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**“Peer Relations Management:” Parents’ Attempts to  
Influence Adolescents’ Peer Relations**

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in the Department of Psychology

We accept this dissertation as conforming  
to the required standard

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### Abstract

Scholars of adolescence have identified parents and peers as two important contexts of development. This dissertation examines an understudied linkage between these two contexts: parents' management of adolescents' friendships. A conceptual model for thinking about parents' management of adolescents' peer relationships was developed and examined as part of the study. Specifically, four peer management behaviors were examined: communicating preferences, communicating disapproval, supporting friendships, and information-seeking. The nature of parents' beliefs about their adolescents' friends (specifically, parents' perceived efficacy in managing their adolescents' friends and parents' concerns about their adolescents' friendships) was also explored. To further evaluate linkages suggested by the conceptual model, connections between parents' beliefs about adolescents' peers and their peer management behaviors were investigated. These aspects of managing adolescents' friendships were then examined for linkages, suggested by the conceptual model, to adolescents' reported friendships (i.e., the deviant and prosocial orientations of their friends) and psychosocial adjustment (i.e., their reported engagement in school and in problem behaviors).

The participants for the study were 452 adolescents and 269 parents (161 mothers and 108 fathers). Data were collected from the adolescents at two time points, in the spring of 1997 and the spring of 1998, resulting in longitudinal information for 170 adolescents. Approximately six months after the first data collection for adolescents, questionnaire packages were sent home for parents' participation.

The study results suggest that parents use the four management behaviors described, albeit relatively infrequently. Additionally, the more parents engaged in one peer management behavior, the more they engaged in the other peer management behaviors. Parents also felt relatively efficacious in managing their adolescents' friendships and were generally unconcerned about their adolescents' friendships. In general, mothers and fathers held similar beliefs about adolescents' friendships, and were similar in their management of their adolescents' friendships.

When the relationships between parents' beliefs about peers and management behaviors to adolescents' friendships and psychosocial adjustment were examined, some interesting linkages were revealed. For example, mothers and fathers reported being more concerned about their adolescents' friendships when their adolescents were engaged in more problem behaviors. When relationships to parents' peer management behaviors were examined, adolescents' problem behaviors and deviant friends emerged as significant predictors of parents' management behaviors, showing relationships to mothers' and fathers' communicating disapproval and information-seeking, as well as to fathers' supporting friendships. For mothers, their concerns also emerged as a significant predictor of their peer management behaviors, showing relationships with supporting friendships and information-seeking. For fathers, feeling efficacious in managing adolescents' friendships was more consistently related to their peer management behaviors than were their concerns about adolescents' friendships.

Finally, parents' concerns about adolescents' friends, communicating disapproval and information-seeking were examined for relationships to change in adolescents' deviant

friendships and psychosocial adjustment. These analyses revealed that when adolescents' school engagement increased, fathers communicated disapproval more and when adolescents' school engagement decreased, fathers sought information about their adolescents' friends more often.

The results of this study provide insight into parents' management of adolescents' friendships and suggest avenues for further research. These avenues and other unexplored linkages suggested by the conceptual model are the substantive focus of the discussion.

Examiners:

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Since Coleman's (1961) influential study of "peer cultures" first appeared, scholars have produced a considerable amount of research examining the influence of peers on the behavior and development of adolescents. Similarly, family researchers have built an extensive body of literature examining the influence that parents have on the development of their adolescent children.

The vast majority of this research, however, either examines parent and peer influences separately or in comparison to each other. That is, researchers have primarily examined how either family or peers influence development, or how family influences compare to peer influences. For example, psychoanalytic approaches, emphasizing intrapsychic conflict, view peers as providing compensatory relationships for adolescents' changing relationships with parents. Turning to peers as sources of social and psychological support, adolescents are depicted in this model as being more susceptible to peer than parental influence. Socialization theory, on the other hand, which has tended to emphasize conflict between parental goals and peer goals, pits parental influences against peer influences, portraying the developing adolescent as caught in the middle, being pulled primarily by one or the other. Theoretical models from the cognitive perspective, in contrast to psychoanalytic and socialization models, emphasize qualitative differences in the relationships of parents and peers and suggest that the two contexts offer unique and complementary opportunities for adolescents (Cooper & Cooper, 1992).

Missing from these theoretical perspectives is the potential influence that parents

may exert on adolescents' peer relationships and thus, on peer influences, through the quality of parent-child relations or through parenting behaviors. Bronfenbrenner's (1986) descriptions of mesosystem influences (i.e., the joint contribution of influences within and between two or more contexts in which the developing individual is an active participant) provides a framework for investigating linkages between the contextual influences of parents and peers. Fortuitously, recent confluences in theoretical and methodological advances have drawn peer and family researchers together to examine in more detail the links between these two ecological contexts (Bogenschneider, Wu, Raffaelli, & Tsay, 1998b; Mounts, 2000a, 2000b; Parke & Ladd, 1992). Research has identified both direct and indirect modes of parental influences on adolescents' peer relationships (e.g., parent-child attachment and qualities of adolescents' friendships, such as trust, Armsden & Greenberg, 1982; and mutuality, Bell, Cornwell, & Bell, 1988) and orientation toward peers (e.g., parental monitoring and the adolescents' susceptibility to peer influences, Bogenschneider et al., 1998b). Direct influences are aspects of parenting or parent-child relations (e.g., prohibiting certain peer interactions, Mounts, 2000a) that specifically impact peer relationships; indirect influences, on the other hand, impact peer relationships through mediating variables (e.g., parenting that allows expressiveness while maintaining connectedness is associated with higher social competence in adolescents, which likely leads to better peer relationships; Cooper & Cooper, 1992).

In the main, researchers looking for links between the family and peer contexts have focused most of their efforts on indirect modes of influence. Among these indirect influences are parenting styles (e.g., Baumrind's typology of demandingness and

responsiveness), parenting behaviors (e.g., discipline and decision-making practices), and qualitative aspects of the parent-child relationship (e.g., conflict and warmth) (Baumrind, 1973; Brown & Huang, 1995; Brown, Mounts, Lamborn, & Steinberg, 1993; Cooper & Cooper, 1992; Fuligni & Eccles, 1993; Steinberg, 1986). Despite the call for and interest in links between family and peer contexts, adolescent researchers have virtually ignored direct paths of influence that parents may have on their adolescents' friendships. These direct influences are of substantive interest for methodological, theoretical, and practical reasons (Bogenschneider et al., 1998b).

First, studying parent-peer processes in adolescence offers a unique methodological opportunity to examine developmental contexts under change. As adolescents spend increasingly more time with peers (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Garbarino, Burston, Raber, Russel, & Crouter, 1978), gain more autonomy, and renegotiate their relationships with their parents toward more mutual and interdependent relationships (Youniss & Smollar, 1985), parents may try to modify their parenting behaviors to match their children's changing needs. Examining pathways of influence as these contextual changes occur allows for an "experiment of nature" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Several researchers (e.g., Cooper & Cooper, 1992; Mounts, 2000a, 2000b) have suggested that parents' behaviors that directly affect adolescents' peer relationships are likely to change substantially over the course of childhood and adolescence. Despite ample documentation regarding the form of parents' management of children's peer relationships, there is little information on how parents manage their adolescents' peer relationships or evidence substantiating change in such behaviors.

Additionally, examining direct paths of influence from parents to peers will provide empirical information allowing scholars to evaluate current theoretical models. Mounts (2000b) has suggested that the dearth of research studying direct pathways between parents and peers may indicate, despite evidence to the contrary, that many researchers still view parental and peer contexts as mutually exclusive and oppositional forces. Evidence of direct pathways of influence to and from parents and peers would cast further doubt on such theoretical positions and provide additional support for Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

Finally, for practical reasons, the lack of information examining direct influences is surprising, given that parents of adolescents are concerned with their children's behavior (especially problem behaviors) and negative peer influences (Gecas & Seff, 1990; Pasley & Gecas, 1984). It makes sense to think that parents who are concerned about the effects of negative peer pressure might act on those concerns, including actions directed at influencing their adolescents' peer relationships. Little research however, has addressed this possibility, despite the potential for important applications.

With the exception of the work of Mounts (2000a, 2000b), studies of parental management of peer relationships in adolescence have focused almost exclusively on parental monitoring (i.e., parents' awareness or knowledge of adolescents' activities and whereabouts) as a direct influence on peer relationships and peer orientation. In one recent volume examining family-peer linkages (Parke & Ladd, 1992), parental monitoring was the only parenting behavior examined as potentially influencing adolescents' peer relationships directly. In the same volume, Cooper and Cooper (1992) speculated that

parents may “scaffold” their adolescents’ experiences with peers. Scaffolding, in the Vygotskian sense (Rogoff, 1993), means that parents provide expert guidance and support for children in social interactions. In childhood, this guidance occurs during social interactions and may be particularly direct or concrete (e.g., providing instructions for sharing and information on the importance of sharing). Cooper and Cooper suggest that parents’ scaffolding of adolescents’ peer interactions may be more abstract, possibly helping adolescents analyze social structure or process, allowing the adolescent to select among alternative behaviors in peer interaction contexts. However, no suggestions as to what form such scaffolding would take was provided. The researchers acknowledge that the form of scaffolding, the contexts in which scaffolding would be useful, and the skills adolescents might need to benefit from scaffolding need to be explicated.

Drawing from the theoretical perspective of lifespan developmental psychology, this research focuses on presenting and testing a conceptual model of linkages between parent and peer contexts. The model specifically focuses on parenting behaviors aimed at managing adolescents’ peer relationships, and the relationship of parents’ peer management behaviors to parents’ belief systems, adolescents’ peer associations, and adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment.

The current research improves on existing research in several ways. First, the model contains additional types of behaviors which parents may use to manage their adolescents’ peer relationships. To date, only Mounst (2000a, 2000b) has examined behaviors specifically targeted at influencing adolescents’ friendships. The behaviors examined by Mounst, specifically, are guiding (i.e., behaviors directed at suggesting

appropriate or inappropriate relationships), prohibiting (i.e., forbidding specific relationships or spending time with specific friends), and supporting (i.e., parents attempts to encourage and promote the friendships of which they approve). The model tested here will also include information-seeking (i.e., parents attempts to gain knowledge of their adolescents' friendships).

Secondly, the model presented and tested here contains aspects of parents' cognitions. Scholars have called for the incorporation of cognitive elements into models of parent-peer linkages, including aspects of parental belief systems that may be important determinants of parenting behaviors (e.g., parenting goals, parents' values, parents' knowledge of peers and attributions regarding peers) and aspects of adolescents' belief systems that may impact the effectiveness of parenting behaviors (e.g., adolescents' ideas about whether they or their parents have legitimate authority over the adolescents' friendship choices) (Bogenschneider et al., 1998; Ladd, 1992; Mounts, 2000a; Smetana, 1995). This research will test some of the linkages involving parents' category-based and target-based beliefs and attitudes about adolescents and their peers (i.e., parents' beliefs and attitudes about adolescents' peers in general and specific relationships, respectively).

This work also extends the research beyond the 9<sup>th</sup> grade samples examined previously (Mounts, 2000a, 2000b), to younger (6<sup>th</sup> grade) adolescents, in the anticipation of potential age differences in parental behaviors as well as in linkages between parents' and adolescents' behaviors. Researchers have consistently suggested the likelihood of developmental changes in parents' behaviors, but no research currently exists that examines these developmental issues.

The general research questions guiding this study are:

- 1) What is the nature of parents' management of their adolescents' peer relationships?
- 2) How do parents' belief systems about adolescents' peers relate to their management of adolescents' peer relationships?
- 3) Is there any relationship between parents' management of adolescents' peer relationships and adolescents' actual peer relationships and psychosocial adjustment?

## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

This chapter draws attention to the background for this research: the theoretical underpinnings, extant research, and inferences drawn from theory and research.

First, the theoretical perspective guiding the model is presented, followed by the proposed conceptual model. Relevant theoretical and empirical literature is reviewed in the presentation of the model. Finally, an attenuated model, suitable for testing, is presented with research questions.

#### The Guiding Theoretical Perspective: Lifespan Development

The theoretical perspective of lifespan developmental psychology provides a backdrop for consideration of adolescents' psychosocial development within the contexts of family and peers. This perspective emphasizes the embeddedness of the developing individual within multiple systems of influence — influences that are multidimensional and that result in developmental trajectories that are multidirectional. According to the lifespan perspective, human development occurs within multiple, integrated levels of organization, including contexts that are biological, psychological, social, institutional, cultural, and historical. No single context acts alone to influence development. Nor is the developing individual a static receptor for these ecological influences. Rather, individuals shape their environments as well. Development is a lifelong process — beginning with conception and ending in death, and is viewed as a joint process of both growth (gains) and decline (loss) (Baltes, 1987; Lerner & Galambos, 1998).

### Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Contexts of Development

Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological development (1979, 1986) is consistent with the principles of lifespan development and provides a framework for considering multiple contexts of development. Bronfenbrenner proposed that the study of human development necessitates considering the mutual accommodation of an actively developing individual and the dynamic characteristics of the immediate setting (i.e., microsystem) in which the individual develops. Examples of microsystems, or settings in which the developing individual is proximally situated, are the family, school, and peers.

At the same time, individual development is influenced by processes operating between microsystems and by the larger contexts in which the microsystems are embedded. Known as mesosystems, the interrelationships between two or more microsystems influence development by their joint contributions. Bronfenbrenner described these influences as taking a number of forms. These forms include the joint contributions made when the developing individual moves from one setting to another, when other individuals who are active participants in both settings influence development (e.g., a sibling who goes to the same school), the quality and nature of communications between settings (e.g., newsletters from the school to the home), and even knowledge and attitudes that influential participants in one microsystem hold about another microsystem (e.g., teachers' attitudes about certain peers).

Finally, these processes — microsystem and mesosystem influences — operate within larger contexts: exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems. An exosystem describes settings that are less proximal, in which the developing person is not in direct

contact, but which nonetheless indirectly influence or are influenced by the individual through a microsystem. An example of an exosystem influence is parents' work: parents' feelings about their workplace (in which the child does not come into regular contact) may impact their parenting positively or negatively (e.g., feeling too tired from work may hinder parenting or feeling content at work may facilitate parenting). On the other hand, being worn out from parenting a difficult child may impact a parent's abilities to be productive at work. A macrosystem refers to a larger, cultural context — the attitudes and ideologies of the culture in which the more proximal settings are embedded. This may include both dominant cultures (e.g., in the U.S. and in Canada, the dominant culture is more or less European) and subcultures (e.g., Black families living in the U.S. or Canada). Finally, the term chronosystem refers to the sociohistorical conditions across the life span or the historical underpinnings which influence and are influenced by events and processes occurring in the lower order systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986). Thus, settings at every level may both instigate and result from developmental processes.

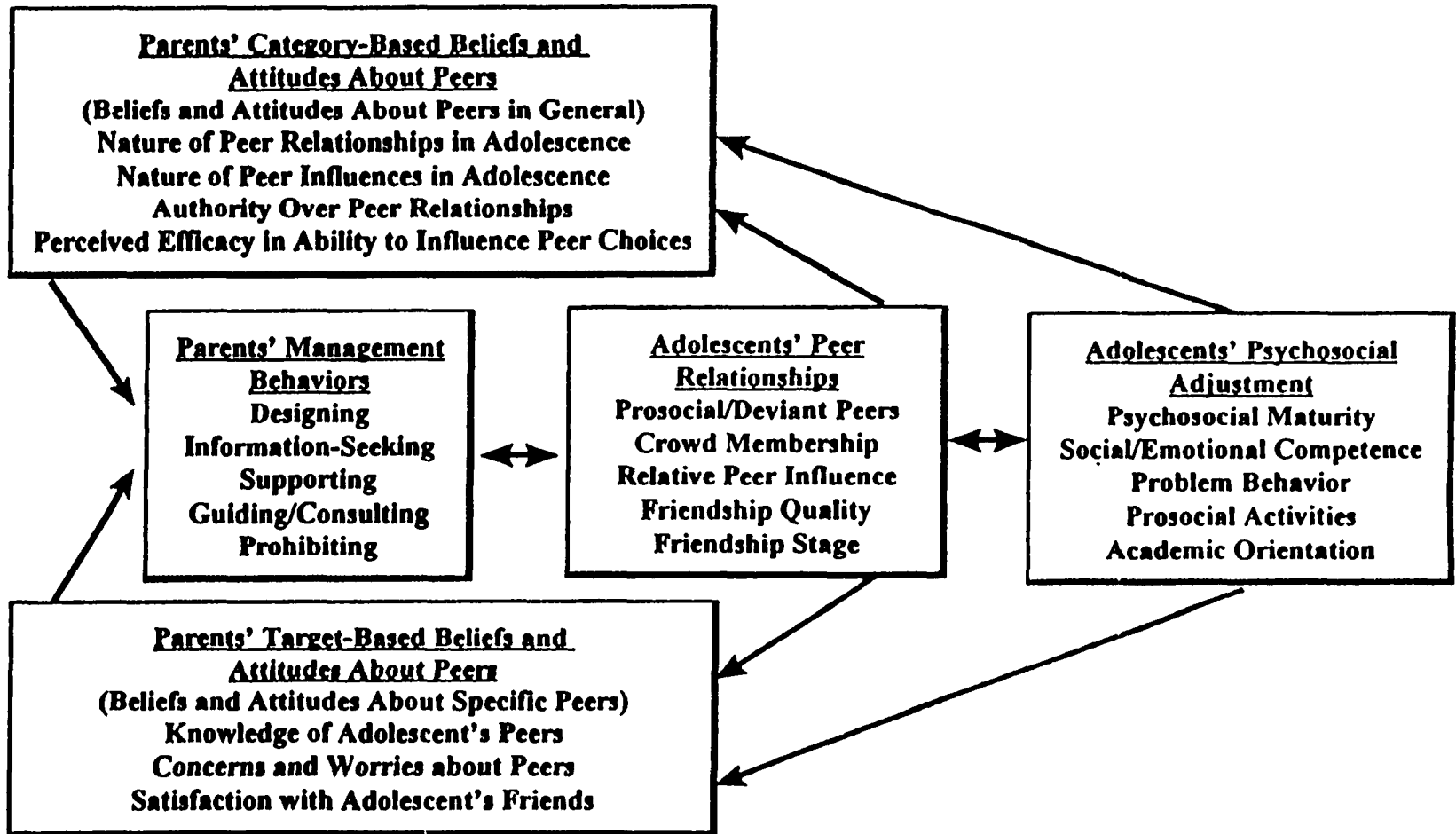
#### A Conceptual Model of Parents' Management of Adolescents' Peer Relationships

The conceptual model for this study, shown in Figure 1, centers on adolescent development embedded in the ecological contexts of family and peers, specifically proposing mesosystem linkages between these contexts. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's concepts of ecological influences and the lifespan developmental perspective, the model proposes that these contexts influence the developing adolescent, as well as each other, and are reciprocally influenced by the adolescent's development.

The central tenet of the model is that parents act to manage their adolescents' peer

Figure 1.

**Conceptual Model of Parents' Management of Adolescents' Peer Relationships**



relations. These peer management behaviors, however, are assumed to be governed, in part, by parents' belief systems — parents' goals for their children, their knowledge of, attitudes about, and perceptions of adolescent peer relationships, both in general and specific to the peer relationships of their own adolescents. Thus, interindividual differences in the extent to which parents engage in different peer management strategies are expected to be accounted for by differences in a) beliefs and attitudes about adolescent peer relationships in general (i.e., category-based beliefs and attitudes) and b) beliefs and attitudes about the peer relationships of their own adolescent children (i.e., target-based beliefs and attitudes). These parental peer management behaviors are construed as influencing the peer relationships of adolescent children. It is also proposed that peer relationships influence parents' peer management behaviors, as the parent-peer relationship is presumed to be reciprocal.

A second part of the model examines the relationships between adolescents' peer relationships and their own psychosocial adjustment. Consistent with extant research (e.g., Mounts & Steinberg, 1995), adolescents' peer relationships are proposed to influence the adolescents' psychosocial development (i.e., through socialization), and in turn, are believed to be influenced by adolescents' adjustment (e.g., selection processes and reciprocal socialization). The model comes full circle by examining potential feedback relationships of adolescents' peer relationships to parents' beliefs about peers. That is, the model proposes that adolescents' peer relationships influence parents' beliefs and attitudes directly, through parents' experiences of these relationships and indirectly, through the effects of peer relationships on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

### Conceptualizing Peer Relationships

Prior to discussing in specific detail the proposed model of peer relationships management, it is important to recognize that the term “peer relationships” covers a wide spectrum of social relationships, from broad categorizations such as peer groups to more specific, intimate relationships. To enhance our understanding, peer relationships may be grouped into three broad categories: 1) individual friendships, 2) cliques, and 3) peer crowds.

Friendships, or one-on-one relationships, are typically characterized by a relatively high degree of closeness and intimacy. The degree of intimacy, the stability of the relationship, and the degree to which individuals think that their feelings are reciprocated varies, as do the benefits and risks to the individuals in the relationship (Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990). Individuals may identify their friends in terms of those identified as closest or “best friends” (although this label is typically reserved for same-sex friends) or identify small groups of individuals who constitute their circle of friends.

Cliques are small, interaction-based groups of adolescents who typically “hang around” together. Cliques vary in size, intimacy, and their openness to individuals outside of the group. Within cliques, individuals typically spend a good deal of time together, forming close relationships with other group members. Cliques are typically regarded by their members as the primary base of interaction with other groups of adolescents (Brown, 1990). Cliques may be formed because individuals choose each other (i.e., friendship cliques) or because individuals are spending time together due to similar activities (i.e., activity cliques).

Peer crowds are typically larger, reputation-based groups of similarly stereotyped individuals who may or may not spend their time together (Brown, 1990). An adolescent's crowd affiliation is based largely on primary attitudes or activities by which the crowd is recognized. Norms are imposed from outside the group and reflect the stereotypic images peers hold of crowd members. Commonly recognized crowd labels reflect these stereotypical images (generated by American adolescents and not researchers), including names such as jocks, nerds, brains, loners, Asians, rogues, druggies, and populars.

The conceptual model can be thought of as encompassing this range of relationships, and may include different aspects of these relationships, from crowd membership to the quality and duration of specific friendships, from the general behavioral or social orientation of an adolescents' circle of friends (e.g., more or less prosocial, more or less deviant) to the influence of best friends. Peer crowds, cliques, and individual friendships are of substantial interest to researchers, as they each provide important contexts for adolescent development.

Conceptualizing Peer Influences: Homophily and Selection Versus Socialization

An equally important issue to consider in conceptualizing peer relationships is the behavioral and psychological similarity found between friends and the manner in which these similarities arise. Homophily, the tendency for individuals to associate with others who are similar to themselves (Kandel, 1986), is a phenomenon in adolescent peer relationships that occurs across a wide range of behaviors. For example, adolescents are more likely to spend time with other adolescents who are similar in terms of alcohol and

drug use (Bauman & Fisher, 1986; Kandel, 1978); tobacco use (Urberg, Chen, & Shyu, 1991); engagement in school misconduct (Brown, Clasen, & Eicher, 1986; Clasen & Brown, 1985); and aggressive tendencies (Cairns et al., 1988); as well as similar in terms of levels of depression and anxiety (Hogue & Steinberg, 1995) and academic orientation (Kandel, 1978). Homophily may result from peer socialization influences (i.e., adolescents who spend more time with peers who smoke may smoke more themselves in order to fit in or conform to peer crowd norms) or from selection effects (i.e., adolescents who smoke are more likely to become friends with others who smoke). Research investigating peer influences often fails to separate these two processes (Mounts, 2000a). Longitudinal data, however, may be used to overcome this limitation and delineate those effects due to selection and those due to socialization. The proposed conceptual model assumes both selection and socialization processes.

#### Conceptualizing Adolescent Outcomes as Psychosocial Adjustment

Many of the same characteristics and behaviors which evidence homophily in adolescent peer relationships (i.e., similarity in achievement orientation, similar engagement in problem behaviors) can be subsumed under the broader construct of psychosocial adjustment. The term “psychosocial” refers to psychological processes occurring within social contexts — behavioral, emotional, and cognitive processes that both influence and are influenced by social relationships. Psychosocial adjustment, then, refers to individuals’ psychological well-being and growth within social contexts. Two of the more important contexts believed to influence adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment are the family and peer relationships (Ladd, 1992). Most of the critical tasks of

adolescence are psychosocial in nature: learning to adjust to a rapidly changing body as well as developing means of coping with changing peer relationships and changing emotional needs (Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1991); developing the ability to self-govern and self-regulate (i.e., autonomy) (Ryan & Lynch, 1989), and constructing a differentiated, yet consolidated identity and positive sense of self (Harter, 1990).

There are other areas as well, that researchers use to assess psychosocial adjustment and development, albeit indirectly. Two examples are problem behaviors (i.e., deviant or risky behavior) and academic orientation. Refraining from engaging in deviant or risky behavior is a marker of genuine adulthood (Arnett, 1997) and is associated with higher levels of psychosocial maturity (Galambos & Tilton-Weaver, in press). Likewise, a stronger academic orientation (e.g., greater engagement and success in school) has been associated with positive self-value, acceptance of authority, positive interpersonal relations, better work orientation and control over anxiety (Conger & Galambos, 1997). Research also suggests that problem behaviors and academic orientation are strongly predicted by peer influences (Mounts & Steinberg, 1995; Newcomb & Bentler, 1989), making these two areas choice candidates for testing a model of parental management influences on adolescent psychosocial adjustment.

#### Parents' Management of Adolescents' Peer Relationships

This research began with a question: What might parents do to influence with whom their adolescents are associating? Researchers have good reasons to believe that parents will attempt to manage their adolescents' peer relationships. First, parents voice concerns over negative peer influences (Gecas & Seff, 1990; Pasley & Gecas, 1984). We

might therefore expect that at least some parents will act on those concerns. These actions may include parents' attempts to decrease their adolescents' susceptibility to peer influences, or parents' attempts to influence the types of peers with whom their adolescents interact. The focus of the current model is on the latter.

Second, research has demonstrated that parents manage the peer relationships of their younger children (Parke & Bhavnagri, 1989; Rubin & Sloman, 1984). Ladd (1992) has suggested that when their children are young, parents act as designers, mediators, supervisors, and consultants. As designers, parents choose ecologically advantageous places for their children to live, go to school, and play. By specifically choosing neighborhoods that have many children, local schools, sidewalks, and safe playgrounds, parents act to design the social environment of their children -- acting to provide access to peers and safe opportunities to interact (Ladd, 1992). Although specific linkages between parents' behaviors and more positive peer interaction have not been studied, research demonstrates that the social ecology of neighborhoods impacts children's opportunities for interaction, the size of their friendship networks, and the spontaneity of children's play (Berg & Medrich, 1980; Medrich, Roizen, Rubin, & Buckley, 1982). Rubin and Sloman (1984) referred to these behaviors as "setting the stage" for peer relationships.

Parents act as mediators by arranging formal and informal opportunities for their children to interact with peers, or by regulating their children's peer choices. Arranging social contacts may include scheduling visits with peers (Rubin & Sloman, 1984), enrolling children in activities where peers will be met (O'Donnell & Stueve, 1983), and playing "chaffeur" (i.e., driving children to social events) (Rubin & Sloman, 1984).

Acting as supervisors, parents may influence their children's peer relationships by monitoring peer activities, and providing support, instruction, or guidance. Rubin and Sloman (1984) referred to provision of advice and guidance as coaching, suggesting that parents may provide information about who should be friends, and how children should conduct themselves in social interactions and relationships. The degree to which parents supervise their children's interactions has been linked to children's social competence. For example, Ladd and Golter (1988) found that when parents used more intrusive and controlling forms of supervision with their preschoolers and their peers, these children, when compared in kindergarten to children of parents using less intrusive strategies, were more likely to be disliked by classmates and rated as more hostile toward peers by their teachers. Finnie and Russell (1988) found similar results in preschoolers: mothers of the more popular children were more likely than mothers of unpopular children to suggest or model more adaptive strategies for entry into play (i.e., strategies that have a higher probability of success for children in group-entry situations).

Ladd suggests that as children grow older, parents may assume a less direct role in children's peer relationships, including acting as "peer consultants" — providing advice and guidance contingent on the child's social concerns. Consulting can be distinguished from supervisory types of guidance in that consulting is child-directed behavior, whereas supervision is parent-directed. That is the child, rather than the parent, is determining the timing and content of the guidance.

It stands to reason that if parents actively manage their younger children's peer relationships, they probably continue to act to influence these relationships through their

offspring's adolescence. However, the form this management takes likely changes in accordance with the cognitive, psychological, and social advances of adolescence. Increasing cognitive flexibility (e.g., the ability to take the perspective of others), increasing autonomy and independence, and more complex identities may lead adolescents to respond to their parents in new ways. Parents, in recognition of these changes, may modify their parenting to accommodate these changes. Indeed, scholars have suggested that parenting that is sensitive and responsive to adolescents' developmental needs is most often associated with positive developmental outcomes (Eccles et al., 1993; Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). For example, changes in parental strictness and independence granting behaviors have been associated with adolescents' peer orientation (i.e., seeking advice from peers and willingness to neglect important responsibilities in order to maintain peer relationships) (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). Specifically, adolescents who reported that their parents granted more decision-making power and were less strict over time were more likely to report lower levels of extreme peer orientation, whereas reported increases in strictness and decreases in decision-making were associated with higher levels of extreme peer orientation.

Thus, it can be expected that the strategies parents employ for managing their children's peer relationships probably change across adolescence, either in the manner in which these behaviors manifest themselves or in the amount to which the behaviors are employed. Mounts (2000a, 2000b) has suggested that parents are more likely to use less intrusive peer management strategies with adolescents than with younger children, and may reduce the amount of overt control over their adolescents' relationships with peers.

This may mean, for example, that parents do less direct supervision of relationships (e.g., watching interactions and suggesting more adaptive interpersonal behavior) and may do more supporting, guiding, and consulting, providing assistance when their adolescents bring peer-related issues to them.

Researchers have become increasingly interested in the form parental management takes in adolescence, as well as the relationship of peer management behaviors to adolescents' peer relationships and well-being. Mounts (2000a, 2000b) has led this foray, developing a measure of parental management as reported by the adolescent. In this measure, she focuses on four categories of peer management, derived from previous pilot studies (Mounts, personal communication, April 26, 1999). These four categories are: 1) supporting or the encouragement of specific friendships and activities because of parental preferences for certain types of peers; 2) guiding or communicating standards, values, expectation for friendships, as well as the potential consequences of friendship choices; 3) prohibiting or communicating disapproval for particular peers or prohibiting contact and activities with those peers; and 4) neutrality, which captures the parents' decision to allow their adolescents to make their own friendship choices.

The last category, neutrality, poses a challenge for conceptualizing parents' peer relationships management. Originally included because parents indicated that they sometimes chose not to interfere or concern themselves with their adolescents' peer relationships (Mounts, 2000a), the items used to assess this dimension may reflect aspects of the parents' belief systems. For example, adolescents' endorsement of the items "My parents tell me that who I have as friends is my personal choice", and "My parents think

that who I have for friends is my own business” indicates that parents have communicated their beliefs that friendship choices are the domain of the adolescent, not the parent.

Endorsement of the items “My parents don’t interfere with my friendships,” “My parents do not concern themselves with my friendships,” and “My parents don’t talk to me about my friends” could indicate a similar attitude or parents’ disinterest in their adolescents’ peer affairs. At any rate, these items seem to reflect attitudinal stances rather than overt behaviors.

Drawing from existing research, this model (as seen in Figure 1) proposes that parents may engage in the following types of behaviors: 1) designing, 2) information-seeking, 3) supporting, 4) guiding (or communicating preferences and disapproval) 5) consulting, and 6) prohibiting. Designing behaviors can be described as the choices parents make in determining where their families (including their adolescent children) will live and interact with others. These choices may be as general as choosing a specific city or rural area because of a preference for a particular cultural or social climate. Other choices may be more specific, such as choosing an up-scale neighborhood to live in, or a school with a particularly good reputation.

Information-seeking behaviors refers to parents’ attempts to gain knowledge of their adolescents’ peers and peer interactions. Much like the more general parenting behavior of monitoring, this refers to parents seeking information through their children as well as other sources (e.g., other parents, neighborhood adolescents, or teachers).

Monitoring measures, which assess a parents’ knowledge of their adolescents’ whereabouts and activities, assumes that this knowledge comes from successful attempts

to gain it. Unlike monitoring, this model operates on the *behaviors* parents engage in to gain knowledge and makes no implicit assumptions about the effectiveness of these or other peer management behaviors.

Supporting behaviors are parenting behaviors that provide encouragement of specific friendships or provide opportunities for meeting new peers. Parents may support their adolescents' friendships by suggesting activities that will enhance contact with a preferred peer, or provide a place for preferred peers to interact with their adolescents (e.g., throwing a slumber party, taking kids on a camp-out).

Guiding and consulting refers to similar behaviors in which parents provide information or advice regarding peers. These are, in essence, communicative behaviors, and may include advising adolescents about choosing appropriate peers and peer activities, as well as the positive and negative consequences of choosing certain friends, or engaging in certain activities with friends. Guiding and consulting, although conceptually similar, are separate dimensions (Ladd, 1992), distinguished by who initiates the behavior. Specifically, guiding is parent-initiated and consulting is adolescent-initiated. Regardless of who initiates the information exchange (whether parent or adolescent), the parent is taking the role of advisor — providing his or her expertise on social interactions and relations. Providing such information may take the form of talking to the adolescent about characteristics that are important in friends (e.g., honesty, caring, or empathy), values that are important in friendships (e.g., trust or mutuality) in general, or about the characteristics, behaviors, or attitudes of particular peers. Thus, these communicative behaviors can be further broken down into communicating preferences (or likes) and

disapproval (or dislikes). Parents may communicate both their likes and dislikes, or may be more apt to communicate approval or disapproval contingent on the type of peers their adolescents are with.

Prohibiting is conceptualized as a category of behaviors in which parents deny their adolescents' interaction with peers they deem undesirable. This category reflects a parent's direct, overt control over interactions with specific peers. For this reason, it is treated as conceptually different than such behaviors as supporting or guiding/consulting. The latter behaviors, engaged in by the parent, still allow considerably more autonomy to the adolescent. When a parent acts in a supporting, guiding, or consulting manner, the decision to interact with the adolescent peer is implicitly the adolescent's prerogative. When prohibiting, parents are implying that they have final authority over the matter.

These categories, while conceptually different, may at times overlap. For example, parents' support of a particular relationship, by providing opportunities for interacting, implicitly encourages more time with some friends and less with others. This may *implicitly* communicate a preference for a particular peer and provide an adolescent with insight into what his or her parent believes are appropriate or inappropriate peer characteristics, as might denying contact with specific peers. These categories should therefore be related to each other. The categories, however, reflect differing levels of control, with prohibiting reflecting the most control, followed by supporting, with guiding or consulting reflecting the least amount of overt control. Mounts' (2000b) work suggests that the level of overt control may be an important element to consider in studying parents' behaviors, as more overtly controlling behaviors are sometimes

curvilinearly related to adolescents' well-being. That is, Mounts found that the highest and lowest levels of prohibiting were associated with more alcohol use and delinquency, whereas moderate levels of prohibiting were associated with lower levels of these problem behaviors.

### Parental Beliefs and Attitudes About Adolescents' Peers

A major component of the dissertation model is the relationship of parents' belief systems to their parenting behaviors. Specifically, consistent with Ladd (1992), it is proposed that parents' beliefs and attitudes about adolescent peers are important determinants for parents' peer management behaviors. Beliefs and attitudes, although grouped together as aspects of parental beliefs systems, actually reflect different types of cognitions (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Sigel, 1995). Beliefs, as the term is generally used, refers to knowledge bases, information or ideas that are accepted by the individual as true (Sigel, 1985). This may include ideas about how children develop (e.g., an implicit theory of development), perceptions of events, expectations (i.e., what one expects to happen), or attributions (i.e., beliefs about how or why something happens). In contrast, attitudes (and values) may include a cognitive component, but are not seen as facts or truth. In contrast to beliefs, attitudes include some evaluative component. In other words, attitudes can be construed as the values placed on beliefs — what is liked or disliked, held as important or unimportant.

These cognitions can be further separated into two classifications: category-based beliefs and attitudes — those that are based on parents' knowledge of adolescent peer relationships in general; and target-based beliefs and attitudes — those that are based on

parents' knowledge of specific individual relationships, most likely those of their own adolescents (Buchanan et al., 1990; Buchanan & Holmbeck, 1998).

Category-based beliefs may include parents' beliefs about the nature of peer relationships in adolescence or the nature of peer influences in adolescence. Parents may for example, believe that adolescents' friendships are in the main, sources of risk (e.g., like the "malevolent peers" often referred to in research), or may see adolescents' friendships as necessary sources of comfort and support (e.g., like Sullivan's "chumships"). Parents may believe that peers overwhelm their own influence with their children or may view peer influences as more differentiated (i.e., peer influences depend on the individual and on the domain in question). Parents' category-based attitudes may include perceptions of their own efficacy in handling their adolescents' peer relationships. These attitudes may range from parents perceiving themselves as highly influential and effective managers, to parents perceiving themselves as ineffective. These areas have been unexplored by researchers.

A more explored area of category-based attitudes about peers is parents' conceptions of authority. Defined by Nucci (1981) as a prototypical domain of personal choice, friendships are an area in which parents and their children may disagree regarding who has legitimate authority. Research has demonstrated that even school-age children do not believe that parents have a legitimate right to make rules about friendship choices, justifying this view with concerns of personal choice (Tisak, 1986; Tisak & Tisak, 1990). In contrast, parents typically believe they should intervene when they are concerned about their adolescents' choice of friends (e.g., when friends are troublemakers or parents disapprove of the friends) (Youniss, DeSantis, & Henderson, 1992).

Smetana and Asquith (1994) investigated parents' (and adolescents') attitudes regarding who has legitimate authority in adolescents' friendship choices. That is, they questioned parents and their adolescent about whether parents have the authority and obligation to make and enforce rules about friendship choice, and whether adolescents, in turn, have an obligation to follow these rules. Although parents and their adolescents, on average, believed that parents have legitimate authority on most friendship issues, this was not always the case. Moreover, parents and adolescents differed in their reasoning about parental authority and adolescent friendships: Parents treated friendship issues as more contingent on parental authority, whereas adolescents felt that friendships fell under their personal jurisdiction. Moreover, parents' and adolescents' rationale for their viewpoints differed: Parents justified their authority using conventional (e.g., parents have authority over their children), prudential (e.g., the behavior or situation might cause harm to the adolescent), and psychological (e.g., friendship choices may influence the adolescent's behavior or personality) reasons; adolescents based their authority on personal concerns (e.g., it should be up to the individual to decide).

Research demonstrates similar variation in the attitudes reflected in statements from preschoolers' parents. In interviews, Rubin and Sloman (1984) found wide variations in the extent to which parents believe they should guide or direct their preschoolers' interactions. Some parents indicated that they engaged in active regulation: "There have been times when there were kids I tried to keep her away from temporarily. You might as well exercise some control over that while you can. *Later on, you don't get the opportunity*" [emphasis added] (p. 230). Others took a more "hands-off" approach:

“You can’t pick who your kids’ friends are, anyway. It just wouldn’t work. They have some rights. They have feelings, too, and you’ve got to trust these sometimes” (p. 230). These statements reflect not only variation in parents’ attitudes about legitimate authority in governing children’s friendships, but differences in these attitudes depending on the developmental stage of the child as well.

Mounts (2000a) found that 19% of a sample of ninth-graders’ mothers ( $n = 103$ ) responded that they did nothing when asked “What things do you do, if any, to influence your child’s selection of friends?” Their rationale for doing nothing to influence their adolescents’ choices of friends speaks to importance of their beliefs, as they indicated that they trusted their child’s decisions or that selecting friends was a personal decision with which parents should not interfere.

Target-based beliefs include knowledge of specific friendships — including those of their children and those of other children with whom the parents come in contact. Target-based attitudes may include parents’ worries and concerns about specific relationships, including the perceived influence of the peers with whom they know their adolescents are interacting — potentially both friends and foes. This could include a parent being worried about the undue negative influence of a particular friend or the impact a specific school bully is having on the adolescent’s well-being.

Research demonstrates that parents are indeed concerned about their adolescents’ relationships. Pasley and Gecas (1984), probing parent-reported beliefs that adolescence is a difficult period of parenting, found that parents cited adolescents’ growing independence and potentially risky decisions as driving their beliefs. Of particular interest

here, parents cited risky social relations as one of their concerns, including their adolescents' poor choice of friends, pressure from adolescent friends to do certain (antisocial) things, dating and a growing interest in sex. Logic dictates that some of these parents are likely to follow through on their concerns with actions.

Another dimension of target-based attitudes that is being proposed as an important antecedent to parents' peer management activities is parents' satisfaction with specific peers. This satisfaction is conceptualized on a continuum ranging from not being satisfied at all with adolescents' friendships to being wholly satisfied. No information currently exists to document such attitudes, but it stands to reason that parents who are concerned and worried about their adolescents' peer relationships are reflecting dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. In contrast, parents who are less worried are likely more satisfied with their adolescents' peers.

It is proposed as well, that category-based and target-based beliefs and attitudes influence each other. For example, parents' beliefs about peer relationships in general may influence how they perceive specific friends. A parent with a particular negative perceptual bias toward adolescent peers may perceive specific friends more negatively. On the other hand, a succession of particularly positive and prosocial relationships may change that same parent's beliefs about peers in general.

It makes sense to account for individual differences in parental management behaviors by examining what may be important motivations for parental actions. The parent who is dissatisfied with his or her adolescent's peers, believes he or she has the authority to make and enforce rules about friendships, and perceives their parenting

actions as efficacious may be likely to prohibit certain relationships, for example. The parent who believes that peer choices should be left to the adolescent, perceives himself or herself to be ineffective in managing adolescent relationships, or is generally very satisfied with his or her adolescent's friendships may be less likely to interfere, or may use less directive strategies. Thus, whether a parent acts to manage the adolescent's relationships, as well as what types of strategies are used, may be determined in part, by what category- and target-based beliefs and attitudes a parent holds.

#### Effects of Parental Management on Adolescents' Peer relationships

The model proposes that parents' peer management behaviors, whether aimed at specific relationships or peers in general, may influence adolescents' social relationships at many levels. For example, parents may change neighborhoods and schools in attempts to remove their adolescents from what they perceive as negative types of crowds (e.g., "druggies" or "dropouts"); they may enrol their adolescents in activities that will bring them into contact with adolescents the parents perceive as more prosocial (e.g., church youth groups, sports teams, dance classes, etc.); they may intervene and prohibit relationships where the peer influence is negative or encourage relationships where peer influences are more positive; and parents may encourage activities to enhance the quality or length of adolescents' relationships by providing more interaction. These are just a few examples of the ways in which parents' peer management behaviors may influence adolescents' peer relationships. Likewise, peer relationships may lead parents to change their peer management strategies, by either changing the type of peer management or the level of peer management. Parents may react to negative peer associations (e.g., negative

crowd reputations, deviant friends, negative peer influences, or contentious relationships) by engaging in behaviors that would discourage these relationships: moving, withdrawing support, talking to the adolescent about the problems these friends pose, or acting to terminate the friendship. On the other hand, parents may react to more positive peer relationships by engaging in behaviors that would encourage or enhance these relationships. At any rate, the relationship between parents' peer management behaviors and adolescents' peer relationships is undoubtedly bidirectional.

Moreover, these relationships likely influence parents' beliefs and attitudes about peers. Although no research has targeted parents' beliefs or attitudes about adolescents' peers, a study of the stereotypic content of parents' beliefs about adolescents (Buchanan, Eccles, Flanagan, Midgeley, Feldlaufer, & Harold, 1990) showed that parents who participated with a later-born child, in comparison to parents who participated with their only or first-born child (i.e., "novice parents") reported more variability in their target-based beliefs. The researchers took this to indicate that with increasing experience and exposure to adolescents, parents revise their beliefs and opinions, or at least those beliefs about specific adolescents. It may be that similar processes operate with beliefs and attitudes about adolescent peers. Potential revisions to belief systems could include changes in the emotional valence of attitudes (i.e., from more negative attitudes toward more positive attitudes), or increasing complexity (e.g., more contingencies for expectations).

### Peer relationships and Adolescent Psychosocial Development

Peer relationships have been consistently associated with adolescents' development

and well-being. For example, association with deviant peers has been identified as an important correlate of adolescents' engagement in problem behaviors (Dishion, Andrews, & Crosby, 1995; Galambos & Tilton-Weaver, in press; Jessor, Van Den Bos, Vanderryn, Costa, & Turbin, 1995; Schulenberg, Wadsworth, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 1996). The processes that are reflected in this association, however, are complex. As already stated, adolescents (and other people as well) tend to associate with individuals who share their proclivities. Therefore, it is not surprising that adolescents who engage in problem behaviors are more likely to associate with deviant peers. Longitudinal research, however, has demonstrated that beyond initial similarities, adolescent peers become more similar to each other as their social association continues, suggesting that friends likely influence each other (Kandel, 1986).

Indeed, researchers have found that peer influences are especially strong, as well as positive, in the domain of academic orientation (Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990). That is, adolescents perceive pressure from friends primarily to stay in school and get good grades. When problem behaviors are considered, researchers have found more pressure for some behaviors than for others: adolescents are more likely to be influenced by friends to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana than to engage in other antisocial behaviors (e.g., stealing, destroying property).

Increasing emphasis has been placed on the positive behaviors adolescents exhibit, including productive use of time (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1992) and prosocial activities, such as attending religious activities and volunteering in the community (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Eccles and Barber (1999) have shown that

engagement in prosocial activities is linked to lower levels of problem behaviors (e.g., less drinking, getting drunk, skipping school, and using drugs) and more positive academic orientations (e.g., better academic performance and greater likelihood of being enrolled in college at age 21). In view of research that suggests that adolescents may perceive more pressure from their peers to engage in productive rather than antisocial or self-destructive behaviors (Clasen & Brown, 1985), it may be especially timely to consider the relationship between peers and prosocial behaviors. Currently, the only research examining this link has examined adolescents' perceptions of pressure from peers and has left unanswered how much peers influence the degree to which adolescents engage in prosocial behaviors or how engagement in prosocial behaviors might influence peer relationships. It could be expected that adolescents who have more prosocially-oriented peers, as opposed to more deviant peers, might engage in more prosocial and less deviant activities themselves. By the same token, adolescents who engage in more prosocial than deviant activities might be more likely to have prosocial friends, as adolescents who engage in prosocial activities are more likely to encounter and interact with peers who are similarly prosocially-oriented.

Finding support for a model linking parental behaviors to peer relationships, and subsequently to adolescents' development and well-being is more difficult. Mounst, in two unpublished studies, has provided tentative support. In a pilot study interviewing 103 mothers of 9<sup>th</sup>-graders (54% had 9<sup>th</sup>-grade sons; 46% had 9<sup>th</sup>-grade daughters), nearly a quarter (24%) responded that they attempt to influence their adolescents' selection of friends by talking about future consequences; 18% encouraged their children to invite adolescents they preferred to their house; 11% prohibited or limited contact with

undesirable peers; 8% gave opinions of peers; 9% talked about their own values in effort to affect peer selection, and 2% relied on praise. This provides some of the first evidence that parents act to influence their adolescents' friendships.

Using longitudinal data from a one-year study of 9<sup>th</sup>-graders, Mounts (2000b) examined the connections between parents' peer management behaviors, and the psychosocial functioning of adolescents and their friends. Essentially, Mounts found that parents' peer management behaviors were related to the psychosocial adjustment of their adolescents. Specifically, monitoring was negatively correlated with adolescents' delinquency and drug use both concurrently and longitudinally (i.e., higher levels of monitoring were associated with lower levels of delinquency and drug use), as well as positively related both concurrently and longitudinally with adolescents' grade-point-average (i.e., higher levels of monitoring were associated with higher grades). In addition, parental monitoring was significantly associated with friends' self-reported delinquency, drug use, grades, and educational expectations (i.e., higher levels of parental monitoring were associated with lower levels of delinquency and drug use, and with higher grades and academic aspirations). Moreover, using regressions to examine the relationship of parents' behaviors to change in adolescents' behaviors, Mounts found that initial levels of prohibiting had a significant negative curvilinear relationship with grades and educational expectations. In other words, the lowest and highest levels of prohibiting were associated with decreases in grades and educational expectations, whereas moderate levels of prohibiting were associated with increases in grades and educational expectations.

In another study, Mounts (2000b) examined the relationship between adolescents'

reports of their parents' guiding and prohibiting and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment. In order to demonstrate that any potential influences were due to friends' influence, she used a regression framework, controlling for friends' initial levels of adjustment (this allows analyses of socialization effects beyond the effects of selection, which would be taken into account by initial levels of adjustment). She found parents' guiding was predictive of initial levels of adolescents' problem behaviors and academic adjustment: higher levels of guiding were associated with lower levels of delinquency and drug use and higher grades and educational expectations. Higher levels of prohibiting, in contrast, were associated with higher levels of delinquency and drug use. When change in adolescents' behaviors was examined (i.e., predicting subsequent behaviors while controlling for initial levels), Mounts found that guiding had a negative relationship with problem behaviors, such that higher levels of guiding were associated with decreased delinquency and drug use, whereas no significant relationships were found for prohibiting.

These studies suggest first, that parents act to influence their adolescents' friendships, and second, that parents' peer management behaviors may vary in the degree to which they are successful. For example, guiding may be a more effective behavior than prohibiting, especially when high levels of prohibiting are used. These are, however, preliminary studies, and we need additional information to illuminate the mechanisms (and differences in these mechanisms) by which these management behaviors might change adolescents' friendships or their behaviors.

### Research Questions

Because the nature of this study is somewhat exploratory, the goals of the

research are twofold: descriptive and predictive. Because there is little information that describes how parents attempt to influence their adolescents' peer relationships, the first part of this study examines the reported use of four parent peer management behaviors: communicating preferences, communicating disapproval, supporting, and information-seeking. This part of the study also attempts to describe aspects of parents' beliefs systems that may influence their peer management strategies (i.e., parents' perceptions of efficacy in managing adolescents' friendships and parents' concerns about adolescents' friendships). The following questions designed to provide such descriptive information guided the first part of this study:

1. What is the nature of parents' peer management behaviors?
  - a. What peer management behaviors do parents report using the most? What peer management behaviors do parents report using the least? How much variation is there in the reported use of these behaviors?
  - b. Are there mean-level differences in mothers' and fathers' reports of peer management behaviors?
  - c. Are parents' peer management behaviors related to each other?
  - d. Does the reported use of peer management behaviors differ as a function of the adolescent's age or gender?
2. What is the nature of parents' beliefs systems about peer relationships?
  - a. How efficacious do mothers and fathers feel about managing peer relationships and how concerned are parents about peer relationships?
  - b. Do mothers and fathers differ in the mean level of their efficacy beliefs and

their concerns about peers?

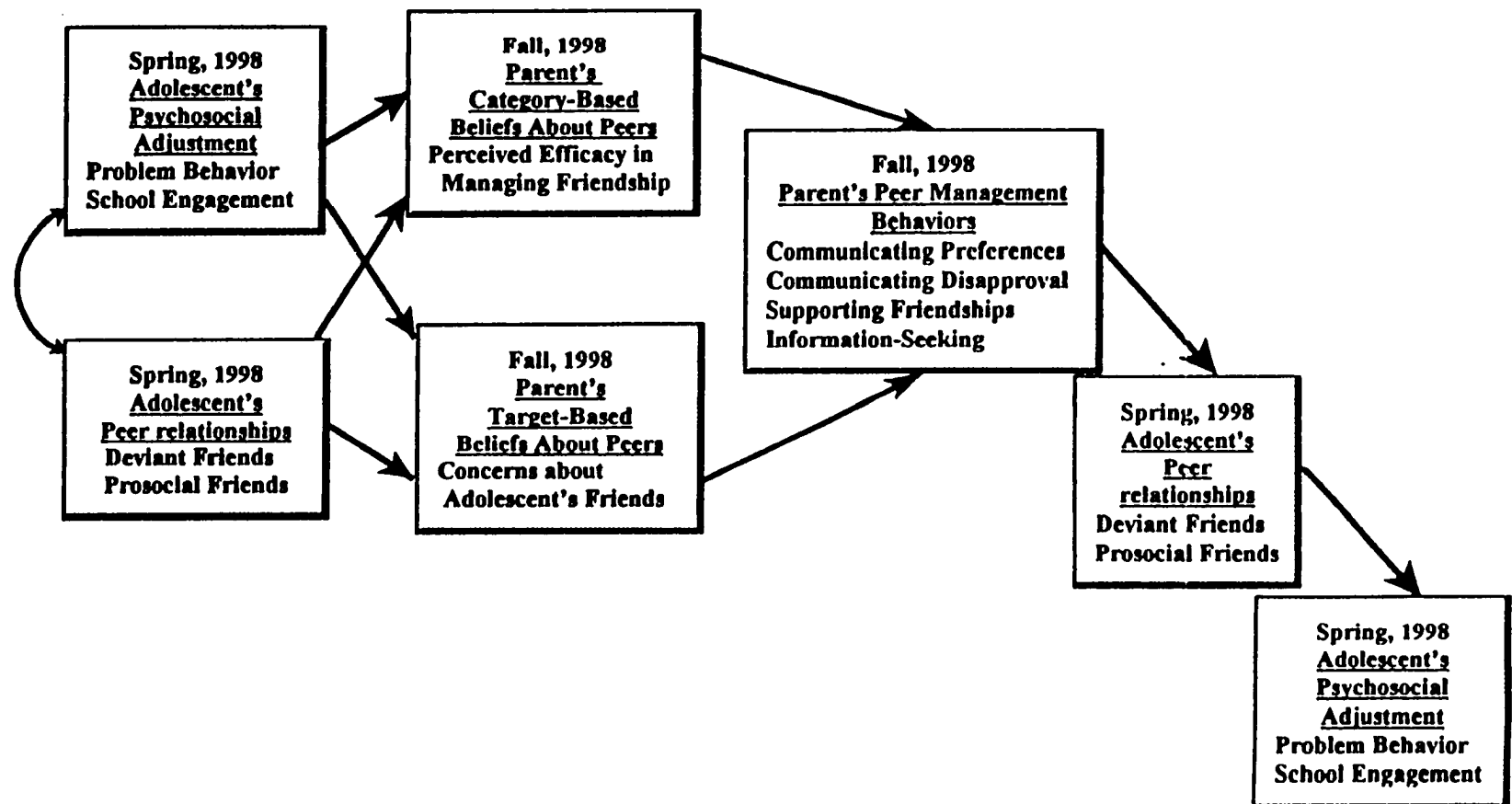
- c. Are parents' efficacy beliefs and concerns about peers related to each other?
- d. Do parents' efficacy beliefs and concerns differ as a function of their adolescents' age or gender?

The second part of this research explores the predictive capacity of parents' peer management behaviors. In order to establish the utility of directing attention to parents' peer management behaviors (as well as their belief systems about peer relationships), there should be demonstrable linkages from parents' belief systems to parents' peer management behaviors to adolescents' friendships and subsequent behaviors. That is, research should be able to show that parents' beliefs are related to their peer management behaviors and that peer management behaviors are related to *intraindividual change* in adolescents' friendships, and to *intraindividual change* in adolescents' behavior. Further, linkages between adolescents' behaviors and friendships and parents' beliefs about peers should be examined.

For the purposes of testing these relationships, a few variables from each conceptual category were examined. As indicated in Figure 2, these include: a) parents' perceived efficacy regarding their influence in adolescents' friendships (category-based beliefs and attitudes); b) parents' concerns with their adolescents' friendships (target-based beliefs and attitudes); c) parents' peer management behaviors, including communicating preferences, communicating disapproval, supporting, and information-seeking; d) adolescents' prosocial and deviant friends; and e) adolescents' problem

**Figure 2.**

**Testing Model of Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment and Peer relationships With Parents' Beliefs about Peers and Peer Management Behaviors**



behaviors and school engagement (note that variables are grouped together under their conceptual category, for simplicity of presentation, and there is no intent to imply that these variables necessarily form latent variables). The research questions that guide this part of the study are:

3. What is the relationship of parents' efficacy beliefs and concerns about adolescents' friendships to their peer management behaviors?
  - a. Are some beliefs or attitudes more likely to be associated with parents' peer management behaviors?
  - b. Do these associations differ as a function of the adolescent's age or gender?
4. What is the relationship between adolescents' behavior (i.e., problem behavior and school engagement) or friendships (i.e., deviant or prosocial) and parents' beliefs about adolescents' friendships and peer management behaviors?
5. Does intraindividual change (over one year) in adolescents' behavior or friendships relate to parents' beliefs about friendship and peer management behaviors?

## Chapter III

### Methods

#### Participants

Data for this study were taken from the Victoria Adolescence Project (VAP), a longitudinal study of adolescent psychosocial development. The participants for the VAP were 452 predominantly Caucasian adolescents (85% were Caucasian, 10% Asian, and 5% First Nations or other), including 220 6<sup>th</sup>-graders (110 females; 100 males) and 232 9<sup>th</sup>-graders (113 females; 119 males). The 6<sup>th</sup>-graders ranged in age from 11.30 to 12.77 years of age ( $M = 11.90$ ,  $SD = .32$  for females;  $M = 12.01$ ,  $SD = .33$  for males) and the 9<sup>th</sup>-graders ranged in age from 13.88 to 17.17 years of age ( $M = 15.04$ ,  $SD = .37$  for females;  $M = 15.09$ ,  $SD = .46$  for males). Seventy-six percent lived in a household with two parents, including stepparents (8% lived with a mother and stepfather; 2.4% lived with a father and stepmother). An additional 21.7% of the adolescents lived in a household headed by a single parent (including those sharing joint custody); the remaining 2% lived with grandparents, foster families, or with other relatives and non-relatives. According to the parents' reports, fathers had a mean score of 49.46 ( $SD = 16.10$ ) on the Blishen and McRoberts (1976) SES index; employed mothers had a mean score of 44.02 ( $SD = 15.54$ ). Examples of occupations and their SES scores are dental assistant, 45.02; bookkeeper, 40.28; and engineer, 70.27. Judging from the SES scores, the sample is diverse with respect to socioeconomic status..

In the second wave of data collection from the adolescents, 83 adolescents of the younger cohort (44 females; 39 males) and 87 of the older cohort (47 females; 40 males)

participated (approximately 40% retention). Data from the initial sample were analyzed in an attempt to determine if there were selection biases for those individuals who participated in both collections. T-tests examining parents' education, parents' SES, and adolescents' and parents' reports on the variables used for subsequent analyses revealed few differences. Adolescents who participated in the second data collection, in comparison to those who did not participate, had mothers who were more educated,  $t(1,430) = -2.00, p < .05$ ; better off socioeconomically,  $t(1,419) = -2.20, p < .05$ ; and communicated preferences about friends more often to their adolescents,  $t(1,158) = -2.17, p < .05$ ; and had fathers who were more educated,  $t(1,406) = -2.17, p < .05$ . Adolescents who participated in the second data collection also reported engaging in less problem behaviors than those who did not participate,  $t(1,443) = 2.44, p < .05$ .

With respect to parents' reports collected approximately six months after the first wave of data collection from the adolescents, 161 mothers and 107 fathers participated. Parent participation rates depended on the living situation of the adolescent. The questionnaire return rates were 40% of mothers and 29% of fathers in mother/father families; 42% of mothers and 28% of stepfathers in mother/stepfather families; 33% of mothers and 4% of fathers in single-mother families; 0% of mothers and 21% of fathers in single-father families; and 36% of mothers and 27% of fathers in joint custody situations. No adolescents in other living arrangements had parents or parent-figures who responded. Adolescents whose parents participated were compared to those whose parents did not participate to determine if there was any bias due to self-selection. Adolescents whose mothers responded, compared to those whose mothers did not respond, reported engaging

in less problem behavior,  $t(1,443) = 2.14, p < .05$ ; having friends who were more prosocial,  $t(1,428) = -2.32, p < .05$ ; and had mothers who were more educated,  $t(1,430) = -3.18, p < .05$ . Adolescents whose fathers responded reported engaging in less problem behavior,  $t(1,443) = 2.30, p < .05$ ; and were more engaged in school,  $t(1,439) = -2.17, p < .05$ , when compared to adolescents whose fathers did not respond. The adolescents whose fathers responded also reported having friends who were less deviant,  $t(1,427) = 2.23, p < .05$ ; and having friends who were more prosocial,  $t(1,443) = -2.18, p < .05$ . The fathers who responded were also better educated (according to adolescents' reports)  $t(1,406) = 4.37, p < .05$ ; and had higher (adolescent-reported) socioeconomic status,  $t(1,443) = 2.17, p < .05$ .

### Procedure

VAP data were collected from local area schools in the spring of 1998. Eight elementary schools, two junior secondary schools (spanning grades 8 to 10), and one high school (spanning grades 8 to 12) agreed to participate. Passive consent procedures were used where allowed by the principals (seven of the elementary schools, one junior secondary school, and one high school). That is, parents were informed of the study and those who did not want their adolescents to participate informed the researchers (see Appendix A for the a sample information letter and Appendix B for the parents' nonconsent card). Two of the schools, one elementary and one junior secondary, required active consent procedures (i.e., parents were informed of the study and provided written informed consent for their adolescents' participation; see Appendix C for a sample of the parents' information letter and Appendix D for the parents' consent form). Response

rates were 67% overall: 79% for passive consent (81% in the elementary schools and 76% in the others), 26% for the schools where active consent was used (86% in the elementary school and 17% in the junior secondary school -- the reason for the discrepancy in participation is, in part, because the elementary school principal and teachers actively sought the return of consent forms).

Students were first informed of the project by packages sent to their homes and announcements by research assistants during class. An additional consent form, which explained the general purpose of the study, the types of questions asked, and the rights of the participants (including a guarantee of confidentiality and right to refuse or cease participation) was provided for the students to read and to sign indicating their consent to participate (see Appendix E for a sample of the adolescents' consent form). Students who agreed to participate filled out a questionnaire during class time (approximately one hour). Questionnaires were administered by research assistants. Teachers were generally not present during questionnaire administration. For each student who participated, \$5 was paid to a class fund following completion of the questionnaires.

About six months following this data collection, the parents of the students were contacted by mail and invited to participate by filling out their own questionnaires (see parents' consent form, Appendix F). The parents were each paid a \$5 honorarium for their participation. This data collection took place in the fall of 1998. In the summer of 1999 (when the students presumably had finished grades 7 and 10, respectively), the adolescents were sent a second questionnaire (and accompanying adolescent and parent consent forms) by mail. The adolescents were offered \$15 for their participation.

### Measures: Adolescents' Reports

Problem Behavior. The mean of 23 items (Brown, Clasen, & Eicher, 1986; Maggs, Almeida, & Galambos, 1995) (e.g., done something that your parents told you not to do; smoked marijuana; see Appendix G for full list of items) comprised the problem behavior measure. Adolescents indicated the frequency of these activities within the past month on a scale from Never (1) to Almost every day (5). Higher scores reflected higher problem behavior. Cronbach alphas are .92 for Time 1 and .90 for Time 2.

School Engagement. The mean of four items (see Appendix G for individual items) was used to assess academic orientation (Welhlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). Adolescents indicated their agreement with four statements on a scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4), with higher scores indicating greater engagement in school. Cronbach alphas are .75 for Time 1 and .80 for Time 2.

Prosocial Friends. The mean of four items (see Appendix G for the list of items) created for this study was used to measure the prosocial orientation of the adolescents' friends. Items were rated on a scale ranging from Agree Strongly (1) to Disagree Strongly (4), with all of the items reversed coded so that higher scores indicate that the friends were more prosocial. Cronbach alphas are .63 for Time 1 and .68 for Time 2.

Deviant Friends. The mean of four items, previously used by Galambos and Maggs (1991), were used to measure the deviance of adolescents' friends (see Appendix G for the items). The same scaling that was used for prosocial friends was used for these items, reverse coded so that higher mean scores indicate that the friends were more deviant. Cronbach alphas are .74 for Time 1 and .80 for Time 2.

### Measures: Parents' Reports

Perceived Efficacy in Managing Adolescents' Friendships. Parents indicated their perceived efficacy in influencing their children's friendships by responding to five items (see Appendix H), two of which were from Freedman-Doan, Arbreton, Harold, and Eccles (1993) and three written for the present study. Asked "How much can you do now" (given various scenarios, such as "to prevent my child from getting in with the wrong crowd at school?" "To help my child select friends that are good for him/her?"), parents responded using a 7-point scale ranging from very little (1) to some (4) to a great deal (7). Higher scores indicated parents felt a greater ability to influence their adolescents' friendship choices. Cronbach alphas for the sample are .93 for mothers and .92 for fathers.

Parents' Concerns about Adolescents' Friendships. Parents' responses to six items (see Appendix H for the items), two of which were also from Freedman-Doan et al. (1993) and four constructed for this dissertation, were used to assess parents' concerns about friendships. Parents indicated their agreement with the items by responding on a 7-point scale for the two Freedman-Doan et al. items (1 = Not at all true, 4 = Somewhat true, and 7 = Very True) and a 5-point scale (1 = Disagree Strongly; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5 = Agree Strongly) for the rest.

Originally, these items comprised two separate constructs (worries about and satisfaction with friends). The items were combined however, when individually the psychometric properties were weak (i.e., deletion of unacceptable items left only two items for one construct). A principal component analysis showed that a single-factor

structure for fathers and a two-factor structure for mothers. Forcing the number of factors to be consistent for both mothers and fathers showed that a single-factor structure worked well for both, with 51% of the variance in the items accounted for by the mothers' factor and 60.74% of the variance explained by the fathers' factor (factor loadings ranged from .42 to .81 for mothers and .64 to .89 for fathers). Furthermore, the Cronbach alphas indicated good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .78$  for mothers and  $\alpha = .85$  for fathers), with item-total correlations averaging  $r = .55$  for mothers and  $r = .66$  for fathers. Therefore, a mean of the standardized items was calculated (within gender of parent), with higher scores indicating more parental concerns about friendships.

Parents' Peer Management Behaviors. Parents' peer management behaviors were measured using these 13 items developed for this study (the specific items are found in Appendix H). Parents were asked to indicate how many times in the past month they had engaged in the indicated peer management behaviors (e.g., "told your child that you like a particular friend of his/hers," "suggested spending time with a particular peer") using a 5-point scale with the responses Never (1), Once or Twice (2), 3 or 4 Times (3), Pretty Often (4), or Almost Every Day (5).

By examining the theoretical meaning and intercorrelations of the individual items, the results of principal component analyses and Cronbach alphas for possible scales, four measures were developed from 13 items (communicating preferences, communicating disapproval, supporting friendships, and information-seeking). These measures meet the following criteria: 1) both mothers' and fathers' scales are composed of identical items, 2) the items within a scale are statistically related (i.e., adequate Cronbach alphas and item-

total correlations), and 3) the final scales make theoretical sense.

A principal component analyses of the 13 items confirmed that there were 4 consistent factors for mothers and fathers. Three factors consisted of three items each: communicating preferences (range of loadings = .55 to .83 for mothers and .75 to .84 for fathers), communicating disapproval (range of loadings = .55 to .83 for mothers and .55 to .79 for fathers), and information-seeking (range of loadings = .55 to .83 for mothers and .47 to .74 for fathers); with the fourth factor, called supporting friendships, consisting of four items (range of loadings = .60 to .82 for mothers and .65 to .76 for fathers). A total of 63% of the variance in the mothers' items and 66% of the variance in the fathers' items was accounted for by the four factors. Two items cross-loaded for mothers: "Asked your child for more information about his/her friends" cross-loaded on information-seeking and communicating preferences, whereas "Said no to an activity with certain friends, because you thought it would be bad for your child" cross-loaded on communicating disapproval and information-seeking.

The items loading on the four factors were then used to create the four peer management behavior scales. Because these two items that cross-loaded on the mothers' factor analyses did not cross-load on fathers, and because the fathers' loadings made theoretical sense, the two items were placed on the scales suggested by the fathers' factor analyses. For the four scales, higher scores indicate a higher frequency of engagement in each type of peer management. Cronbach alphas for this sample are as follows: for communicating preferences, mothers'  $\alpha = .75$ , fathers'  $\alpha = .80$  (item-total correlations averaged  $r = .58$  for mothers and  $r = .65$  for fathers); for communicating disapproval,

mothers'  $\alpha = .59$ , fathers'  $\alpha = .59$  (item-total correlations averaged  $r = .43$  for mothers and  $r = .42$  for fathers); for supporting friendships, mothers'  $\alpha = .70$ , fathers'  $\alpha = .74$  (item-total correlations averaged  $r = .49$  for mothers and  $r = .54$  for fathers); and for information-seeking, mothers'  $\alpha = .68$ , fathers'  $\alpha = .81$  (item-total correlations averaged  $r = .51$  for mothers and  $r = .67$  for fathers). Although the Cronbach alphas for communicating preferences are somewhat weak, this measure was retained for analyses because it was of theoretical interest and similar to measures used in other studies (e.g., measures of prohibiting contact).

## Chapter IV

### Results

#### Part I: Description

##### Describing Parents' Management of Adolescents' Friendships

The first purpose of this study was to determine, what in general, parents' management of their adolescents' peer relationships would look like. To examine the general nature of parents' peer management behaviors (i.e., which behaviors parents engage in most and the degree of variability in each behavior), descriptive statistics (including means, standard deviations, skew, and kurtosis) were calculated for mothers and fathers (see Table 1). Both mothers and fathers report using support and communicating preferences about friendships most often with their adolescents compared to information-seeking and communicating disapproval. However, the means of all four parents' peer management behaviors range from 1.42 (between "never" and "once or twice" in the past month) to 2.71 (closer to "3 or 4 times" in the past month), suggesting that on average, parents use these peer management behaviors relatively infrequently (i.e., a few times a month). Additionally, the skew and kurtosis of communicating disapproval and information-seeking are relatively high and positive, suggesting that most parents use these behaviors very infrequently.

In order to examine mean-level differences between mothers' and fathers' peer management behaviors, paired t-tests were calculated. The results of these t-tests indicate that although mothers report using all four peer management behaviors more often than fathers, only mothers' and fathers' reports of communicating preferences were

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Management Behaviors

Management behavior	<u>n</u>	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
<b>Communicating preferences</b>							
Mothers' reports	160	2.44	.87	1.00	5.00	.50	-.42
Fathers' reports	107	2.22	.85	1.00	5.00	.83	.27
<b>Communicating disapproval</b>							
Mothers' reports	160	1.44	.58	1.00	5.00	2.42	9.35
Fathers' reports	107	1.42	.51	1.00	3.67	1.53	3.02
<b>Supporting friendships</b>							
Mothers' reports	160	2.71	.84	1.00	5.00	.25	-.30
Fathers' reports	107	2.65	.85	1.00	4.75	.16	-.52
<b>Information-seeking</b>							
Mothers' reports	160	1.87	.75	1.00	5.00	1.17	1.60
Fathers' reports	107	1.82	.76	1.00	4.67	1.62	2.91

Note. Scale anchors for all items were: 1 = Never, 2 = Once or Twice, 3 = 3 or 4 times, 4 = Pretty Often, and 5 = Almost Every Day.

significantly different: mothers report communicating their preferences regarding their adolescents' friendships more frequently ( $M = 2.40$ ) than fathers ( $M = 2.16$ ) (see Table 2).

Pearson correlations were calculated to determine the extent to which: 1) mothers' peer management behaviors were interrelated, 2) fathers' peer management behaviors were interrelated, and 3) mothers' reported peer management behaviors were related to fathers' reported peer management behaviors. As can be seen in Table 3, mothers' reports of their peer management behaviors and fathers' reports of their own peer management behaviors are significantly interrelated, with moderate to strong positive correlations (the intercorrelations range from .22 to .59 for mothers and from .21 to .56 for fathers). The more a parent engages in one peer management behavior, the more he or she also engages in the other peer management behaviors.

The patterns of relationships are also similar for mothers and fathers. For example, both the lowest and highest correlations for mothers and fathers are between the same variables (i.e., lowest correlations are between communicating disapproval and supporting friendships; whereas the highest correlations are between communicating preferences and information-seeking).

With respect to the correlations between mothers' and fathers' behaviors (also reported in Table 3), some are significantly correlated whereas others are not. With the exception of mothers' and fathers' supporting friendships, mothers' and fathers' reports of the same behaviors are all significantly correlated: the more mothers report communicating preferences, the more fathers communicate preferences. Positive associations hold also

Table 2

**Results of Paired T-Tests Examining Differences in Mothers' and Fathers' Reported Management Behaviors**

Management behaviors	Mothers'		Fathers'		t(1,90)	p
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
Communicating preferences	2.40	.88	2.16	.79	2.64	.02
Communicating disapproval	1.44	.52	1.42	.51	.50	.62
Supporting friendships	2.66	.84	2.64	.86	.19	.85
Information-seeking	1.85	.79	1.76	.64	1.05	.30

Table 3

Intercorrelations Among Parents' Management Behaviors

Management behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mothers' reports								
1. Communicating preferences	-							
2. Communicating disapproval	.41* (160)	-						
3. Supporting friendships	.42* (160)	.22* (160)	-					
4. Information-seeking	.59* (160)	.37* (160)	.50* (160)	-				
Fathers' reports								
5. Communicating preferences	.32* (91)	.09 (91)	-.04 (91)	.14 (91)	-			
6. Communicating disapproval	.28* (91)	.55* (91)	.08 (91)	.39* (91)	.35* (107)	-		
7. Supporting friendships	.12 (91)	-.02 (91)	.18 (91)	.16 (91)	.41* (107)	.21* (107)	-	
8. Information-seeking	.24* (91)	.26* (91)	.06 (91)	.42* (91)	.56* (107)	.48* (107)	.47* (107)	-

Note. *n* for each correlation is provided in parentheses.

\*  $p < .05$ .

for communicating disapproval and information-seeking. In addition, mothers' communicating preferences is significantly correlated with fathers' communicating disapproval and information-seeking: the more mothers communicate preferences about friendships, the more fathers communicate disapproval and seek information about friendships. Similarly, fathers' communicating disapproval and seeking information is not only significantly related to mothers' communicating preferences about friendships, but also to mothers' communicating disapproval and seeking information about friendships.

To answer the question of whether reported use of peer management behaviors differs as a function of the adolescents' gender or grade (age), 2 x 2 (Adolescents' Gender x Adolescents' Grade) ANOVAs were conducted. For mothers' reports, no significant main effects or interactions were found for any of the peer management behaviors. For fathers, a significant main effect of gender was found for communicating preferences,  $F(3, 103) = 5.38, p < .05$ ; and a significant main effect of grade was found for information-seeking,  $F(3, 103) = 4.65, p < .05$ . Specifically, fathers of daughters ( $M = 2.43$ ;  $SD = .79$ ) report communicating preferences more often than fathers of sons ( $M = 2.05$ ;  $SD = .86$ ), and fathers of 9<sup>th</sup>-graders ( $M = 1.65$ ;  $SD = .56$ ) report seeking more information about their adolescents' friendships than fathers of 6<sup>th</sup>-graders ( $M = 1.97$ ;  $SD = .88$ ). No other significant main effects or interactions were found with respect to fathers' peer management behaviors.

### Describing Parents' Beliefs About Adolescents' Friendships

What is the nature of parents' beliefs systems about peers? This research question was addressed by examining two constructs: parents' beliefs about their efficacy in

managing friendships and parents' concerns about friendships. To determine what parents, in general, believed about their adolescents' friendships, descriptive statistics were calculated and examined. Mothers and fathers both report, on average, feeling somewhat efficacious, with mothers reporting slightly higher feelings of efficacy (see Table 4).

Because parents' concerns were measured with standardized items using different original scales, the descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the original items individually (see Table 5 for a breakdown of each item and its associated descriptive statistics). Both mothers' and fathers' responses center around "2," which corresponds most closely to the scaling anchors "Disagree slightly" or "Not at all true" in response to items such as "I [dis]approve of my child's friends" and "I am worried about the kinds of friends my child has," respectively. These results suggest that parents, in the main, are relatively unconcerned and generally satisfied with their adolescents' friendships. However, there is sufficient variability to suggest that many parents differ from this average, being more or less concerned with their adolescents' friendships.

To determine if mothers and fathers differ in their efficacy beliefs and concerns about friendships, paired t-tests were conducted. The t-tests revealed that there were no significant differences between mothers' and fathers' efficacy beliefs or concerns about their adolescents' friendships (see Table 6).

Pearson correlations were calculated to examine the interrelationships between mothers' and fathers' beliefs about their adolescents' friendships. As seen in Table 7,

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Efficacy in Managing Adolescents' Friendships

Parents' efficacy	<u>n</u>	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
Mothers' reports	159	4.45	1.43	1.00	7.00	-.37	-.34
Fathers' reports	108	4.13	1.40	1.00	7.00	.03	-.40

Note. Scale anchors for all items were: 1 = Very Little, 4 = Some, and 7 = A Great Deal.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics (unstandardized) for Individual Items in Parents' Concerns About Friendships Scale

Scale item	<u>n</u>	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
<b>Friends have positive influence<sup>c</sup></b>							
Mothers' reports	161	1.98	.97	1.00	5.00	.70	-.33
Fathers' reports	107	2.15	.90	1.00	5.00	.57	.08
<b>Approve of friends<sup>c</sup></b>							
Mothers' reports	161	1.67	.80	1.00	4.00	1.18	1.03
Fathers' reports	108	1.84	.90	1.00	5.00	1.11	1.06
<b>Worried adolescent will do (bad) things with friends<sup>a</sup></b>							
Mothers' reports	161	2.50	1.29	1.00	5.00	.23	-1.33
Fathers' reports	108	2.38	1.22	1.00	5.00	.27	-1.30
<b>Satisfied with circle of friends<sup>c</sup></b>							
Mothers' reports	161	1.78	.98	1.00	5.00	1.23	.83
Fathers' reports	108	1.86	.92	1.00	5.00	1.01	.65
<b>Worried about kinds of friends<sup>b</sup></b>							
Mothers' reports	160	1.88	1.26	1.00	7.00	1.93	4.36
Fathers' reports	106	2.15	1.39	1.00	7.00	1.41	1.84
<b>Worried about who adolescent's with<sup>b</sup></b>							
Mothers' reports	160	1.69	1.36	1.00	7.00	2.58	6.65
Fathers' reports	106	1.82	1.36	1.00	7.00	2.17	4.67

<sup>a</sup>Possible responses range from "1 = Disagree strongly" to "3 = Neither agree nor disagree" to "5 = Agree strongly." <sup>b</sup>Possible responses range from "1 = Not at all true" to "4 = Somewhat true" to "7 = Very true." <sup>c</sup>Item was reverse coded.

Table 6

Results of Paired T-Tests Examining Differences in Mothers' and Fathers' Reported Beliefs About Friendships

Belief about friendships	Mothers		Fathers		t(1,89)	p
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
Efficacy in managing friendships	4.37	1.47	4.11	1.29	1.46	.15
Concerns about friendships	.02	.74	.00	.78	.32	.75

Table 7

Intercorrelations Among Parents' Beliefs about Adolescents' Friendships

Belief About Friendships	Mothers		Fathers	
	Efficacy in management	Concerns about friendships	Efficacy in management	Concerns about friendships
<b>Mothers' reports</b>				
Efficacy in management	-			
Concerns about friendships	-.33* (158)	-		
<b>Fathers' reports</b>				
Efficacy in management	.22* (90)	-.30* (91)	-	
Concerns about friendships	-.19 (89)	.75* (90)	-.27* (106)	

Note. n for each correlation is provided in parentheses.

parents' efficacy in managing friendships was significantly negatively associated with concerns about friendships, where parents who felt more efficacious also reported less concern. Mothers' reports were also correlated with some of the fathers' reports: when mothers reported feeling more efficacious, fathers reported feeling more efficacious; when mothers reported more concern about their adolescents' friends, the fathers reported feeling less efficacious and more concerned as well. Indeed the correlation between mothers' and fathers' reports of being concerned is very strong, suggesting considerable overlap between mothers' and fathers' understanding of this issue.

To determine if there were gender or grade differences in parents' beliefs about peers, two 2 x 2 (Adolescents' Gender x Adolescents' Grade) ANOVAs were conducted. For mothers, a significant main effect of grade was found for efficacy beliefs,  $F(3,158) = 8.50, p < .005$ . Specifically, mothers of 6<sup>th</sup>-graders ( $M = 4.75; SD = 1.24$ ) reported feeling more efficacious in managing their adolescents' friendships than mothers of 9<sup>th</sup> graders ( $M = 4.09; SD = 1.57$ ). No significant main effects or interactions were found with respect to other fathers' or mothers' beliefs.

#### Part II: Predicting Parents' Beliefs About and Management of Adolescents' Peer relationships

To examine the relationships implied by the conceptual model (Figure 1), cross-sectional and longitudinal models were drawn up and examined separately. The model suggests that adolescents' adjustment (i.e., problem behavior and school engagement) and friendships (i.e., prosocial friends or deviant friends) influence parents' beliefs about peers and parents' peer management behaviors. Further, the model suggests that the

relationship between adolescents' behavior and friendships is mediated by parents' beliefs. These relationships are explored using the first wave of adolescents' and parents' reports (see Figure 3 for the variables used; again note that the grouping is heuristic, for the sake of simplicity).

Table 8 shows the intercorrelations among adolescents' reports. All of the intercorrelations among adolescents' problem behavior, school engagement, deviant friends, and prosocial friends were significant. The more adolescents engaged in problem behaviors, the less they reported being engaged in school, the more deviant their friends were, and the less prosocial their friends were. The more adolescents reported being engaged in school, the less deviant they reported their friends were, and the more prosocial their friends were. Finally, the more deviant they reported their friends were, the less prosocial their friends were reported to be.

#### Examining The Relationship Between Adolescents' and Parents' Reports

Pearson correlations were first calculated between adolescents' behavior (problem behavior and school engagement) and friendships (deviant or prosocial), parents' beliefs about peers (efficacy in managing friendships and concerns about friendships) and peer management behaviors. These are reported in Table 9. These correlations reveal some interesting relationships. Adolescents' engagement in problem behaviors and school are both significantly related to mothers' beliefs about their efficacy in managing their adolescents' friendships, and both mothers' and fathers' concerns about their adolescents' friendships. Specifically, the more adolescents engage in problem behaviors, the less efficacious their mothers feel about managing their adolescents' friendships, and the more

Figure 3.

Predicting Parents' Peer Management Behaviors

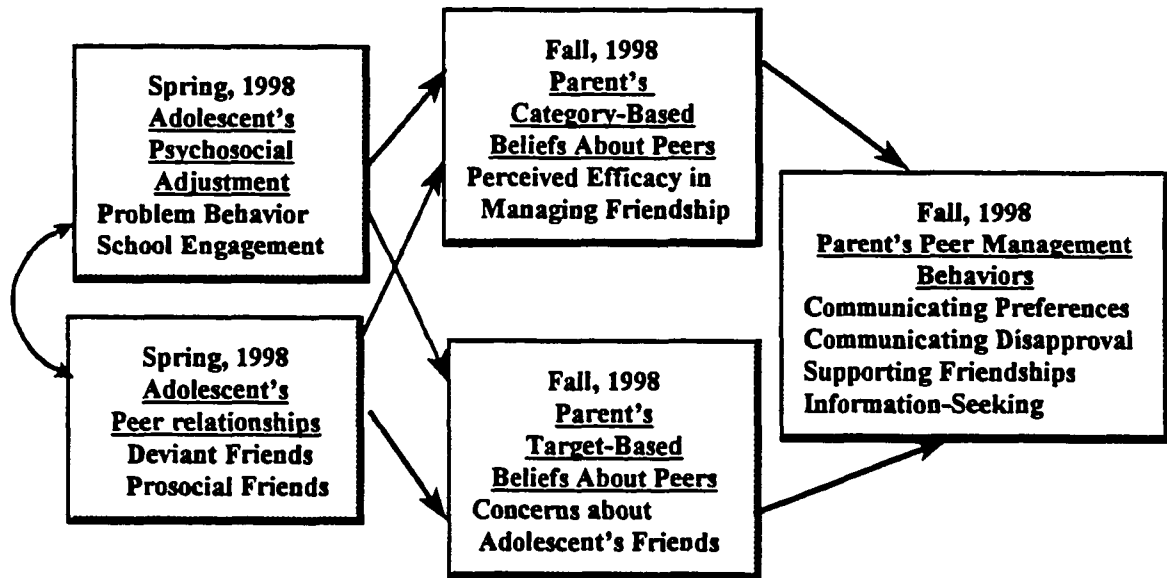


Table 8

Intercorrelations Among Adolescents' Time 1 Reports of Problem Behavior, School Engagement, Deviant and Prosocial Friends.

Adolescents' reports	Problem behavior	School engagement	Deviant friends
School engagement	-.32*		
Deviant friends	.54*	-.31*	
Prosocial friends	-.24*	.29*	-.23*

Note.  $n$  ranges from 422 to 434.

\* $p < .05$ .

Table 9

**Correlations between Adolescents' Behaviors and Friendships and Parents' Reports of Their Beliefs About Friendships and Management of Their Adolescents' Friendships**

Parents' reports	Problem behavior	School engagement	Deviant friends	Prosocial friends
<b>Mothers' reports</b>				
<b>Beliefs about friendships</b>				
Efficacy in managing friends	-.19*	.19*	-.21*	.05
Concerns about friendships	.32*	-.19*	.41*	-.16
<b>Management behaviors</b>				
Communicating preferences	.08	.05	.16	.08
Communicating disapproval	.27*	-.03	.38*	-.14
Supporting friendships	.06	.10	.06	-.07
Information-seeking	.25*	.02	.16*	-.04
<b>Fathers' reports</b>				
<b>Beliefs about friendships</b>				
Efficacy in managing friends	-.14	.15	-.12	.09
Concerns about friendships	.40*	-.28*	.37*	-.29*
<b>Management behaviors</b>				
Communicating preferences	.12	.18	.01	.02
Communicating disapproval	.28*	.08	.15	-.12
Supporting friendships	.16	.04	-.14	-.08
Information-seeking	.41*	-.05	.16	-.18

**Note.** *n* for mothers' reports range from 151 to 159; for fathers' reports from 100 to 106.

\**p* < .05.

concerned mothers and fathers are about their adolescents' friends. In comparison, the more engaged adolescents are in school, the more efficacious mothers feel and the less concerned mothers and fathers are about the adolescents' friends. The adolescents' behavior was also significantly related to parents' peer management behaviors. That is, the more adolescents reported engaging in problem behaviors, the more both mothers and fathers communicated their disapproval of their adolescents' friends and sought information about their adolescents' friends.

Similarly, adolescents' friendships were related to some of their parents' beliefs about peers and parents' peer management behaviors. Mothers of adolescents who reported having more deviant friends felt less efficacious in managing their adolescents' friends, were more concerned about their adolescents' friends, communicated their disapproval of friends more often, and sought information more often about their adolescents' friends. Fathers of adolescents who reported having more deviant friends were also more concerned about their adolescents' friendships. Fathers of adolescents who reported having more prosocial friends were less concerned about their adolescents' friendships.

Interestingly, there were no significant relationships found between parents' (either mothers' or fathers') communicating preferences about friends or supporting their adolescents' friendships and adolescents' reported behaviors or friends' orientation. Overall, adolescents' reported engagement in problem behaviors was most consistently related to their parents' beliefs about peers and peer management behaviors.

### Predicting Parents' Beliefs About Adolescents' Friendships

Next, the relationship of adolescents' behaviors and friendships to parents' beliefs about peers were examined by conducting a set of four hierarchical regressions (two each for mothers and fathers). Four interactions were also examined, to determine if gender or grade moderated the relationships between adolescents' behaviors or friendships and parents' beliefs. These interactions were included because the possibility of gender or grade moderating these relationships has not been previously examined. It is possible, for example, that parents are more likely to become concerned about their adolescents' friends, or doubt their efficacy in managing their adolescents' friends only when their younger or female adolescents become engaged in less than desirable behavior or friendships (i.e., parents might believe that such problem behaviors are more normative for older adolescents or for boys). The hierarchical format was as follows:

Block 1. Adolescents' characteristics: Gender and grade were entered to examine differences in parents' beliefs about peers;

Block 2. Adolescents' behaviors: Adolescents' reports of their problem behavior and school engagement were entered to predict parents' beliefs about peers;

Block 3. Adolescents' friendships: Adolescents' reports of their deviant friends and prosocial friends were entered to predict parents' beliefs about peers, as indicated in Figure 3;

Block 4. Adolescents' Gender X Behaviors interactions: Interactions between gender and block 2 predictors were entered to examine gender differences in the relationships between adolescents' behaviors and parents' beliefs about peers;

Block 5. Adolescents' Gender X Friends interactions: Interactions between gender and block 3 predictors were entered to examine gender differences in the relationships between adolescents' friends and parents' beliefs about peers;

Block 6. Adolescents' Grade X Behaviors interactions: Interactions between grade and block 2 predictors were entered to examine grade differences in the relationships between adolescents' behaviors and parents' beliefs about peers; and

Block 7. Adolescents' Grade X Friends interactions: Interactions between grade and block 3 predictors were entered in a final block to examine grade differences in the relationships between adolescents' friends and parents' beliefs about peers.

As suggested by Aiken and West (1991), the categorical predictors (gender and grade) were dummy coded (boys = 0, girls = 1; 6<sup>th</sup> grade = 0 and 9<sup>th</sup> grade = 1) and the continuous predictors (adolescents' reports of their behavior and friendships) were centered, in order to reduce the multicollinearity associated with combining these variables to create interaction terms. The intercorrelations among the interaction terms were examined to ensure that none were above .70, which would indicate multicollinearity among the interaction terms.

The results of these regressions are reported in Table 10. First, because there were no significant interactions (for mothers' or for fathers' regressions), these terms were dropped from the tabled results and will not be discussed further. Only Block 1 explained a significant amount of variance in mothers' efficacy beliefs (4%,  $p < .05$ ), with a main effect for gender: mothers of daughters, in comparison to mothers of sons, felt more efficacious in managing their adolescents' friendships. The full model predicted a

Table 10

**Hierarchical Regression Results Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Beliefs About Peers**

Beliefs about peers	Block 1: Adolescents' characteristics β and R <sup>2</sup>			Block 2: Adolescents' behavior β and R <sup>2</sup> Δ			Block 3: Adolescents' friendships β and R <sup>2</sup> Δ			Model
	GN	GD	R <sup>2</sup>	PB	SE	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	DF	PF	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Mothers' reports</b>										
Efficacy in managing friends	.06	-.20*	.04*	-.09	.14	.03	-.08	-.01	.00	.08
Concerns about friends	-.04	.06	.01	.32*	-.11	.12*	.36*	.01	.07*	.19*
<b>Fathers' reports</b>										
Efficacy in managing friends	-.15	-.06	.02	-.11	.08	.02	-.08	-.02	-.00	.05
Concerns about friends	-.02	-.07	.01	.47*	-.24*	.28*	-.12	-.10	.02	.31*

**Note.** *n* ranges from 146 to 147 for mothers and 97 to 99 for fathers. GN = gender, GD = grade, PB = problem behavior, SE = school engagement, DF = deviant friends, PF = prosocial friends, EF = efficacy in management, CN = concerns about friends.

\* *p* < .05.

nonsignificant 8% of the total variance in mothers' efficacy beliefs.

With respect to mothers' concerns about their adolescents' friendships, Block 1 was nonsignificant, explaining only 1% of the variance in mothers' concerns about friends. With the inclusion of Block 2, an additional 12% of the variance in mothers' concerns was explained ( $p < .05$ ), with adolescents' problem behavior emerging as a significant predictor (school engagement did not significantly predict mothers' concerns). Specifically, the more adolescents engaged in problem behaviors, the more concerned their mothers were about their friends. The inclusion of Block 3 explained an additional 7% of the variance ( $p < .05$ ). Deviant friends, but not prosocial friends, was a significant predictor of mothers' concerns: mothers of adolescents who reported having more deviant friends were more concerned about their adolescents' friends than mothers whose adolescents reported having less deviant friends. The full model explained 19% of the variance in mothers' concerns ( $p < .05$ ).

With respect to fathers' efficacy beliefs, none of the predictors were significant, with the full model explaining only 5% of the total variance in fathers' feelings of efficacy. For fathers' concerns, Block 1 was nonsignificant, explaining only 1% of the variance. The inclusion of Block 2, however, explained an additional 28% of the variance in fathers' concerns ( $p < .05$ ). For this step, both adolescents' problem behaviors and school engagement were significant predictors: fathers of adolescents who reported being more engaged in problem behaviors and less engaged in school were more concerned about their adolescents' friendships than were fathers of adolescents who reported less engagement in problem behaviors. Block 3 was nonsignificant, explaining only 2% of the

variance in fathers' concerns. The full model explained a total of 31% of the variance in fathers' concerns about friends ( $p < .05$ ).

### Predicting Parents' Management of Adolescents' Friendships

Next, a set of eight hierarchical regressions was conducted to examine the relationships implied in Figure 3. That is, do adolescents' behaviors and friendships, as a set, predict parents' peer management behaviors, and do parents' beliefs predict parents' peer management behaviors? Further, are there gender or grade differences in the relationships between parents beliefs about peers and parents' peer management behaviors?

The regressions were conducted in a manner similar to those described above, with the four parent management behaviors as the dependent variables:

Block 1. Adolescents' characteristics: Gender and grade were entered to examine differences in parents' peer management behaviors;

Block 2. Adolescents' behaviors: Adolescents' reports of their problem behavior and school engagement were entered to predict parents' peer management behaviors;

Block 3. Adolescents' friendships: Adolescents' reports of their deviant friends and prosocial friends were entered to predict parents' peer management behaviors, as indicated in Figure 3;

Block 4. Parents' beliefs about peers: Parents' category- and target-based beliefs about peers were entered to determine if efficacy and concerns together predict parents' peer management behaviors;

Block 5. Adolescents' Gender x Parents' Beliefs interactions: The interactions

between gender and parents' beliefs were entered to determine if gender moderated the relationship between parents' beliefs and peer management behaviors;

Block 6. Adolescents' Grade x Parents' Beliefs interactions: The interactions between grade and parents' beliefs were entered to determine if grade moderated the relationship between parents' beliefs and peer management behaviors; and

Block 7. Parents' Efficacy x Parents' Concerns interaction: The interactions between parents' efficacy and concerns was entered as a final step, to determine if parents' efficacy moderated the relationship between parents' concerns about peers and the parents' peer management behaviors.

This hierarchical structure tests each block as an additional set of independent variables in predicting parents' peer management behaviors. Adolescents' behaviors and friendships were entered separately, with behaviors being entered first to reflect the influence of homophily in adolescents' relationships. This order of entry was chosen so that selection effects would not be underestimated (Kandel, 1986). Parents' beliefs were entered next, reflecting the fact that parents' reports were collected 6 months later than the adolescents' reports and that parents' peer management behaviors are presumed to be guided by parents' belief systems (Ladd, 1992).

The interactions entered in Blocks 5 through 7 were of substantive theoretical interest: the relationship between parents' beliefs about peers and parents' peer management behaviors in adolescence has not yet been tested and it is not known whether gender or grade might moderate these relationships. It could be expected, for example, that parents might be concerned about peers, but only act upon those concerns when the

parents feel their adolescent is more vulnerable (e.g., a girl or a younger adolescent). Or, parents might feel efficacious, but still feel they should not interfere with their adolescents' friendships when their adolescent is older. The interaction between parents' efficacy and concerns was also included because it may be hypothesized that parents who feel concerned may act upon those concerns depending on whether they feel their efforts will be rewarded (i.e., they feel efficacious in managing their adolescents' friendships).

Results of mothers' regressions. Results for mothers' peer management behaviors are shown in Table 11. Because only two significant interactions were found, when four would have been expected by chance, Blocks 5, 6, and 7 will not be presented or discussed. For mothers' communicating preferences, Table 11 shows that none of the steps were significant, with the full model explaining only a non-significant 8% of the total variance. For mothers' communicating disapproval neither gender nor grade were significant predictors (Block 1). For Block 2, the inclusion of adolescents' reports of problem behavior and school engagement explained an additional 8% of the variance in mothers' communicating disapproval ( $p < .05$ ), with adolescents' problem behaviors emerging as a significant unique predictor. The mothers of adolescents who reportedly engaged in more problem behaviors were more likely to communicate their disapproval of their adolescents' friends than mothers of adolescents who engaged in less problem behavior. Block 3, in which adolescents' deviant and prosocial friends were entered, explained an additional 12% of the variance in mothers' communicating disapproval ( $p < .05$ ). Deviant friends was a significant predictor: the more deviant the adolescents' friends were, the more their mothers communicated disapproving of their friends. Adolescents'

Table 11

**Hierarchical Regression Results Predicting Mothers' and Fathers' Peer Management Behaviors**

Peer management behaviors	Block 1: Adolescents' characteristics $\beta$ and $R^2$			Block 2: Adolescents' behavior $\beta$ and $R^2\Delta$			Block 3: Adolescents' friendships $\beta$ and $R^2\Delta$			Block 4: Parents' beliefs about peers $\beta$ and $R^2\Delta$			Model
	GN	GD	$R^2$	PB	SE	$R^2\Delta$	DF	PF	$R^2\Delta$	EF	CN	$R^2\Delta$	$R^2$
<b>Mothers' reports</b>													
Communicating preferences	-.15	.08	.03	.07	.09	.01	.23	.04	.03	.13	-.00	.02	.08
Communicating disapproval	-.15	.10	.04	.32*	.07	.08*	.44*	-.14	.12*	.13	.41*	.12*	.35*
Supporting friendships	.02	.09	.01	.09	.16	.02	.08	-.17	.05	.10	-.19*	.05*	.10
Information-seeking	-.10	.10	.02	.30*	.15	.07*	.07	-.07	.01	.13	.13	.02	.12*
<b>Fathers' reports</b>													
Communicating preferences	-.18	.16	.06	.14	.20	.04	-.18	-.16	.03	.23*	.03	.06*	.19*
Communicating disapproval	-.10	-.09	.02	.43*	.18	.15*	.07	-.14	.01	.31*	.50*	.21*	.39*
Supporting friendships	.01	.10	.01	.15	.10	.02	-.44*	-.16	.11*	.08	-.20	.04	.18*
Information-seeking	.06	.23	.05	.11*	.11	.13*	-.20	-.17	.04	.21*	.19	.05*	.27*

**Note.**  $n = 146$  for mothers and 97 for fathers. GN = gender, GD = grade, PB = problem behavior, SE = school engagement, DF

= deviant friends, PF = prosocial friends, EF = efficacy in management, CN = concerns about friends.

\*  $p < .05$ .

prosocial friends was not a significant predictor. An additional 12% of the variance in communicating disapproval was explained with the addition of mothers' beliefs in Block 4 ( $p < .05$ ): the more mothers reported being concerned about friends, the more they communicated disapproval. Mothers' efficacy was not significantly related to their communicating disapproval. The total amount of variance explained by the full model for mothers' communicating disapproval was 35% ( $p < .05$ ).

As can be seen in Table 11, Blocks 1, 2, and 3 did not explain a significant amount of variance in mothers' supporting friendships. In Block 4, however, a significant 5% of additional variance in mothers' supporting friendships was explained by the inclusion of mothers' beliefs about peers ( $p < .05$ ). Mothers' concerns about friendships were significantly associated with mothers' supporting friendships. That is, the more mothers were concerned about their adolescents' friends, the less support they provided for their adolescents' friendships. Mothers' efficacy beliefs were not a significant predictor in this block. The total amount of variance explained by the full model for mothers' supporting friendships was a nonsignificant 10%.

Table 11 shows that for mothers' information-seeking, Block 1 did not account for a significant amount of the variance (only 2%). The inclusion of adolescents' problem behaviors and school engagement in Block 2 explained a significant amount of additional variance (7%) in mothers' information-seeking ( $p < .05$ ). In Block 2, adolescents' problem behaviors was the significant predictor of mothers' information-seeking. Specifically, the more adolescents reported being engaged in problem behaviors, the more their mothers sought information about their friends. Blocks 3 and 4 were not significant

steps, adding only 1% and 2%, respectively to the explained variance. The full model for mothers' information-seeking explained 12% of the variance ( $p < .05$ ).

Results of fathers' regressions. The results of the regressions for fathers' peer management behaviors are also shown in Table 11. For fathers' communicating preferences, Blocks 1, 2, and 3 did not add significantly to the prediction of fathers' communicating preferences. The inclusion of fathers' efficacy and concerns about friendships in Block 4 added a significant 6% to the variance explained in fathers' communicating preferences ( $p < .05$ ). Of these two predictors, only fathers' efficacy in managing friendships was a significant predictor: the more efficacious fathers felt about managing their adolescents' friendships, the more fathers communicated their preferences about friends to their adolescents. The total amount of variance explained by the full model for fathers' communicating disapproval was 19% ( $p < .05$ ).

With respect to fathers' communicating disapproval, Block 1 failed to reach conventional levels of significance, showing that there were no significant main effects for gender or grade. For Block 2, the inclusion of adolescents' reports of problem behavior and school engagement explained an additional 15% of the variance in fathers' communicating disapproval ( $p < .05$ ), with more problem behaviors being associated with fathers' communicating more disapproval of friends. School engagement did not emerge as a significant predictor. The inclusion of Block 3, which added adolescents' deviant and prosocial friends only explained a nonsignificant 1% additional variance in fathers' communicating disapproval. An additional 21% of variance in fathers' communicating disapproval, however, was explained by the addition of fathers' beliefs in Block 4 ( $p <$

.05). Both fathers' efficacy beliefs and concerns about friendships were significant predictors of fathers' communicating disapproval: the more fathers felt efficacious in managing friendships and the more concerned they were, the more fathers communicated disapproval of their adolescents' friends. The total amount of variance explained by the full model for fathers' communicating disapproval was 39% ( $p < .05$ ).

For fathers' supporting friendships, only the inclusion of adolescents' deviant and prosocial friends in Block 3 explained a significant amount of additional variance in fathers' support of friendships (11%,  $p < .05$ ). Deviant friends was a significant predictor (prosocial friends were not). Specifically, the more deviant adolescents' friends were, the less fathers supported the adolescents' friendships. The full model explained 18% of the variance in fathers' supporting friendships ( $p < .05$ ).

With regards to fathers' seeking information about friendships, Block 1 was not significant. The inclusion of adolescents' behaviors and friends in Block 2, however, explained an additional 13% of the variance in fathers' information-seeking ( $p < .05$ ). The only significant predictor in this step was problem behavior: the more adolescents reported engaging in problem behaviors, the more fathers sought information about their adolescents' friends. Block 3 was nonsignificant, adding only 4% to the variance explained in fathers' information-seeking. Block 4 was significant, explaining an additional 5% of the variance in fathers' information-seeking with the inclusion of fathers' beliefs ( $p < .05$ ). The significant predictor for this step was fathers' efficacy beliefs: the more fathers felt efficacious in managing their adolescents' friendships, the more they sought information about their adolescents' friends. The full model accounted for 27% of

the variance in fathers' information-seeking ( $p < .05$ ).

### Additional Analyses

As additional analyses, the relationship of parents' reports of socioeconomic indicators (i.e., parents' occupational SES ratings and parents' education levels) with adolescents' behaviors, adolescents' friends, parents' beliefs about peers, and parents' management behaviors were examined. The goal was to determine whether parents' socioeconomic status should be controlled or examined as a relevant variable. Pearson correlations were calculated between the separate socioeconomic indicators (i.e., mothers' and fathers' education levels and SES scores) and adolescents' reports of their behavior and friends, and parents' reports of their beliefs about and management of their adolescents' friends. Out of forty correlations, six were significant. However, the magnitude of the correlations indicated only small to modest effects: five of the correlations ranged in magnitude between  $-.17$  and  $.12$ , whereas one correlation (between fathers' support and SES) was  $.24$ . Because there were no consistent or strong relationships, parents' socioeconomic status was not considered further.

### Exploratory Analyses

Do parents' beliefs about peers mediate the relationships between adolescents' behaviors or friendships and parents' peer management behaviors? The hierarchical regressions that were just described only partially tested the model implied in Figure 3. To test the mediated steps implied, procedures outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) were used. According to Baron and Kenny, a mediated relationship is suggested when three conditions are met: 1) the independent variable significantly predicts the mediator (e.g.,

adolescents' problem behavior predicts parents' concerns about friends), 2) the independent variable significantly predicts the dependent variable (e.g., problem behavior predicts a parent management behavior such as communicating disapproval), and 3) when the independent variable and the mediator are simultaneously regressed on the dependent variable (e.g., problem behavior and parents' concerns are regressed on communicating disapproval), the effect of the independent variable drops in magnitude (ideally to 0). A drop in the magnitude of an independent variable's effect, without a concomitant drop in significance, suggests that the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is only partially mediated.

For this model, the first step requires demonstrating a relationship between adolescents' problem behavior, school engagement, deviant friends, or prosocial friends (the independent variables) and either parents' efficacy or concerns (the potential mediators). This can be determined by examining the regressions in Table 10. Only mothers' and fathers' concerns had the required relationships: for mothers, problem behaviors and deviant friends both predicted mothers' concerns; for fathers, problem behaviors and school engagement predicted fathers' concerns. Determining if conditions 2 and 3 were met could be accomplished by examining the betas in the hierarchical regressions reported in Table 11. Condition 2 (i.e., the IV predicts the DV) was met by two of the IVs: problem behavior and deviant friends. For mothers, problem behavior predicted mothers' communicating disapproval and information-seeking, and deviant friends predicted mothers' communicating disapproval. For fathers' peer management behaviors, problem behavior predicted fathers' communicating disapproval and

information-seeking, whereas deviant friends predicted fathers' supporting friendships. Condition 3 (i.e., only the mediator significantly predicts the DV when both the IV and mediator are entered simultaneously) was met for only two predictors, indicating only two mediated relationships (see Table 12): 1) the relationship between adolescents' deviant friends and mothers' communicating disapproval was partially mediated by mothers' concerns about friends (a significant beta associated with deviant peers dropped in magnitude from .44 to .29, but remained significant), and 2) the relationship between adolescents' problem behavior and fathers' communicating disapproval was partially mediated by fathers' concerns about friends (a significant beta associated with deviant peers dropped in magnitude from .43 to .25, but remained significant). Figure 4 depicts the mediated relationships.

Thus, the more the adolescents reported that their friends were deviant, the more their mothers were concerned about the adolescents' friends. In turn, the more concerned mothers were about their adolescents' friends, the more likely they were to communicate their disapproval of their adolescents' friends. Similarly, the more problem behavior adolescents engaged in, the more concerned their fathers were about their friends and, in turn, the more fathers communicated disapproval of their adolescents' friends. But, with respect to both mothers' and fathers' communicating disapproval, the parents' concerns only partially mediated the relationships. Specifically, mothers communicated more disapproval of their adolescents' friends when their adolescents' friends were reportedly more deviant, and fathers communicated more disapproval of their adolescents' friends when their adolescents engaged in more problem behavior, whether or not the mothers or

Table 12

Standardized Regression Coefficients for Mothers' and Fathers' CommunicatingDisapproval: Parents' Beliefs About Peers Mediating Adolescents' Behavior and Friends(Blocks 2, 3, and 4 Only)

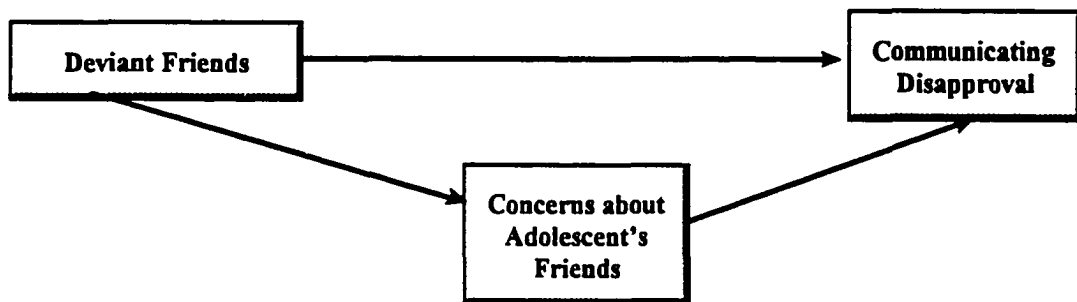
Predictors	Communicating disapproval					
	Mothers' reports			Fathers' reports		
	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
<b>Adolescents' behavior</b>						
Problem behavior	.32*	.06	.03	.43*	.40*	.25*
School engagement	.07	.23*	.21*	.18	.22*	.28*
<b>Adolescents' friends</b>						
Deviant friends		.44*	.29*		-.01	-.06
Prosocial friends		-.14	-.14		-.14	-.07
<b>Parents' beliefs about peers</b>						
Efficacy in managing friends			.13			.31*
Concerns about friends			.41*			.50*

Note.  $n = 146$  for mothers and 97 for fathers.

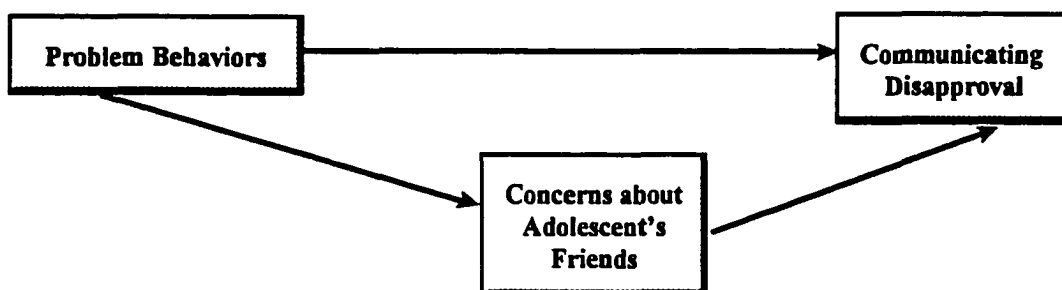
Figure 4.

The Relationship of Adolescents' Behavior and Friendships to Parents' Communicating Disapproval, Mediated by Parents' Concerns About Adolescents' Friends

A. Mother



B: Fathers



fathers were more concerned about their adolescents' friends.

### Part III: Predicting Change in Adolescents' Behavior and Friends

A final set of analyses was conducted to examine the relationship of parents' beliefs about peers and peer management behaviors to *change* in adolescents' behavior and friends. Only a subset of the model variables was examined. Specifically, from the parents' reports, only parents' concerns about friends, communicating disapproval, and information-seeking were chosen for examination, because these were consistently and strongly related to adolescents' behavior and friends. From the adolescents' reports, problem behaviors and deviant friends were selected for analyses, because these variables were consistently predictive of parents' beliefs about peers and peer management behaviors. Additionally, for fathers only, school engagement was examined, as it emerged as a significant predictor for fathers only.

First, the cross-time correlations for the adolescents' reports of problem behavior, deviant friends, and school engagement were calculated. Table 13 shows these correlations: all of the reports for Time 2 were significantly intercorrelated and all of the autocorrelations (between Time 1 and Time 2 reports) were significant. Specifically, the more adolescents reported engaging in problem behaviors at Time 2, the more deviant their friends were and the less adolescents were engaged in school at Time 2. Additionally, the more deviant adolescents' friends were at Time 2, the less the adolescents reported being engaged in school. With respect to the autocorrelations, the more problem behaviors adolescents engaged in at Time 1, the more problem behaviors they reported engaging in at Time 2. Similarly, the more deviant adolescents' friends were

Table 13

Correlations Among Adolescents' Reports, Time 1 and Time 2

Adolescents' reports	Time 2 reports		
	Problem behavior	Deviant friends	School engagement
Time 1			
Problem behavior	<b>.69*</b>	.60*	-.35*
Deviant friends	.49*	<b>.58*</b>	-.20*
School engagement	-.36*	-.28*	<b>.51*</b>
Time 2			
Problem behavior	-	.69*	-.36*
Deviant friends		-	-.32*
School engagement			-

Note.  $n$  ranges from 157 to 170. Bolded values are the autocorrelations between Time 1 and Time 2.

\*  $p < .05$ .

at Time 1, the more deviant their friends were at Time 2, and the more engaged in school the adolescents reported at Time 1, the more they reported being engaged in school at Time 2.

Paired t-tests were conducted to examine mean level differences in adolescents' reports over time. The results of these tests, reported in Table 14, suggest stability over time, as there was not significant mean level change in adolescents' reports. To determine how much individuals changed, change scores were computed from the raw scores (Time 2 score - Time 1 score). Examining descriptive statistics (i.e., modes, means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores) for these difference scores (see Table 15) reveals that for problem behavior and school engagement, the modal change score is 0 and the modal change score for deviant friends was -.25, suggesting little or no change in these reports over time. Additionally, the means are also very close to 0. This suggests that for most adolescents, their problem behaviors, deviant friends, and school engagement either did not change or changed very little over time. Some reports, however, change, as can be seen by the standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores. The descriptive statistics, combined with the cross-time correlations and t-test results suggest a high degree of stability in the adolescents' reports.

Next, the correlations between the adolescents' reports at Time 2 and the parents' reports were examined. As shown in Table 16, mothers' reports of concerns were significantly correlated with their adolescents' reports of problem behavior and deviant friends: the more concerned mothers were about friends, the more adolescents reported engaging in problem behaviors and having deviant friends at Time 2. Similarly, mothers'

Table 14

Results of Paired T-tests Comparing Adolescents' Reported Behaviors and Friendships at Time 1 and Time 2

Adolescents' reports	Time 1		Time 2		t	df	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Problem behavior	1.40	.40	1.39	.45	.47	1, 165	.64
Deviant friends	2.11	.71	2.17	.80	-1.03	1, 159	.30
School engagement	2.95	.57	3.03	.64	-1.75	1, 164	.08

Table 15

Descriptives for Raw Change Scores for Adolescents' Problem Behavior, Deviant Friends, and School Engagement

Adolescents' reports	Mode	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	<u>n</u>
Problem behavior	.00	.02	.34	-1.39	1.70	166
Deviant friends	-.25	.06	.70	-1.75	2.75	160
School engagement	.00	.08	.60	-2.50	2.50	165

Table 16

Correlations between Adolescents' Reports at Time 2 and Parents' Reports of Peer Management Behaviors

Adolescents' reports at Time 2	Mothers' reports			Fathers' reports		
	CN	CD	IS	CN	CD	IS
Problem behavior	.29*	.30*	.20*	.32*	.17	.23
Deviant friends	.39*	.36*	.21*	.35*	.29*	.20
School engagement	-.17	-.03	-.08	-.33*	.19	-.11

Note. *n* ranges from 111 to 112 for mothers' reports and 69 to 71 for fathers' reports.

CN = concerns about friends, CD = communicating disapproval, and IS = information-seeking.

\*  $p < .05$ .

communicating disapproval and information-seeking were also significantly related to adolescents' reported problem behavior and deviant friends: the more problem behaviors adolescents reported engaging in at Time 2 and the more deviant their friends reportedly were at Time 2, the more their mothers communicated disapproval of friends and had sought information about friends 6 months earlier.

For fathers' reports, the more concerned fathers were, the more problem behaviors adolescents engaged in at Time 2, the more deviant their friends were at Time 2, and the less adolescents reported being engaged in school at Time 2. Similar to mothers' reports, fathers' communicating disapproval was significantly related to adolescents' reports of deviant friends: the more fathers communicated disapproval, the more deviant adolescents reported their friends were at Time 2. Fathers' information-seeking was not significantly correlated with adolescents' Time 2 reports.

Next, five hierarchical regressions were conducted, two for mothers using Time 2 reports of problem behavior and deviant friends as dependent variables, and three for fathers using Time 2 reports of problem behavior, deviant friends, and school engagement as dependent variables. The hierarchical steps were as follows:

Block 1. Adolescents' behavior or friends Time 1: This step removes the variance associated with adolescents' reports at Time 1. Any remaining variance represents intraindividual change in the adolescents' reports that may be accounted for by subsequent predictors (Cohen & Cohen, 1983);

Block 2. Parents' concerns about friends: Parents' concerns about friends was entered next to examine the relationship with change in adolescents' reports; and

Block 3. Parents' peer management behaviors: Mothers' and fathers' reports of communicating disapproval and information-seeking were entered, to determine if these peer management behaviors predicted change in adolescents' reports.

Table 17 provides the results of these hierarchical regressions. Of the five regressions, adolescents' school engagement was the only dependent variable for which parents' beliefs about peers or parents' peer management behaviors were significant predictors. For both problem behavior and deviant friends, Block 1 was consistently significant, indicating that Time 2 reports of adolescents' problem behaviors and deviant friends were predicted by their Time 1 reports. This suggests a good deal of stability in adolescents' reports, especially for problem behavior, which necessarily limits the ability to find relationships to change in adolescents' reports.

With respect to adolescents' school engagement (Time 2), the first block accounted for a significant 35% of the variance in adolescents' initial school engagement ( $p < .05$ ). That is, the more adolescents reported being engaged in school at Time 1, the more they were engaged in school at Time 2. The inclusion of Block 2 (fathers' concerns about friends) only accounted for an additional 2% of variance in adolescents' school engagement. The entry of the final block of predictors (fathers' peer management behaviors) accounted for an additional 8% of the remaining variance in adolescents' school engagement ( $p < .05$ ). Both fathers' communicating disapproval and information-seeking were significant predictors of *change* in adolescents' school engagement: the more fathers communicated disapproval of friends, the greater the increase in adolescents' school engagement; and the more fathers sought information about friends, the greater the

Table 17

**Hierarchical Regression Results Predicting Change in Adolescents' Problem Behaviors, Deviant Friends, and School****Engagement**

Time 2 Reports	Block 1: Adolescents' reports Time 1 $\beta$ and $R^2$				Block 2: Parents' concerns about friends $\beta$ and $R^2\Delta$		Block 3: Parents' peer management behaviors $\beta$ and $R^2\Delta$			Model
	PB	DF	SE	$R^2$	CN	$R^2\Delta$	CD	IS	$R^2\Delta$	$R^2$
<b>Mothers' regressions</b>										
Problem behavior (Time 2)	.78*			.62*	.02	.00	.05	-.01	.00	.62*
Deviant friends (Time 2)		.63*		.40*	.13	.01	.01	.08	.01	.42*
<b>Fathers' regressions</b>										
Problem behavior (Time 2)	.67*			.45*	-.03	.00	-.05	-.01	.00	.45*
Deviant friends (Time 2)		.49*		.24*	.14	.02	.15	-.01	.02	.27*
School engagement (Time 2)			.59*	.35*	-.14	.02	.33*	-.23*	.08*	.45*

**Note.**  $n$  ranges from 104 to 109 for mothers and 65 to 68 for fathers. PB = problem behavior, DF = deviant friends, SE = school engagement, CN = concerns about friends, CD = communicating disapproval, and IS = information-seeking.

\*  $p < .05$ .

decrease in adolescents' school engagement. The final model accounted for a total of 45% of variance in adolescents' initial school engagement ( $p < .05$ ).

## Chapter V

### Discussion

How do parents try to influence who their adolescents have as friends? This was the first question this study explored. Four peer management behaviors were examined: communicating preferences, communicating disapproval, supporting friendships, and information-seeking. The results of the first part of this study show that parents use these management strategies, but for the most part relatively infrequently. Out of the four peer management behaviors, mothers and fathers were most likely to communicate preferences about friends and support their adolescents' friends and they were less likely to communicate disapproval of or seek information about their adolescents' friends. The more frequent use of communicating preferences and supporting friendships as peer management strategies may stem from the fact that these behaviors are more positive than communicating disapproval and information-seeking. For example, parents and adolescents may see communicating preferences and supporting friendships as less intrusive or meddlesome than communicating disapproval and seeking information.

Additionally, as indicated by positive correlations among all of the management behaviors, the more parents engage in one type of peer management behavior, the more they engage in the other types of management behaviors. For example, the more parents communicate preferences, the more they also communicate disapproval. It seems, then, that parents who believe that their management is important rely on a variety of behaviors, rather than on one type of behavior exclusively.

Interestingly, mothers and fathers, by and large, did not differ in their use of peer

management behaviors. They used communicating disapproval, supporting friendships, and information-seeking with similar frequency. The exception to this similarity in peer management was in communicating preferences. T-test results indicated that mothers were more likely than fathers to communicate who and what characteristics they preferred for their adolescents' friends. This difference may arise from stereotyped perceptions and expectations that women are more knowledgeable about close relationships than men (Moen, 1996). Mothers might then, by default, be expected to communicate information about friendship choices to their children.

There is, however, additional evidence that mothers and fathers are more similar than dissimilar in their peer management strategies. The correlations between mothers' and fathers' management behaviors suggest that the more mothers communicate preferences, the more fathers communicate preferences. The same positive associations were found for communicating disapproval and information-seeking. Therefore, although there may be some mean-level differences in parents' behaviors, they tended to manage their adolescents' friendships in similar ways. This similarity is also evident in the strength of the correlations among mothers' and fathers' management behaviors. That is, the lowest and highest correlations between management behaviors were the same for mothers and fathers. The strongest correlations for both were between communicating preferences and seeking-information. This consistency is striking, suggesting that when either mothers or fathers feel that their adolescents need assistance in navigating their friendships, mothers and fathers are equally likely to manage their adolescents' friendships and likely to manage adolescents' friendships in similar ways.

On a few variables, fathers' peer management behaviors were sensitive to the gender and age of the adolescent. That is, fathers of daughters were more likely than fathers of sons to communicate their preferences, and fathers of 9<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than fathers of 6<sup>th</sup> graders to seek information about their adolescents' friends. No such differences were found for mothers communicating preferences and information-seeking. Why might such differences be found? Perhaps mothers feel that relationships should be managed in similar ways across adolescence, regardless of whether their adolescent is a boy or girl, or regardless of their age. Fathers of daughters, on the other hand, may feel more comfortable communicating their preferences to their adolescents than fathers of sons (e.g., because girls talk more about relationships in general, or because girls are more open to fathers' suggestions). Alternatively, fathers may feel that girls need guidance more than do boys. This latter explanation would be somewhat consistent with suggestions that fathers of daughters, compared to fathers of sons, might feel the need to be vigilant in parenting their daughters as they become more grown-up (Hill & Lynch, 1983).

With respect to the grade differences in seeking information about friends, fathers of older adolescents may look for more information about friends either in anticipation of more problems with peers or because older adolescents' friendships may be less proximal than younger adolescents' friendships. Given that some 9<sup>th</sup> graders may have started to drive or have friends that drive, their friendships may involve people and activities that parents may be less likely to know about. This may be enough incentive for fathers of older adolescents to seek more information about their friends. Alternatively, it may be

that fathers seek more information than mothers out of necessity -- that adolescents volunteer more information to their mothers than to their fathers. These results offer some interesting questions for future research. For example, are mothers and fathers perceived by their adolescents as equally responsible or effective in helping or interfering with their friendships? Or do these perceptions differ with regard to the adolescents' gender or age?

Parents' beliefs about peer relationships were also explored. Specifically, this study investigated, in general, how efficacious parents feel about managing their adolescents' friendships and how concerned parents were about their adolescents' friendships. The results suggest that most parents feel relatively efficacious when it comes to managing their adolescents' friendships. That is, parents' responses were normally distributed with a mean that was mid-range on a scale ranging from Very Little to A Great Deal.

Additionally, mothers and fathers differed in how efficacious they perceived themselves in managing their adolescents' friendships. Specifically, mothers felt more efficacious than fathers. This may also be related to the gender stereotypic beliefs that women are more adept at close relationships. Moreover, mothers of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, in comparison to mothers of 9<sup>th</sup> graders, felt more efficacious in managing their adolescents' friendships. This is particularly interesting, in light of the lack of grade differences in mothers' management of their adolescents' friends. Perhaps, then, mothers manage their 9<sup>th</sup> graders' friendships even if they do not feel particularly efficacious. This is indeed supported by the regressions conducted to determine whether mothers' efficacy predicted

their peer management (i.e., mothers' perceived efficacy in managing friendships was not a significant predictor of any of the peer management behaviors).

Parents' concerns about their adolescents' friendships were also examined. The results suggest that parents are relatively unconcerned about their adolescents' friendships. Both mothers and fathers are generally satisfied with their adolescents' friends and not worried about these relationships. This was true regardless of the adolescents' grade and gender.

The two parental beliefs about adolescents' peers were related: the more mothers or fathers felt efficacious in managing adolescents' friendships, the less concerned they were about the adolescents' friends. It may be that when parents feel efficacious, they are less concerned, or alternatively that when they are more concerned and worried about their adolescents' friendships, the less they feel they can manage those relationships. Mothers' and fathers' beliefs about adolescents' peers were positively intercorrelated: the more efficacy mothers reported, the more efficacy fathers reported. Similarly, the more concerned mothers were about their adolescents' friendships, the more fathers were concerned about their adolescents' friendships. This adds to the picture of consistency in parenting where potential management of adolescents' friendships is concerned. It also suggests that there may be problems in families where neither parent is managing their adolescent's friendships.

### The Conceptual Model

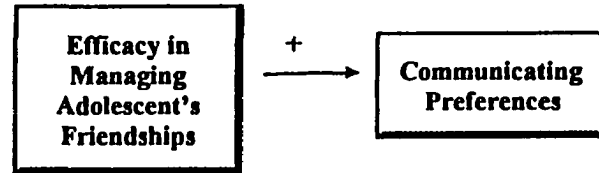
Another goal of this study was to examine the relationships implied by the conceptual model of parents' management of adolescents' peer relationships. The first

model (i.e., the cross-sectional model) examined suggested that adolescents' behaviors (i.e., problem behavior and school engagement) and friendships (i.e., prosocial friends or deviant friends) would influence parents' beliefs about peers and parents' peer management behaviors. Further, the model suggests that the relationships between adolescents' behavior or friendships and parents' peer management behaviors is mediated by parents' beliefs. The results suggest that only some of these relationships hold (Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8 depict the results of the regressions). For mothers' beliefs about peers, the results showed that mothers' efficacy in managing friends was predicted by grade only. Mothers of 6<sup>th</sup> graders feel more efficacious in managing their adolescents' friendships than do mothers of 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Surprisingly, mothers' efficacy in managing adolescents' friendships does not depend on the adolescents' behavior or their friends. Mothers then, may feel relatively efficacious in most cases, except where it comes to managing older adolescents' friendships, where they feel less so. However, both adolescents' problem behaviors and deviant friends predicted mothers' concerns about friends: the more problem behaviors adolescents reported and the more they reported that their friends were deviant, the more concerned mothers were about their adolescents' friends. It is interesting to note that the prosocial aspects of adolescents' lives, being engaged in school and having more prosocial peers, did not appear to be related to mothers' concerns. Perhaps mothers' concerns are potentiated when their adolescents begin manifesting more problematic lifestyles – being with problem peers and engaging in problem behaviors.

For fathers' efficacy beliefs, none of the predictors were significant, suggesting that fathers feel relatively efficacious across the board. However, consistent with mothers,

**Figure 5.**

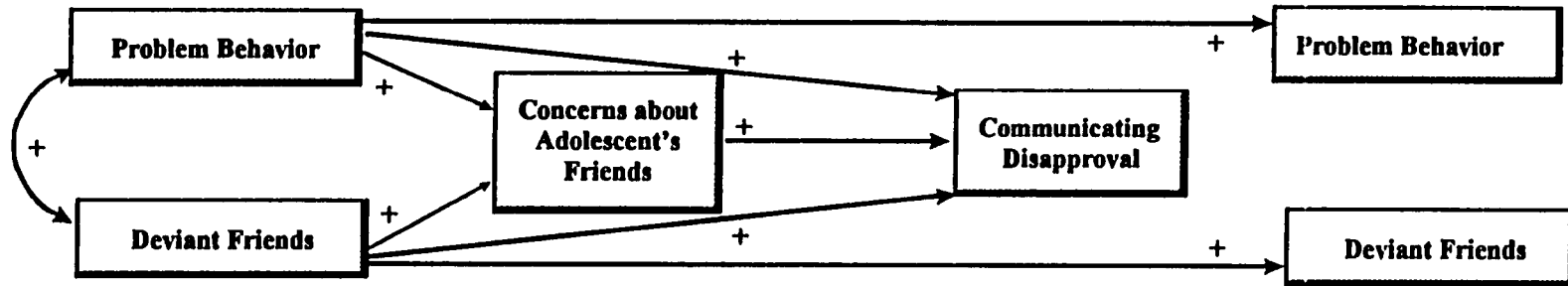
**Post-analyses Model of Fathers' Communicating Preferences, Beliefs About Peers, and Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment and Friendships**



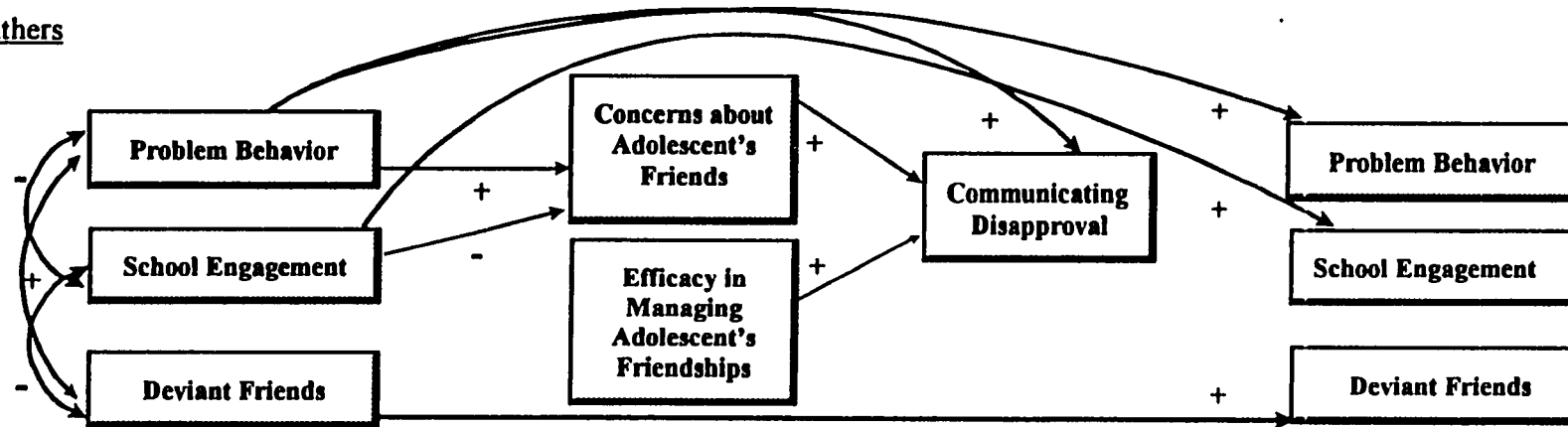
**Figure 6.**

**Post-analyses Models of Parents' Communicating Disapproval, Beliefs About Peers, and Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment and Friendships**

**A: Mothers**



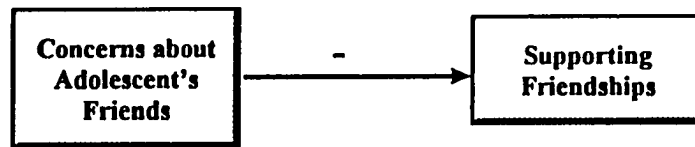
**B: Fathers**



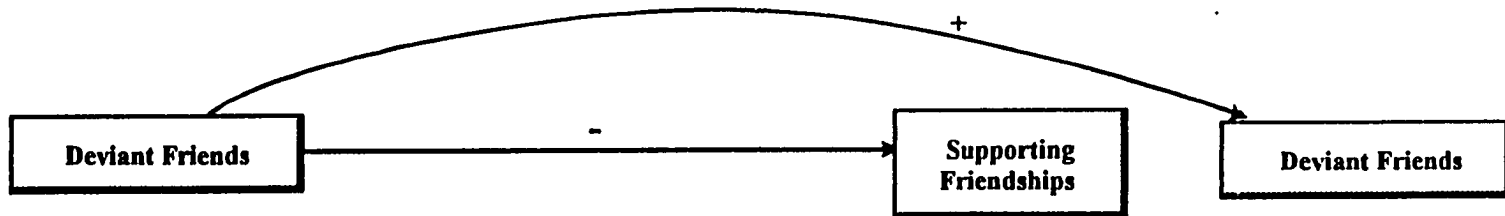
**Figure 7.**

**Post-analyses Models of Parents' Supporting Friendships, Beliefs About Peers, and Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment and Friendships**

**A: Mothers**



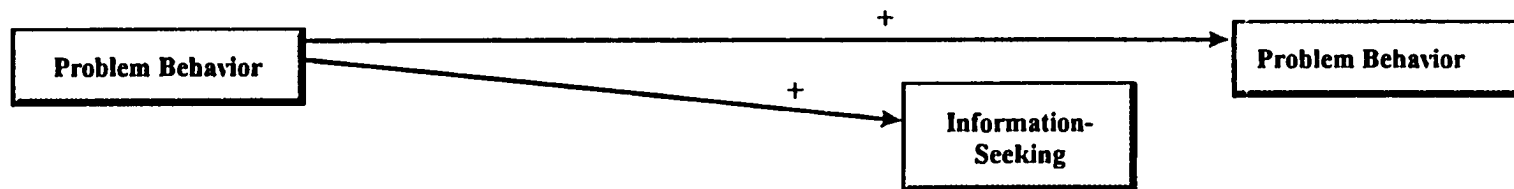
**B: Fathers**



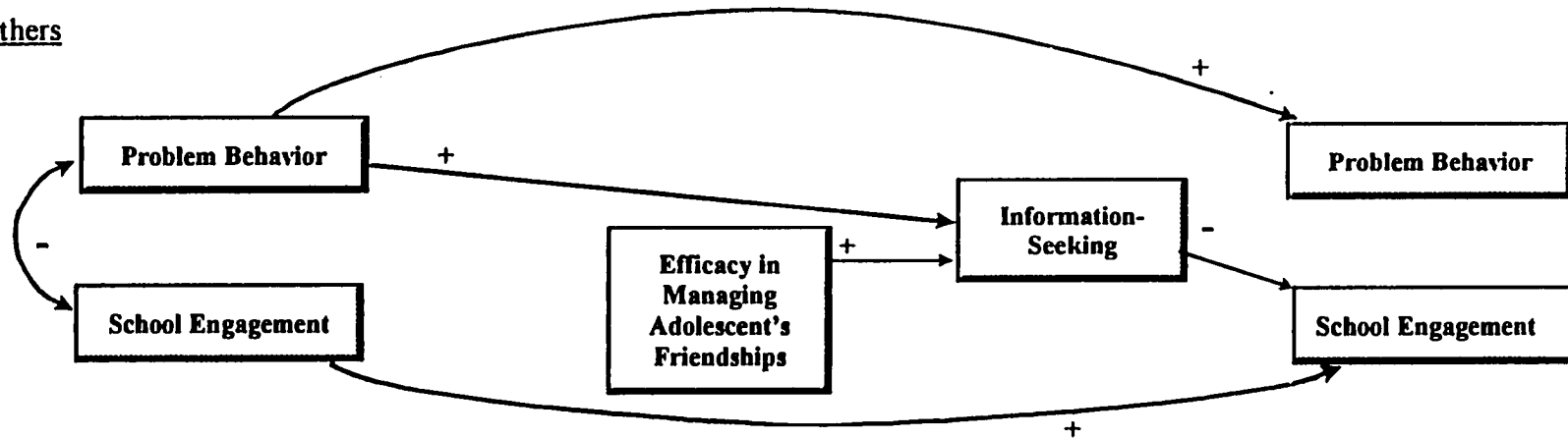
**Figure 8.**

**Post-analyses Models of Parents' Information-Seeking, Beliefs About Peers, and Adolescents' Psychosocial Adjustment and Friendships**

**A: Mothers**



**B: Fathers**



fathers were more concerned about their adolescents' friends when their adolescents were engaged in more problem behaviors. In addition, fathers were also more concerned about their adolescents' friends when their adolescents were less engaged in school. Fathers, then, could be sensitive to both adolescent behaviors as indicators of problems, whereas mothers may not. The adolescents' friends, however, did not significantly predict fathers' concerns about friends. One potential explanation for this arises from the information coming from different sources. That is, parents reported on their beliefs, whereas adolescents reported on their friends. It might be that mothers' beliefs are based on more knowledge about their adolescents' friends than are fathers' beliefs. That is, there might be more veridicality between the friends on whom mothers and adolescents are reporting than there is between the friends on whom fathers and adolescents are reporting. Because mothers tend to spend more time with their children and do more of the caregiving (Collins & Russell, 1991; Fagot, 1995), they may have more knowledge of their adolescents' friends. Differential knowledge about friends might lead to different beliefs about friends. If mothers then knew more about who their adolescents' friends were, when those friends are more deviant, they have more reason to be concerned. This difference in knowledge would also be consistent with fathers needing to seek more information about their adolescents' friends (at least with 9<sup>th</sup> graders).

How then, do parents' beliefs about peer relationships and adolescents' behaviors and friendships relate to parents' peer management behaviors? For mothers' peer management behaviors, communicating disapproval was significantly predicted by adolescents' problem behaviors, deviant friends, and mothers' concerns about friends.

That is, the more problem behaviors adolescents engaged in, the more deviant their friends were, and the more concerned mothers were about their adolescents' friends, the more mothers communicated disapproval of their adolescents' friends. Interestingly, mothers' support was also predicted by mothers' concerns, but not by adolescents' behaviors or friends. The more concerned mothers were about their adolescents' friends, the less they supported their adolescents' friendships. And, like communicating disapproval, problem behavior was a significant predictor of mothers' information-seeking: the more problem behavior adolescents engaged in, the more their mothers looked for information about their friends. These patterns suggest that for some peer management behaviors, mothers may have different contingencies (e.g., support being predicted by mothers' concerns and information-seeking being predicted by adolescents' problem behaviors), but for other peer management behaviors (e.g., communicating disapproval and information-seeking both), similar conditions may lead to their use (e.g., adolescents' engagement in problem behavior). These are tentative conclusions, however, because the data were cross-sectional, without means of assessing mothers' behaviors prior to their adolescents' behavior and friends. Nonetheless, some interesting possibilities become evident. For example, adolescents' problem behaviors may alert mothers to the need for intervention – telling their adolescents that they do not like their friends and looking for more information about their adolescents' friends. Seeking information in response to adolescents' problem behaviors may occur if mothers see the source of their adolescents' problem behavior as time spent in the company of deviant friends. If so, the mothers' reactions might be based on somewhat stereotypical ideas about adolescents' problem

behavior and their peer relationships (i.e., the stereotyped perception of “malevolent peers,” suggesting that adolescents’ peer norms are antithetical to adult norms). It may be, however, that mothers might react to adolescents’ problem behavior by looking for information on all fronts, in attempts to determine where they might be able to intervene.

In consideration of the data being cross-sectional, it is also possible that mothers’ concerns and peer management behaviors might be leading adolescents to engage in more problem behavior and associating with more deviant peers. If the adolescents perceive their mothers’ lack of support, communicating disapproval, and information-seeking as unsupportive or intrusive, the adolescents might respond with rebellious behavior. This possibility, however, will require longitudinal data from both the mothers and the adolescents to explore.

It is also interesting that all aspects of the proposed model worked only for mothers’ communicating disapproval. That is, the adolescents’ behavior, friendships, and mothers’ beliefs may be influencing mothers’ communicating disapproval. This peer management behavior was also one of the few in which mothers’ beliefs mediated the relationship between adolescents’ friendships and mothers’ peer management behavior, albeit only partially. It may be that communicating disapproval is perceived by mothers and adolescents to be particularly intrusive, and mother might need to be concerned about both their adolescents’ behavior and their friends before they act to manage their adolescents’ friendships by communicating their disapproval.

Fathers’ peer management behaviors were related to adolescents’ behaviors and friends, and fathers’ beliefs in ways similar to mothers’ peer management behaviors. For

example, fathers communicated disapproval of their adolescents' friends more when their adolescents were engaged in problem behaviors and when the fathers were more concerned about their adolescents' friends. And similar to the results for mothers, fathers sought more information about their adolescents' friends when their adolescents were engaged in problem behaviors. One difference was that fathers were less likely to support their adolescents' friendships when their adolescents reported having friends that were more deviant. A more striking difference was the consistency in which fathers' efficacy beliefs predicted their peer management behavior. Fathers' perceived efficacy in managing friendships predicted communicating preferences, communicating disapproval, and information-seeking: the more efficacious fathers felt in managing their adolescents' friendships, the more they talked to their adolescents about who they liked and did not like, and the more fathers tried to gain information about their adolescents' peers. This suggests that fathers, in comparison to mothers, need to feel more efficacious before they attempt to manage their adolescents' friends.

Another similarity between mothers' and fathers' peer management was in the mediation of communicating disapproval by parents' beliefs: for mothers, the relationship between deviant friends and communicating disapproval was partially mediated by mothers' concerns about friends; for fathers, the relationship between adolescents' problem behaviors and communicating disapproval was partially mediated by fathers' concerns. In both cases, parents' concerns partially mediated the relationships, suggesting that for some parents, communicating their disapproval of their adolescents' friends might be contingent on their feeling concerned about their adolescents' being involved with

deviance – either in their own adolescents' behavior or in the behavior of their adolescents' friends.

Two other consistencies emerged from the results examining these relationships: 1) that adolescents' problem behavior is pretty consistently related to parents' management strategies, and 2) that for fathers, their management behaviors may be contingent on their efficacy beliefs. These linkages may be the results of stereotypic thinking on the parents' part. That is, parents may turn to managing peers when their adolescents engage in problem behavior, believing that changing their adolescents' friendships will change their behavior. This attitude would be consistent with research that suggests parents may have a bias in thinking that peers are the problem, not their own kids (Bogenschneider et al., 1998). Perhaps parents are too well acquainted with the idea of negative peer pressure. With regards to fathers' efficacy beliefs relating to their peer management behaviors, this may too spring from stereotypic beliefs. If parents believe that peer management is the mothers' domain, it could explain why fathers need to feel efficacious and mothers do not. Mothers would be expected to act, whether or not they felt that their efforts would be rewarded. Fathers, on the other hand, might hold back on managing their adolescents' friendships, unless they felt that they could be successful in those attempts.

The final goal of this study was to explore the relationship of parents' beliefs about friends and parents' peer management behaviors to change in adolescents' behavior and friendships. The results of the longitudinal analyses suggests that only change in adolescents' school engagement is related to fathers' communicating disapproval and information-seeking. Specifically, increases in adolescents' school engagement were

associated with fathers communicating more disapproval. Because the fathers' reports were collected in between adolescents' reports, it might be that fathers being more engaged in managing their adolescents' friendships via communicating disapproval resulted in adolescents becoming more engaged in school.

The longitudinal results also suggest that decreases in school engagement were associated with fathers seeking more information about their adolescents' friends. This could mean that when adolescents become less engaged in school, fathers react by looking for information about their adolescents' friends. Again, this would be consistent with fathers potentially acting on stereotypic beliefs about negative peer influences. These results, however, need to be considered tentative, for multiple reasons. First, there was little change associated with adolescents' reports of problem behaviors and deviant friends. This could well have impacted the results, as restrictions in the amount of change necessarily restrict the ability to find differences in change. Secondly, because of the nature of the sample, the sample sizes are smaller, reducing the power to find smaller effects. Moreover, the attrition resulted in a selection bias, in which those that participated in the longitudinal component were from families with higher socioeconomic status, and potentially with adolescents who were better adjusted (i.e., the adolescents who participated in the second wave were less likely to engage in problem behaviors). This bias may also explain why there was little change in adolescents' behavior or friendships, as these adolescents may well be better off psychosocially and more stable in their counterparts who chose not to participate in the longitudinal part of the study.

### Limitations

The selection bias that may have resulted from sample attrition likely accentuated biases that may have already existed in the data. Results from a study examining the effects of sample bias indicate that when data collection efforts had to rely on active parental consent, rather than using passive consent, the participants were more likely to come from economically-advantaged households and less likely to engage in problem behaviors (Tilton-Weaver, Galambos, & Vitunski, 2000). Additionally, parents who participated were more educated, and their adolescents were better psychosocially adjusted (i.e., less engaged in problem behavior, more engaged in school), with more prosocial and less deviant friends. This bias, however, likely made finding significant relationships more difficult because of reduced variability. If adolescents who were more deviant were included, then the relationships that were found might become stronger.

Another limitation of the study was the relative similarity across the sample culturally. The sample was largely Caucasian, with a small component of Asian and First Nations adolescents. Care, then, should be taken in generalizing to more ethnically diverse groups. Indeed, an interesting path for future research in this area would be to examine parents' peer management in some cultures that are known to be dissimilar with respect to beliefs about adolescents' independence and friendship choices. For example, in Latino families, friends are typically brought home and introduced to the family (Brown, Alvarez, & Quijada, 1999). Brown and his colleagues found that when parents disapproved of these newly introduced friends, adolescents often broke off the relationships because their parents' approval was important. Because of these cultural

differences, expression of parents' peer management and the contingencies on which parents act to manage peer relationships may be different in Latino families. Other cultural and contextual differences are likely to exist, especially if there are variations in parents' and adolescents' perceptions of the need for and legitimacy of parents' management of adolescents' friendships.

Another possible variant might be when parents perceive their adolescents' environment to be particularly risky. For example, parents whose families live in impoverished urban areas might be more concerned with their adolescents becoming involved with gangs or being exposed to danger (e.g., drugs or violence) while in the company of friends, and might be more likely under these conditions to be especially controlling.

### Future Research

This study provides important data examining parents' peer management behaviors and the relationship of these peer management behaviors to adolescents' psychosocial adjustment and friendships, as well as to parents' beliefs about peers. One of the strengths of this research was the demonstration that these linkages exist and that further research may reveal additional linkages and variations. This study is, to the author's knowledge, the first to link parents' beliefs about peers to parents' peer management behaviors in adolescence. This provides important insight into what may be some determinants of parents' peer management.

Another strength of this study was in the use of reports from both adolescents and their parents, rather than relying on a single reporter. Moreover, fathers were solicited for

participation in this study, providing information that is often not included in parenting studies. Fathers have been largely understudied in parenting research, for many reasons, including the difficulty and expense of obtaining reports from both parents.

With the study's limitations and strengths in mind, several suggestions for improving and extending this work are provided. First, a sample providing more variability in adolescents' psychosocial adjustment and development might reveal linkages not seen in this study. Given that few grade differences emerged, despite expectations to the contrary, it might prove to be more revealing to include even younger individuals, perhaps pre-adolescents, who might more likely to change over the course of a year in their psychosocial adjustment. Alternatively, the interval of measurement might be adjusted, considering that a different interval might capture more change.

Measurement of parents' beliefs about peers and peer management behaviors is another area in which further work is needed. For example, the measure of parents' communicating behavior needs to be examined, given that its internal consistency was on the border of what is considered acceptable limits. This particular peer management behavior was consistently associated with adolescents' problem behaviors and deviant friends, as well as parents' concerns, suggesting that improvements in measurement might yield stronger relationships, perhaps even revealing some that did not emerge in this study.

There are also other peer management behaviors that were not studied, and potentially more that research has not yet examined. Parents, after responding to the peer management items, were asked to respond to an open-ended question: "In the past month, are there any other ways in which you have tried to influence who your child has as

friends? Please tell us what you did.” The responses of some parents indicate that consultation might be an important behavior: “The way I influence is by talking with her about conflicts/problems she has with friends and how she deals with them; I have explained why a friend may sometimes act unfriendly to help her understand.” These may be indications of parents’ scaffolding their adolescents’ relationships, by providing them with important insights into relationships and helping them develop the social skills necessary to negotiate intimate relationships. This area of parents’ peer management has been largely unaddressed by research.

Another area for measurement development is parents’ beliefs about peers. One of the most promising areas may be parents’ and adolescents’ ideas about who has legitimate authority. In response to the question in the preceding paragraph, parents often noted that trying to influence their adolescents’ friendships was not something they felt comfortable doing: “I would never tell her who she can be friends with, although we do discuss negative and positive characteristics of her peers.” Sometimes, however, a parents’ “non-interference” stance seemed to stem from parents’ deeming their “interference” as unnecessary: “I try not to interfere with his choice of friends. I think by being ‘judgmental’ of his peers, [I] would be showing him an aspect of my personality I’d rather he not see. I like all of his friends, though some more than others.” and “I really don’t feel comfortable trying to influence my daughter – she has infinite good sense and if she has a problem with a friends, I encourage her to try to talk it out and we also discuss traits in people, how to deal with situations – then she is able to decide what is best for her. She is able to make really careful, wise decisions.” These responses seem to suggest that

parents' beliefs about authority may be contingent on whether or not they perceive their adolescents' friends and decisions about friends as problematic. Examining the contingencies then, that lead parents to believe influencing adolescents' friendships is a legitimate part of their parenting, may provide new insight into when and why parents attempt to manage their adolescents' friendships.

Other parts of the conceptual model were left unaddressed by this study and provide intriguing avenues for researchers. One such area is the efficacy of parents' peer management behaviors. Is communicating disapproval about adolescents' peers actually effective? Does it reduce the likelihood that adolescents have deviant or undesirable friends? These questions and questions like them, which require longitudinal information from the parents to address, could provide information that would be relevant to individuals who work with families. Identification of effective and ineffective peer management strategies might provide important tools for parents whose adolescents are at risk for psychosocial maladjustment.

Another intriguing question is whether or not change in parents' beliefs about peers is related to changes in their peer management behaviors. It would be interesting to know, if when parents become more concerned about their adolescents' friends, do they shift their peer management strategies to match this increased concern (e.g., increasing the amount of information-seeking and communicating disapproval)? Do parents who shift their beliefs about authority in adolescents' peer relationships, from believing they do not have authority to believing they do (e.g., when adolescents' friends become problematic)? Does this also change their peer management behaviors? Another intriguing possibility is

that changes in parents' peer management behaviors may precede changes in their beliefs (e.g., parents' having a "knee-jerk" reaction to adolescents' misbehavior, and subsequently altering their beliefs to match their behaviors).

The use of both parents' reports in this study allowed the examination of consistencies and differences in mothers' and fathers' beliefs about peers and peer management behaviors. One area that might be examined in the future is the congruence between mothers and fathers' peer management behaviors and how congruence or lack of congruence relates to adolescents' psychosocial adjustment and friendships. Holmbeck, Paikoff, and Brooks-Gunn (1995) have suggested that there may be differential effects. Some effects that might be seen could be an accentuated effectiveness of the peer management behavior when mothers' and fathers' peer management behaviors are congruent and a marked ineffectiveness when mothers and fathers are not congruent. Alternatively, it may be that the effectiveness is determined by one parent and not the other.

Another venue for future research is in examining differences between parents' and adolescents' reports. In this research parents reported on their own beliefs and behaviors and adolescents reported on their own behaviors and friendships. Are there differences in parents' and adolescents' perceptions of parents' beliefs and behaviors? Do these differences have import for the effectiveness of parents' peer management behaviors? That is, is the adolescent's perception of the parent's behavior more important than the perception of the parent?

Another question lies in differences in reports about adolescents' friendships. Are

the friends that parents are concerned or unconcerned about the same friends that adolescents are reporting on when they describe their friends as more or less antisocial? If the reports are of different individuals, it might impact the findings. It could be that parents are unconcerned and do not act to manage particularly deviant friends because they do not know about them. Recent research suggests that parents do not always know what an adolescent is up to, because the adolescents engage in deception – not telling their parents about their friends and activities, or actively providing them with false information (Marshall, Sullivan, & Bosdet, 2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). After reporting on their own friends, the adolescents in this study were asked to respond to an open-ended item: “Do you have any friends that you do not want your parents to know about? YES or NO; If you answered yes, why don’t you want your parents to know about these friends?” Although 86% of the adolescents who participated responded “No,” 14% responded yes, indicating a substantial portion would like to hide some of their relationships from their parents. Of those who responded as to why, most indicated that their friends were either deviant or were potential romantic partners (this latter was more true for girls). Examples of their responses are: “Because they are extremely bad and because they are way older than me, like 19 (reported by a 7<sup>th</sup> grade girl).” “These friends smoke cigarettes and I don’t want my mum to know this because she would think that I was smoking.” “Because they are not my parents’ type of ‘friend,’ also because they’re guys too!” “Because they’re older and they have a past history with the law. My parents are very strict about my friends.”

The consequences of parents’ and adolescents’ disagreements over appropriate

peers may be another area for future research. When parents and adolescents disagree over a friendship, how does this affect an adolescent's psychosocial adjustment? For example, when an adolescent has a friendship that is perceived as being particularly important (perhaps because it is the adolescent's sole source of peer support) and parents communicate a dislike of that friend, how do adolescents manage this discrepancy in desire? Do adolescents attempt to change their parents' perceptions of such peers, or do they simply ignore their parents? When might adolescents ignore their parents and when might they concede and break the friendship off?

This leads to a more general question: How do adolescents in general, manage their parents' attempts to manage them? Do adolescents work to deflect their parents' efforts? Under what conditions are they likely to do so? This conceptual model that provided the underpinnings for this work has multiple areas for future examination. As can be seen from this discussion, the work in the area of parents' management of adolescents' peers has only begun, and promises a rich and interesting area for future research.

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Appendix A:

Passive Consent Information Letter to Parents

**RE: VICTORIA ADOLESCENCE PROJECT**

Dear Parents:

I am writing to invite your child to participate in the **Victoria Adolescence Project (VAP)**, a study that I am conducting in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of your child's school during the Spring of 1999. As a developmental psychologist, with expertise in adolescence, I am interested in finding out more about the growth of teenagers in early and middle adolescence. Over the past few years, I have conducted several studies about adolescent growth and maturational processes, and have found it to be a worthwhile experience for me and the participants.

The purpose of this study is to examine the feelings and behaviors of young people as they grow up. As children move through adolescence, they become increasingly independent, spend less time with family and more time with friends, and are more willing to engage in risky behaviors. These behaviors accompany the physical and emotional changes typical of adolescence. Because we are interested in all these issues, we ask young people to complete a questionnaire to tell us how old they feel, what physical changes they have experienced, what they do with their friends and family, and the extent of their participation in social, independent, and risk-taking activities. We also ask questions about the nature of their relationship with their parents.

If your adolescent is interested in taking part in this study, he/she will spend about 45 minutes filling out a survey during class. Let me assure you that all questionnaires will

be sealed in an envelope upon completion and will be identified only by a code number and not by a name. Please note that we are not interested in individual responses, but in adolescents as a group. For each student who participates, we will be contributing \$5 towards the class fund. We have found that students, parents, and school staff appreciate the extra funding towards the students' education.

A subset of participating adolescents will be mailed two more sets of questionnaires, once next year and again the following year. This is the best strategy for finding out how adolescents actually develop. Your child may be asked to participate again, but is under no obligation to do so.

This summer we also plan to mail questionnaires home to a subset of mothers and fathers to complete. Obtaining a parent's perspective on the young person's growth and development is invaluable in telling us about parental expectations for and relations with the adolescent. Therefore, we can gain much by asking parents and adolescents about the nature of their relationship. However, if you are selected to participate in this portion of the study, please be assured that you are under no obligation to do so.

Let me assure you that the identification numbers we use are for tracking the information gathered in the follow-ups. We use these numbers to match your adolescent's information with yours and to match information from year to year. These numbers are never used to identify individuals for reports or other releases of information. We will, however, use them to determine your identity only for the following purposes:

- ◆ To meet any requests by you or your child to have data or portions of data removed from the study and destroyed;

- ◆ To make successive contacts with you or your child to inform you of research results, and
- ◆ To request continued participation.

It is also important that you know that participation is entirely voluntary and that you or your child may cease participation at any time, without repercussions. Your and your child's participation or nonparticipation will have no bearing on their grades or standing at school. You or your child may request at any time that any or all of the information collected from you be removed from the study and destroyed.

**Please return the enclosed card or phone us with your 6<sup>th</sup>-grade child's name and school if you do not wish your child to participate in this study.**

If you or your child have any concerns or questions about this project, please feel free to call me or my research assistants at 721-8718 or please leave a message.

Respectfully,

Nancy L. Galambos, Ph.D.

Professor

/enclosure

The *Victoria Adolescence Project* is funded by  
a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant to Nancy L. Galambos.

Appendix B:

Passive Consent Nonconsent Card for Parents

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
*LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF YOUTH*

TELEPHONE: (250) 721-8718

\_\_\_ I do not give consent for my child to participate in this study.

\_\_\_ I consent to my child to participate in this study.

Please make sure you include this information:

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Attended: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you wish to call us to leave this information,  
please leave a message at (250) 721-8718.**

Appendix C:

Active Consent Information Letter to Parents

**RE: VICTORIA ADOLESCENCE PROJECT**

Dear Parents:

I am writing to invite your child to participate in the **Victoria Adolescence Project (VAP)**, a study that I am conducting in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of your child's school during the Spring of 1999. As a developmental psychologist, with expertise in adolescence, I am interested in finding out more about the growth of teenagers in early and middle adolescence. Over the past few years, I have conducted several studies about adolescent growth and maturational processes, and have found it to be a worthwhile experience for me and the participants.

The purpose of this study is to examine the feelings and behaviors of young people as they grow up. As children move through adolescence, they become increasingly independent, spend less time with family and more time with friends, and are more willing to engage in risky behaviors. These behaviors accompany the physical and emotional changes typical of adolescence. Because we are interested in all these issues, we ask young people to complete a questionnaire to tell us how old they feel, what physical changes they have experienced, what they do with their friends and family, and the extent of their participation in social, independent, and risk-taking activities. We also ask questions about the nature of their relationship with their parents.

If your adolescent is interested in taking part in this study, he/she will spend about 45 minutes filling out a survey during class. Let me assure you that all questionnaires will

be sealed in an envelope upon completion and will be identified only by a code number and not by a name. Please note that we are not interested in individual responses, but in adolescents as a group. For each student who participates, we will be contributing \$5 towards the class fund. We have found that students, parents, and school staff appreciate the extra funding towards the students' education.

A subset of participating adolescents will be mailed two more sets of questionnaires, once next year and again the following year. This is the best strategy for finding out how adolescents actually develop. Your child may be asked to participate again, but is under no obligation to do so.

This summer we also plan to mail questionnaires home to a subset of mothers and fathers to complete. Obtaining a parent's perspective on the young person's growth and development is invaluable in telling us about parental expectations for and relations with the adolescent. Therefore, we can gain much by asking parents and adolescents about the nature of their relationship. However, if you are selected to participate in this portion of the study, please be assured that you are under no obligation to do so.

Let me assure you that the identification numbers we use are for tracking the information gathered in the follow-ups. We use these numbers to match your adolescent's information with yours and to match information from year to year. These numbers are never used to identify individuals for reports or other releases of information. We will, however, use them to determine your identity only for the following purposes:

- ◆ To meet any requests by you or your child to have data or portions of data removed from the study and destroyed;

- ◆ To make successive contacts with you or your child to inform you of research results, and
- ◆ To request continued participation.

It is also important that you know that participation is entirely voluntary and that you or your child may cease participation at any time, without repercussions. Your and your child's participation or nonparticipation will have no bearing on their grades or standing at school. You or your child may request at any time that any or all of the information collected from you be removed from the study and destroyed.

**If you give your permission for your 6<sup>th</sup> grade child to participate in our study, please return the enclosed consent form to your child's teacher. Without your consent, your child will not be able to participate in this study.**

If you or your child have any concerns or questions about this project, please feel free to call me or my research assistants at 721-8718 or please leave a message.

Respectfully,

Nancy L. Galambos, Ph.D.

Professor

/enclosure

*The Victoria Adolescence Project is funded by*

**a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant to Nancy L. Galambos.**

Appendix D:Active Consent Form for Parents

University of Victoria

Department of Psychology

***VICTORIA ADOLESCENCE PROJECT:******INTERVIEW STUDY*****PARENT CONSENT FORM**

1. I give my consent for my child to participate in the **Victoria Adolescence Project: Interview Study** conducted by Dr. Nancy Galambos.
2. I understand that the purpose of this research project is to study the feelings and attitudes that adolescents have about what it means to grow up and be mature.
3. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that my child may withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that my child is free to refuse to respond to questions in the interview.
4. I understand that the interview will be audio taped and transcribed.
5. I understand that any data collected during the study will remain confidential and that my child's anonymity is guaranteed. Specifically, recordings and transcripts will be identified only by code number, and names will not be attached to any published results. Recordings and transcripts will be kept in a locked room.

Name: *(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_Child's Name: *(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Appendix E:Informed Consent Form for Adolescents**VICTORIA ADOLESCENCE PROJECT****ADOLESCENT CONSENT FORM**

1. I agree to take part in this study, the **Victoria Adolescence Project**.
2. I understand that I will be asked questions such as
  - how old I feel
  - how my body has changed
  - what I do with my friends and family
  - what activities I take part in
  - how I get along with my parents
3. I also understand that
  - my answers to the questions are private and confidential  
(my parents and teachers will not be told what I wrote)
  - my questionnaire will be kept in a locked file to maintain my privacy
  - my name will not be on the questionnaire, only a code number to identify it
  - I do not have to take part in the study
  - I can stop at any time if I want to
  - I do not have to answer any questions if I do not want to
  - my name and address will be kept on a list, locked in Dr. Galambos' office, and will only be used to
    - remove my answers from the study if I ask Dr. Galambos to
    - tell me what was learned from the study
    - ask me if I'd like to take part in another study
  - if I am asked to take part in another study
    - I can say no
    - if I say no, it's okay (there will be no consequences)
    - the information that I have already given will stay in the study, unless I ask Dr. Galambos to remove and destroy it

Name: (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Appendix F:Parents' Consent for Their Own Participation

## Consent Form for Participation by a Parent in

The Victoria Adolescence Project

This is to certify that I give my consent to participate in the **Victoria Adolescence Project** conducted by Dr. Nancy Galambos.

I understand that:

- This project is studying the feelings and behaviors of adolescents and the relationship between adolescents and their parents.
- I will complete a questionnaire about my perceptions of my relationship with my adolescent and my perceptions of parenting.
- My participation is entirely voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- I am free to refuse to respond to the questionnaire or any items on the questionnaire.
- The information collected in the study is confidential.
- Questionnaires will be identified only by code number and my name will not be attached to any published results.
- Questionnaires will be kept in locked files.
- My name and address will be on a master list that will be kept in the locked files of Dr. Galambos, and will be used for:
  - Making future contact with participants to inform them of results; and
  - Making contact to request continued participation.
- I may be contacted regarding future participation and may choose, without repercussion, not to participate in any or all future research.
- If I decide not to participate further, any information collected to that point will be retained.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix G:Items Used for Adolescents' Questionnaire MeasuresProblem Behaviors:Disobeying Parents:

- VADEV2      Looked for trouble.  
VADEV3      Lied to your parents.  
VADEV4      Done something that your parents told you not to do.  
VADEV22     Broke a house rule.

Substance Use:

- VADEV9      Used beer, wine, or liquor.  
VADEV13     Had a drink (of alcohol) at a party or dance.  
VADEV18     Smoked marijuana.  
VADEV19     Smoked a cigarette.  
VADEV20     Done some drugs (besides marijuana).

Antisocial:

- VADEV5      Took things worth between \$2 and \$50.  
VADEV6      Took things worth less than \$2.  
VADEV7      Had contact with the police.  
VADEV8      Became angry and broke things.  
VADEV10     Started a fist fight.  
VADEV11     Took part in gang fights.  
VADEV12     Used force to get money or valuables.  
VADEV14     Broke into and entered a home, store, or building.  
VADEV15     Damaged or destroyed public or private property on purpose.  
VADEV16     Beat up someone who did nothing to you.  
VADEV17     Took things worth \$50 or more.  
VADEV21     Carried a weapon (e.g., knife).  
VADEV23     Bought stolen or "hot" goods (bike parts, stereo equipment).

**Academic Orientation**

- VASCH1 My teachers care about how I'm doing.  
VASCH2 Most teachers like me.  
VASCH3 I care what most of my teachers think of me.  
VASCH4 I feel satisfied with school because I am learning a lot.

**Prosocial Friends:**

- VAPEER1 Most of my friends would jump in and help a stranger in trouble.  
VAPEER3 The kids I hang out with are liked by parents and teachers.  
VAPEER5 In general, my friends are honest and trustworthy.  
VAPEER7 My closest friends almost always show responsible behavior.

**Deviant Friends:**

- VAPEER2 Lots of my friends smoke cigarettes.  
VAPEER4 I know many kids who have stolen something.  
VAPEER6 My friends often do things their parents say not to do.  
VAPEER8 My friends often get into trouble with adults.

Appendix H:

Items Used for Parents' Questionnaire Measures

Parents' Perceptions of Efficacy

How much can I do now:

VAM1INF1: To prevent my child from getting in with the wrong crowd at school?

VAM1INF2: To get my child to associate with friends that are good for him/her?

VAM1INF3: To increase the chances that my child will hang out with kids I like?

VAM1INF4: To keep my child from hanging out with kids I don't approve of?

VAM1INF5: To help my child select friends that are good for him/her?

Parents' Concerns about Friendships

VAM1FR1: I think my child's friends have a positive influence on him/her (reverse coded).

VAM1FR2: I approve of my child's friends (reverse coded).

VAM1FR4: I worry that my child will do things with his/her friends of which I would disapprove.

VAM1FR5: I am satisfied with my child's circle of friends (reverse coded).

VAM1WOR2: I am worried about the kinds of friends my child has.

VAM1WOR4: I sometimes worry that I don't know where my child is or who she/he is with.

**Parents' Peer management Behaviors:**

**Communicating Preferences:**

- VAM1PB2: Told your child that you like a particular friend of his/hers.
- VAM1PB5: Talked to your child about characteristics you prefer in his/her friends.
- VAM1PB6: Talked to your child about his/her friends' behavior, attitudes, or characteristics.

**Communicating Disapproval:**

- VAM1PB3: Encouraged your child to spend less time with certain friends.
- VAM1PB4: Told our child that he/she could not spend time with a specific friend.
- VAM1PB11: Said no to an activity with certain friends, because you thought it would be bad for your child.

**Support:**

- VAM1PB10: Said yes to an activity with certain friends, because you thought it would be good for your child.
- VAM1PB12: Provided a place for your child and his/her friends to interact(e.g., a party, afternoon study session, etc.).
- VAM1PB13: Suggested to your child a particular activity (e.g., a movie, game, sleepover, etc.) with certain friends.
- VAM1PB14: Supported your child's involvement in an extracurricular activity in which your child would be with peers you prefer.

**Information-Seeking:**

- VAM1PB8: Asked your child for more information about his/her friends.
- VAM1PB9: Asked other parents about your child's friends.
- VAM1PB15: Checked up with other parents to ensure your child wasn't getting into trouble with friends.