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## Private school teacher perceptions of elementary school childrens' needs: A clarion call for elementary school counselors

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## Private school teacher perceptions of elementary school childrens' needs: A clarion call for elementary school counselors

### Abstract

Recent research has confirmed that divorce contributes to a major crisis in the lives of most children, with stress engendered by that crisis often entering into the academic learning of school-age children. Between 1960 and 1975, the number of one-person households doubled. Jenkins (1976) reported 9,000,000 children under the age of eighteen live in single-parented families. The United States Bureau of Census reported, "more than 18% of the nation's school age children live with a lone parent" (1982, p. 536) and projected that 48% of all children born in 1980 will live a considerable part of their life with a single parent before they reach the age of eighteen.

PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
CHILDRENS' NEEDS: A CLARION CALL FOR  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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A Research Paper  
Presented to  
The Department of Educational Administration  
and Counseling  
University of Northern Iowa

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Karen I. Kerr  
July 1984

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Entitled: PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
CHILDRENS' NEEDS: A CLARION CALL FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
COUNSELORS

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

Recent research has confirmed that divorce contributes to a major crisis in the lives of most children, with stress engendered by that crisis often entering into the academic learning of school-age children. Between 1960 and 1975, the number of one-person households doubled. Jenkins (1976) reported 9,000,000 children under the age of eighteen live in single-parented families. The United States Bureau of Census reported, "more than 18% of the nation's school age children live with a lone parent" (1982, p. 536) and projected that 48% of all children born in 1980 will live a considerable part of their life with a single parent before they reach the age of eighteen.

Schools play a significant part in the lives of young people, both in terms of time and in preparation for adulthood. Children of single-parent families have special problems and needs which should be taken into consideration at school. Despite the large number of children living in single-parent environments, educators in the United States have paid little attention to the unique problems caused by these environmental conditions.

Not only the increasing incidence of divorce/single-parent families, but also drug and alcohol related problems, child abuse problems, and psychological, emotional, and social problems of all children are important signals which highlight the need for schools to address the implications of these problems upon students' learning. It is therefore logical that educational institutions, public and private,



should provide guidance services for all students, and particularly, for those faced with stressful situations which critically affect their learning.

Also Siegal and Boyes (1980) believe conflicting values in a double-standard society create confusion for children.

For the young child, moral rules are the infallible product of adult authority and should not be violated even accidentally or with good intention. The adult influence is more powerful than peer influence in stimulating older children's moral judgement development. (p. 105)

It seems logical then, to assume that schools need to take an active part in becoming aware of these problems of young people and attend to the responsibility of helping young people deal with stresses which may hinder their learning. A child's need for security, need to be loved for self, need to feel a sense of belonging, and need to be respected as a person are all basic needs which, if not fulfilled, expose that child to the risk of maladapted development, social deviance, and psycho-social stress. (Evans, 1981)

#### Importance of the Study

Herr (1981) and Denga (1981) agreed that all children regardless of geographic circumstances express joy, anxiety, unhappiness, confusion, achievement, frustration, and many other feelings that compose the spectrum of human emotions. Long (1981) substantiated that little has been published about the rights of children as counseling clients. Children do have the right to be recognized, to feel secure, and to be treated as persons. A notion has been carried forth in the Declaration of the Rights of Children as stated in the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (1974, p. 1) "each child should

have equal opportunity to develop his or her abilities, his or her individual goals, and his or her sense of moral and social responsibilities to become a useful member of society."

Long (1981) also stated counselors are best likely to serve the interests of the child when professional supervision and consultation is necessary. The counselor is advised to inform the client, or child, of what behaviors are desired, why these behaviors are desirable, and how these might best be obtained. With special skills that counselors have acquired, the child clients are better assured of maintaining their rights, their freedom of choices, and their preparation of responsibilities as members of today's society.

The world of elementary school students is not nearly as safe and secure as most people believe it to be, as young people experience a great deal of stress and anxiety. Because school personnel and family members have a special commitment to youth, they play a vital role in helping elementary school students find a measure of happiness for life. Knowing what young people worry about can assist counselors and parents to better understand them and aid in their development. Many young people need assistance in unlearning inappropriate behaviors and the education that is dissipated through worrying or anxiety can be channeled into higher levels of performance, problem solving, and more joyful living. Murs, Sutton, and Adams (1979) noted counseling services were needed to help school-age children to function more responsibly in the school. It is not surprising then, in the past decade the school and, in particular, the school counselor have been

suggested as being logical agents for providing skills through parent education programs and providing school counseling for the students.

It seems natural to perceive the teacher's contact hours with the child can serve as the basis for needed counseling, but it should be understood the teacher has neither the time nor the skills to handle the negative behaviors of any particular student among the full classloads in which he or she may function. Research continues to support the contention that the greatest efforts in terms of time and money, materials, dedication, and skill need to be focused on the earliest years of the child's formal schooling. (Bloom, 1977) It is during these critical formative years that the child forms behaviors and attitudes largely determined in what direction, to what degree his or her individual talents will be used. The elementary school counselor is charged with facilitating optimal development of the whole child.

Elementary school counseling has witnessed steady growth over the past ten years. The number of counselors increased to approximately 11,000 by 1976. (Myrick and Moni, 1976; Van Hoose and Carlson, 1972; Van Hoose and Kurtz, 1970) Furlong (1979) related that the 1970's were defined as the age of accountability; including accountability for elementary school counselors. After nearly three decades of research and discussion on the topic of the counseling profession in the elementary schools, the counselors' roles still have not been clearly defined. The American School Counselors Association (ASCA) Governing Board (1966) defined counselors' roles, both individual and as a professional group, to focus efforts identified by the professional as

priority roles if they were to influence the social/legal processes that define their activities.

With the growing implementation and the accountability concern of elementary school counselors around the country, there grows a strong need for models of program development. Stafford (1972) stated that the goals for elementary school counseling programs should be based on the skills of the counselor and on the needs of the persons served by the counseling programs. Aubrey (1975) stressed the need for a clear definition of elementary counseling and for the development of the curriculum content. The first step involves perceiving the need for program development and according to Shaw (1977) a need study is one way to promote an interest in a new program. In relation to these needs, research for this paper was developed and a needs' assessment was compiled and the data was tabulated and recorded for the reader.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to determine the perceived need for elementary school counselors in private schools in cities over 30,000 in the state of Iowa. A survey was sent to elementary school teachers in private schools randomly selected in these cities to help identify major problems confronting the youth of today's society. (Appendix C)

This survey addressed the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. Are there currently elementary school counselors in Iowa's private school systems?

2. Is there a need for elementary school counseling services in private schools in the state of Iowa to support the needs of children as perceived by teachers in these schools?

3. As perceived by teachers in elementary private schools, who performs the functions of an elementary school counselor if no counselor is available?

4. What do elementary school teachers perceive as high priority problems facing students today?

Private schools in which this research was conducted are religiously affiliated and supported by church parishes. All schools and teachers within the Archdiocesan systems are fully state certified. These private schools allow for the integration of religious truth and values not only by their curriculum but more importantly by dedicated teachers who show their own faith-life to their students.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in its generalizability as the sample of schools was not representative to the total population. The sample did not include public schools and was limited to cities over 30,000 population.

The use of the rating scales as criteria for rating behavior problems of children is subjective and therefore less reliable than assessment by direct observation. The conclusions were based upon the returned data only.

Teachers may have felt threatened to answer any direct questions pertaining to wanting a counselor or not. The survey was compiled to

enable teachers to answer objectively, yet still have the feeling to answer honestly to what they felt to be true in their particular situation.

#### Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study as defined:

1. Children of Divorce. Persons under the age of 18 whose biological or adoptive parents, with whom they have been residing, have been separated or divorced.

2. Divorce(d). "1. legal and formal dissolution of a marriage . . . 1. to dissolve legally a marriage between; separate by divorce. . . ." (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1970, p. 412)

3. Separate(d). " . . . 4. to stop living together as man and wife without a divorce." (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1970, p. 1298)

4. Single-Parent Children. Children who are living with one parent due to divorce/separation, death, or birth to an unmarried woman.

5. Single-Parent Families. Persons under the age of 18 whose biological or adoptive parent lives with the child.

6. Specific Problem Behavior. Behavior which often leads to difficulty in classroom; for example, the behavior of acting out, withdrawal, distractability, and disturbed peer relationships.

7. Private Schools. Schools not considered public; Lutheran Baptist, Catholic.

8. Community. Anyone affiliated in the involvement of the educational process of the child.

## Chapter Two

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While the process of divorce is a crisis situation for all families, some children seem to make satisfactory adjustments while others exhibit a multitude of less desirable behavioral symptoms; each situation will be addressed in the following literature review. This review of literature has been divided into three parts:

1. Acknowledgment of behavior problems in children from divorce/single-parent families.
2. Social/psychological development in children from divorce/single-parent families.
3. School performance and schools as a resource.

#### Acknowledgment of Behavior Problems in Children

##### From Divorce/Single-parent Families

If one examines the report of the United States Census Bureau (1982, p. 120) one would find 6,839,000 families are headed by one parent. According to the United States Census Bureau the future is not pleasant. Conley (1981) stated over one million families per year are affected by divorce. Approximately two million children become offspring of divorced parents each year. According to Touliatos and Lindholm (1980), "Population survey data indicate that the number of children under eighteen years of age who reside with only one parent has doubled since 1960." (p. 264) Zigli (1963) concurred with the United States Census Bureau's report in projecting that by 1990, twenty-five percent of all school age children will be living in single-parent families. The sheer size of the phenomenon makes it one that schools, particularly private schools, cannot afford to ignore.

Contributing greatly to childrens' anxiety is the fact that many children receive less attention from their parents during or following the divorce. The parents seem preoccupied with their own distress and efforts to cope with the divorce. With the added role of single parenthood and the probability of full time work, the parent is less physically available for the child.

Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1977) conducted a two year longitudinal study of the impact of divorce on family functioning and the development of the children. In their study of ninety-six families, the divorced mothers and fathers encountered marked stress in areas of practical problems of living, self-concept, emotional stress, and interpersonal relations. Two years after the divorce the divorced parents were still less content with their lives than were parents from intact families. They also characterized behaviors of children of divorce as more dependent, more aggressive, whiny, demanding, unaffectionate, and more disobedient than behaviors of other children from intact families. Anthony (1974) noted other behaviors of children experiencing divorce as low vitality, restlessness, quiet, shame, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, inability to be alone, regression to immature behavior, phobia, anxiety, and intense attachment to one parent.

The expectations held by parents and possibly teachers, and even mental health professionals, is that marital turmoil causes behavior problems in children. This may not only create biased rating data but also may be problematic in that a self-fulfilling prophecy may result. Parents, for example, who attribute to a child's "normal" misbehavior



to an emotional reaction and then to their marital divorce, may not respond to that child with their usual discipline. Thus, in their attempt to understand the child, some parents set limits which are inconsistent and confusing and thereby accidentally create problems they are trying to avoid.

#### Social/Psychological Development in Children From Divorce/Single-parent Families

Hozman and Wallerstein (1976) equate the experience of losing a parent through divorce as similar to that of losing a parent through death. The child needs to be allowed to work through the stages which include anger, fear, depression, and most often grief. This is supported by Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1975, 1976) in a report that stated school age children respond to divorce with pervasive sadness, fear, anger, and feelings of deprivation. For older school age children they found that divorce affected the freedom of children to keep major attention focused outside the family, particularly on school-related tasks. These children displayed conscience and intense anger, fear, phobia, and a shaken sense of identity and loneliness.

According to Tessman (1978) if the process of identification becomes the over-riding mechanism by which children insure a sense of closeness, it can interfere with the development of the acceptable, individual sense of identity. In single-parent families, identification with figures outside the family may seem novel and become increasingly significant to the child's sense of self. "Early

identification with parental figures later affects experiences, goals in life, and the sense of identity." (p. 44)

The number of children from divorced families seeking psychiatric treatment was found to be greater than those seeking similar treatment in the general population. (McDermott, 1970; Morrison, 1974) Tuckman and Regan (1966) compared reports of 1,767 children referred to outpatient clinics in Philadelphia. Children from intact families were under-represented while children of divorce, separated, widowed, or unmarried families were over-represented in the clinic sample. The children of divorce were referred most often for aggression and anti-social problems.

Tooley (1976) focused on boys aged four to seven who were being reared in fatherless homes. She found occurrences of sleep disturbances, enuresis, foods stealing, food hoarding, the theft of money. Hetherington (1973) studied the effects of father absence on 72 teenage girls at a community center. Findings of the study revealed that the girls from the fatherless homes were anxious and had inadequate skills in relating to men.

A more recent view about the social/psychological development of children from divorce/single-parent families is stated by Touliatos and Lindholm (1980), studies generally have demonstrated that children from families which have been broken by parental death, divorce, or separation exhibit a greater degree of maladaptive behavior, particularly conduct disorders and socialized-aggressive delinquency.

## School Performance and Schools as a Resource

Studies of the intellectual development of children from divorce/single-parent families have investigated both school achievement and intellectual growth. Biller (1973) and Shinn (1978) concluded that children raised in mother-headed families show deficits in cognitive performance as assessed by standardized intelligence and achievement tests and in school performance. Findings of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the Kettering Foundation Institute for the Development of Educational Activities (/I/D/E/A/) longitudinal study (1980) helped to confirm the assumption; for years educators have assumed that children from one-parented families have more trouble in school than do children from two-parented families. As a group, one-parented children showed lower achievement and presented more discipline problems than did their two-parented peers. They were absent more often, late to school more often, and showed more health related problems. In addition this study found, "a definite correlation between school performance and family status." (p. 33) Clearly, stress resulting from divorce experiences manifest themselves in the academic areas, stated by Kelly and Wallerstein. (1979)

Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) found in their five year study that single-parent children, with few exceptions, saw separation and divorce as very stressful situations. Teachers reported a high level of anxiety for over one-half of the students involved in the study. Annis and Allers (1979) further suggested teachers may find that most children that show restlessness and forgetfulness are unmotivated, nervous, or have inconsistent behavior, come from disrupted homes.

Brown (1980) also reported single-parent children cause " . . . more than their share of discipline problems at both elementary and high levels." (p. 539)

The important role that schools can play in facilitating childrens' adjustment recently has received attention in divorce related literature. (Drake, 1979; Damon, 1979; NAESP, 1980; Skeen & McKenry, 1980; Palker, 1980; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; and Henderson, 1981) According to Drake (1979) the school is a natural environment for the child and Wallerstein and Kelly (1979) recognized the importance of schools in dealing with children of divorce. They stated it is crucial that teachers and principals be sensitive to the ways in which stress of the family breakup can disrupt, even if it's temporary, their students' ability to participate in the learning process. Such awareness and willingness to provide a supportive setting for these children will combine to make the school more responsive to changes wrought by a decade of divorce. Hammond (1978) and Skeen & McKenry (1980) suggested that educators become more knowledgeable of, and more sensitive to, the special needs and feelings of children from divorced/single-parent families. Hammond further suggested that teachers and counselors hold classroom discussions about divorce and other one-parent family situations in a non-threatening atmosphere to encourage children to accept these situations. Since children spend one-third of their waking hours each week involved in school or in school related activities, and although teachers and other educators are unable to do anything about divorce, they can do something to help children of divorced parents to make satisfactory adjustments and growth.

Drake (1981) clarified ten major issues affecting children of divorce and separation with which the school administrators must contend. One area was counseling. In so many words, Drake said,

The loss of a parent through death, separation, or divorce is almost always extraordinarily stressful for a child. Many children handle the loss well with the support from family and friends. But others may benefit from some kind of counseling. Three suggested approaches are: peer-counseling or "rap groups"; individual or small group meetings with the school counselor or social worker; and referral to an outside professional if indicated. Whatever form the counseling takes, it is crucial that the students involved are not made to feel singled out or stigmatized in any way by their participation. School principals, counselors, and social workers should be prepared to refer parents who themselves feel the need of counseling to appropriate community agencies. (p. 27)

A few other interventions have been described for counseling children of divorce. Wilkinson and Beck (1977) described a developmental approach which consisted of eight 45 minute sessions with elementary children. The goal was to help clarify a child's feelings about divorce, to gain a realistic picture of the situation, to help the child to see that others experience similar feelings, and to assist the child in learning new ways in coping with his or her feelings.

The school performance of divorce/single-parent children may or may not be "normal," but it is the responsibility of the school to provide the needed services for the special needs of these children and of any children who face problems which can interfere with their learning.

## Chapter Three

### REPORT OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The preceding chapter presented a review of literature regarding the psychological and emotional effects of divorce and separation upon children and their learning. There is no single behavior reaction to divorce or to separation, therefore, there are no easy guidelines for recognizing behaviors related to these situations and the emotional changes which may accompany them. Divorce and separation are two of the many problems which children may encounter and influence their opportunity and capability to learn.

The purpose of this study is to show a need for elementary school counselors in private schools in cities over 30,000 population in the state of Iowa. Because of the emotional, psychological, and physiological stresses upon elementary school children, there is a need for the school to help by providing specialized assistance to student growth and learning. The needs of these children are important. Guidance services in general and counselors specifically, have been added in many schools throughout the state, but not in private elementary schools.

#### Instrument

A three part survey was distributed randomly throughout 40 private elementary schools in cities over 30,000 in Iowa. This survey was designed for principals and teachers. Principals were asked to indicate the number of students enrolled in their schools, check appropriate areas indicating whether or not a counselor serves their

school. Further the principals were asked to distribute the survey to their teachers. (See Appendix B)

The principle instrument was designed by the researcher. (See Appendix C) The instrument was divided into three parts:

1. Teachers' perceptions of counselors' functions based on a priority scale of 1 to 5. (1 as being high priority and 5 as low priority.)
2. Teachers' perceptions of who performs these functions in their school. (a. counselor b. administrator c. teacher d. AEA specialist e. no one)
3. Teachers' perceptions of students' problems prioritized on a scale of 1 to 15. (1 being high priority and 15 as low priority.)

#### Design Sample

The survey was conducted in the spring of 1983 in private elementary schools randomly selected in cities over 30,000 in the state of Iowa. The study is based on returned data only. Data was received from 189 teachers representing 23 schools. Many teachers did not respond to each question so tabulation totals for any question may vary. Data is reported raw scores and in the first part of the survey the data has also the percent ages of teachers responding.

## Chapter Four

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

## Perceptions of Counseling Functions

Teacher perceptions relative to the need for crisis counseling are reported in Table 1. Ninety-seven lower elementary school teachers responded to this item. Seventy-seven percent perceived this need as high priority. Eighty-six upper elementary school teachers responded to this same item, viewing it even as higher priority with an 84% priority. From the total 183 teachers, 148 perceived this as high priority. This constitutes nearly an 81% priority item in meeting the needs of children.

Table 1

Provides Crisis Counseling in Time of Need

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	75	77.3%	73	84.9%	148	80.9%
Neutral (3)	12	12.4%	10	11.6%	22	12.0%
Disagree (4 & 5)	10	10.3%	3	3.5%	13	7.1%
Total	97	100.0%	86	100.0%	183	100.0%



Table 2 reflects the role of an elementary school counselor, providing small group counseling, as teachers perceived it and rated it as high priority. Of the 185 total teachers, both lower elementary and upper elementary teachers, 123 viewed this function in high priority. Only 11% of the lower elementary teachers rated in low priority, while even a less percent, or 6% of the upper elementary teachers rated it of low priority. Only 22% took a neutral stand on this item.

Table 2

Provides Small Group Counseling

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	63	70.8%	60	65.9%	123	68.9%
Neutral (3)	16	18.0%	25	27.5%	41	22.4%
Disagree (4 & 5)	10	11.2%	6	6.6%	16	8.7%
Total	89	100.0%	91	100.0%	185	100.0%

One of the highest functions of elementary counselors, as perceived by teachers was that of providing individual counseling. Of the 175 replying to this item, 147 teachers rated this function as an 84% priority. Neutral and low priority ratings showed a less than 10% priority in both groups. This function was perceived as the highest priority function of a counselor by these elementary teachers.

Table 3

Provides Individual Counseling

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	70	83.3%	77	84.6%	147	84.0%
Neutral (3)	7	8.3%	9	9.9%	16	9.1%
Disagree (4 & 5)	7	8.3%	5	5.5%	12	6.9%
Total	84	99.9%	91	100.0%	175	100.0%

The function, consults with staff members involving the students, also ranked as high priority with a total of 150 out of 186 teachers viewing this item of 80% priority. Only 10 lower elementary teachers and only 9 upper elementary teachers perceived this as a more neutral item. Only 17 teachers were found to disagree that this function is important. This function was also perceived as high in priority.

Table 4

Consults with Staff Members Involving Students

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	75	79.0%	75	82.4%	150	80.0%
Neutral (3)	10	10.5%	9	9.9%	19	10.2%
Disagree (4 & 5)	10	10.5%	7	7.7%	17	9.1%
Total	95	100.0%	91	100.0%	186	99.9%

With nearly the identical percent, a 71.9 viewed by lower elementary teachers and a 71.5 of the upper elementary teachers, this function was rated to be of high priority. Both lower and upper elementary teachers had the same number signifying a neutral stand on this item. This percentage was 17%. Only a total of 12% rated this as low priority. This was only 21 teachers out of 180 responding to this item in Table 5.

As shown in Table 6, the function dealt with elementary counselors consulting with educational specialists. The lower elementary teachers rated this function of high priority, giving it an 80% rating. Seventy-six of the 93 teachers felt this function to be important while sixty-seven of 87 upper elementary teachers rated this function for a 77%. Only six lower elementary teachers view this function as low priority. Five upper elementary teachers perceived this function

as being of low priority. Fourteen percent viewed this function as neutral.

Table 5

Provides In-service Programs to Faculty Members

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	64	71.9%	65	71.5%	129	71.7%
Neutral (3)	15	16.8%	15	16.5%	30	16.7%
Disagree (4 & 5)	10	11.3%	11	12.0%	21	11.6%
Total	89	100.0%	91	100.0%	180	100.0%

Table 6

Consults With Educational Specialists

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	76	81.7%	67	77.1%	143	79.4%
Neutral (3)	11	11.8%	15	17.2%	26	14.4%
Disagree (4 & 5)	6	6.5%	5	5.7%	11	6.1%
Total	93	100.0%	87	99.9%	180	99.9%

Table 7 shows the teachers' perceptions about an elementary counselor assisting in the identification of students special needs. It related 77 lower elementary teachers indicating it as an 84% priority. It also shows 72 upper elementary teachers perceiving it as an 81% priority. One hundred eight-one teachers responded to this item with 149 perceiving it as high priority. Only 21 teachers viewed it as neutral and even lower rating of 11 teachers saw it as low priority.

Table 7

Assists in Identification of Students With Special Needs

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	77	83.7%	72	80.9%	149	82.3%
Neutral (3)	7	7.6%	14	15.7%	21	11.6%
Disagree (4 & 5)	8	8.6%	3	3.3%	11	6.1%
Total	92	99.9%	89	99.9%	181	100.0%

The function of elementary counselors consulting with teachers to develop management strategies to meet the needs of the students ranked a little below 80%. Lower elementary teachers, 69 in number, perceived this as a 77.5% item and 77 upper elementary teachers responded to this item with a 79% rating. Of the 186 total elementary teachers that responded to the item in Table 8, 146 perceived it to be of high priority. This showed a 78% high priority rating.

Table 8

Consults With Teachers to Develop Management Strategies to Meet Needs of Students

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	69	77.5%	77	79.3%	146	78.5%
Neutral (3)	14	15.7%	16	16.5%	30	16.1%
Disagree (4 & 5)	6	6.8%	4	4.1%	10	5.4%
Total	89	100.0%	97	99.9%	186	100.0%

Table 9 records teachers' perceptions of elementary counselors' functions of providing developmental guidance to all students in a percent rating below 80. From a total of 89 lower elementary teachers, 68 perceived this item as high priority with a 76% response. Of a total 93 upper elementary teachers 71 teachers showed a 76% priority of this item. A total 182 teachers responded to this item showing that 139, or a 76% perceived this item as high priority.

The function of conducting assessments of individual needs (Table 10) indicated that teachers perceive this function to be of less priority than many of the others. Both lower and upper elementary teachers viewed this function of an elementary counselor under 75% priority. Lower elementary teachers viewing it a 72% while upper elementary teachers rating it a 65%. One hundred twenty-seven of the one hundred eighty-seven teachers viewed this item to be of high

priority. Only 8 out of 91 lower elementary teachers ranked this item to be of low priority, however, as did only 7 of the 96 upper elementary teachers who responded to this item.

Table 9

Provides Developmental Counseling to all Students

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	68	76.4%	71	76.4%	139	76.4%
Neutral (3)	16	18.0%	13	13.9%	29	15.9%
Disagree (4 & 5)	5	5.6%	9	9.7%	14	7.7%
Total	89	100.0%	93	100.0%	182	100.0%

Table 10

Conducts Assessments of Individuals Using a Variety of Instruments

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	65	71.5%	62	64.6%	127	67.9%
Neutral (3)	18	19.8%	27	28.1%	45	24.1%
Disagree (4 & 5)	8	8.8%	7	7.3%	15	8.0%
Total	91	100.0%	96	100.0%	187	100.0%

Table 11 indicates that a total of 178 teachers responded to this function. This function, interprets the guidance program to parents and community, rated as a low 61% compared to many of the other functions in priority. However, this 61% was still higher than the neutral rating of 28% or the low priority rating of 11%. Either the teachers did not feel this function to be very important or they just wished to not respond, but only 178 of the 189 responded to Table 11.

Table 11

Interprets the Guidance Program to Parents and Community

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	52	61.9%	57	60.6%	109	61.2%
Neutral (3)	22	26.2%	27	28.7%	49	27.5%
Disagree (4 & 5)	10	11.9%	10	10.6%	20	11.2%
Total	84	100.0%	94	99.9%	178	99.9%

Table 12 reflects the item of elementary counselors providing staff members with classroom guidance. Of the 174 responding to this item, 64 lower elementary school teachers rated it of 75% priority. Also 64 of upper elementary school teachers viewed its importance to be a 72% priority. Twenty-nine teachers or a 17% priority indicated this to be neutral. Only 9 lower elementary teachers and 8 upper elementary teachers ranked this function as low priority.



Table 12

Provides Staff Members With Help and Materials to Aid Classroom  
Guidance

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	64	75.3%	64	71.9%	128	73.6%
Neutral (3)	12	14.1%	17	19.1%	29	16.7%
Disagree (4 & 5)	9	10.6%	8	9.0%	17	9.8%
Total	85	100.0%	89	100.0%	174	100.1%

This function was the only one which indicated, of the 166 teachers responding to it, a percent less than 60% for high priority. This percentage was still above the percentages of neutral and low priority showings. Nearly one-third of the teachers viewed this function in a neutral way while 36 perceived it as low priority. It was indicated by some teachers that this function was not the responsibility of a counselor and these teachers had not rated it on the 1 to 5 scale. Only 166 of the 189 total teachers responded to this item.

It was perceived by these elementary school teachers that the functions of an elementary school counselor, indicated by high percent, would be those functions which involve the student and the students needs directly. But all of the functions rated above 50% high priority

and from all indications brought forth in the tables it is the assumption of the researcher that all these functions were important. It is also an assumption that many of these functions were more important than others shown by a raw score and also by a percentage.

Table 13

Makes Home Visits & Encourages Parents' Visits to Increase Parent Awareness

	Lower Elementary		Upper Elementary		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agree (1 & 2)	37	47.5%	39	44.3%	76	45.8%
Neutral (3)	29	37.2%	25	28.4%	54	32.5%
Disagree (4 & 5)	12	15.4%	24	27.2%	36	21.7%
Total	78	100.0%	88	99.9%	166	100.0%

Counseling Functionaries

Teachers were asked to indicate who performs the counseling duties identified. It was possible to indicate that more than one person performed each function. For each item or function from Tables 1 through 13 the choices were as follows: a. counselor, b. administrator, c. teacher, d. AEA specialist, and e. no one.

It was indicated by the principals that there was only one fulltime counselor and one half-time counselor in the schools which responded to this survey. It is the assumption of the researcher that

teachers may have misunderstood this part of the survey. This part read, ". . . also identify by circling, who performs this function in your school." Many teachers responded that the counselor does a particular function, yet only two principals indicated that they had counselors. However, the numbers are indicated in Table 14 as tabulated by the researcher and the reader may draw his or her own conclusions about how the teachers responded to this part of the survey.

In over six of the thirteen function areas, there were over 100 teachers who indicated that they performed in those particular functions. These areas and their numbers are as follows:

1. Assists in needs of students	122
2. Crisis counseling	121
3. Small group counseling	117
4. Provides developmental guidance	115
5. Individual counseling	107
6. Consults with AEA specialists	100

Not only in these particular areas did teachers perceive themselves performing more than a counselor, administrator, AEA specialists, or no one, but also in the areas of: conducts assessment of individual needs, interprets guidance program to parents, and makes home visits.

In four of the thirteen areas teachers indicated that the principal functions in that job more than they do. These areas are:

1. Consults with staff involving students' needs
2. Provides in-service for staff
3. Consults with teachers to meet needs of students
4. Provides staff with advice and materials

Table 14

Functions Performed by Whom

Item	Counselor	Administrator	Teacher	AEA Specialist	No One
	number	number	number	number	number
1. Crisis counseling	15	103	121	26	11
2. Small group counseling	22	50	117	32	35
3. Individual counseling	20	67	107	49	21
4. Consults with staff	18	87	75	56	18
5. Provides in-services for staff	10	97	44	50	33
6. Consults with AEA Specialists	13	92	100	31	19
7. Assists in needs of students	19	90	122	74	11
9. Provides developmental guidance	21	33	115	38	24
10. Conducts assessment of individual needs	16	34	98	57	24
11. Interprets guidance program to parents	13	66	72	31	53
12. Provides staff with advice & materials	18	71	43	49	53
13. Makes home visits	13	13	30	30	133

Teachers responded to each area and even a few perceived no one as performing the particular function as indicated in Table 14. The most responses to no one functioning in any given area was that area of makes home visits.

In at least about half of these areas specified, teachers indicated that they perceive AEA specialists performing that particular function. These are as follows:

1. Individual counseling
2. Consults with staff
3. Provides in-service for staff
4. Assists in needs of students
5. Consults with teachers to meet needs of students
6. Conducts assessment of individual needs
7. Provides staff with advice and materials

As indicated by 189 elementary teachers, they perceive themselves as functioning in many of an elementary counselors roles. It is also indicated they feel that the principal performs many of these functions as well. It is possible that any of the numbers appearing in counselor column could be reasonably correct since there is one full-time counselor in one school and a half-time counselor in another school.

#### Teachers Ranking of Childrens' Problems and Their Impact on a School Counseling Program

Part 2 of the survey dealt with the many problems which young people are faced with today. Teachers were asked to prioritize these problems as they saw their importance in being dealt with in a counseling program. Since the severity of this varies for lower elementary children from upper elementary children, each problem is charted showing this difference. By responding on a scale of 1 to 15

(1 indicating high priority and 15 low priority) the teachers' responses are found in Table 15 and 16.

Table 15

Lower Elementary School Teachers' Priorities to Students' Problems

Item	Raw Score	Rank
A. Single parent	662	8th
B. Divorce	502	4th
C. Emotional problems	324	1st
D. Handicapped	819	12th
E. Foster home	1047	15th
F. Psychological problems	430	3rd
G. Gifted	995	14th
H. Remedial	838	13th
I. Peer pressure	547	5th
J. Death	809	11th
K. Drugs/alcohol	689	9th
L. Separation	699	10th
M. Self-image	360	2nd
N. Child abuse	645	7th
O. Social adjustment	601	6th

Eighty-four lower elementary school teachers prioritized these following students' problems to be important enough to be dealt with through a counseling program (Table 15):

- 1st, emotional problems
- 2nd, self-image
- 3rd, psychological problems
- 4th, divorce
- 5th, peer pressure
- 6th, social adjustment
- 7th, child abuse
- 8th, single parent
- 9th, drug/alcohol
- 10th, separation
- 11th, death
- 12th, handicapped
- 13th, remedial
- 14th, gifted
- 15th, foster home

Ninety upper elementary school teachers responded to the same items listed in Table 16. These teachers prioritized the students' problems as following:

- 1st, emotional problems
- 2nd, peer pressure
- 3rd, psychological problems
- 4th, self-image
- 5th, social adjustment
- 6th, divorce
- 7th, drugs/alcohol
- 8th, child abuse
- 9th, single parent
- 10th, separation
- 11th, death
- 12th, remedial
- 13th, handicapped
- 14th, foster home
- 15th, gifted

Table 16

Upper Elementary School Teachers' Priorities to Childrens' Problems

Item	Raw Score	Rank
A. Single parent	759	9th
B. Divorce	618	6th
C. Emotional problems	358	1st
D. Handicapped	996	13th
E. Foster home	1079	14th
F. Psychological problems	435	3rd
G. Gifted	1079	15th
H. Remedial	921	12th
I. Peer pressure	403	2nd
J. Death	917	11th
K. Drugs/alcohol	688	7th
L. Separation	791	10th
M. Self-image	444	4th
N. Child abuse	731	8th
O. Social adjustment	547	5th



## Chapter Five

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is indicated by the research that today's youth face many crisis related problems. Many of these youth are unable to understand, to cope, to handle, nor solve these problems by themselves. Parents may or may not be the source of these problems, but they may face not being able to deal with the problems without emotions entering into them. These problems can enter into the academic performance of a child and also into his or her social life with their peers.

This study indicates teachers perceive young people to have problems. One hundred eighty-nine elementary school teachers in 23 private schools, randomly selected in cities over 30,000 population throughout the state of Iowa perceived divorce, single-parent, emotional, psychological, social, and self-image problems to be high priority problems to be met by the school. On a scale of 1 to 15 both lower elementary school teachers and upper elementary school teachers viewed these above problems in the top six in priority.

These same teachers perceived themselves as functioning in the role of a counselor in about half of the thirteen functions listed. Those which they viewed themselves as performing the counselor's role in were crisis counseling, individual counseling, small group counseling, providing in-service to other faculty members, identifying students with special needs, and consulting with AEA specialists. It was signified that from the 23 schools which responded, only one school had a full time counselor and one school had a half time counselor.

The functions which these teachers perceived as top priority functions of a counselor were those which were directly related to the children. Showing an 80% or over were the functions of: crisis counseling, individual counseling, consults with staff members involving students, consults with AEA specialists, and assists in identification of students with special needs.

Based on the data collected from the 189 elementary school teachers who responded to this survey the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. There is one fulltime counselor and one halftime counselor functioning in the 23 elementary private schools which responded to the survey.
2. Both lower and upper elementary school teachers who responded to the survey, perceive the needs and problems of elementary school children to be important.
3. Elementary school teachers in the private schools which responded to the survey perceive themselves as performing the functions of a counselor in about half of the functioning roles described.
4. Elementary school teachers perceive principals as performing in a few of the counselors' roles listed in the survey.
5. Divorce, emotional, psychological, self-image, single-parent, and social problems of elementary school children ranked in high priority as the teachers who responded to the survey signified.

This study provided information relative to the perceptions of both lower and upper elementary school teachers involving the problems which elementary school children face and the importance of these

problems as these teachers perceive their priority for counseling purposes. Based upon the literature reviewed and the results of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Research should be conducted to explore other aspects of the total child and his or her environment as in-depth to the needs and problems listed within this study.
2. More investigation should be conducted to understand why there are so few elementary school counselors in private schools in Iowa.
3. Correlation studies should be attempted to explore the relationship in selected behaviors of private school children and public school children who may have counselors.
4. Since there are so few elementary school counselors in private schools, in-service programs to help teachers with the skills of counselors be provided.
5. Findings and conclusions of this study should be disseminated to practicing school related professionals to promote better understanding and awareness to the problems of elementary school children and to the need for elementary school counselors in private schools.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

## Letter to Archdiocese

January 12, 1983  
1005 Maplewood Dr.  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Fathers  
Archdiocese of Iowa

Dear Father:

I am in need of your help and the help of persons within your Archdiocese. My name is Karen Kerr and I teach Junior High at Blessed Sacrament School in Waterloo, Iowa. I am in the process of developing a Research Paper about Counseling in Private Schools in the state of Iowa. I'm doing this for the Elementary Counseling Office at UNI in Cedar Falls.

I need your permission to send the enclosed survey (facsimile) to schools throughout your area as a sample sampling of opinions and to teachers in various schools. As you can see the survey is about counseling in elementary private schools all over the state.

I am asking your approval of my sending the enclosed survey to these church schools under your jurisdiction. It is urgent that the survey be completed as soon as possible; hoping that the end of February is not rushing. With your approval and encouragement to the Principals of your schools, I pray that this survey will help me meet the needs of the Research Paper.

Find enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for your reply.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,

Karen Kerr

## Appendix B

## Letter to Administrators of Private Schools

March 12, 1983

Administrators or Principals:

Thank you for taking the time to look over this material. I have received permission from the heads of the Archdiocese in each area of Iowa to conduct this survey. The survey is a part of my Research Paper for my M.A. program in Elementary Guidance and Counseling at UNI at Cedar Falls.

Please distribute these surveys among your faculty members. Please keep one for yourself. I'd appreciate it if these could be completed and returned to me by May 15th, 1983. Find a self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed.

I will furnish you with the tabulated data as soon as it is compiled.

Needed also is some general information about your school:

Total enrollment of your school \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor in your building    yes \_\_\_\_\_    no \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, 1/2 time \_\_\_\_\_,    full time \_\_\_\_\_

Again, thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Karen Kerr

1005 Hawlewood Drive  
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613  
March 12, 1983

Dear Principals and Teachers:

I am in need of your help. Through the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, I am nearing the completion of my M.A. in Elementary Counseling with said department. By conducting a survey I feel the Research Paper will take on a more informative and adequate description of the functions of a counselor at the elementary level in private schools throughout the state of Iowa.

This information will be kept confidential. It will be purely useful in the knowledge of current status of counseling in these schools. The names of towns and the schools will not be identified.

Please identify if you are lower elem. \_\_\_\_\_ upper elem. \_\_\_\_\_

PART I :

With increasing emphasis on job accountability and tight budgets, counselors are often called upon to be more definitive in communicating to the audiences they serve the variety of functions they perform.

Using a scale of 1 - 5 ( 1 as agree and 5 as disagree ) please circle what you feel to be your belief of the appropriateness of the following counseling functions. Also identify by circling, who performs these functions in your school.

(a. counselor b. administrator c. teacher d. AEA specialist or e. no one )

1. Provides crisis counseling in time of need.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
2. Provides small group counseling.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
3. Provides individual counseling.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
4. Consults with staff members involving students to bring about a better adjustment for each child.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
5. Provides in-service programs to faculty members.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
6. Consults with educational specialists.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
7. Assists in identification of students with special needs.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e

8. Consults with teachers to develop management strategies to meet the needs of individual students.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
9. Provides developmental counseling to all students with the focus on acceptance of self, decision-making, and effective communication skills.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
10. Conducts assessment of individual student using a variety of instruments.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
11. Interprets the guidance program to parents and community.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
12. Provides staff members with help and with materials to aid classroom guidance.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e
13. Makes home visits and encourages parents' visits to increase parent awareness to the guidance program.  
1 2 3 4 5 a b c d e

PART II :

Many problems face young people in a community. Please prioritize the following as you see their importance in being dealt with through a counseling program. ( 1 - 15 ; 1 being high priority and 15 being low priority)

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. single parent
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. divorce
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. emotional problems
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. handicapped
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. foster home
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. psychological problems
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. gifted
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. remedial
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. peer pressure
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. death
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. drugs/alcohol
- \_\_\_\_\_ l. separation
- \_\_\_\_\_ m. self-image
- \_\_\_\_\_ n. child abuse
- \_\_\_\_\_ o. social adjustment

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Appendix C  
Copy of Survey