARENTAL GOALS FOR ADOLESCENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
INTRODUCTION	1
METHOD	28
Participants.....	28
Procedure	29
Measures	30
Analysis.....	33
RESULTS	36
Risk-Taking Goals	36
Parent-Child Relationship Goals.....	47
DISCUSSION.....	58
REFERENCES	69

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LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES	Page
I Mothers' thought towards goals for avoiding alcohol by Race	37
II Mothers' thought towards goals for avoiding alcohol by SES	37
III Mothers' thought towards goals for avoiding other risks by Race	38
IV Mothers' thought towards goals for avoiding other risks by SES	39
V Mothers' importance of goals for avoiding alcohol by Race.....	40
VI Mothers' importance of goals for avoiding alcohol by SES.....	40
VII Mothers' importance of goals for avoiding other risks by Race.....	41
VIII Mothers' importance of goals for avoiding other risks by SES.....	42
IX Mothers' responses to conflicting goal for risk-taking by Race	43
X Mothers' responses to conflicting goal for risk-taking by SES	43
XI Mothers' thought towards goals for close relationships by Race	47
XII Mothers' thought towards goals for close relationships by SES	48
XIII Mothers' thought towards goals for getting along well by Race	49
XIV Mothers' thought towards goals for getting along well by SES	49
XV Mothers' importance of goals for close relationships by Race.....	50
XVI Mothers' importance of goals for close relationships by SES	51
XVII Mothers' importance of goals for getting along well by Race.....	52
XVIII Mothers' importance of goals for getting along well by SES.....	52
XIX Mothers' responses to conflicting goal for parent-child relations by Race	53
XX Mothers' responses to conflicting goal for parent-child relations by SES	54

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	Page
I Pre-Screening Interview.....	74
II Informed Consent.....	76
III Interview Guide	79
IV Coding Dictionary.....	95

PARENTAL GOALS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Thesis under the direction of Christy M. Buchanan, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Parental goals reflect parents' desires for particular outcomes in their child's development. Parental goals might be one force that motivates parenting practices and shapes a child's development through adolescence (Chao, 1995; Eccles, 1992). For this reason and because there is lack of past research that has addressed this topic, this study was designed to examine parental goals for adolescents. Specifically, I examined mothers' short-term goals (i.e., goals for the adolescent period) in two domains especially relevant to adolescents: risk-taking and parent-child relationships. Thirty-six mothers of adolescents (range 11-18 years of age) from three ethnic groups (non-Hispanic White, African American, and Hispanic/Latino) participated. Within each ethnic group, mothers from three socioeconomic groups (less than \$40,000; between \$40,000 and \$80,000; greater than \$80,000) were represented. Data were collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as a small number of closed-ended scaled questions concerning the importance of specific goals. Descriptive information for scaled questions by ethnicity and economic status is provided. Qualitative analyses were used to extract themes concerning mothers' goals from the open-ended questions. Results suggest that there were both similarities and differences in mothers' goals for their adolescents in the domains of risk-taking and parent-adolescent relations. Recommendations for future research are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

When parents consider what they would like their child to become and what characteristics they would like them to possess, they are, implicitly or explicitly, creating goals for their children. Hastings and Grusec (1998) defined parenting goals as “outcomes that parents hope to achieve during interactions with their children” (p. 465). In this sense, parents’ goals represent what they believe is important for child development. According to expectancy-value theory (Eccles, 1992), parents’ goals in specific domains lead them to engage in parenting practices that in turn guide the child’s development towards the desired outcome. Chao (1995) believes that parents’ child rearing beliefs, including goals, “form an important psychological guide to action by way of motivational or intentional force” (p. 328). In other words, parents’ goals should guide their plans to influence their children to act or think in the way that parents desire. Thus, parental goals represent parents’ desires for their own child’s development, and these desires are one force motivating behaviors that they believe will help them attain those goals.

Parents have goals for many different domains of their children’s lives, such as academic achievement, personal relationships, and physical health. LeVine (1977) proposed that all parents have goals in three general areas: ensuring the child’s survival and health, developing the child’s self-reliance, and encouraging cultural values. The category of cultural values can, of course, subsume many different domains of behavior. Because the focus of the current study is goals held by parents of adolescents, this study explores parental goals in domains that are especially relevant to adolescent development such as risk-taking and parent-child relationships.

Adolescence can be a challenging time for parents because children are becoming more independent but are also still reliant on parental care and protection. It is also a time where children have new and different choices and opportunities, some of which carry heightened consequences for current and future well-being compared to childhood. Parents of adolescents might be uncertain of what they can or should expect their increasingly independent children to do, or of how much influence they wield. Yet, this period of development can potentially mark an important time for parents to exert influence before children become fully independent and responsible for the consequences of their actions. Through investigating what types of goals parents have for their adolescent children, I hope to shed light on what parents expect to accomplish during this potentially decisive period.

A relatively small number of studies have examined parental goals explicitly (e.g., Chao, 1995; Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Levine, 1977; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001; Tulviste et al., 2007) and even fewer examine the goals that parents endorse specifically for adolescent children (for exceptions, see Daddis & Smetana; Mounts & Kim, 2009; Smetana & Chuang, 2001). Furthermore, most studies address long-term goals, such as what parents want for their child's future, but not short-term goals, or goals for their child's more immediate behaviors. Thus, we know very little about parents' hopes, desires, or wishes for adolescents' behaviors or accomplishments during adolescence. The current study was designed to address this gap.

A common theme in the existing literature on parental goals is the importance of cultural background. Indeed, many studies have shown that parental goals and other beliefs are influenced by cultural background (e.g., Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001; Tulviste et al., 2007). It has also been proposed that socioeconomic status (SES) exerts influence on parental goals (Elder et al., 1995; Redding, 1997). Therefore, another aim

of this study is to investigate how parental goals for adolescents vary according to ethnicity and SES. This information will potentially provide a more comprehensive picture of parents' thinking about adolescence and might help to explain differences in parenting practices and child outcomes among these groups.

To provide a background for the study aims, I will first address the definition of “goals” based on existing literature that provides conceptual and empirical definitions. I will also distinguish between long-term and short-term goals. Next, I will review past research that has investigated parental goals for adolescent behavior in domains similar to those examined in the present study. I will then review how culture and SES may shape parental goals during adolescence. Lastly, I will discuss methodological approaches to assessing goals, and argue for the contributions of an open ended, qualitative, approach given the state of our knowledge about goals for adolescent children.

Defining Goals and Types of Goals

Among the studies that have addressed the issue of parental goals, the concept of goals has been studied under the guise of different labels (e.g., expectations). Here I will provide a definition of “goals” as it is applied in my study and describe how this definition relates to past conceptualizations. I will also distinguish between long-term and short-term goals.

In general, a goal is a type of belief that represents what people want or hope to accomplish. As mentioned earlier, Hastings and Grusec (1998) defined parenting goals as “outcomes that parents hope to achieve during interactions with their children” (p. 465). In the present study, “goal” is defined as something parents hope, wish, or desire for their child. In other words, goals as studied here represent developments, behaviors, or characteristics that parents see as important and would like to promote in their child.

In previous research, other terms have been used to define entities that are similar to the construct of goals that is used in this paper. For example, parental values and expectations have been studied previously as influences on parenting behaviors and child outcomes (e.g., Daddis & Smetana, 2005; Gill & Reynolds, 1999; Jose et al., 2000; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001), yet often these constructs are defined similarly to goals. In general, parental values for their children represent things that parents believe are important, such as having a certain religious faith (Holden & Edwards, 1989), and thus research on parents' values for children is relevant. In contrast, some parental expectations might reflect their goals whereas others may not. Parental expectations can represent what parents think their child will do naturally or what they think their child will do because that is what they intend to make sure their child will do. Parental expectations that reflect what the parent thinks their child will do naturally do not reflect goals because these do not necessarily reflect the parents' desire for future development or change. In fact, expectations in this sense can be negative and contrary to parental goals (e.g., a parent expects that a child will drop out of school despite parental hopes to the contrary). Parental expectations that reflect commitment on the parents' part to ensure certain developmental outcomes are similar to parental goals because there is a desired endpoint in mind toward which the parent is working. Goals, values, and expectations can be thought of as similar constructs when they are operationally defined as how much parents want certain things to happen, and try to ensure happen, for their children. Therefore, I will draw from literature that has measured expectations and values in this sense, as it is relevant to my investigation of parental goals.

Previous research has also examined different types of goals. Parents can have goals for the long term, such as how they want their children to be as adults, and goals for the short term, such as what characteristics they want their child to embody in the present

(e.g., Harackiewicz et al., 2000). Specifically, parents may have long term goals such as a desire that their child graduate from college or have a satisfying marriage.

Simultaneously, parents of adolescents may have short term goals for a child to avoid risk-taking behaviors such as using drugs. Most research on parental goals has focused on long term goals (e.g., Mansbach & Greenbaum, 1999; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001). However, parents' long term goals might be only weakly associated with actual parenting behaviors that are occurring during adolescence. Also, there might not be as much variability among parents' long term goals compared to their short term goals. For example, a parent might have goals for their child to be successful in the future but, more specifically, during adolescence a parent's goals might include doing well in school, being responsible, and being kind to others. In other words, a parent's goals for their child's present might be more focused and specific compared to their long term goals for their child's future. Parents' short term goals for their adolescents might thus have greater influence on parenting practices during adolescence. Therefore, this paper will focus on short term goals, or parents' desires for their adolescents' behavior and development during their teenage years.

In summary, I will review literature on parenting goals even when the construct measured has been called "values" or "expectations," because these findings may also reflect parental goals for their children. Additionally, parents may have different types of goals (i.e., long term versus short term) but this study will focus on mothers' short term goals in a variety of domains that are arguably relevant to the period of adolescence. In the following section, I review literature relevant to such goals.

Goals for Adolescents

This study addresses parental goals in two domains that are particularly important during adolescence: risk-taking behaviors and parent-child relationships. These domains

are markers of the storm and stress perspective of adolescence (Arnett, 1999). Although there is variability, adolescence is characterized by increases—compared to childhood—in risk-taking and parent-child conflict. Research has shown that parental expectations for such developments to occur during adolescence may indeed promote such developments in their children (Buchanan & Hughes, 2009; Madon et al., 2006). Yet, even if two parents recognize the possibility of increased risk-taking and parent-child conflict, parents can differ in their goals concerning such developments. For example, some parents might have the goal of preventing risk-taking altogether, whereas other parents might actually want their child to engage in some amount of risk-taking if they believe some risk-taking is healthy. Likewise, one parent's goal might be to survive what they believe to be an adolescent's inevitable distancing from parents, whereas another parent's goal might be to maintain a close, involved relationship despite the adolescent's growing independence.

Despite the prominence of storm and stress conceptualization of adolescence, and despite parental endorsement of storm and stress stereotypes (Buchanan & Holmbeck, 1998), little research relevant to goals for these domains exists. Yet parents' goals for adolescents' risk-taking and for parent-child conflict in particular might very well influence parenting practices that are ultimately relevant to these behaviors (Eccles, 1992).

Although not directly focused on a “storm and stress” domain, research that addresses parents' goals for the development of their child's autonomy is potentially relevant to parents' goals for both parent-child conflict and risk-taking. Research has demonstrated that parental goals for autonomy have changed dramatically over time with more parents desiring autonomy over obedience in their children from the 1920's to the 1980's (Alwin, 1988). Still, Arnett (1999) suggested that parent-child conflict increases

during adolescence as adolescents desire more independence than parents often desire their adolescents to have. How parents approach their adolescents' development of autonomy thus might reflect or influence their goals for their relationship with their child. For example, parents might allow their child's independence because they also have the goal of minimizing immediate conflict in the parent-child relationship. Conversely, parents might want to limit their adolescents' personal autonomy because they believe it is a way to maintain a close parent-child relationship. Additionally, some risk-taking might be driven by autonomy issues; thus, how parents handle autonomy needs and the balance of independence and supervision of adolescents could be relevant to goals regarding risk-taking. For instance, parents may want their child to be less autonomous because they think it will decrease the amount of risk-taking in which their child will engage. Alternatively, goals for autonomy might lessen goals to prevent risk-taking if risk-taking is seen as an inevitable result of the desired autonomy.

Research on goals for family obligations is also relevant to goals for parent-child relations and risk-taking. Most of the research on parents' beliefs about family obligation has been conducted from a cultural perspective, and cultural influences on goals will be discussed in more detail in a later section. For now it bears noting that parents vary in their emphasis on family obligation for adolescents (e.g., Chao, 1995; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999), and that a higher sense of obligation among adolescents is associated with more positive relationships with parents as well as increased motivation towards academics (Fuligni et al., 1999). These findings suggest that parents' goals for family relationships might be important influences on actual parent-child relationships during adolescence. Goals for family obligation and relationships might also relate to goals for adolescent risk-taking if adolescents with a stronger sense of obligation to their family

are at less risk for engaging in unhealthy behaviors that are typically associated with adolescence (e.g., experimenting with drugs; Arnett, 1999).

The limited existing literature (Alwin, 1988; Chao, 1995; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999) suggests that parents vary in their goals regarding autonomy and family obligations for their adolescent children. These goals might have relevance for goals regarding risk-taking and parent-child relationships. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to study parents' goals in these domains. However, it is immediately clear that such goals are likely to differ by culture and other contexts. Thus, in the next section I review literature on culture, socioeconomic status, and parent education as possible influences on parental goals for adolescents.

Influences on Parents' Goals

Culture. Phalet and Schonpflug (2010) suggest that parental goals are mechanisms for parents to transmit or pass down cultural values. Therefore, it makes sense to examine how parental goals differ by culture. "Culture is the set of values, beliefs, ways of thinking, rituals, and institutions of a group or population" (Brooks, 2008). In this study, groups were defined by ethnicity. Parents from different ethnic backgrounds are likely to have different goals for their adolescent children based on differing values and on differing perceptions of needs and threats faced by their children (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001).

General theory and findings about culture and parental goals and values. The transmission of cultural values between parents and children has been studied extensively and various researchers have developed theories of how this transmission occurs. For example, Greenfield et al. (2003) proposed that parents' values for the development of their children are derived from parents' ethnotheories of development: "a system of beliefs and ideas concerning the nature of the ideal child and socialization practices

necessary to achieve this ideal” (p. 464). Ethnotheories generate developmental goals that allow parents to socialize their children towards their cultural values. Rosenthal and Roer-Strier (2001) suggested a concept similar to ethnotheories; they theorized that parents use the image of an “adaptive adult” (p. 20) to guide their socialization goals. Parents’ socialization goals are aimed at instilling the characteristics that are valued and perhaps necessary in a particular culture. As Keller et al. (2006) asserted: “Cultural models of the self provide essential frameworks for shaping socialization goals and parental ideas about what constitutes effective child rearing” (p. 156). Thus, differences between cultures lead to different value systems, which result in differences in child rearing goals. It is probable that parents’ desires to instill cultural values in their children are heightened during adolescence, as their children are on the verge of becoming adults. Therefore, it is important to examine how parental goals during adolescence might differ by culture or ethnicity, as a result of different values, needs, and threats.

Past research has focused on cultural models of independence and interdependence to understand how parents’ cultural values influence the way they parent their children. Countries that endorse these models are commonly labeled as individualistic or collectivistic, respectively (e.g., Pearson & Rao, 2003). For example, many Asian and African cultures have been categorized as collectivist because their members value social interconnectedness and conformity. European and American societies, in contrast, have been categorized as individualistic because their members prioritize individuation and self reliance (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Phalet and Schonpflug (2010) suggest that collectivistic and individualistic values influence parents’ goals such that “parents in predominantly collectivistic countries (e.g., Turkey or Singapore) tend to stress conformity goals such as obedience or respect, whereas parents in individualistic countries (e.g., Germany and the United States) stress autonomy goals

such as agency or independent thinking” (p. 188). Individualist and collectivist cultures have been said to endorse these values because they are adaptive to the surrounding environment:

“Particular economic and environmental conditions create different social structures that favor different developmental pathways. The pathways therefore arise as adaptations to these physical and economic conditions. Thus, the interdependent pathway appears to be an adaptive response to small face-to-face communities and a subsistence economy; these communities value tradition and therefore change slowly. The independent pathway, in contrast, appears to be an adaptive response to large, anonymous, urban communities and a commercial economy; these communities value innovation and therefore change more rapidly” (Greenfield et al., 2003, p. 465-466).

Therefore, the individualist/collectivist (I-C) distinction has been useful in past research in providing an explanation for why parents from different cultural backgrounds endorse different ideals and instill them in their children.

However, the I-C distinction has been characterized as oversimplified (Keller et al., 2006) and might not be adequate to fully distinguish the ethnic groups examined in the present study. Current scholars (e.g., Oyserman et al., 2002) suggest that modern day societies cannot be clearly categorized as purely individualist or collectivist because cultural values can encompass some dimensions of both simultaneously. Kagitcibasi (2005) has suggested that individualistic and collectivistic values run along a continuum and that the degrees of autonomy and relatedness are not mutually exclusive; cultures can endorse both autonomy and relatedness. According to Kagitcibasi, there are cultures that still predominately endorse either independent or interdependent family models, however parents who endorse both autonomy and relatedness in their childrearing goals would fall

under the model of emotional interdependence whereby children are socialized to be independent, but not separate. The family model of emotional interdependence arises when the need for material interdependence decreases and autonomy in children is more highly valued than conformity. In this situation, parents might expect greater separateness in some behavioral domains, such as self-reliance, yet might continue to desire relatedness in other domains, such as emotional closeness. Kagitcibasi's conceptualization of family models is more comprehensive than the I-C distinction in describing cultural differences because it allows for more nuanced categorization of cultures. The family models of independence, interdependence, and emotional interdependence might be useful when describing differences in American ethnic groups. Prior to considering values and possible goals in the American ethnic groups of interest, however, I review empirical research demonstrating how parental goals might be influenced by cultural values and changes in cultural values.

Kagitcibasi and Ataca (2005) found that the shift from the family model of "interdependence" to one of "emotional interdependence" is marked by changes in the qualities that parents value in their children, including decreased desire for obedience, increased desire for autonomy, but continued desire for emotional closeness. Alwin (1988) found that a shift in parents' desire for autonomy over obedience in children occurred in the United States from the 1920's to the 1980's and by the late 20th century was also more prevalent in families at higher income levels than those with less income. This suggests that increased affluence and modernization might lead to families endorsing more individualistic values. A shift to emotional interdependence might also occur when families emigrate from countries that endorse collectivist values to countries that endorse individualist values. Indeed, many researchers have found that immigrants in the United States value both autonomy and relatedness in their adolescent children

(e.g., Chao, 1995; Jose et al., 2000; Kwak, 2003). Jose et al. (2000) compared the parenting goals and practices of parents living in China, the United States, and Chinese parents who had immigrated to the United States in their lifetime. In this study, parents from the two Chinese samples endorsed collectivist traits (e.g., obedience) as more important compared to the European American parents. However, parents from all three samples endorsed individualist traits (e.g., autonomy). This pattern suggests that the parents in the two Chinese samples endorse the model of emotional interdependence whereas the European American mothers endorse the model of independence. The authors suggest the reason that both the native and immigrant Chinese sample endorsed the individualist traits is that both have been exposed to some aspects of Western ideologies (Jose et al., 2000).

In a similar study, in order to investigate whether parental beliefs aligned with collectivist or individualist values Chao (1995) interviewed European American mothers and Chinese mothers who had immigrated to the United States. Chao asked mothers of children aged 2-5 years, “What is your view of childrearing? What do you think is important for raising children?” (p. 333). Chao created a hierarchy of themes that mothers commented on most frequently in the interviews. Although the Chinese and European American mothers espoused childrearing beliefs that were in line with collectivist and individualist values, respectively, there were similarities in how the mothers prioritized their goals. The mothers in the two samples prioritized their childrearing goals in a similar hierarchy: “1) making the child feel loved, 2) building skills for success, 3) teaching a value for others, 4) teaching skills for relating to others, 5) fostering independence, and 6) building some group-related identity roots” (p. 350). Despite these similar goals, the Chinese and European American mothers emphasized different methods of accomplishing these goals; for example when discussing “fostering

independence,” the Chinese mothers stressed self-reliance as a way to become contributing members of the community and the European American mothers stressed individualism as a way to become more independent from the parents. However, overall these findings show that mothers from countries that have been stereotypically labeled according to the I-C distinction actually espouse goals for both autonomy and relatedness although the specific conceptions of and outcomes desired by achieving each might be differently instantiated.

In summary, past research on cultural models in parenting has demonstrated that distinguishing between independence and interdependence in parental values is useful for studying parental childrearing goals. However, much evidence implies that many cultures endorse some levels of both autonomy and relatedness and that parents have goals to develop these traits in their children to varying extents and for varying reasons. Using this theoretical background, I next examine values of parents in the most common ethnic groups in the United States, developing hypotheses about what types of goals these parents will have for their adolescents.

Ethnic groups in the United States. The current study focused on three ethnic groups in the United States: African Americans, Hispanics, and European Americans. I wanted to know how ethnicity might influence the goals that mothers espouse for their adolescent children in the domains of risk-taking behaviors and parent-child relationships.

Some researchers suggest that, in general, minority populations in a country endorse a more collectivist ethnotheory, whereas the majority populations endorse a more individualist ethnotheory (Greenfield & Keller, 2002). Consistent with this suggestion, there is evidence that African American and Hispanic parents endorse more collectivist values compared to European American families (e.g., Dixon et al., 2008; Fuligni et al., 1999). However, as mentioned earlier, parents in diverse cultures such as the United

States, are likely to value both independence and interdependence in certain ways or for certain purposes (Oyserman et al., 2002). Therefore, it is important to consider the possible influence of a family's ethnic identity as well as the influence of the majority's cultural values. The conceptualization of the family model of emotional interdependence and past research on parenting and parental goals in American ethnic minority groups allow for some hypotheses to be made in regard to the present study. For example, past research that is relevant to the aims of this study has compared parent-child conflict, autonomy goals, and family obligation in African American, Hispanic, and European American families.

Julian, McKenry, and McKelvy (1994) investigated the parental attitudes of mothers and fathers from European American, Hispanic, Asian American, and African American backgrounds with children aged 18 years old or younger. Parents were asked how important it was to them for their child to engage in a variety of behaviors. A behavior examined in this study that is relevant to the domain of risk-taking was "trying new things." On average, Hispanic mothers rated "trying new things" higher in importance compared to mothers in the other three ethnic groups. Behaviors relevant to the domain of parent-child relations were "follow family rules," "independence," and "do what parents ask." On average, African American, Hispanic, and Asian American mothers all rated "follow family rules" as higher in importance than did Caucasian mothers. African American mothers rated "independence" and "do what parents ask" higher in importance compared to the other groups of mothers.

The Julian et al. (1994) study was not focused specifically on parents of adolescents or issues of adolescence. However, it addressed some of the domains that characterize the storm and stress view of adolescence, including risk-taking and parent-child relations. As Hispanic mothers reported the highest level of endorsement for

“trying new things” it might imply that Hispanic mothers would be more likely to endorse goals for risk-taking. However, these Hispanic mothers also rated “following family rules” as high in importance. Furthermore, “trying new things” might be conceived as more positive overall than risk-taking, which can be conceived positively but often encompasses negative behaviors, as in the case of storm and stress conceptualizations. Certainly, Hispanic parents who have immigrated have modeled “trying new things”. Thus, the findings might reflect a desire for positive risk-taking but also continued respect for the family. The finding that African American mothers rated both “independence” and “do what parents ask” as more important goals compared to mothers in the other ethnic groups is in line with past literature that suggests there is a strong emphasis on family in African American families, but there is also a demand for responsibility and independence at a young age (McLoyd, 1990). Overall these findings illustrate that ethnic minority groups are likely to endorse goals that reflect both independent and interdependent values.

Although African American parents might endorse both types of values, there is also evidence that African American parents believe that limit setting is *more* important to them than encouraging independence, at least for adolescent children. Smetana and Chuang (2001) conducted semi-structured interviews with middle class African-American parents of early adolescents about their goals for setting limits and encouraging independence. Findings showed that African American mothers and fathers rated limit setting as a more important goal than encouraging independence. African American parents also endorsed high levels of behavioral control and later expectations for the autonomy of their children compared to the European American parents studied in previous research (Daddis & Smetana, 2005). Together with research showing a relatively high authoritarian approach to parenting behavior among African American

parents (e.g., Dornbusch, et al., 1987) these findings imply that African American parents might have related goals of minimizing risk-taking (i.e., through limit setting) and continued close parent-child relationships (i.e., by emphasizing personal responsibility but not overemphasizing personal independence).

As might be reflected in Julian et al. (1994) findings regarding the importance of following family rules, individuals from the Latino culture have been found to value family and community closeness over individual achievements (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006). These values are expressed in Latino parents' three primary child rearing goals: "familismo (familism), respeto (respect), and educación (education)" (Halgunseth, et al., p. 1282). Familismo is a sense of obligation to and connectedness with one's immediate and extended family. Respeto reflects a goal of keeping harmonious relationships with others by demonstrating respect for self and others. The goal of educación refers more to a moral education rather than an academic education in that parents desire for their children to act morally and have good manners. Therefore, Latino parents have goals for their children to develop close ties to their family and act respectfully towards others. Halgunseth et al. suggest that these goals lead Latino parents to exert more control over a range of child behaviors than do parents from other cultural backgrounds, including European Americans. In regard to the present study, these findings indicate that Latino mothers might demonstrate goals for parent-child relations during adolescence that are focused on closeness and less tolerant of growing distance or conflict. Also, higher levels of control might be indicative of goals for fewer risk-taking behaviors relations among Latino parents.

Consistent with these studies of Hispanic and African American parents, in studies that have examined the beliefs and expectations of adolescents, Hispanic and African American adolescents report stronger beliefs that they should be respectful and

have obligations to their families compared to European American adolescents (e.g., Dixon, Grabber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Hardway & Fuligni, 2006). Additionally, Dixon et al. (2008) found that African American and Latino mothers reported significantly more intense arguments with their children when their children's parental respect was low than did European American mothers, suggesting that when respect from children is highly valued and regarded as culturally important in a particular group then a lack of respect will be more likely to lead to parent-child conflict. Furthermore, Hernandez, Garcia, and Flynn (2010) found that among Hispanic emerging adults, those who endorsed higher levels of familism experienced higher levels of distress from parent-child conflict compared to lower levels of familism. The latter research suggests that Hispanic and African American mothers might put more emphasis on goals of reducing parent-child conflict in order to reduce the distress of violating the high value placed on family. However, it is also possible that Hispanic and African American mothers care less about reducing immediate conflict because they care more about respect and obligation to the family and will try to uphold those values even if it causes distress at times.

Past research indicates that European American parents are the most likely of the ethnic groups to espouse independent/individualistic values (e.g., Fuligni et al., 1999; Jose et al., 2000). In his essay on adolescent storm and stress, Arnett (1999) suggests that parent-child conflict during adolescence promotes the development of individualism and autonomy. As European American mothers have been shown to most highly value personal independence and put less emphasis on family obligation, it is likely that they will have fewer goals to decrease or refrain from parent-child conflict if they believe it is natural for children to move away from the family and that conflict might even help a

child to become more independent. They might also be more accepting of risk-taking as a reflection of growing personal autonomy, which is expected and valued.

Overall, then, it is evident that culture can shape parents' goals for their children. Cultural influences on goals are derived from parents' ethnotheories that vary according to what is most adaptive to a certain environment. In the United States families have many different cultural backgrounds and there is not one set of values that all parents believe are important for their children. As this literature indicates and as Kagitcibasi's (2005) theory predicts, parents will endorse goals for autonomy and relatedness in their children at different levels and in different domains depending on their cultural backgrounds. Thus, in regard to the present study, I predict that Hispanic and African American mothers will emphasize goals for their children to maintain close familial relationships while showing respect and obligation to the family. They are also likely to emphasize growing material autonomy, but in the context of respect and family obligation, thus not allowing for as much personal autonomy or negative risk-taking. In contrast, European American mothers might put less emphasis on goals for demonstrating respect and family obligation and be more tolerant of risk-taking because they are more likely to want and expect their children to display personal independence. However, European American mothers might still have goals to maintain emotional closeness in familial relationships, even if conflict is tolerated.

Socioeconomic Status (SES). Another factor that might influence parents' goals for their adolescent children is their socioeconomic status (SES). Similar to different cultural groups, it is likely that parents with varying SES will develop different goals for their adolescents based on different needs and threats they believe their children will encounter. Much of past research suggests that overall, parents with low SES are more likely to value conformity in their children compared to parents with high SES, who are

more likely to value self-reliance (Hoff, Laursen, & Tardif, 2002; Kagiticibasi & Ataca, 2005). An emphasis on conformity versus self-reliance might reflect the unique needs and threats that these groups face. In order to understand parental goals during adolescent it is important to consider the impact of SES on parental goals.

Previous research has examined how families with fewer economic resources compare in their parenting values compared to parents under less economic strain. In a study that looked at mothers in Turkey over a three year period, Kagiticibasi and Ataca (2005) found that as families became more affluent they placed greater value on emotional closeness with children and less value on the material value of children. In other words, with economic growth, there was less of a need to keep children close for the purposes of running the family business. With greater affluence, parents could focus less on obedience and more on emotional closeness; thus, there was a shift in values from endorsing interdependence to endorsing emotional interdependence.

Other studies have demonstrated that parents with low SES espouse both independent and interdependent values for their children. Tulviste, Mizera, De Geer, and Tryggvason (2007) compared the child rearing goals of mothers of 4- to 6-year-old children from Estonia, Finland and Sweden. The authors noted that these three countries are similar in cultural background with the exception that, of the three countries, Estonia had a less stable economic history. The authors predicted that with less economic stability, mothers from Estonia would have different child rearing goals. Here the authors found that in Estonia, mothers placed a greater emphasis on conformity, obedience, politeness, and being hard working as child rearing goals compared to mothers from Finland and Sweden. However, the Estonian mothers also rated goals pertaining to self-maximization, such as independence and curiosity, as more important

compared to the other two groups of mothers. The Swedish and Finnish mothers stressed the importance of developing their children's self esteem and happiness.

Rosenthal and Roer-Strier (2001) demonstrated similar findings to those of Tulviste et al. (2007) and Kagitcibasi and Ataca (2005) in their study on Israeli mothers and mothers from the former Soviet Union who had immigrated to Israel. The mothers from the country with greater economic hardship (the Soviet mothers) emphasized the importance of emotional control, achievement, efficiency and organization whereas those with lesser economic hardship (the Israeli mothers) emphasized the importance of autonomy, social competence, and leadership. The Soviet mothers' goals reflected more interdependent values whereas the Israeli-born mothers' goals reflected more independent values. It may be that when mothers experience greater economic hardship they develop goals for their children that are more focused on hard work and conformity, perhaps as a way to overcome the threats their environment impose (e.g., limited financial resources).

Together, the findings from these studies illustrate how SES might begin to influence parental goals at adolescence. Specifically, the findings from Tulviste et al. (2007) provide evidence that families with lower SES might endorse goals for more respectful parent-child relations as the Estonian mothers believed that obedience was more important than the other mothers. The Swedish and Finnish mothers also espoused goals for their children to be happy while putting less emphasis on obedience. This suggests that high SES mothers might be more concerned the emotional well-being of their children and thus have goals for emotionally close family relationships whereas the low SES mothers are more focused on obedience. Additionally, a greater emphasis on the child's obedience suggests that the low SES mothers might be concerned with a goal to avoid negative risk-taking behaviors. However, the Estonian mothers also endorsed

goals for self-maximization which appears to be in contrast with their goals for obedience and suggests that these mothers might be especially likely to endorse goals for some positive risk-taking behaviors (Tulviste et al., 2007). However, these studies were not conducted in the United States or with mothers of adolescents.

In the United States, families with low SES are more likely live in an environment with greater threats to adolescent health and safety (e.g., gang violence, drug peddling). In the face of these possible threats, parents with low SES might prioritize goals to maintain respect and obedience in the parent-child relationship and to avoid risk-taking behaviors more highly than mothers with high SES who are faced with fewer direct threats to their adolescents' well-being. Mothers with high SES, because of greater financial resources, more potential knowledge of and comfort with parenting resources, and more support from those who wield power and influence in their community might have fewer concerns about the dangers of adolescent risk-taking. A safer environment with fewer threats might free these mothers from worry over strict obedience and allow for a greater concern with emotional closeness in the parent-child relationship.

Nonetheless, resources for parents can vary drastically among parents with similar income levels (e.g., education, community centers) and these resources might also influence parental goals during adolescence within SES groups. Brody, Flor, and Gibson (1999) investigated parental goals for African American mothers with low SES and varying perceptions of parental resources. The authors presented a model of parenting that views financial status as the impetus for parents' subsequent efficacy, goals, and parenting practices, culminating in an effect on child competence. This study was conducted with a sample of single African American mothers living in rural Georgia who had a child between 6 and 9 years old. Mothers were interviewed about their parenting beliefs and practices. The mothers were presented with the following parenting goals and

then were asked to rate how important the goals were to them on a scale of 1 (slightly important) to 5 (extremely important): to be respectful, to be well educated, to get along with others, and to be well behaved. Using path analysis, the authors found that perceived financial resources predicted mothers' feelings of efficaciousness. Specifically, rural African American mothers believed they were more efficacious as parents when they had adequate financial resources. In turn, higher efficacy beliefs were positively related to how much parents endorsed each of the developmental goals. Lastly, the extent to which mothers endorsed healthy goals for their children was shown to predict parenting practices that promoted child competence. Therefore, among mothers with relatively low SES, perceptions of more resources predicted a greater endorsement of positive goals because these mothers were more confident in their parenting abilities (Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999).

The present study thus compares mothers from different SES groups and focuses on goals pertaining to adolescent development. With regard to parent-child relations, these findings indicate that both high and low SES mothers could have goals to keep their children close to the family. However, low SES mothers are expected to be more likely to emphasize respect and obedience whereas high SES mothers are expected to be more likely to emphasize emotional closeness. This is because low SES mothers are more likely to perceive greater threats in their environment and therefore are more likely to have goals to keep their children physically safe. With regard to risk-taking behaviors, high SES mothers might have fewer goals to avoid risk-taking altogether whereas low SES mothers might be more likely to articulate goals for absolute avoidance of negative risk-taking behaviors; low SES mothers, in other words, might be more likely to have goals reflecting "zero tolerance" for such behaviors.

This review of influences on parenting goals has illustrated how ethnicity and SES might play a role in the goals parents espouse for their adolescents. Next, I will discuss how these goals should be assessed so that results are ecologically valid.

Assessment of Goals

In order to address parental goals for adolescence, the present study focused on goals for behaviors that are specifically associated with the storm and stress perspective of adolescence: parent-child relations and risk-taking behaviors. This study is unique, as this topic has not been addressed in previous literature. Because almost nothing is known about goals specifically in these domains, it was important that this study have a methodology that is sensitive to many different responses and not restrictive towards the investigators' views of possible goals.

In previous literature, parents' goals for child development have typically been assessed by asking parents how important certain goals are to them (e.g., Chao, 1995; Julian, McKenry, & McKelvy, 1994; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001). Parents are typically provided with pregenerated lists of goals. This methodology is likely not the best way to assess goals in domains that have not been previously investigated, especially among groups that have been underrepresented in past research (e.g., ethnic minorities, low income populations). Pregenerated goals are very likely less sensitive than they should be to the wide array of goals that parents from different backgrounds have for their children. Also, by providing parents with lists of goals there is no way to tell if these parents think about these goals on their own. For example, a parent might say that a goal of "having a good relationship with my child" is very important. However, this parent might endorse the goal only because it was provided and might not actually think about that goal in natural settings. If this were so, then that goal might not be a very

important goal with respect to influencing the parent's behavior with his or her adolescent child.

Because of the limitations of pregenerated lists, in-depth interviews might be a better way to assess parents' short term goals for adolescents in storm and stress domains. This is because in-depth interviews allow for more freedom in responses. Open-ended questions can elicit a range of thinking from parents to assess more validly a range of phenomenologically salient parental goals. Furthermore, open-ended interviews with parents from a range of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds can generate insight into the variety of goals parents might have in different contexts.

Pregenerated lists of goals might be useful after first asking parents open-ended questions about their goals. Whereas it is important to elicit a wide range of responses from mothers in order to gain a valid assessment of their goals given the interest in specific domains of goals, it is also important to ask specifically about the domains of interest. However, even when asking about goals in specific domains, giving parents a chance to talk about their thinking and goals before rating the importance of those goals on a predetermined scale could be insightful.

In sum, for this study, in depth interviews with open-ended questions were coupled with a small list of pregenerated, closed-ended, and scaled questions. Documenting the beliefs of parents in ethnically and economically diverse families about their goals for adolescent development in this way will provide a more accurate foundation of knowledge concerning the range of things parents from different backgrounds hope and desire. This study could potentially aid the development of structured measures of goals for this age group that are more inclusive than they would be otherwise.

The Present Study and Hypotheses

In summary, the present study was designed to explore parental goals for adolescents in the domains of parent-child relationships and risk-taking behaviors. The aim of this study was to learn what parents desire for their children in these domains of central importance to adolescence and development. The term goals is defined in the present study as what parents hope for their adolescent to be like, what parents wish for their adolescent, parents' expectations for positive outcomes in their adolescent's life, and overall, things that parents believe are important for their adolescent's development. To achieve my aim, I conducted in-depth interviews with mothers of adolescents from different ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Overall, I expected mothers from different ethnic backgrounds and from different socioeconomic levels would have some similar and some different goals pertaining to their relationship with their adolescents and risk-taking behaviors. The design of the study was meant to elucidate goals I might not expect, and I also developed hypotheses based on previous theory and research. Specifically, my hypotheses were as follows:

In regard to ethnicity, I expected that:

1) European American mothers, who are more likely to be influenced by the family model of independence, would be more likely to endorse goals to promote autonomy in the parent-adolescent relationship and less likely to endorse goals to promote family obligation than would African American and Hispanic mothers. Therefore, European American mothers would be more tolerant of some conflict in the parent-child relationship but would still have goals to maintain some emotional closeness.

2) African American and Hispanic mothers, who are more likely to be influenced by the family model of emotional interdependence, would be likely to endorse goals for some distancing in parent-child relations in the domain of behavioral self-reliance but

would still strongly endorse goals for continued respectful parent-child relations and family orientation among their adolescents.

3) Although there is evidence that suggests Hispanic mothers endorse goals for some risk-taking in a positive sense (e.g., trying new things), I expected that European American mothers will be more likely than the other mothers to endorse goals that allow for more negative risk-taking (e.g., experimentation with alcohol) as an avenue to develop more autonomy and independence. Additionally, because African American and Hispanic mothers place a greater emphasis on parental control and limit setting, they would have stronger goals of absolute avoidance of risk-taking behaviors.

In regard to SES, I expected that:

4) Mothers with low SES would endorse goals for more obedience and respect in the parent-child relationship whereas mothers with high SES would endorse goals for emotional closeness. This is because I expected mothers with low SES to perceive greater threats in their environment and therefore believe that maintaining family relationships and staying out of trouble is more important to remain safe compared to mothers with high SES.

5) Mothers with low SES would endorse more goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors than would mothers with high SES. This is because I expected mother with high SES would have more resources and therefore perceive less threats or consequences for their children if they were to engage in risky behaviors.

A caveat of the present study is that it is a qualitative study with a small number of participants. Therefore, I will not be able to quantify results in a definitive or generalizable way. The aim of the study is exploratory, to elucidate a range of goals in different contexts that can be used in future research with larger samples and a quantitative approach. Overall, this information will provide a more concrete base of

knowledge about the goals endorsed by parents of adolescents from different backgrounds in domains of specific relevance to adolescent behavior.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 36 mothers who were caring for adolescent children aged 11-18 years. Mothers were recruited in each of three ethnic groups (non-Hispanic White, African American, and Hispanic/Latino). Within each ethnic group, a roughly equal number of mothers was recruited from low, middle, and high income families and from families with oldest children aged 11-13 years, 14-16 years, and 17-18 years. In total, 14 mothers were from low income families, 11 were from middle income families, and 11 were from high income families. Income levels were determined using the median income for the county, which is \$50,000. Thus, the low income group included mothers who reported their family's total annual income to be less than \$40,000, the middle income group included mothers who reported their family's total annual income to be between \$40 and \$80,000, and the high income group included mothers who reported their family's total annual income to be greater than \$80,000.

Among the 12 African American mothers, 41.6% were from low income families, 25% were from middle income families, and 33.3% were from high income families. In regard to marital status, 33.3% of the African American mothers were single, 41.7% were married, and 25% were divorced. In regard to the age of the oldest adolescent, 16.7% from the African American families were 11-13 years old, 41.6% were 14-15 years old, and 41.6% were 16-18 years old.

Among the 12 European American mothers, 33.3% were from low income families, 33.3% were from middle income families, and 33.3% were from high income families. In regard to marital status, 8.3% of European American mothers were single, 50% were married, and 41.7% were divorced. In regard to the age of the oldest

adolescent, 58.3% from the European American families were 11-13 years old, 16.7% were 14-15 years old, and 25% were 16-18 years old.

Among the 12 Hispanic mothers, 41.6% were from low income families, 33.3% were from middle income families, and 25% were from high income families. In regard to marital status, none of the Hispanic mothers were single, 83.3% were married, and 16.7% were divorced. In regard to the age of the oldest adolescent, 25% from the Hispanic families were 11-13 years old, 33.3% were 14-15 years old, and 41.6% were 16-18 years old.

Procedure

Mothers were recruited through local community organizations such as churches and youth or social service organizations, and through personal contacts and networking. Mothers were recruited via flyers, letters (given to them personally by project or organization staff), or in-person (either one-on-one or in group events at the organization).

A pre-screening informational interview (see Appendix A) over the telephone was used to gather demographic information (ethnicity, age of adolescent children, and total family annual income) to determine eligibility of mothers who expressed willingness to participate. Because we were trying to interview at least one mother from each level of income, child age, and ethnic background, mothers were typically considered ineligible after the pre-screening interview if we had already interviewed a mother with a similar background. However, in order to have the desired 12 mothers for each ethnic groups, there had to be at least three duplications for income level or child age. For instance, after nine African American mothers were recruited at each income level and age group, three additional African American mothers were recruited as duplicates.

After the prescreening interview, eligible mothers were called back for purposes of scheduling an interview. The prescreening forms were shredded after eligible and

ineligible mothers were contacted to make sure that no confidential information was on file without the mothers' consents. Interviews took place in Greene Hall on the campus of Wake Forest University, at the home or work place of the interviewee, or at a local coffee shop, according to the interviewee's preference. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer reviewed the informed consent (see Appendix B) with the mother and addressed any questions she had at that time. Materials were translated into Spanish for mothers who were not fluent in English.

Interviewers were trained in standard effective interviewing methods, including establishing a positive rapport with participants. Interviews took approximately 2 hours and were audio recorded to allow for transcription. When necessary, interviews were conducted in Spanish. A structured interview guide (see Appendix C) was used to guide the interviewers through all topics of interest. The interview consisted of mostly open-ended questions, followed by more specific, guided questions and prompts that were used when a mother's answer did not address or elaborate on certain topics of interest. Questions were systematically designed to solicit parents' own thinking about adolescents and parenting.

Participants received a \$20 gift card to an accessible department store (e.g., Target) for completing the interview. When the interview was complete, the mother was asked about her willingness to be contacted, and to recommend friends, for an interview or a future survey on the same topic of parenting at adolescence.

Measures

The interview guide for the entire interview, which investigates a range of parental beliefs about normal and healthy adolescent development as well as parenting, is included in Appendix C.

Demographic information. Early in the interview, the mother was asked several questions to assess the age of her children, her ethnicity, her child's ethnicity, and her education (see Appendix C, p. 1). At the end of the interview, the mother was asked about family income, to assess SES (see Appendix C, p. 12). Although this information was collected during the pre-screening interview, the prescreening forms were eventually shredded because the information was obtained prior to getting informed consent, and some mothers who were prescreened were not interviewed. Therefore, the questions regarding age of children, ethnicity, and income were asked again so that information could be coded with the rest of the mother's interview.

Parenting goals. Questions about parental goals comprised the third section of the interview guide (see Appendix C, p. 4-7). Interviewers began by saying (Appendix C, p. 5): "Parents usually have goals – hopes, wishes, expectations for good things – for their children. Some goals are for very specific behaviors or accomplishments, for example, graduating from high school. Others are more subtle and have to do with character traits like becoming more independent or responsible. Some are goals for the short-term, such as how they act or what they do during adolescence, and some are long-term, for their future." Then interviewers explained that we wanted to know about short-term goals. Specifically they were told we are interested in their goals for their child's adolescent years or by the end of their adolescent years.

The questions concerning goals were then administered using three approaches. The first approach consisted of a series of open-ended questions. First, mothers were asked, "What do you feel are the most important goals you have for your adolescent child(ren)?" (see Appendix C, p. 5). Mothers were also asked how they thought the age and gender of their child influenced their goals. This approach also included open-ended questions about a number of specific, pregenerated topics. The topics of relevance to my

study were taking risks/testing limits and parent-child relationships (see Appendix C, p. 5). Parents were asked if they had any goals that relate to these behaviors. For example, “When it comes to taking risks or testing limits, do you have any goals for your teenage children?” (see Appendix C, pg. 5). Probes were used to elicit mothers’ detailed ideas about goals in each of these areas. Sample probes were: “what you hope for them to be like, what you wish, or expectations for good things” (see Appendix C, p. 5).

The second approach was a card sort procedure to obtain quantitative rankings of the relevance and importance of some specific goals in the risk-taking and parent-child relationship domains. The interviewer presented the interviewee with a list of nine potential goals that fall under these domains, such as “avoid using alcohol” and “get along well with you” (see Appendix C, p. 6). Each of these goals was written on an index card and also read out loud. The interviewer said to the mother, “I have a set of cards naming some different goals, hopes, and expectations a parent might have for a child’s teenage years, and I have a few questions using the following options, *not at all* (1), *somewhat* (2), or *very* (3).” (see Appendix C, p. 6). After reading through all goal cards, interviewees were asked, “How often have you thought about each of these possible goals?” (see Appendix C, p. 6). Mothers were instructed to place each goal card next to a frequency tag (*not at all*, *somewhat*, or *very*) that best described how much they had thought about this goal. Next, they were asked “How important is it to you that each goal happens for your child?” Mothers were handed the stack of goal cards and, again, they were asked to place each goal card next to the scaled frequency option that best described the importance attached to the goal.

In the third approach to assessing goals, the interviewer asked the interviewee three questions about conflicting goals that did not fall in the hypothesized areas of interest but that might be useful for eliciting ideas about opinions on topics of interest.

The mother was given the following instructions: “Now I’m going to ask about some goals that might conflict with each other. I’d like you to tell me which of each pair of goals is more important to you, and why” (see Appendix C, p. 6). Mothers were asked which of two opposing goals they believed was more important for their adolescent child. One of these questions was related to risk-taking behaviors in that parents were asked if it was more important for their child to conform and fit in with peers or for their child to speak their mind even if it goes against the crowd. Another question was related to parent-child relationships in that parents were asked if it was more important for their child to show responsibility and obligation to the family or for their child to pursue his or her own dreams. After the mother responded, she was asked to explain or elaborate on her choice if she did not do so spontaneously.

Analysis

Each interview was transcribed verbatim by graduate and undergraduate research assistants. Spanish interviews were translated and transcribed by individuals fluent in the language. Any identifying information (e.g., names of children, parents, schools and work places) was removed from the transcript to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. After transcription, each interview was checked by a different research assistant.

Open-ended questions. After transcription, all interviews were coded using a coding dictionary (see Appendix D) that was developed based on constructs of interest to the study. The coding dictionary defined the domains of interest in the study and was used to categorize mothers’ statements in the transcripts. Each transcript was coded in two passes. In the first pass, the interview was coded for the primary domains of interests in beliefs about adolescents (e.g., risk-taking, parent-child relationships) and in beliefs about parenting (e.g., monitoring, modeling). In the second pass, the interview was

coded for type of beliefs within each domain, such as comments that reflected beliefs about how healthy or normal certain behaviors (e.g., risk-taking) are or comments reflecting goals about that domain of behaviors. Although one section of the interview was explicitly designed to elicit beliefs about goals (as described earlier), the entire interview was coded for goal comments, not just the section targeting goals. Two team members coded every transcript for each pass and any differences were resolved through discussion.

After two passes of coding, graduate and undergraduate research assistants transferred the written codes into the electronic text using ATLAS.ti 5.0, a computerized software package that allows coding and retrieval of text for specific codes. Text segments in each transcript pertaining to salient themes and patterns were thus tagged with the appropriate codes. After the textual data were tagged, the software was used to extract all of the segments pertaining to a specific code and store text with each identifier in a new file. Segments were extracted for relevant subgroups (e.g., European American; high SES).

I then examined all comments made about goals for risk-taking behaviors and the parent-child relationship by ethnic and SES group, looking for trends and themes. In other words, I examined what mothers in each of the ethnic and socioeconomic groups said regarding goals for the parent-child relationship or for risk-taking and picked out themes or ideas that were brought up by multiple mothers. For example, when asked about goals pertaining to risk-taking many mothers mentioned goals for “positive risk-taking”, thus I examined the theme of “positive risk-taking” across all mothers to see if there were any patterns that emerged. In other words, after elucidating major themes from all transcripts, I compared the number and the percentage of mothers in each ethnic and SES group that articulated each theme. Although definitive numerical analysis is not

possible given the sample size and methodology, I nonetheless looked for trends in the types of goals that different groups of mothers endorsed.

Card sort quantitative data. The responses to the card sort approach were coded numerically (e.g., *not at all* = 1, *somewhat* = 2, *very* = 3). These data were analyzed descriptively for frequencies by ethnic and income groups. Along with looking at descriptive information, I also conducted a series of one-way ANOVAs with the independent variables of either ethnicity or SES predicting the dependent variables of mothers' responses to each of the eight goals that related to risk-taking behaviors and parent-child relationships (for a total of 16 ANOVAs).

Conflicting goals approach. Mothers responded to the questions about conflicting goals by choosing one of the two perspectives or saying they agreed with both. The responses to the conflicting goals approach were coded numerically (e.g., first option = 1, second option = 2, both = 3) and analyzed descriptively for frequencies by ethnic and income groups. The mothers were also encouraged to elaborate on their choice, and the elaborations to these questions were coded qualitatively.

RESULTS

Risk-taking Goals

Quantitative analysis. The results for the one-way ANOVAs were nonsignificant indicating that there were no significant differences between the ethnic or SES groups in regard to their responses to the quantitative questions about how much they thought about or the importance that children avoid risk-taking behaviors. Given the low power of those analyses, however, I also examined the frequencies of the mothers' responses descriptively.

With respect to having thought about goals concerning risk-taking, there was variation. Most commonly, mothers (42.9%) reported that they thought about goals for their child to avoid alcohol very often, yet 34.3% had thought about them somewhat and 22.9% had thought about them not at all. There was an increasing tendency across European American, African American, and Hispanic mothers to answer either not at all or very (see Figure 1). European American mothers were the most likely to have only thought about this goal somewhat (58.3%). In regard to SES, trends suggest the possibility of a greater tendency for mothers with low SES (53.8%) or high SES (45.4%) to have thought about goals to avoid using alcohol very often compared to mothers with middle SES (27.2%) who were more likely to have thought about this goal not at all or somewhat often than very often (see Figure 2).

Mothers also most commonly reported (44.1%) that they thought about goals for their child to avoid other risk-taking behaviors such as defying authority very often, yet 32.4% thought about them somewhat often and 23.5 % thought about them not at all.

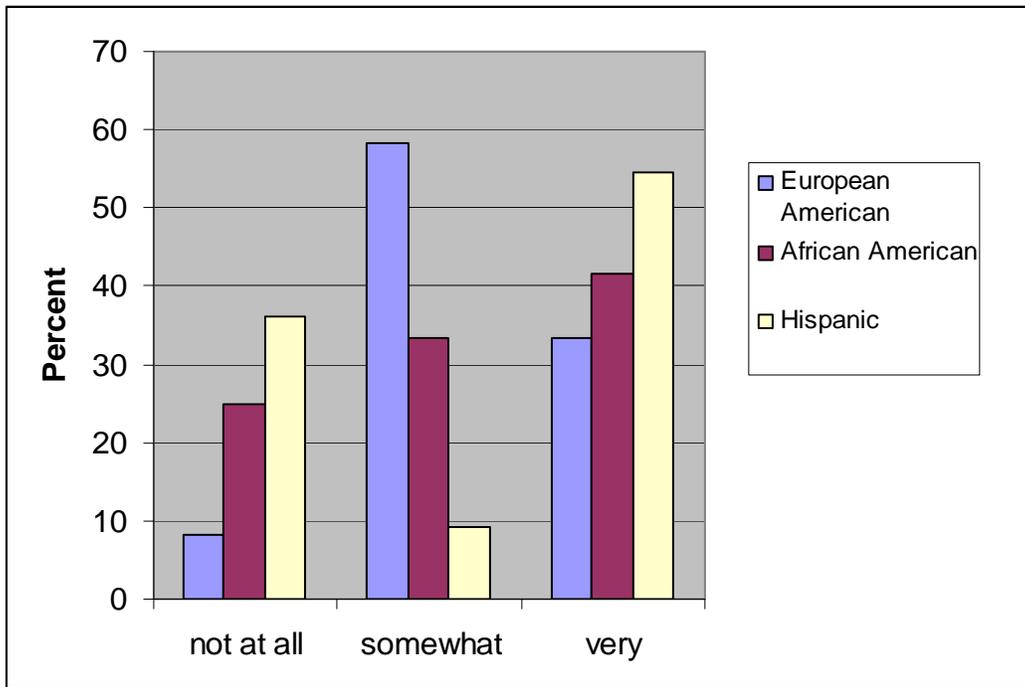


Figure 1. “How often have you thought about avoid using alcohol?” [Race]

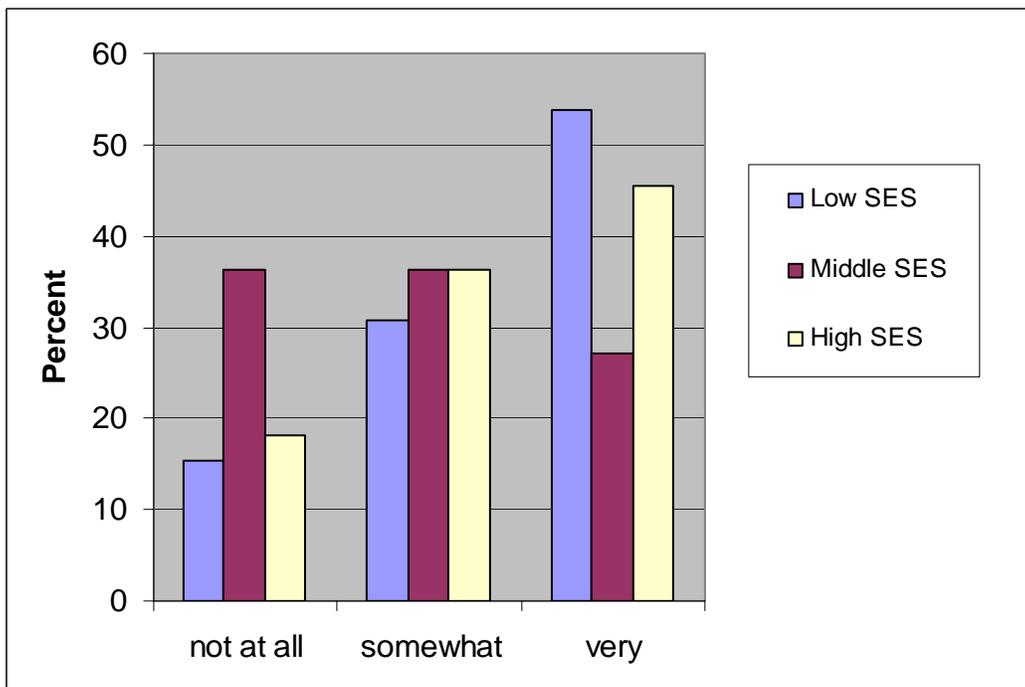


Figure 2. “How often have you thought about avoid using alcohol?” [SES]

The most interesting ethnic trend was that all of African American mothers reported that they had thought about goals for avoiding other risk-taking behaviors, such as defying authority, either very often or somewhat often whereas several European American (33.3%) and Hispanic (36.7%) reported that they had never thought about such goals (see Figure 3). Although, many of the low SES (50%) and middle SES (63.6%) mothers said that they had thought about goals for avoiding taking risks that involve defying authority very often, a relatively low percentage of high SES mothers (18.2%) thought about this goal very often (see Figure 4).

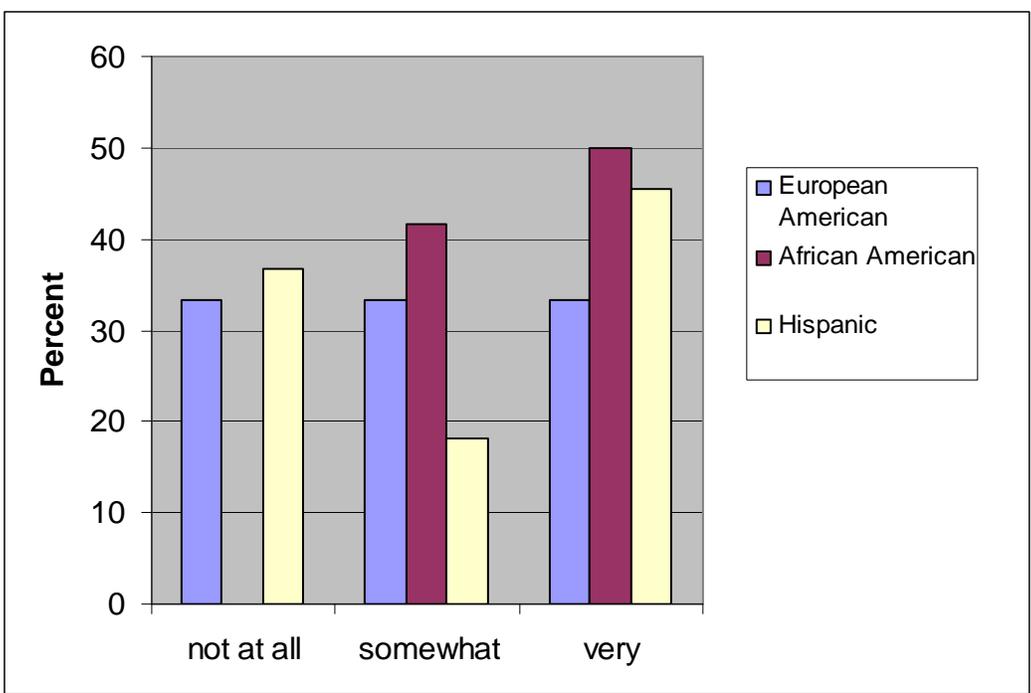


Figure 3. “How often have you thought about avoid taking other risks that involve defying authority?” [Race]

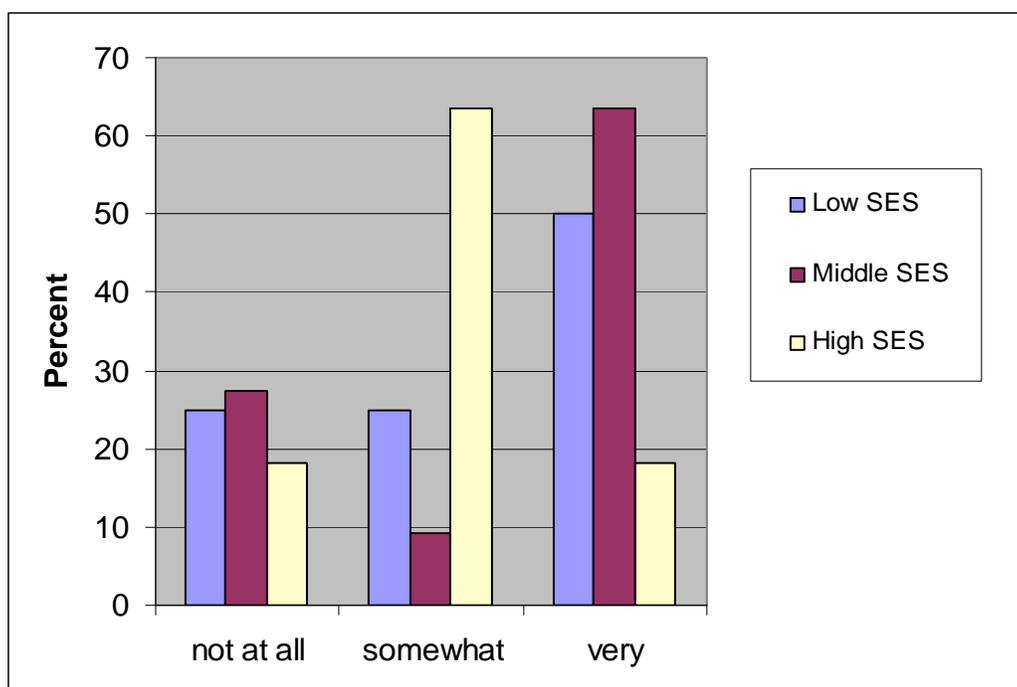


Figure 4. “How often have you thought about avoid taking other risks that involve defying authority?” [Race]

With respect to the importance placed on avoiding risk-taking, the vast majority of mothers said such avoidance was very important. The majority of the mothers (77.1%) reported that their goals for their child to avoid alcohol were very important whereas only 17.1% said this was somewhat important and only 5.7% (i.e., two mothers) said this was not at all important. Clearly, it was quite rare for any mother to say avoiding alcohol was not an important goal. When mothers deviated from that predominant response, they were predominantly European American (16.7%), with the only mothers who said avoiding alcohol was not at all important being European American (see Figure 5). Virtually all of the high SES mothers said that avoiding alcohol was a very important goal; the primary deviations from this predominant response with respect to SES were low SES (23.1%) and middle SES (36.4%) mothers (see Figure 6).

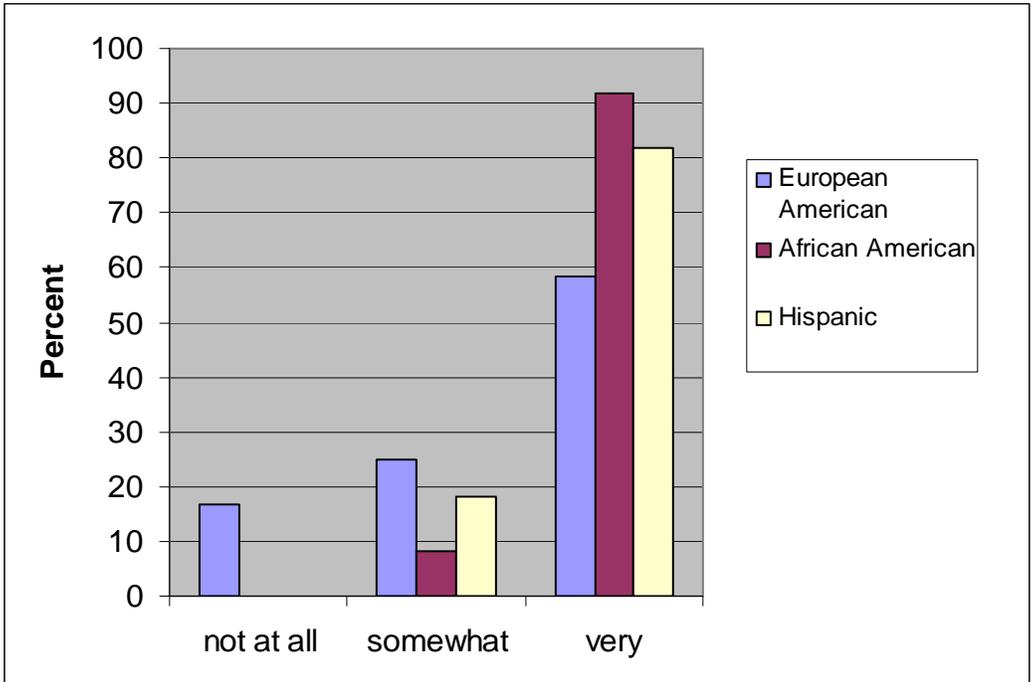


Figure 5. "How important is it to you that your child avoid using alcohol?" [Race]

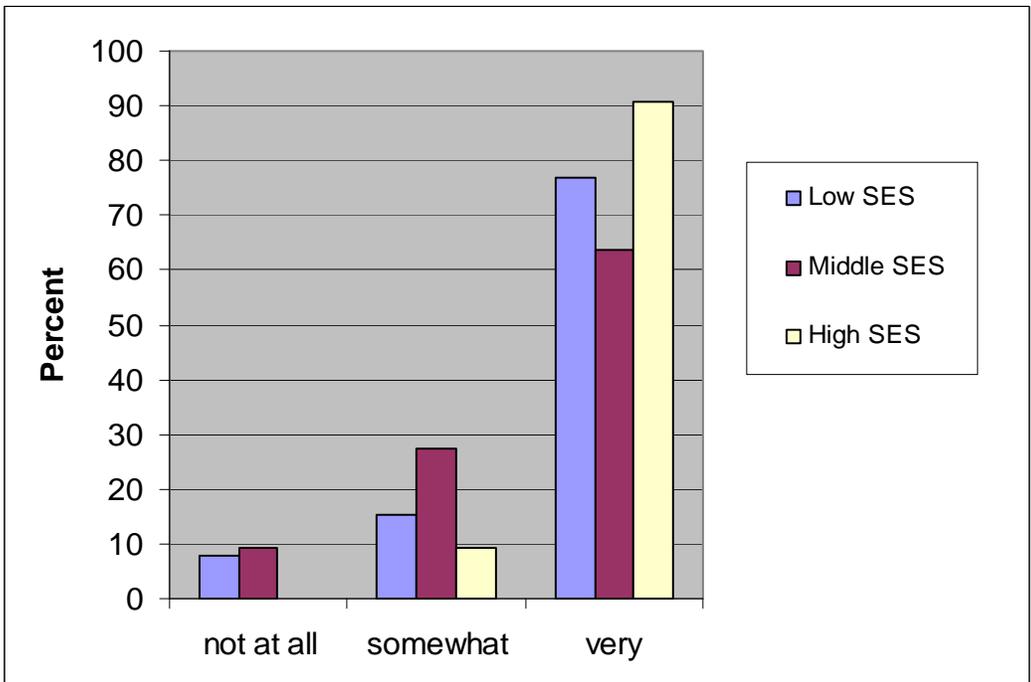


Figure 6. "How important is it to you that your child avoid using alcohol?" [SES]

The majority of the mothers (71.4%) reported that goals for their child to avoid risk-taking behaviors such as defying authority were very important whereas only 28.6% said such goals were somewhat important and none said such goals were not at all important. African American mothers were the least likely to deviate from this predominant response (16.7%) compared to European American (66.7%) and Hispanic mothers (63.6%) (see Figure 7). With respect to SES, high SES mothers were the most likely to deviate from this predominant response (45.5%) compared to middle SES (18.2%) and low SES (23.1%) mothers (see Figure 8).

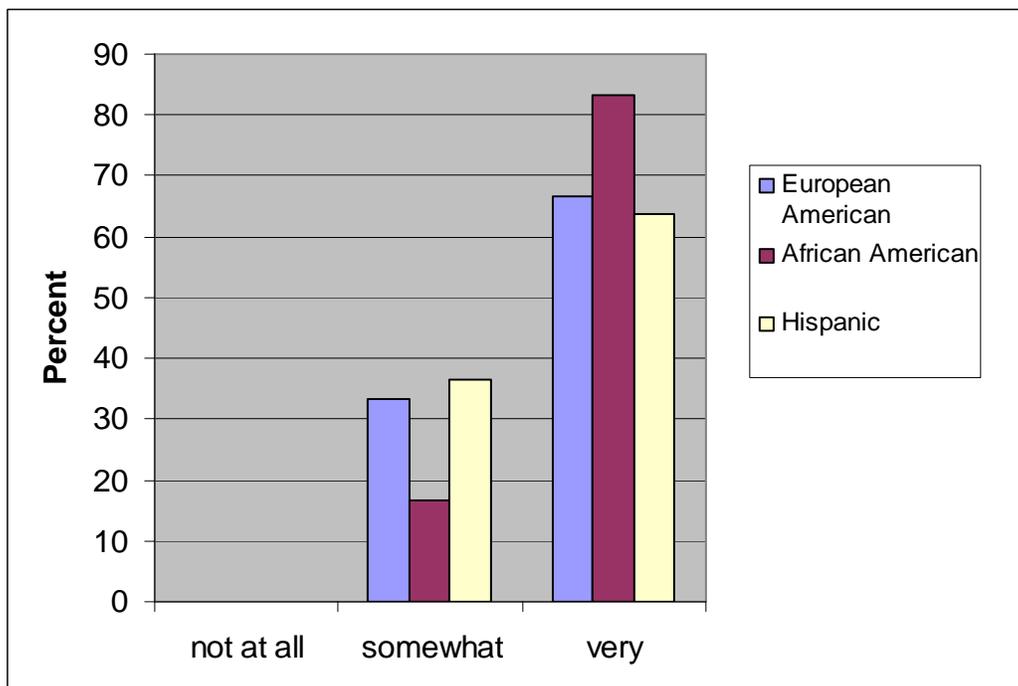


Figure 7. “How important is it to you that your child avoid taking other risks that involve defying authority?” [Race]

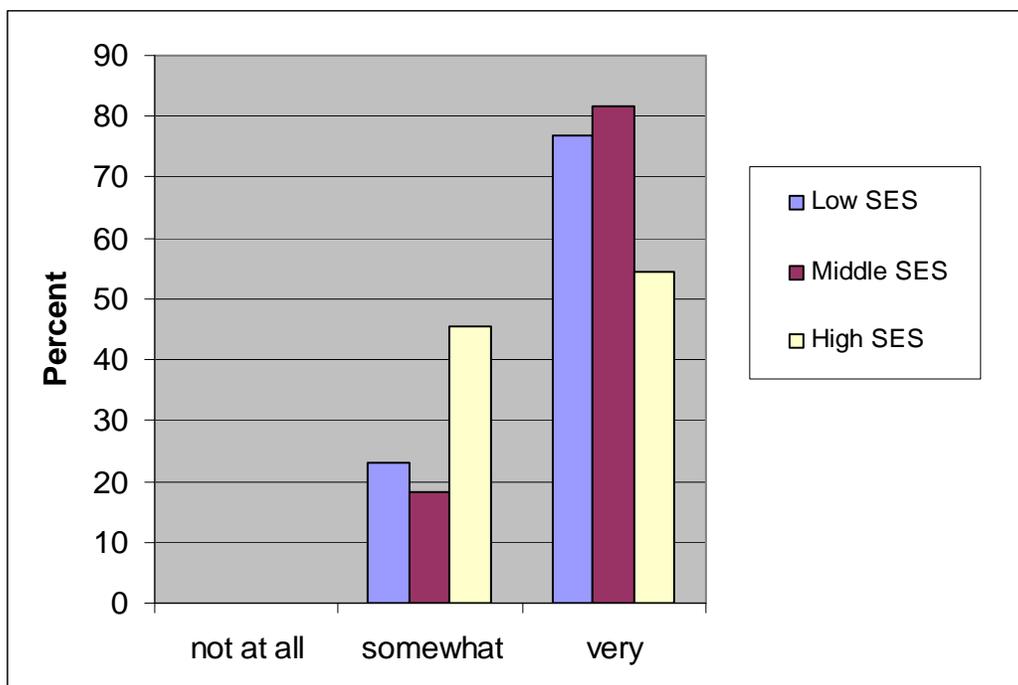


Figure 8. “How important is it to you that your child avoid taking other risks that involve defying authority?” [SES]

Lastly, for the conflict goal pertaining to the risk domain, the majority of the mothers from all groups (94.3%) said that a goal for their child to speak his or her mind or do what he or she wants even if it goes against the crowd was more important than a goal for their child to fit in with or conform to his or her peers (5.7%). Although there was virtually no deviation from the predominant response, one African American mother (8.3%) said it was more important to fit in and one Hispanic mother (9.1%) said both were important (see Figure 9). With respect to SES, the only mothers to choose an option including conformity (i.e., the first option or both) were low SES (14.14%) (see Figure 10).

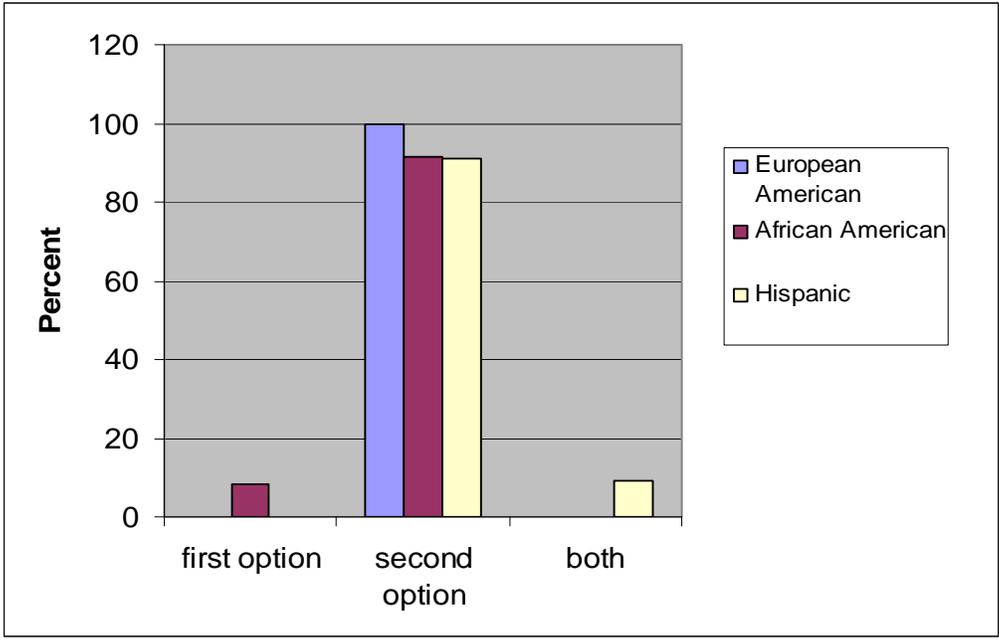


Figure 9. “Is it more important to you that, during adolescence, your child fit in with or conform to his or her peers or is it more important to you that your child be able to speak his or her mind or do what he or she wants even if it goes against the crowd?” [Race]

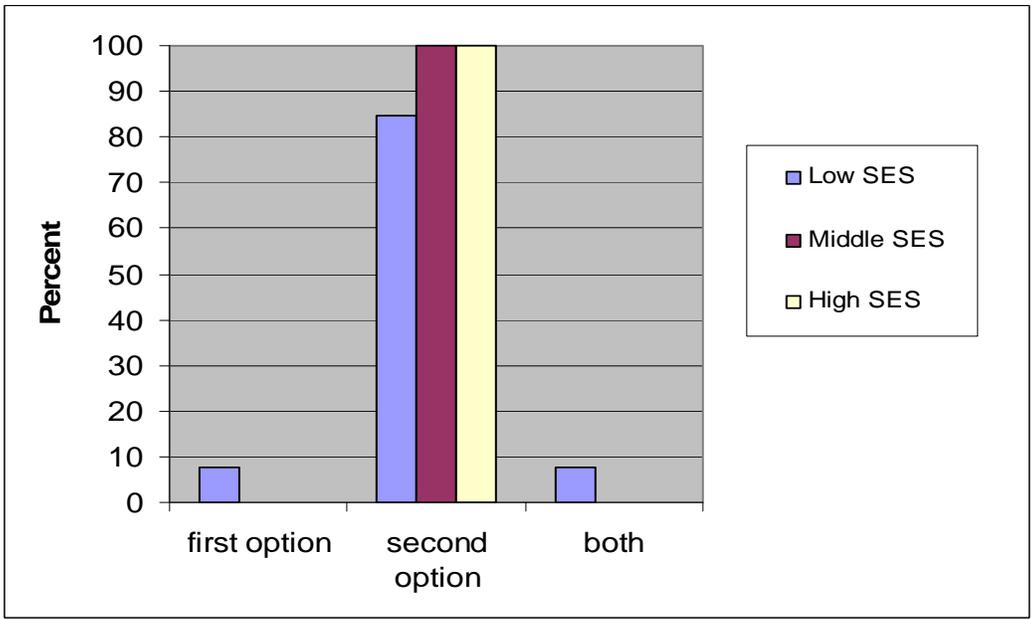


Figure 10. “Is it more important to you that, during adolescence, your child fit in with or conform to his or her peers or is it more important to you that your child be able to speak his or her mind or do what he or she wants even if it goes against the crowd?” [SES]

Qualitative trends. The themes that emerged when mothers spoke about their goals regarding risk-taking behaviors were a) clear goals for strict avoidance of any risk-taking behaviors, b) passively expressed goals (i.e., hopes) for avoiding risk-taking behaviors, c) goals for modest experimentation with the more negative risks (e.g., alcohol), d) goals for showing respect to authority, and e) goals to support positive risk-taking behaviors.

The first three themes emerged for how much parents endorsed goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors or how much risk-taking behaviors they were willing to tolerate. The mothers who expressed clear and firm goals for “strict avoidance” ($n = 12$) were adamant in not wanting their child to engage in any risk-taking behaviors and mentioned rules or expectations they had expressed to their children. For example, when asked, “When it comes to using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs, do you have any goals for your teenager?” one European American mother (high SES) responded, “Well I mean clearly our goal is not, that we really don't want them drinking, doing drugs, smoking, and we make that very clear.” Of the mothers that expressed goals for strict avoidance of risk-taking behaviors, six were African American (50%), three were European American (25%), and three were Hispanic (25%). Five of these mothers were from low SES families (35.7%), four were from middle SES families (36.4%), and three were from high SES families (27.3%).

In contrast, other mothers expressed goals for their children to avoid risk-taking behaviors but did so in a more passive or hopeful way ($n = 9$). For example, when asked, “What about using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs? Do you have any goals?” one African American mother (low SES) said, “I wish she wouldn't. It's my goal. Again, I'm not with her 24/7 so hopefully I've given her the correct tools that she needs to make up good

judgment.” Three of the mothers that mentioned goals for avoiding risk-taking but in a more tentative or passive way were African American (25%), two of those mothers were European American (11.1%) and two of those mothers were Hispanic (11.1%). Six of the mothers who mentioned goals for avoiding risk-taking in a passive way were from low SES families (42.9%) and three were from high SES families (27.3%) and none were from middle SES families.

Another theme that emerged was “goals for modest experimentation with negative risks.” Four mothers made comments endorsing experimentation with risk-taking behaviors (e.g., drinking alcohol) in modest amounts. When asked: “When it comes to using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs do you have any goals for your teenage daughter?”, one Hispanic mother (high SES) said, “I have expectations that they're responsible and they can, I mean, like I said before, they try alcohol, um, I don't want to see them drunk.” Mothers might endorse goals for their adolescent to experiment with their friends because they believe that risk-taking behaviors such as drinking alcohol are inevitable or some mothers might have goals for their adolescent to experiment at home because it is a safe place. For example, one European American mother (middle SES) said: “Well that if she experiments with it, she does it in a protected environment. In other words, I would rather she have a glass of wine with Christmas dinner at home than go off and party with her friends and ride in the car with a bunch of kids who've been drinking.” Two of the mothers that mentioned goals for modest experimentation were European American (16.7%), two of those mothers were Hispanic (16.7%), and none were African American. Two of the mothers that mentioned goals for modest experimentation were from low SES families (14.3%), one was from a middle SES family (9.1%), and one was from a high SES family (9.1%).

The goal of “showing respect for authority” was a theme that emerged in several ($n = 13$) mothers’ responses to questions about their goals for adolescent risk-taking. When asked: “So what do you feel are the most important goals for your children?”, one African American mother (low SES) said: “...respect, good attitude, even when someone treats you (badly), to always treat people like you would want to be treated.” And when asked: “What about goals as far as how they act towards authority?” the same mother responded: “...always respect authority.” Seven of the mothers who mentioned goals for showing respect for authority were African American (58.3%), six of those mothers were European American (50%), and two of those mothers were Hispanic (16.7%). Three of the mothers that mentioned goals for showing respect for authority were from low SES families (25%), eight were from middle SES families (72.7%), and four were from high SES families (33.3%).

Several ($n = 10$) of the mothers responded to questions about goals for risk-taking with comments about positive risk-taking behaviors (e.g., meet new people, try new things). For example, when asked: “When it comes to taking risks or testing limits, do you have any goals for your teenage daughter?” one European American mother (middle SES) said: “I would like for her to try new things that are good for her. By that, I don't mean going out and experimenting with drugs and alcohol; I mean try a sport that she's not comfortable with.” Goals for positive risk-taking were mentioned by three African American mothers (25%), four European American mothers (33.3%) and three Hispanic mothers (25%). In regard to SES, four of these mothers were low SES (28.6%), two were middle SES (18.2%), and four were high SES (36.4%).

Parent-Child Relationship Goals

Quantitative analysis. The results for the ANOVAs were nonsignificant indicating that there were no significant differences between the ethnic or SES groups

regarding their responses to the quantitative questions regarding how much they thought about or the importance of the parent-child relationship. Given the low power of those analyses, however, I also examined the frequencies of the mothers' responses descriptively.

The majority of the mothers from all groups (77.1%) reported that they thought about goals to keep up a close relationship with their child very often. This was true across all ethnic groups, although European American mothers were most likely to deviate from this predominant response (33.3%) and African American mothers were least likely (16.7%). African American mothers were the only group in which no mother claimed never to have thought about the goal of keeping a close relationship (see Figure 11). In regard to SES, mothers from low SES families (84.6%) and high SES families (81.8%) were the most likely to endorse the predominant response, and middle SES (36.4%) were the most likely to deviate from it (see Figure 12).

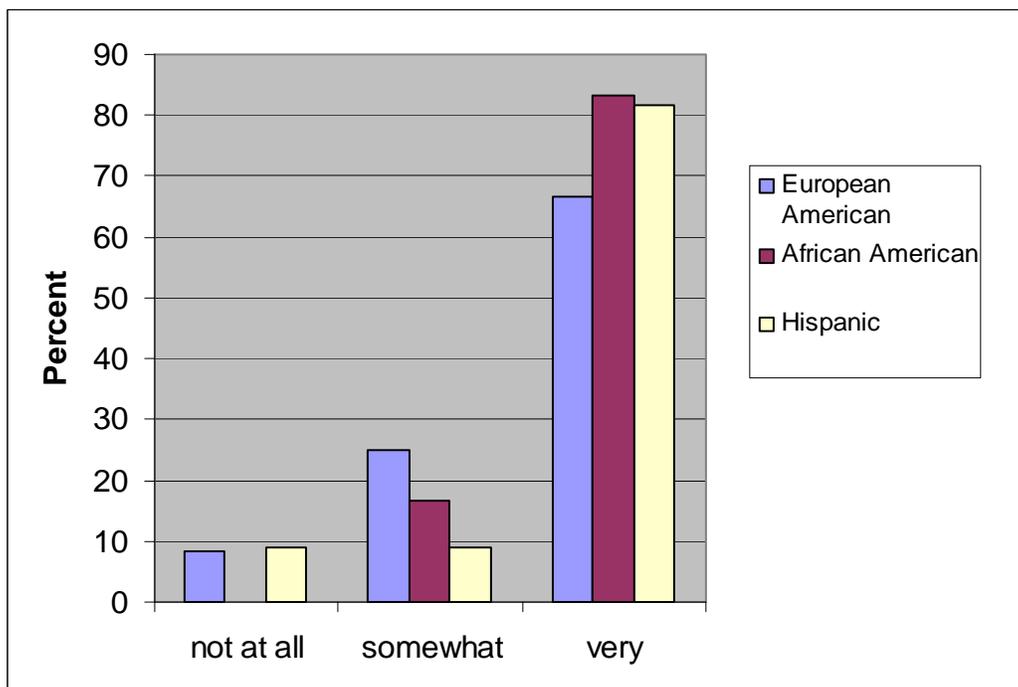


Figure 11. "How often have you thought about keep up a close relationship with you?" [Race]

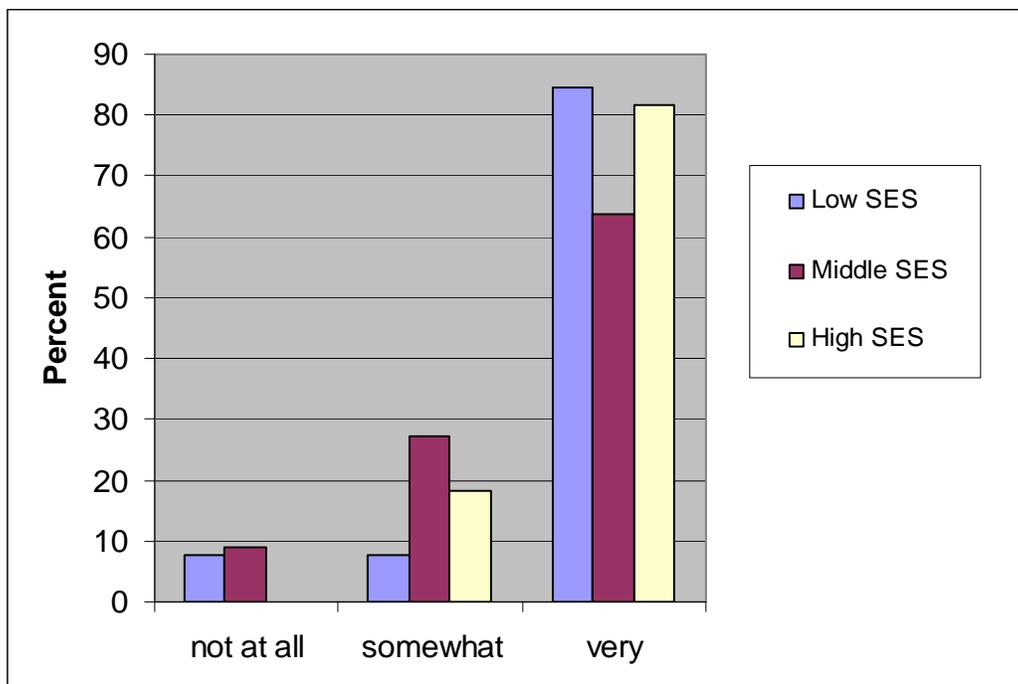


Figure 12. “How often have you thought about keep up a close relationship with you?” [SES]

The most common response of the mothers from all groups (64.7%) was that they thought about goals to get along well with their child very often. European American mothers (66.7%) and African American mothers (75%) were the least likely to deviate from this response and Hispanic mothers (50%) were the most likely. African American mothers were the only group in which no mother claimed never to have thought about the goal of getting along with their child (see Figure 13). Low SES mothers (84.6%) were the least likely to deviate from the predominant response; middle SES (50%) and high SES mothers (54.5%) at least sometimes admitted to not having or only sometimes thought about this issue. Yet a roughly equal percentage of high SES (18.2%) and low SES (15.4%) mothers said they had never thought about this goal, more than the percentage of middle SES mothers (10%) (see Figure 14).

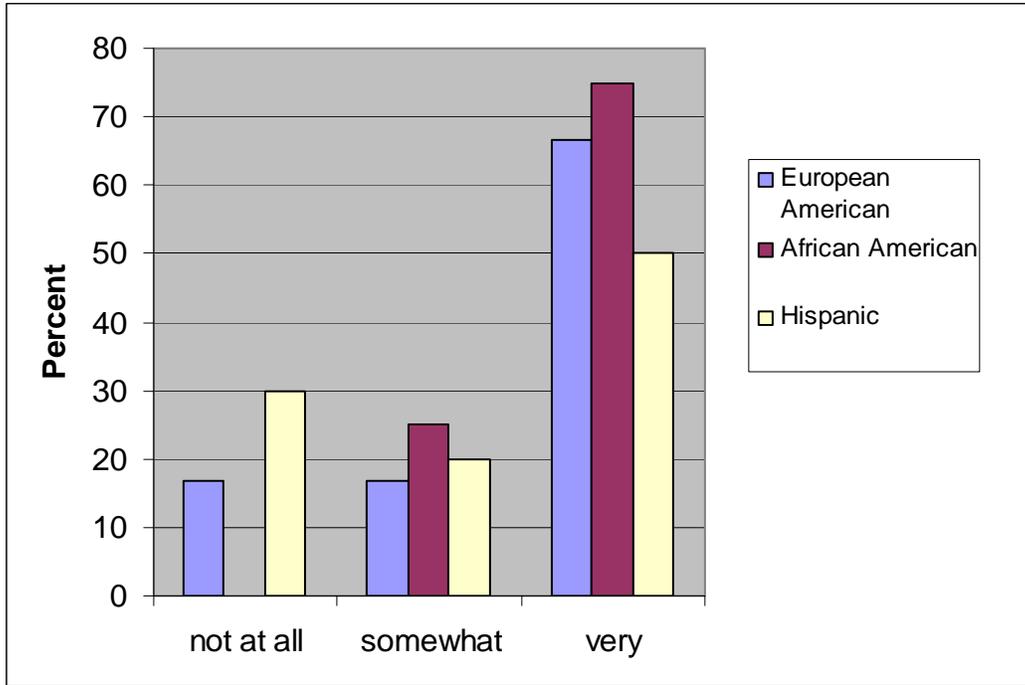


Figure 13. “How often have you thought about get along well with you?” [Race]

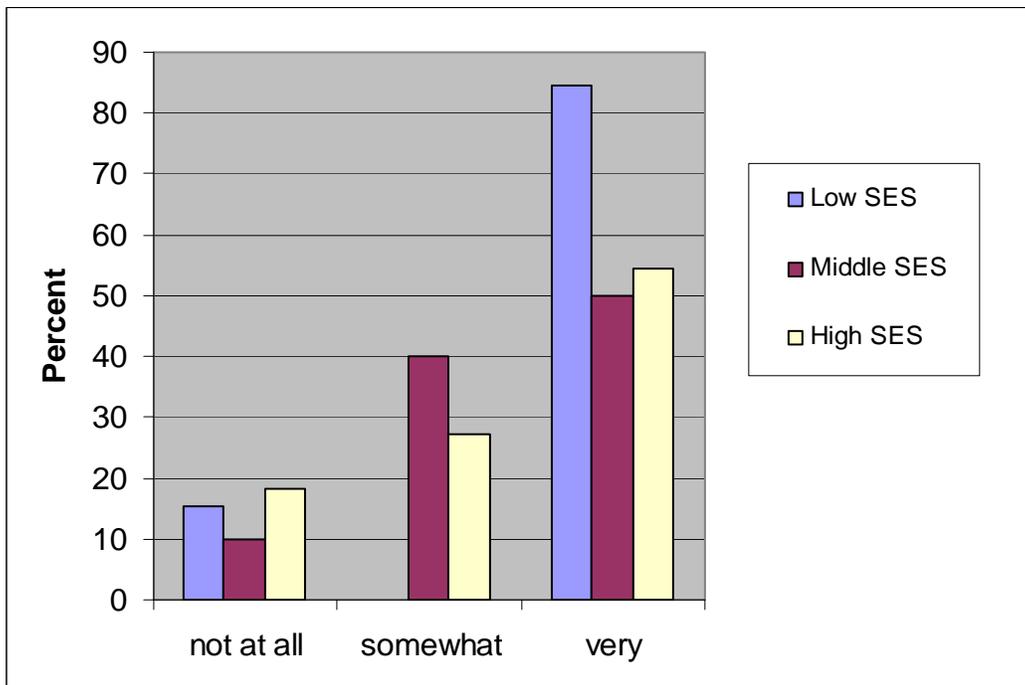


Figure 14. “How often have you thought about get along well with you?” [SES]

The majority of the mothers from all groups (82.9%) reported that the goal to keep up a close relationship with their child was very important. European American mothers (83.3%) and African American mothers (91.7%) were the least likely to deviate from this predominant response, whereas the Hispanic mothers were the most likely (72.7%). Hispanic mothers who deviated said the goal was somewhat important; no Hispanic mothers or African American mothers said the goal was not at all important. The one mother who said this goal was not at all important was European American (8.3%) (see Figure 15). Mothers with middle SES were most likely to deviate from the predominant response (27.3%), however, the one mother who said this goal was not at all important was low SES (see Figure 16).

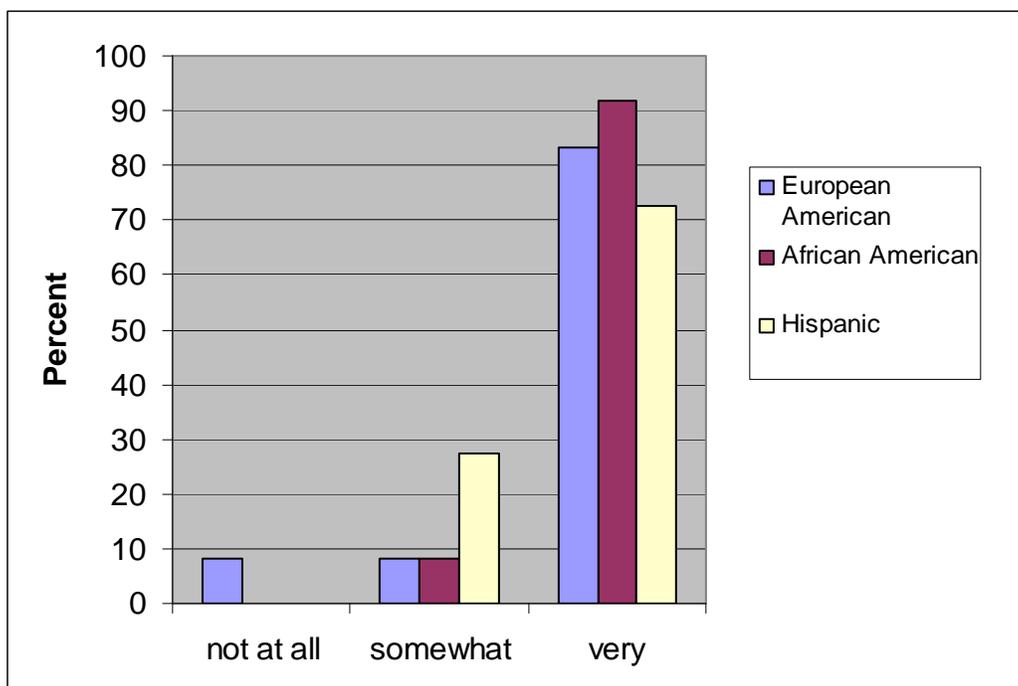


Figure 15. “How important is it to you that your child keep up a close relationship with you?” [Race]

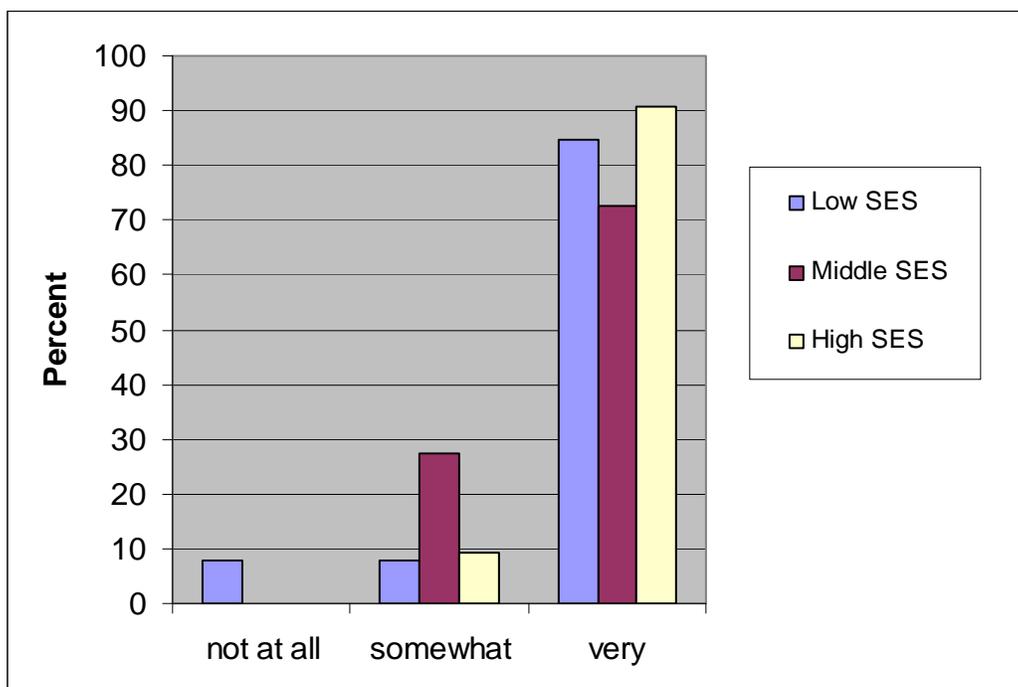


Figure 16. "How important is it to you that your child keep up a close relationship with you?" [SES]

The majority of the mothers from all groups (73.5%) reported that their goals to get along well with their child were very important. Although this response seemed about equally likely in all ethnic groups, the one mother who said that getting along with their child was not at all important was European American (8.3%) (see Figure 17). Mothers from low SES (84.6%) families were especially likely to endorse the predominant response of getting along being very important; middle SES (70%) and high SES (63.6%) mothers were more likely to deviate. The only mother, however, who said the goal was not at all important was a low SES mother (7.7%) (see Figure 18).

Lastly, for the conflict goal pertaining to the parent-child relationship domain, the most common response of mothers across groups (45.7%) was that the adolescent show responsibility and meet obligations to the family. Only 14.3% of all the mothers

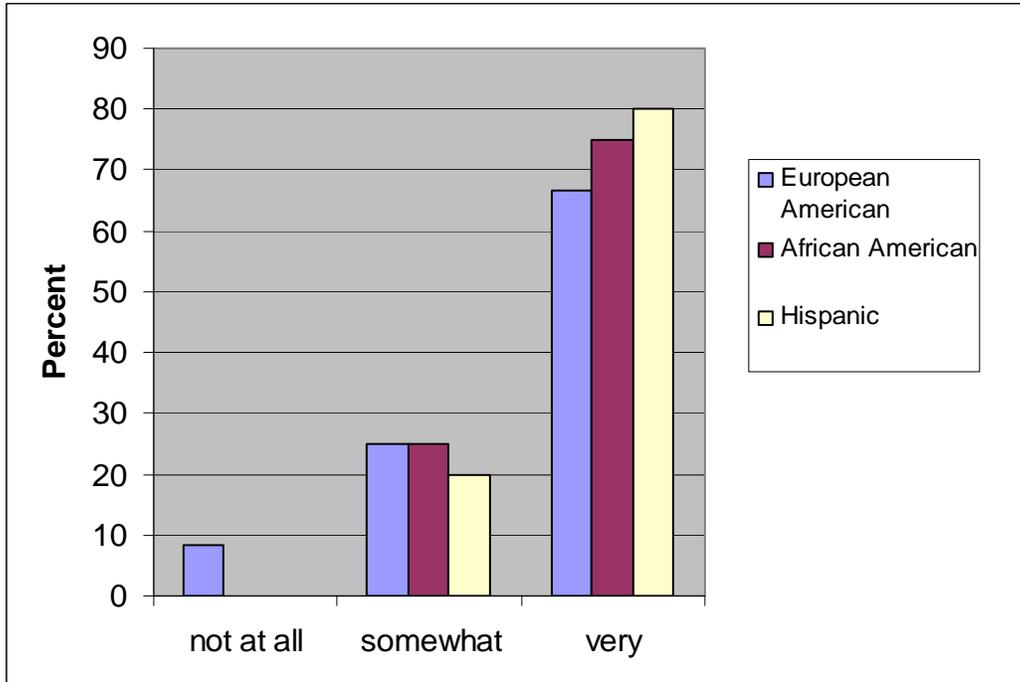


Figure 17. “How important is it to you that your child get along well with you?” [Race]

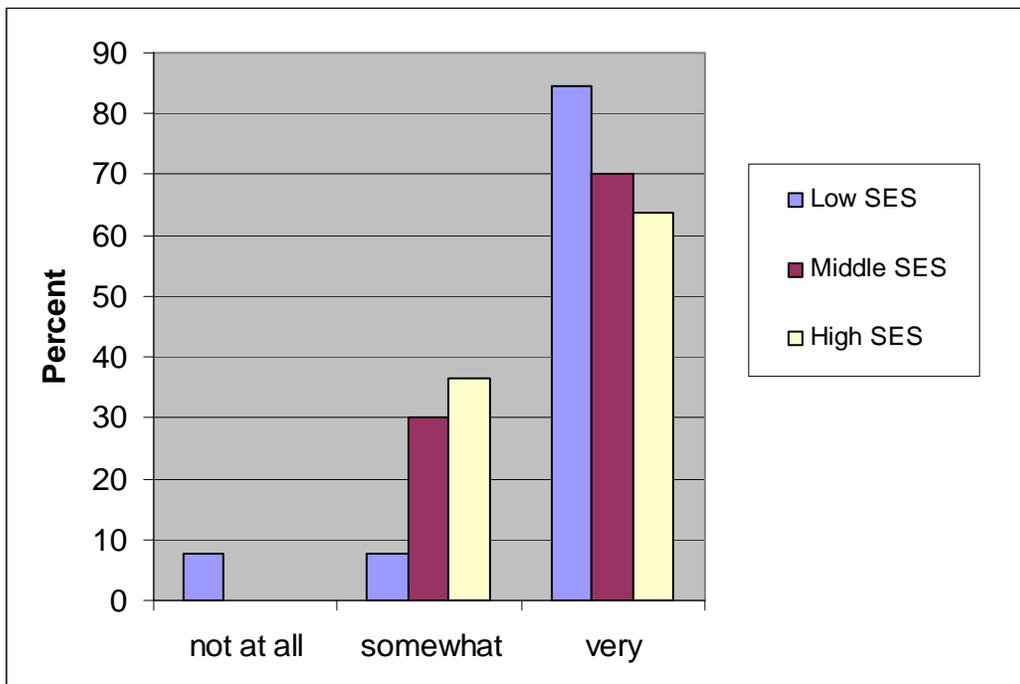


Figure 18. “How important is it to you that your child get along well with you?” [SES]

endorsed a goal for their child to pursue their own interests and dreams. However, many of the mothers (40%) said that both of those goals were equally important. In regard to ethnicity, Hispanic (63.6%) and African American (50%) mothers were especially likely to say the first option of showing respect and meeting family obligation was more important. European Americans (58.3%) were especially likely to say that both options were equally important. Also, European American (16.7%) and African American (25%) mothers were the only mothers who chose the second option, “pursuing his or her own interests and dreams”; none of the Hispanic mothers chose this option alone (see Figure 19). In regard to SES, high SES mothers (27.3%) were most likely of all socioeconomic groups to choose “pursue his/her own interests and dreams” alone (see Figure 20).

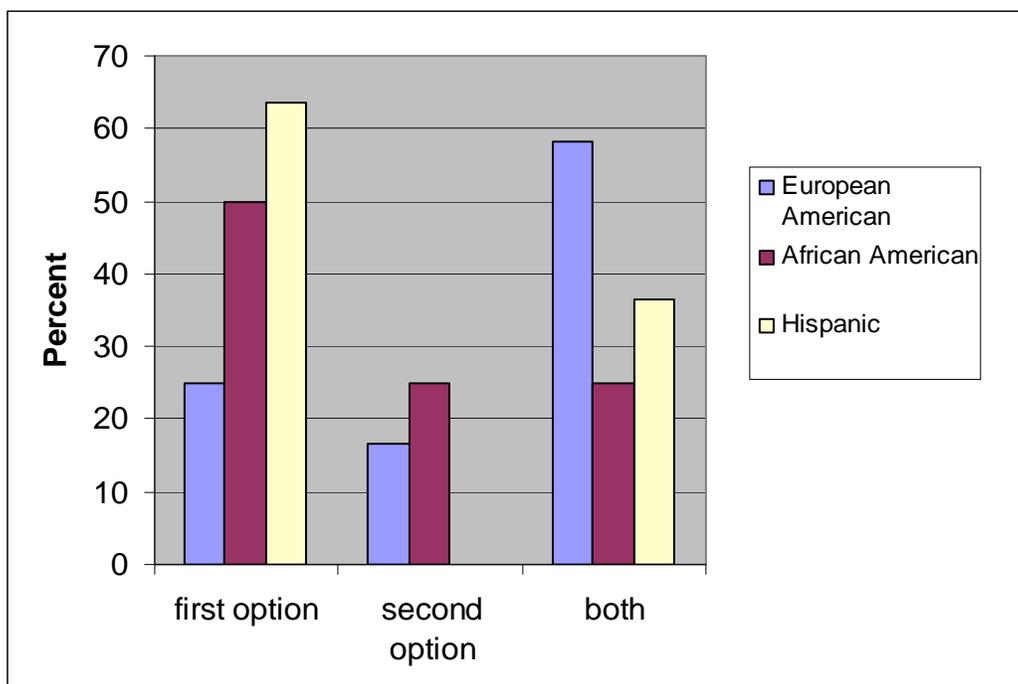


Figure 19. “Is it more important to you that, during adolescence, your child show responsibility and meet obligations to the family or is it more important that he or she pursue his or her own interests and dreams?” [Race]

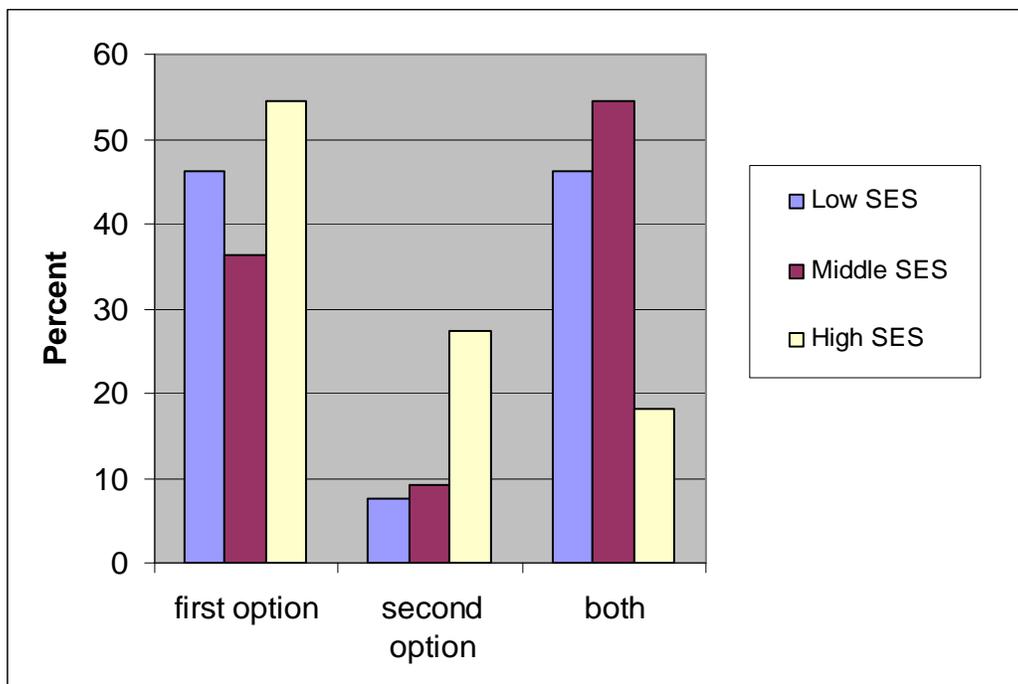


Figure 20. “Is it more important to you that, during adolescence, your child show responsibility and meet obligations to the family or is it more important that he or she pursue his or her own interests and dreams?” [SES]

Qualitative Analysis. In regard to goals for parent-child relationships, the themes that emerged were 1) goals for independence, 2) goals for interdependence, 3) goals for emotional interdependence and 4) goals for openness in communication. The theme that emerged around parental goals for independence encompassed mothers’ comments about wanting their children to be more independent or to pursue their own interests and dreams. Twenty-one mothers (58.3%) made comments endorsing goals for developing or instilling independence in their children. When asked, “What are the most important goals you have for your daughter?” one African American mother (low SES) said, “I want her to be able to handle adulthood and just come to me when she has a problem, not that I’m carrying her through adulthood but I try to make her a little

independent now.” For the same question, one European American mother (middle SES) said, “...being responsible and learning to be an individual and learning to do without the aid of her parents, you know, because she's going to college. Those are goals I'd like to have for her.” Seven of the mothers who articulated goals for independence were African American (58.3%), ten of those mothers were European American (83.3%), and four of those mothers were Hispanic (33.3%). Eight of the mothers who endorsed goals for independence were from low SES families (57.1%), seven of those mothers were from middle SES families (63.6%), and six of those mothers were from high SES families (54.5%).

The theme that emerged around parental goals for interdependence encompassed mothers' comments about wanting their children to remain dependent on them or the family as well as comments about wanting their child to be obligated to the family more than to his or her own interests or dreams. Nineteen mothers (52.3%) of the mothers expressed goals for developing or instilling interdependence in their children. When asked, “What are your goals regarding how close or independent they are from you or your family?” one Hispanic mother (low SES) said, “That they are as independent as they can be.” The interviewer then asked, “During adolescence?” and the mother said, “Oh no! We are talking about adolescence. They need to always ask permission...I want them to rely on me a little while they are young, and I do like them to depend on me, I do enjoy it.” When asked, “What are the most important goals you have for your teenager?” one African American mother (middle SES) responded, “Have respect for their family and care and concern for their family and others; being responsible and showing respect to the family because that's still foundation building. If you are darting out too much on

your own right now it can lead to danger.” Six of the mothers who articulated goals for interdependence were African American (50%), five of those mothers were European American (41.7%), and eight of those mothers were Hispanic (66.7%). Eight of the mothers who endorsed goals for interdependence were from low SES families (57.1%), five of those mothers were from middle SES families (45.5%), and six of those mothers were from high SES families (54.5%).

“Goals for emotional interdependence” was another theme that emerged, though less commonly, in parental goals in the domain of parent-child relationships. These mothers ($n = 5$) made comments about wanting their child to develop a sense of independence but also to remain emotionally close. When asked, “What about how close or independent they are from you or the family? Do you have any goals for that?” one African American (high SES) mother said, “I want him to be close to us and independent from us. I want him to know that he can be in the world and that he’s equipped to accomplish the things that he wants to accomplish but that he’s always got us behind him, but that he doesn’t have to feel like he’s gotta stay near us or have our approval on everything that he does, but that he should know that we’ll love him and there’s nothing that can change that.” Three of the mothers who endorsed goals for emotional interdependence were African American (25%), one of those mothers was European American (8.3%), and one of those mothers was Hispanic (8.3%). One of the mothers who endorsed goals for emotional interdependence was from a low SES family (7.1%), three of those mothers were from middle SES families (27.3%), and one of those mothers was from a high SES family (9.1%).

The last theme in the domain of parent-child relationships was “goals to develop openness in communication.” When asked about goals for the relationship with their teenager, half of the mothers ($n = 18$) expressed goals to have open communication with their teenager such that their teenager is comfortable talking about anything with them as a parent. When asked, “What about her relationship with you? Do you have goals for that?” one European American mother (high SES) said, “The biggest goal is just to have an open, positive relationship where they feel like they can talk to us without fear of consequences...just a goal of very open communication.” Seven of the mothers who endorsed goals for openness were African American (58.3%), ten of those mothers were European American (83.3%), and one of those mothers was Hispanic (8.3%). Six of the mothers who endorsed goals for openness were from low SES families (42.9%), five of those mothers were from middle SES families (45.5%), and seven of those mothers were from high SES families (63.6%).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore what mothers state as their most important goals for their adolescent's development, specifically in the domains of risk-taking behaviors and parent-child relationships. This study provides important contributions to the field of developmental psychology not only because there is a lack of past research that focuses on parental goals for adolescents but also because there is a lack of past research that focuses on the specific domains of risk-taking behaviors and changes in parent-child relationships, domains central to and markers of the "storm and stress" perspective (Arnett, 1999). Furthermore, this study provides data from a diverse sample of mothers which is important because little is known about how goals specifically for adolescents are influenced by social and environmental factors. The purpose of this study was not to explain how goals might influence parental behavior; however, the findings might shed light on the role of goals in parenting that is suggested by theoretical models (Chao, 1995; Eccles, 1992).

In this study, "goal" was defined as something parents hope, wish, or desire for their children. Past literature suggests that parental goals are one important motivation behind parental practices (Chao, 1995; Eccles, 1992) and other literature suggests that goals are means by which parents pass down cultural customs (Greenfield et al., 2003; Phalet & Schonpflug, 2010). If these models are correct, then parental goals should reflect, and perhaps even predict, parenting behavior and should systematically vary according to parents' cultural backgrounds. In contrast, other literature suggests that parental goals are universally similar (Levine, 1977) and that goals are less variable

across cultures than the methods parents use to accomplish their goals (Chao, 1995). My results point to both differences and similarities.

The qualitative methodology of this study was chosen so that a wide range of responses in three ethnic (non-Hispanic White, African American, and Hispanic/Latino) and socioeconomic groups could be documented and studied more extensively in future research. Due to the exploratory nature of this study and the small number of participants, the findings should not be generalized. Nonetheless, these findings reflect trends found in previous research and might be useful in future research aimed at examining parental goals for adolescents.

My first hypothesis was that European American mothers would articulate more goals for autonomy in the parent-adolescent relationship and fewer goals for family obligation than would African American and Hispanic mothers. As predicted, there was a trend for European American mothers to endorse goals that promote independence in adolescents and this trend is illustrated in both the qualitative and quantitative data. When answering open-ended questions about goals for their adolescents, the European American mothers were the most likely to articulate goals for independence compared to African American or Hispanic mothers. Additionally, a higher percentage of African American mothers and Hispanic mothers endorsed the goal that their adolescents show responsibility and meet obligations to the family over pursuing their own dreams compared to European American mothers, who were more likely to endorse goals for their adolescents to pursue their own interests and dreams either alone or together with family obligation. At the same time, mothers from all groups had thought about and valued a close relationship with their teen. And despite a greater emphasis on

independence, European American mothers made the most comments articulating goals for open communication, or a relationship characterized not simply by loyalty to the family but by sharing of feelings, ideas, and opinions, supporting my expectation that they would value emotional closeness.

These results indicate that mothers across ethnic groups have thought about and value closeness and warmth in the relationship with their teen. Yet they differ in emphasis in personal autonomy, family obligation, and emotional closeness characterized by open communication. This is consistent with literature showing that despite differences in parenting practices such as joint decision-making or parental control between African American and European American families, adolescents from both groups perceive similar warmth in the parent-child relationship (Jackson-Newsom, Buchanan, & McDonald, 2008). In sum, in examining goals for parent-child relationship, I found that African American and Hispanic mothers articulated fewer goals for autonomy and more for family obligation whereas European American mothers articulated more goals for personal autonomy (i.e., greater independence) as well as open communication between parent and child. In the context of each of these ethnic groups, all of these goals might be accompanied by parental warmth, because closeness is highly valued and the parenting practices are interpreted differently.

My second hypothesis was that African American and Hispanic mothers would articulate goals for emotional interdependence by emphasizing some distancing in the parent-adolescent relationship through behavioral self-reliance but also continued respect and obligation to the family. Although there was low overall spontaneous mention of goals for emotional interdependence, African American mothers were in fact more likely

to articulate goals for emotional interdependence than were European American and Hispanic mothers. African American mothers were also more likely to articulate goals for respect in the parent-adolescent relationship than were European American and Hispanic mothers. Contrary to my second hypothesis however, Hispanic mothers did not tend to articulate goals for emotional interdependence or respect more often than European American mothers. Yet, a higher percentage of Hispanic mothers articulated goals for family obligation compared to European American and African American mothers. Hispanic mothers were also less likely than African American or European American mothers were to say that keeping up a close relationship with their adolescent was a very important goal, and the most likely to report that they had not given a lot of thought to goals for getting along well with their adolescents.. Hispanic mothers were also the least likely to mention goals for open communication compared to European American and African American mothers. These findings support the possibility that Hispanic mothers care less about personal closeness or avoiding conflict in the parent-child relationship than other mothers because they care more about family obligation and will place emphasis on family obligation even if it causes distress (Hernandez, Garcia, & Flynn, 2010). This set of findings provides more evidence -in addition to that discussed for the first hypothesis- that family loyalty or obligation is perceived differently from relational closeness and getting along well. Importantly, then, goals for parent-adolescent relational closeness and family obligation might be conceptually distinct, at least in some ethnic groups.

From these findings, it appears that mothers across ethnic groups have goals for both separateness and relatedness in the parent-child relationship to some degree.

Although mothers from ethnic minority groups were more likely to endorse collectivistic type goals, such as family obligation, compared to European American groups (consistent with the work of Fuligni et al., 1999; Phalet & Schonpflug, 2010), there were also African American and Hispanic mothers who endorsed goals for fostering independence in their adolescents. This suggests that African American and Hispanic mothers have goals for family obligation and a warm parent-child relationship and also some independence from the family. Therefore, even though there was low spontaneous mention of goals specifically for emotional interdependence, it appears that mothers in all groups do, simultaneously, have goals for relatedness and separateness as suggested by other scholars (e.g., Kagitcibasi, 2005).

My third hypothesis was that European American mothers would endorse goals for some risk-taking behaviors, such as drinking alcohol or defying authority, in their adolescents whereas African American and Hispanic mothers would endorse goals for strict avoidance of risk-taking behaviors. Although the vast majority of the mothers in this study endorsed the goal of having their adolescent avoid alcohol, African American and Hispanic mothers tended to be even more concerned with this goal compared to European American mothers. The only mothers who said that avoiding risk-taking behaviors such as drinking alcohol was not at all important were European American mothers. In contrast, none of the African American mothers endorsed any goals for modest experimentation with risk-taking behaviors. Ethnic differences were even more evident when it came to risk behaviors that involve defying authority (compared to avoiding substance use). All of the African American mothers had thought about avoiding risk-taking behaviors such as defying authority either very often or somewhat

often, whereas several European American and Hispanic mothers reported that they had never thought about such goals. African American mothers were least likely to say that goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors such as defying authority were not very important, whereas European American and Hispanic mothers were more likely than African American mothers to say that this goal was only somewhat important. Furthermore and as expected, a greater percentage of African American mothers articulated goals for strict avoidance of risk-taking behaviors compared to European American and Hispanic mothers. This pattern of findings for African American mothers supports previous research findings that African American parents are more likely to endorse goals to set limits with their adolescents over encouraging independence (Smetana & Chuang, 2001).

There appeared to more consistency across ethnic groups when looking at mothers' goals for avoiding risk-taking that were mentioned in a more passive way. This finding might reflect the reality that wanting children to be safe is a universal goal and some amount of avoiding risks is desired by most mothers. Yet the certainty with which this goal is held, or the extent to which risk-taking is perceived as a threat to such safety, does vary. Across ethnic groups, mothers appeared equally likely to articulate goals for positive risk-taking behaviors, with European American mothers slightly more likely to talk about these goals.

My fourth hypothesis was that mothers with low SES would be more likely to have goals for obedience and respect in their adolescents than mother with high SES. Interestingly, mothers with middle SES were the most likely to articulate goals for showing respect for authority whereas mothers with low and high SES were less likely.

However, in support of this hypothesis, mothers with low SES were the most likely to endorse goals for family obligation and the least likely to endorse goals for the child to pursue his or her own interests and dreams compared to mothers with middle and high SES. Middle and high SES mothers might believe that respect is important for success outside the home whereas low SES mothers believe that it is important for the adolescent to stay obligated to the family.

My fifth hypothesis was that mothers with low SES would be more likely to have goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors compared to mothers with high SES. In support of this hypothesis, I found that many of the low SES and middle SES mothers reported thinking about goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors very often whereas a relatively low percentage of high SES mothers had thought about this goal very often. Additionally, mothers with high SES were the most likely of mothers in all SES groups to say that goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors such as defying authority were not very important, whereas mothers with low and middle SES were more likely than high SES mothers to say this goal was very important. Although mothers with low SES were more likely to articulate goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors in a passive way than other mothers, only a slightly higher percentage of low SES mothers articulated goals for strict avoidance of risk-taking behaviors compared to mothers with middle and high SES. Because mothers with low SES were more likely to mention goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors passively it might suggest that the low SES mothers were especially aware of the threats or dangers of risk-taking in their environment but were less likely to feel they had power to prevent these behaviors than other mothers. This would support

past literature indicating that fewer perceived resources are associated with lower parental efficacy (Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999).

In contrast, high SES mothers articulated the most goals of any SES group for modest experimentation with alcohol whereas low SES mothers were least likely to articulate this goal. This might suggest that high SES mothers are less concerned with the potential dangers of modest negative risk-taking, given greater resources in their environment that might buffer such dangers.

Mothers with high SES were slightly more likely to mention goals for positive risk-taking behaviors than were low and middle SES mothers. This finding might suggest that mothers with high SES feel that their children have more opportunities available and have more freedom to explore these opportunities without fear of financial consequences. This explanation is supported by the finding that high SES mothers were the most likely to endorse a goal for their adolescent to pursue their own interests over goals for family obligation.

Limitations, Contributions, and Future Directions

This study had a relatively low sample size ($N = 36$); the qualitative design together with the small sample size limits generalizability. However, ideas drawn from these mothers can be studied more extensively in larger samples. With larger samples, one could make finer distinctions of SES than I was able to do. In this study “low SES” was defined as a family income below \$40,000 a year; however, a family making \$40,000 a year might be in a very different situation than a family with no income at all. Similarly, “high SES” was defined as a family income greater than \$80,000 a year, but there might be an important difference between \$80,000 a year and, say, \$150,000 a year.

Luthar and Latendresse (2005) have written about parenting challenges of affluent families, but these families made \$125,381 on average. Although it is possible that SES matters less to goals of the type studied than does ethnicity, greater differentiation between SES might have led to more variation among the mothers in this sample.

Social desirability is another factor that might have limited the variability I found. The mothers in this study might not have been comfortable expressing goals for experimentation if they believed it would not be socially acceptable. And although interviewers were trained to probe mothers sincere beliefs and experiences at length, in many cases this probably did not occur to a sufficient extent. Thus, further efforts should be made – perhaps by talking to mothers repeatedly over time – to elucidate honest and heartfelt responses based on real-life experiences.

In regard to the methodology, the mix of qualitative and quantitative questions led to contributions to this area of research by elucidating a range of goals in different contexts while also asking about goals that have been examined in past research. I had anticipated that the quantitative questions would be less sensitive to mothers' wide array of goals than the qualitative questions. Indeed, the qualitative analysis produced themes that were unexpected, such as goals for positive risk-taking. However, the mothers' responses to the qualitative and quantitative questions were sometimes conflicting. For example, a mother might endorse a goal for avoiding risk-taking behaviors as very important in the quantitative section but later, in her elaboration of a qualitative question, articulate goals for some experimentation. Additionally, several of the mothers endorsed conflicting goals, such as goals for independence as well as family obligation. This is not necessarily surprising considering the complexity of real life thinking and that the

mothers in this study might not have thought deeply about these questions prior to the interview. Future research could focus more on conflicting goals questions, such as the ones in this study, so as to know how mothers prioritize complex and conflicting goals.

Another contribution of this study was the distinction between importance of goals and how much mothers had thought about such goals. I found greater variation in mothers' responses to the quantitative questions that asked mothers how much thought they had given to their goals compared to the quantitative questions that asked mothers how important those goals were to them. This suggests that although mothers responded that some goals were very important to them, they did not necessarily think about them very often. This difference illustrates that quantitative ratings of the importance of goals might not actually reflect how much mothers consciously think about these goals in their daily lives. The qualitative questions allowed mothers to convey their goals more fully, even if they had not put a lot of thought towards these goals prior to the interview. Future research could address how goals are associated with parenting practices to better assess how much these goals affect mothers' daily lives.

Future research could also include more follow up questions that examine why mothers think they have certain goals. For example, it might have been beneficial to ask mothers if the threats that they perceived in the environment did indeed influence the goals they endorsed.

Conclusion

Mothers in this study appeared to be both similar and different in their goals for their adolescents. In conducting these interviews, it appeared that all mothers endorsed goals that would keep their child safe, consistent with Levine (1977). Most

mothers tended to think that goals for avoiding risk-taking behaviors and staying close with their children were important during adolescence. Storm and stress notions that risk-taking and distancing in the parent-child relationship are common (Arnett, 1999) did not seem to interfere with such goals, which were strongly held. However, some mothers deviated from typical responses and magnified over the population of all mothers, these deviations might represent a significant number of mothers.

Parental goals are an important aspect of parenting (Chao, 1995; Eccles, 1992; Hastings & Grusec, 1998), and this is no less true during the adolescent years than during childhood. Mothers might have innumerable goals for their children including goals that were not documented here. This study was a small step of a long process that is aimed at examining how parents from different backgrounds approach the task of parenting adolescents and what steps parents take to aid in their adolescents' development during this period.

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Appendix A

Pre-Screening Interview

Introduce yourself, and ask for person you are trying to reach.

Verify correct name and spelling (record any corrections / additions above). Ask the mother if she has just a couple of minutes for you to ask a couple of questions.

Thank you so much for your willingness to be interviewed. Because we need to interview mothers from a variety of different backgrounds and experiences, and because we can interview only a relatively small number of mothers, we need to ask a few questions of all our mothers before we can decide who to interview. Are you able to speak privately for a couple of minutes right now? (If mother says no or hesitates, offer to call back at a better time, and find out when that would be.)

We will keep this information completely confidential. It will be stored in a separate place from your name and contact information.

Pre-Screening Information for Participant # _____

From where did this referral come? _____

How old are each of your children? (List all, and for each, ask whether child is a boy or girl. Do not record names if given.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How would you describe your race or ethnicity? (Get answer in their words. If necessary, follow up with “Do you describe yourself as: [European-American? African-American? Hispanic? Latina/o?]” beginning with the ethnic group that seems to best describe this person.)

Next I need to get an idea of your family’s total annual income, that is, the amount of money your family takes in from all sources in one year, approximately. (Examples, if needed: earnings, disability, child support). I’m going to some different options – just tell me which option best describes your total family income in a year.

- 1) under \$20,000
- 2) between \$20 and \$40,000
- 3) between \$40 and \$60,000 (median for county+/- \$10,000)
- 4) between \$60 and 80,000

5) above \$80,000

Ok, finally for now, I need to find out what the best times of the day and week are for a possible interview:

Thank you for giving us this information so that we can make sure to interview mothers from all kinds of different backgrounds and experiences. We will give you a call within the next week to let you know whether we will be able to do an interview with you, and if so, to schedule it. If we cannot interview you, we hope you will consider participating in a later part of the study that involves filling out a questionnaire. We will be looking for many more mothers to participate in that part of our study.

Scheduling Information

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Parents' Beliefs about Adolescents and Parenting of Adolescents: Interviews

Informed Consent Form to Participate in Research
Christy Buchanan, PhD Co-Principal Investigator
Joseph Grzywacz, PhD Co-Principal Investigator

Introduction

You are invited to be in a study. Research studies are designed to gain scientific knowledge that might help people. You are being asked to take part in this study because you have an adolescent child between the ages of 11 and 18 years old. Your participation is voluntary. Please take your time in making your decision as to whether or not you want to participate. Ask the study staff to explain any words or information in this document that you do not understand.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' attitudes and beliefs about adolescents, as well as their beliefs about parenting during the adolescent years. We also want to learn about what makes it easier or more difficult for parents to use the parenting strategies they think are best with their adolescents. This research is important for understanding how parents from a variety of backgrounds interact with their adolescents, and for developing programs that help parents raise healthy children.

How Many People Will Take Part in the Study?

46 mothers or primary female caregivers of adolescents will take part in this study. Mothers will be recruited through community organizations such as churches and local youth agencies, as well as local retail locations.

What Is Involved in the Study?

If you agree to participate in this study you will be interviewed. The interview will last between one and two hours. The interview will be tape-recorded, and then transcribed (written down). During the interview, you will be asked questions about your beliefs about "normal" adolescent behavior and development. The interviewer will also ask you to talk about different ways of parenting that you believe are appropriate or healthy for adolescents. There will also be questions about things that make parenting adolescents easier or more difficult. You are free to stop the interview or take a break at any time.

The interview will be audio-recorded. This is so that we can capture everything you say accurately. We will use the information that you share with us during the interview to better understand the best ways of parenting adolescents. You can ask us to stop the

recording at any time. After the interview, you can contact us if you decide you don't want us to use the audiotape of your interview. The audiotape will be destroyed once its use in this study is finished.

How Long Will I Be in the Study?

You will be in this study for one to two hours. You will be asked if you are willing to be contacted for a follow up survey within the next six months.

Will You Be Paid for Participating?

You will receive a \$20 gift card to a local store at the end of your participation in this study.

What Are the Risks of the Study?

We do not anticipate any risk in your participating in this study. However, it is possible that you might become uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You may choose not to answer any question(s) you do not wish to for any reason. You can stop the interview at any time.

In this study you might provide information that you consider confidential or private. Any information you give us will be kept confidential. Neither the audiotape nor the transcript of your interview will be connected with your name. Any information in the interview that might identify you personally will be cut from the transcript. Instead of using your name, we will assign a study number to your information. Only our study staff will be able to see or hear your interview information.

Are There Benefits to Taking Part in the Study?

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. However, the scientific understanding gained from this study might help other people, because it will be used to develop ways to promote positive parenting of adolescents in the future.

What about the Use, Disclosure and Confidentiality of Information?

The data collected will be kept in a secure location. Only study staff will have access to the research records and passwords for office computers and networks are protected. When research data are no longer useful, they will be destroyed. Confidentiality may be broken in order to protect you or others if information arises in the course of the research that suggests you intend to harm yourself or others.

What Are the Costs?

There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

Whom Do I Call if I Have Questions or Problems?

For questions about the study, contact one of the study investigators:

Christy Buchanan at (336) 758-5123 or buchanan@wfu.edu

Joseph Grzywacz at (336) 716-2237 or grzywacz@wfubmc.edu

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a group of people who review the research to protect your rights. If you have a question about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, (336) 758-5888.

You will be given a signed copy of this consent form.

Signatures

By signing below, you indicate that you are willing to participate in this research project.

Participant Name (Printed)

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Parents' Beliefs about Adolescents and Parenting of Adolescents Parent In-Depth Interview Guide 2-26-10

First go over informed consent with mother. Give her one copy that she can look at while you talk; let her know this is her copy to keep for future reference. Ask whether she wants you to read it through with her or just summarize the main points. Go through each section and make sure you communicate in accurate lay language (either word for word w/ clarification as needed or in summary form) the critical points for that section. Pay attention to non-verbal cues indicating that the mother understands, and if need be ask if she understands what you are saying.

Next, verify that it is ok to tape the interview, and start the taping.

Finally, right before starting, let the mother know there are no right or wrong answers, and that the most important thing is that she share her own experiences and perspectives.

I. Participant Background Information

I am going to begin with a few questions about you, so I can get to know you better. This will help me with other topics we will discuss.

Have you lived your entire life in _____ County?

Tell me about other places you have lived.

How long have you lived in the U.S.? In N.C.? How did you come to NC?

Tell me about places in _____ County you have lived.

Please tell me about your education.

Are you married? Have you ever been married? How many times?

Tell me about your spouse

Some of the questions will repeat or verify information you were asked in the screening interview, but because we were not allowed to keep those documents, I need to get this information again.

Tell me about your children.

How many do you have? How old are they? Gender? Grade? Relationship to children (biological mother, etc.) Do they all have the same father? Do any of them have a driver's license? Permit? School attended? School performance?

Record information about age, gender, and grade (if applicable) of all children. (**Do not record names** if given –you can indicate child #1, child #2.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How would you describe your race or ethnicity? (Get answer in their words. If necessary, follow up with “Do you describe yourself as: [European-American? African-American? Hispanic? Latina/o?]” beginning with the ethnic group that seems to best describe this person.)

Do you describe your teenage children’s ethnicity in the same way?

Do you work outside the home? If yes, what kind of work do you do? Have you always done this kind of work? Tell me about your current employment situation.

Interviewer should be aware of the following four sections of the interview and help guide mother as necessary through them.

- 1) what is normal or healthy behavior during adolescence
- 2) what goals parents have for their adolescent children
- 3) what parents think are the best ways to parent an adolescent child; and
- 4) things that make being a “good” or “effective” parent easy or hard.

There are 5 parts to the interview – in the first we want to talk about what you think is “normal” or “healthy” adolescent behavior. Remember that we are not looking for any particular answers, and there is no “right” or “wrong” answer. The best answers are what you think about these things. (Reiterate the point about needing to hear her real perspective—that she should not try to figure out what we want to hear – throughout the interview. What we want to hear is HER honest perspective.)

II. Beliefs about “normal” or “healthy” adolescent development and behavior

Goal: to elicit ideas and beliefs about normal adolescent behavior, particularly in the 5 domains of interest (risk-taking, mood, parent-child relationships; positive behaviors; health/self-care). Elements of and related to beliefs about behaviors being “normal” are whether a behavior is “typical of most adolescents”, “unavoidable”, “inevitable”, or “important for healthy” development. We also want to know at what level the various behaviors are “normal”, “typical”, “unavoidable”, “inevitable”, or “important for healthy” development. Use probes as necessary to elicit this information.

1. What types of behavior do you think are *normal* for adolescents?

Possible follow ups: Why do you say that is normal? Typical of most adolescents?

Is it inevitable or unavoidable?

If mother is really having trouble answering what is normal/typical, ask “why do you think it's hard to say what's normal or typical?” and if she still struggles, you can ask “is it because you think adolescents are so different that nothing is normal/typical ?”

1a. Is normal behavior different for girls and boys? How so?

1b. For any “negative” behaviors that the parent says are “normal” or “typical of most adolescents”, ask whether parent thinks these behaviors are “healthy” in the sense that it is good for the adolescent to experience / engage in these things.

1c. Ask about specific domains of interest. If parent has already addressed a domain, you can say “you might have already addressed this, but let me just make sure.”

Some parents have told us about some things they think are normal or typical of most adolescents. I want to see what you think about these things. What about _____? Would you say that this is “normal”? Typical? Do you think adolescents are more likely to _____ compared to younger or older people? Is it inevitable / unavoidable?

If necessary, follow up with: What makes you say that? What exactly do adolescents normally or typically do that you think reflects _____ ?

How much of _____ would be normal or typical, and at what point would _____ no longer be normal or typical?

If parent espouses that negative developments are normal/typical/unavoidable/inevitable, ask “Is it healthy? In other words, are these types of behaviors they think adolescents need to engage in to grow up in a healthy way? Are these behaviors good for the teenager? Would they worry if their teenager was NOT engaging in such behaviors? Why? Why not?”

Then ask ... “How much of this sort of behavior is healthy? When does it become unhealthy? Would you worry if your child did not _____? Would you worry if they did? Why or why not?”

For each general & specific probe, try to get at beliefs about normal/ typical/ unavoidable/ inevitable/ healthy if these things don't come up naturally.

- What about taking risks, testing limits, or getting into trouble?
 - disobeying authority
 - using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs
- What about having difficulties with mood or emotions
 - feeling down or depressed
 - feeling angry

- What about having problems or difficulties in relationships with parents
 - talking back to or fighting with parents
 - being unwilling to share things with parents

Even though some of the things we've been talking about –like risk-taking, moodiness, and parent-child conflict – can be stressful for parents, some parents think it is important for adolescents to do these things to develop into healthy adults. I'd like to see what you think, by having you answer just a few questions using the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3)

For normal and healthy teenage development ...

How important do you think it is for teenagers to experiment with things like drinking alcohol? 1 2 3

How important do you think it is for teenagers to experience ups and downs in mood? 1 2 3

How important do you think it is for teenagers to fight with their parents? 1 2 3

Would you be worried or concerned if... (for items answered "yes", ask how much, somewhat or very? – if there is any question about level of worry, use entire 3 point scale)

... your teenager experimented with drinking alcohol? 1 2 3

...your teenager drinking alcohol quite often? 1 2 3

...your teenager was having a lot of negative moods? 1 2 3

...your teenager was fighting with you several times a week? 1 2 3

- What about exhibiting positive traits (synonyms - characteristics, attitudes) and behaviors
 - being kind to kids who are not in their circle of friends/other kids whether or not they are friends
 - volunteering to help at home or in the community for no reward
- What about adolescents' self-care ... for example physical exercise, eating, or sleep? (Find out what the mother thinks is normal for these things.)
 - getting physical exercise
 - eating
 - sleeping

Now I have a couple more questions using the options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3)

For normal and healthy teenage development ...

How important do you think it is for teenagers to show positive characteristics such as kindness toward kids that aren't in their circle of friends or volunteering in the community? 1 2 3

How important do you think it is for teenagers to show positive habits regarding physical exercise, eating, and sleep? 1 2 3

"How worried or concerned would you be if..."

... your teenager was not showing positive characteristics such as kindness toward kids that aren't in their circle of friends or volunteering in the community? 1 2 3

...your teenager were not showing positive habits regarding physical exercise, eating, or sleep? 1 2 3

III. Goals for adolescent children

Goal: to learn how parents want their children to behave and what they want them to accomplish during adolescence.

Synonyms for goals – what you hope for them to be like, what you wish, expectations only in the positive sense (i.e., expectations for positive outcomes).

Ok, our second section is about parents' goals for adolescent children. Parents usually have goals – hopes, wishes, expectations for good things -- for their children. Some goals are for very specific behaviors or accomplishments, for example, graduating from high school. Others are more subtle and have to do with character traits like becoming more independent or responsible. Some are goals for the short-term, such as how they act or what they do during adolescence, and some are long-term, for their future. We are most interested in the goals you have for your children *during their adolescent years, or by the end of the adolescent years*. Again, remember, there are no right or wrong answers – what's most important is that I find out what you really think.

1. What do you feel are the most important goals you have for your adolescent child(ren)? (If necessary, remind them that we are most interested in goals for behavior or accomplishments *during their adolescent years, or by the end of the adolescent years*).

1a. How does age of the adolescent affect your goals? Gender?

1b. I want to ask about some goals for some specific behaviors now. You might have thought about goals for the behaviors I'm going to mention or you might not have – just let me know whether you have goals and if so, what they are. If they tell you they haven't thought about a goal in a particular case, ask something like "If you think about it right now..." If they HAVE thought about it, just ask about what their goals are.

When it comes to _____, do you have any goals (synonyms if necessary: wishes, hopes, desires, positive expectations) for your teenage children? What are they? If specific probes are not addressed, ask "what goals do you have for your adolescent(s)

with respect to (specific probe)? Be sure to probe for what they WANT to happen in each case!

- taking risks or testing limits?
 - how they act toward authority
 - using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs (probe differences among these substances if necessary or among different types of drugs if necessary)
- their mood or emotions
- their relationships with you
 - how much they do or share with you
 - how close to or independent they are from you or family
- the positive traits and behaviors they exhibit
 - kindness toward kids who aren't in their circle of close friends/other kids whether or not they are friends
 - how much they help at home or in the community for no reward
- their self-care?
 - getting regular physical exercise
 - eating healthy foods
 - getting adequate sleep

Find out what “regular exercise”, “healthy eating” or “adequate sleep” means to the parents if they endorse it.

I have a set of cards naming some different goals, hopes, and expectations a parent might have for a child's teenage years, and I have a few questions using the following options, not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3). Use Q – sort procedure; present cards in order indicated.

First, how often have you thought about each of these possible goals? How much thought have you given to each thing? Place each goal with the card indicating how much you've thought about this before tonight.

...avoid using alcohol? 1 2 3

...avoid taking other risks that involve defying authority? 1 2 3

...avoid extremes in emotion? 1 2 3

...keep up a close relationship with you? 1 2 3

...get along well with you? 1 2 3

...be kind to kids who are not in their circle of friends/ other kids whether or not they are friends 1 2 3

...be willing to help others for no reward? 1 2 3

...get regular physical exercise (at least three times a week)? 1 2 3

...get at least 8 hours of sleep most nights? 1 2 3

Second, for each of these goals, hopes, or expectations for your child's teenage years, *how important is it to you* that each of these things happens for your child. Place each goal with the card indicating how important it is.

- ...avoid using alcohol? 1 2 3
- ...avoid taking other risks that involve defying authority? 1 2 3
- ...avoid extremes in emotion? 1 2 3
- ...keep up a close relationship with you? 1 2 3
- ...get along well with you? 1 2 3
- ...be kind to kids who are not in their circle of friends/ other kids whether or not they are friends 1 2 3
- ...be willing to help others for no reward? 1 2 3
- ...get regular physical exercise (at least three times a week)? 1 2 3
- ...get at least 8 hours of sleep most nights? 1 2 3

1c. Now I'm going to ask about some goals that might conflict with each other. I'd like you to tell me which of each pair of goals is more important to you, and why. [For Iwer: These are other goals for adolescent children that are not specifically in the 5 domains of interest, but are hypothesized to be related to ethnicity and to parenting]:

Make sure the mother describes her thinking about these things. She may choose one of the other, or say she can't choose or they are both important in certain ways. Any of these types of answers are ok as long as she talks about her beliefs and values on these issues.

...is it more important to you that, during adolescence, your child fit in with or conform to his/her peers OR is it more important to you that your child be able to speak his/her mind or do what he/she wants even if it goes against the crowd?

...is it more important to you that, during adolescence, your child show responsibility and meet obligations to the family OR is it more important that he/she pursue his/her own interests and dreams

...is it more important to you that, during adolescence, your child have or acting in accordance with a particular religious faith OR is it more important that your child question religious principles and make his/her own choices about what to believe.

IV. Beliefs about effective parenting of adolescents

Goal: to see whether parents endorse the importance of the same domains of effective parenting that are promoted in the scientific parenting literature (love & involvement; monitoring; rules & guidance; modeling), and to see whether parents have ideas about specific ways to achieve effective parenting in those domains. In this section, there should be a greater emphasis on doing activities as a family in order to make the teenager feel loved etc. Some families might relate better to the concept of family activities compared to one-on-one activities.

Our third topic is parents' beliefs about effective parenting...

1. Most every parent wants to be “good” or “effective” parents. So, what I want to know is what being a “good parent” or an “effective parent” means to you when you think about parenting adolescent children? Please remember that I want your ideas and opinions, not what you think might be the advice of some “expert” on parenting! Even the so-called “experts” have different opinions!

In your ideal world, what kinds of things do you try to do, or believe you should do, to be a good or effective parent to your adolescent child?

1a. Some people think parents of adolescents should find ways to express love to their teenagers and should continue to do things with them and be involved in their lives. Other people think that because of all the changes they are going through adolescents often don't want their parents around and get embarrassed when parents express love or want to do things with them. What do you think?

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).

How important is it for parents of adolescents to express their love to their adolescent children? 1 2 3

How important is it for parents of adolescents to do things with their adolescent children? 1 2 3

Tell me about the things you do to try to express love to your adolescent child(ren)?
What kinds of things do you do as a parent that would make your teenager feel loved?

Tell me about what you do to be involved with them or share activities with them, if anything.

How important is it for parents of adolescents to engage in one-on-one activities with their adolescent children? 1 2 3

How important is it for parents of adolescents to engage in family activities with their adolescent children? 1 2 3

How difficult /hard is it for you to express love to and do things with your adolescent? (not at all, somewhat, very)? Why? Why not? 1 2 3

Be sure to probe here ... Is there any aspect of expressing love or being involved where the parent feels she struggles? Could use help? Probe: If you were able to sit down with someone who is really experienced in parenting adolescents, what questions might you ask about how to express love or be involved with your teenage child, what would you want to know? Are there specific situations you've faced where you didn't know what to do? Other possible probes: Has it ever been difficult in the past (if it's not now)? What are some of the things you think make it difficult for other parents to express love / stay involved?

There are different ways of expressing love. I have several things parents might think are more or less important for expressing love to teenagers. I'd like to find out how you feel about these specific things.

**Use Q-sort procedure. Show parent ALL cards in indicated order, then go back and have parent rate each option

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).

How important is it for parents to _____ for teenagers to feel loved?

... listen to the adolescent's problems? 1 2 3

... ask the adolescent about his/her dreams? 1 2 3

... do things with the adolescent? 1 2 3

... give the adolescent compliments or praise? 1 2 3

... have regular family activities and traditions? 1 2 3

... share stories about the family and the child? 1 2 3

... just meet their basic needs for food and shelter, without worrying about most of these other things? 1 2 3

Once parent has rated all options using Q-sort or verbal ratings, ask them why they thought certain things were very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. Do this follow up thinking about the set or subsets of questions, not every individual option.

1b. Some people think parents of adolescents should find ways to know how their teenagers are spending their time, who they are hanging out with, how they are spending their money, and things like that. Other people think teenagers need privacy and that they will resent and rebel against what they see as parental intrusion or "control". What do you think?

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).

How important is it for parents of adolescents to keep track of and know about the activities and behavior of their adolescent children? 1 2 3

Tell me about the things you do to try to "keep track of" your adolescent child(ren) at the level you think is best.

How difficult /hard is it for you to keep track of what your adolescent is doing and who they are with? (not at all, somewhat, very)? Why? Why not? Where could you use help? or If you were able to sit down with some parenting expert for advice on how to "keep track" of your teenage child, what would you want to know? 1 2 3

Be sure to probe here ... Is there any aspect of keeping track of teenage children where the parent feels she struggles? Could use help? Probe: If you were able to sit down with someone who is really experienced in parenting adolescents, what questions might you ask about how to keep track your teenage child, what would you want to know? Are

there specific situations you've faced where you didn't know what to do? Other possible probes: Has it ever been difficult in the past (if it's not now)? What are some of the things you think make it difficult for other parents to keep track of teenage children?

There are different ways parents might "keep track" of teenagers. I have a list of some things parents might think are more or less important for keeping track of teenagers. I'd like to find out how you feel about some of these things.

**Use Q-sort procedure. Show parent ALL cards in indicated order, then go back and have parent rate each option

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).

How important is it for parents to....?

...ask questions of their adolescent on these topics? 1 2 3

...wait for the adolescent to offer information on these topics, *rather than* asking questions? 1 2 3

... know the parents of the adolescent's friends? 1 2 3

... talk with parents of the adolescent's friends about what the adolescent does? 1 2 3

... know the adolescent's friends? 1 2 3

Once parent has rated all options using Q-sort or verbal ratings, ask them why they thought certain things were very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. Do this follow up thinking about the set or subsets of questions, not every individual option.

1c. Some people think parents of adolescents should make rules and put limits on what their adolescent can do. Other people think it is important for teenagers to be able to experiment and make their own decisions, and that parents should not have a lot of rules at this age. What do you think?

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).

How important is it for parents of adolescents to have rules and set limits for their adolescent children? 1 2 3

Tell me about the things you do to try to give the amount of guidance or limits for your adolescent child(ren) that you think is best. 1 2 3

How difficult /hard is it for you to set limits for your adolescent and follow through on them? (not at all, somewhat, very)? Why? Why not? 1 2 3

Be sure to probe here ... Is there any aspect of setting rules or limits for teenage children where the parent feels she struggles? Could use help? Probe: If you were able to sit down with someone who is really experienced in parenting adolescents, what questions might you ask about setting rules or limits for your teenage child, what would you want to know? Are there specific situations you've faced where you didn't know what to do?

Other possible probes: Has it ever been difficult in the past (if it's not now)? What are some of the things you think make it difficult for other parents to set rules or limits and follow through on them?

There are different things parents might have rules about for teenagers. I'd like to find out how important you feel it is to have rules for these different things when it comes to teenagers.

**Use Q-sort procedure. Show parent ALL cards in indicated order, then go back and have parent rate each option.

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).
How important is it for parents to set limits or rules on ...?

... dating 1 2 3

... drinking or other substance use 1 2 3

... schoolwork 1 2 3

... driving 1 2 3

... who their friends are 1 2 3

Once parent has rated all options using Q-sort or verbal ratings, ask them why they thought certain things were very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. What limits are appropriate? Do this follow up thinking about the set or subsets of questions, not every individual option.

For things they said were important, ask:

How important is it to set and follow through with consequences for not following rules for these behaviors? What are some consequences you have used or try to use?

1d. Some people think it's important for parents of adolescents to model the kinds of behavior they expect from their child and to talk about their own values and expectations with their children. For example, if parents want their teenager to be polite toward others, they should act politely toward others, including their adolescents. Other people think that it's ok for parents, who are adults, to act differently than they expect their teenage children to act, and that adolescents don't care much what their parents do or think. What do you think?

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).

How important is it for parents of adolescents to set a good example as they parent their adolescent children? 1 2 3

How important is it for parents to share their own values and beliefs with their adolescent children? 1 2 3

Tell me about the things you do to try to set an example for your adolescent child(ren).

Tell me about what you try to do to share your opinions and beliefs at the right level?

How difficult /hard is it for you to set a good example for your child? (not at all, somewhat, very)? Why? Why not? 1 2 3

How difficult /hard is it for you to share your values and beliefs on important topics? (not at all, somewhat, very)? Why? Why not? 1 2 3

Be sure to probe here ... Is there any aspect of setting and example for or sharing values and beliefs with teenage children where the parent feels she struggles? Could use help? Probe: If you were able to sit down with someone who is really experienced in parenting adolescents, what questions might you ask about setting an example or sharing your values, what would you want to know? Are there specific situations you've faced where you didn't know what to do? Other possible probes: Has it ever been difficult in the past (if it's not now)? What are some of the things you think make it difficult for other parents to set a good example or share their values?

There are different ways parents might share their own values and beliefs with their teenagers. I'd like to find out how which things you feel are more or less important when it comes teaching your teenage child about your values and beliefs.

**Use Q-sort procedure. Show parent ALL cards in indicated order, then go back and have parent rate each option

Use the following options: not at all (1), somewhat (2), or very (3).

How important is it for parents to?

... set an example, to act in the same ways they want their children to act (for example, watching the kinds of TV shows or movies they would want their children to watch; or showing the same kinds of behavior concerning drinking, drugs, or sexuality that they expect from their children)? 1 2 3

... talk about their personal mistakes or regrets with their adolescent? 1 2 3

... share opinions with adolescent about healthy and moral issues? 1 2 3

Once parent has rated all options using Q-sort or verbal ratings, ask them why they thought certain things were very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. Do this follow up thinking about the set or subsets of questions, not every individual option.

What do you think would be the result if there is a contradiction between what the parent says and what the parent does? (goal – result for the child w/ respect to their behavior)

V. Barriers and facilitators to effective parenting

Goal: to expand upon what makes it easier or harder for mother to parent in “effective” ways, or in ways that would promote their goals.

In this fourth section, I have some questions about things that make parenting teenagers easier or harder. We've just discussed a lot of things you think are important and that you

try to do as a parent of a teenage child(ren). (LIST SOME OF THE THINGS THEY HAVE ENDORSED.) And as we've already discussed sometimes these things are easier or harder for parents to do. Every parent I know struggles in some ways with being the kind of parent they want to be.

1. I am going to list some specific things that might make it harder or easier for you to parent in the way you'd like to. (Some of these you might/have already mentioned earlier...) What about? Does that make it harder or easier for you to be the kind of parent you want to be? How or Why?

- ...your teenage child's (children's) unique personality and needs
- ... being a single or married parent
- ... the quality of the parents marriage or relationship
- ... other people such as extended family or friends
- ... your employment situation
- ... having parented an older child (or not)
- ... your financial situation
- ...the community or neighborhood you live in
- ... popular culture, like current fashion, television, radio
- ... technology
- ... time availability

VI. Scenarios – In this last section of our interview, I want you to imagine a few possible situations, and tell me what you think about them or how you might respond. The first situations are about possible teenage behavior.

Imagine John, a 16 year old boy or Jane, a 16 year old girl. (Choose gender of this parent's oldest teenager.)

Imagine his/her parents discover that he/she has been drinking alcohol when he/she goes out with his/her friends. What do you think about this? What would you do if you were in this situation?

Imagine his/her parents discover that he/she has been experimenting with drugs such as marijuana and cocaine. What do you think about this? What would you do if you were in this situation?

Imagine he/she has been uncharacteristically quiet and sad for several weeks now. What do you think about this? What would you do if you were in this situation?

Imagine he/she has been very argumentative and uncooperative toward his/her parents for several weeks now. What do you think about this? How would you react?

Imagine he/she is never very interested in getting involved in volunteer activities sponsored by school or church / synagogue. When there are opportunities to participate

in things such as cleaning up the neighborhood or tutoring other children, he/she always has an excuse not to do it. What do you think about this? How would you react?

Imagine he/she does not seem to be very concerned with healthy eating or exercise. What do you think about this? How would you react?

Finally, I want you to imagine some situations about parents of teenagers.

Imagine some parents you know allow their teenage child to have a party and drink alcohol at their house? What do you think about this?

Imagine some parents respond to a teenage child who is being very moody and argumentative, and letting their grades slip, by saying “that’s just how teenagers are ... it will pass”. What do you think about this?

VII. Closing

Do you have anything else you want to tell me about parenting your adolescent child?

There is one last question I need to verify - it is one you answered when we talked on the phone, but as I said we could not keep that information, so I have to ask again. I need to get an idea of your family’s total annual income, that is, the amount of money your family takes in from all sources in one year, approximately. (Examples, if needed: earnings, disability, child support). What is the family’s approximate total income?

Before we stop, do you have any questions for me?

I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to me. Your experiences and opinions will be really helpful.

In a few months (later next spring or summer), we will be doing another study that will involve answering some similar questions on a questionnaire. It would not take as much time as the interview. Would you be willing to have us contact you to see about taking that questionnaire? You can decide at that time whether you want to do it.

If yes, record participants’ name and contact information on separate sheet.

Whether yes or no, ask: Do you know any other mothers that you think might be interested telling us about their parenting experiences in that later questionnaire study? Would you be able to give us their names and contact information now or later?

If they want to give information now, record the information on separate sheet for future potential participants.

That’s all the questions I have. Thank you again for your time and for sharing your experiences and ideas.

Appendix D

Coding Dictionary

First Pass	
Demographics:	
EDUC	Information about maternal education (level, type)
MARSTAT	Information about mother's marital status
CHILDREN	Information about children: number/ages/relation (e.g., bio, step, adopted)
Beliefs about Behaviors:	
RISK	Beliefs about Adolescent Risk-Taking - comments indicating what a mother thinks about adolescents in general or about her own adolescent regarding risk-taking; regarding behaviors that have the potential to be harmful to themselves and/or to the people around them, including behaviors that are reckless, norm-breaking, dangerous, or involve sensation-seeking (e.g. experimenting with alcohol or drugs, impulsiveness, etc.); regarding behaviors that reflect taking chances even at the risk of loss, hurt, or failure, whether positive (e.g., speaking to a person with whom one is unacquainted; trying a new activity) or negative (e.g., having unprotected sex, taking a dare that involves damaging property).
REBEL	Beliefs about Adolescent Rebelliousness – comments indicating what a mother thinks about adolescents in general or about her own adolescent regarding rebellious or otherwise difficult behavior; regarding behaviors that go against norms or authority (e.g. testing limits, defying authority, being stubborn, rude, selfish, bullying etc.)
MOOD	Beliefs about Adolescent Moods or Emotions– comments indicating what a mother thinks about adolescents in general or about her own adolescent regarding issues of moods (e.g., emotional outbursts; mood swings; depression), emotions (e.g., feelings of anger, happiness) or emotional insecurity (e.g., awkward, anxious, insecure, confused).
PCRELA	Beliefs about Parent-Adolescent Relationships– comments indicating what a mother thinks about adolescents in general or about her own adolescent regarding the nature of parent-child relationships at adolescence (e.g., degree of conflict, degree closeness, supportiveness, presence or desire for shared activities, degree or frequency of communication, degree of independence of child from parents, expressions of love or physical affection, enjoyment of one another, behavior toward one another).

POSITIVE	Beliefs about Positive Adolescent Behaviors – comments indicating what a mother thinks about adolescents in general or about her own adolescent regarding any behavior or characteristic at adolescence that can be considered positive (e.g., competence, confidence, connection with others, character, contribution to others or the community, idealism, generosity, compassion, hope, energy)
HEALTH	Beliefs about Physical Health or Self-care During Adolescence- comments indicating what a mother thinks about adolescents in general or about her own adolescent regarding physical health and development or self care (e.g., nutrition, exercise, sleep)
BEHAVE - OTHER	Beliefs about Behaviors – Other (any behavior or characteristic not included in above) - comments indicating what a mother thinks about adolescents in general or about her own adolescent regarding any behavior that does not fit into the above 5 domains.
Beliefs about Parenting	
LOVE	Beliefs about Expressing Love or Being Involved with Adolescent Children - comments addressing beliefs about ideal or actual parental role and activities regarding love or involvement with adolescent children; regarding maintaining a relationship with the adolescent that offers support and acceptance, expressions of love, and shared activities.
MONITOR	Beliefs about Monitoring Adolescent Children - comments addressing beliefs about ideal or actual parental role and activities regarding monitoring adolescent children; regarding awareness of teenagers' whereabouts and activities (including school performance, work experiences, after-school activities, peer relationships, adult relationships, and recreation); may involve direct supervision, observation, communication, or networking with other adults
RULES	Beliefs about Rule or Limit Setting with Adolescent Children- comments addressing beliefs about ideal or actual parental role and activities regarding rule or limit-setting with adolescent children; regarding setting and enforcing behavioral expectations, rules, and boundaries.
MODEL	Beliefs about Modeling or Sharing Values with Adolescent Children- comments addressing beliefs about ideal or actual parental role and activities regarding modeling or sharing values with adolescent children; regarding provision of ongoing information and support around decision-making, values, skills, goals; teaching by example and by ongoing dialogue.
PARENT - OTHER	Beliefs about Parenting – Other Aspects of Parenting - comments addressing beliefs about ideal or actual parental role and activities regarding any activity that does not fit into the above 5 categories.
General Barriers and Facilitators to "Effective" Parenting	

EASEDIFF	comments addressing what makes any aspect of parenting easier or more difficult
<u>Second pass for Beliefs about Behaviors</u>	
NORMAL	any comment indicating beliefs about how common or stereotypical a behavior or characteristic is during adolescence; comments indicating the extent to which mother associates a behavior or characteristic with adolescents as a whole or with her own adolescent (e.g., It's normal for adolescents to experiment with alcohol, but not typical for adolescents to drink heavily everyday)
VARIATION	any comment indicating beliefs about whether a behavior or characteristic is unavoidable for the adolescent to experience or impossible for the adolescent not to experience OR whether there is variability in the behavior/characteristic or the behavior / characteristic would depends on the particular child or other factors; comments indicating the extent to which mother believes that every child that goes through adolescence will engage in this behavior or have this characteristic or experience and there is no way for the adolescent to avoid this behavior (e.g., It's inevitable that adolescents will fight with their parents, no matter how parents try to avoid it)
HEALTHY	any comment indicating beliefs regarding whether the behavior or characteristic will promote his/her own beneficial development (healthy) or detrimental development (unhealthy); beliefs can pertain to physical or mental health, but here, healthy or unhealthy mainly means that the positive or negative adolescent behavior will promote helpful or harmful future development; mothers may specify that certain behaviors are healthy only at certain points or up to certain levels (e.g., fighting a little bit with parents is healthy so that the adolescent will learn to establish reasoning behind arguments but fighting all the time is detrimental to the adolescent because it turns them into an aggressive person)
PARINF	any comment indicating how much influence or control the mother thinks she has on the adolescent's behavior or characteristic
PEERINF	any comment indicating how much influence or control the mother thinks peers have on the adolescent's behavior or characteristic
GOAL	comments indicating something the mother hopes, wishes, or desires for her own adolescent child; how the mother would like her child to behave; what the mother wants her child to do or accomplish; what the mother deems important for her child. We are most interested in goals for adolescence, but at this point any goal (whether for adolescence or later) should be coded.
WORRY	any comment indicating the extent to which the mother is or would be troubled or concerned regarding the particular behavior or characteristic of the adolescent. Comments can indicate that the mother would be worried or would not be worried.

ETHNICBEH	any comment indicating mother's beliefs about ethnic differences or similarities in the behavior or characteristic
GENDERBEH	any comment indicating mother's beliefs about gender differences or similarities in the behavior or characteristic
AGEBEH	any comment indicating mother's beliefs about age differences or similarities in the behavior or characteristic
Second Pass for Beliefs about Parenting	
REASON ... LOVE, MONITOR, RULE, MODEL	comments indicating why it is important or unimportant for parents to engage in indicated parenting behavior; why parents should or should not engage in indicated parenting behavior; when this parenting behavior should or should not be used; situations in which it is or is not beneficial or necessary
METHOD...]	comments indicating methods of indicated parenting behavior that are effective; opinions about how parents SHOULD engage in this parenting behavior or what methods "work"
PRACTICE...	comments indicating methods of indicated parenting behavior that parent uses; what the mother ACTUALLY does in terms of this parenting behavior - may or may not be the same as what are said to be the most effective tools or what parents should do
EASYDIFF ...	comments indicating which aspects of indicated parenting behavior are difficult / challenging or easy / not challenging and reasons and why; things that mother is uncertain about regarding this parenting behavior or comments about things that make it easy/not difficult
GENDER...	comments about how gender influences any aspect of indicated parenting behavior [this may overlap with above categories]; differences or similarities for this parenting behavior for boys and girls; this might include what parents should do, actually do, or what is easy/difficult depending on gender
AGE...	comments about how age of adolescent influences any aspect of indicated parenting behavior [this may overlap with above categories]; differences or similarities for this parenting behavior depending on ages of adolescents; this might include what parents should do, actually do, or what is easy/difficult depending on age
Second Pass for EaseDiff	
CHILDCHAR	comments about how characteristics of the child (i.e. personality or needs) act as a barriers or facilitators to effective parenting
PARCHAR	comments about how characteristics of the parent (i.e. their own personality or upbringing) act as barriers or facilitators to effective parenting
RELASTAT	comments about how the mothers marital status acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting

RELAQUAL	comments about how the quality of the parents' relationship acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
FAMINF	comments about how extended family and friends of act as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
EMPLOYMENT	comments about how the parents' employment situation acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
OLDERCHILD	comments about how parenting an older child or not acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
FINANCE	comments about how the parents' financial situation acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
COMMUNITY	comments about how the community or neighborhood that the family lives in acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
POPCULT	comments about how popular culture (including things like TV, fashion, radio) acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
TECHNOLOGY	comments about how technology (e.g. cell phones, computers) acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
TIMEAVAIL	comments about how time availability of the parents acts as a barrier or facilitator to effective parenting
EDOTHER	comments about other factors not mentioned above that act as barriers or facilitators to effective parenting