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## The Portrayal of Characters with Behavior Disorders in Fiction Books for Upper Elementary Children

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## The Portrayal of Characters with Behavior Disorders in Fiction Books for Upper Elementary Children

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### Abstract

Our society perceives childhood as a time when children are happy and carefree, learning and growing. For many children, however, childhood is not carefree. In the national school population, 1.2 to 2.0 percent of the students are behavior disordered (Haring, 1987). "Behavior disorders" is used as a term rather than "emotional disabilities" because the State of Iowa has mandated the use of the former term.

This research focuses on the ways in which children's literature portrays the behavior-disordered child. Books with accurate descriptions of the behavior-disordered condition in children help adults and other children understand the disorders.

THE PORTRAYAL OF CHARACTERS  
WITH BEHAVIOR DISORDERS IN FICTION BOOKS  
FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

A Graduate Research Paper  
Submitted to the  
Division of Library Science  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

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in Fiction Books for Upper Elementary Children

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement  
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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Our society perceives childhood as a time when children are happy and carefree, learning and growing. For many children, however, childhood is not carefree. In the national school population, 1.2 to 2.0 percent of the students are behavior disordered (Haring, 1987). "Behavior disorders" is used as a term rather than "emotional disabilities" because the State of Iowa has mandated the use of the former term.

This research focuses on the ways in which children's literature portrays the behavior-disordered child. Books with accurate descriptions of the behavior-disordered condition in children help adults and other children understand the disorders.

Authors write fiction in creative ways, but these ways must be close to reality when the books deal with problems such as behavior disorders. The author's creative methods are those which have not been tested or experimented with in a laboratory but come from the experiences, hearts and minds of authors of contemporary trade books for upper elementary school-aged children. How do the behavior-disordered child characters react to differences in their worlds which should traditionally be happy and carefree and which become different as a result of behavior such as described in the subcategories which describe behavior disorders?

The purpose of this research was to identify and analyze novels for children in order to determine the accuracy of the portrayal of behaviorally disordered characters. This content analysis may give parents and educators the opinions of different authors about how behavior disordered children behave. The researcher attempted to include relevant sources of interest to all people who want to understand the behavioral differences inherent in our society.

The types of behavior disorders included in the investigation are "a wide spectrum of problem behaviors, such as emotional handicaps, conduct disorders, delinquent behavior, hyperactive/distractible behavior, as well as psychiatric diagnoses such as ...schizophrenia, developmental disorders, and autism" (Cheney, 1990, p. 47).

One tends to accept, and not fear, those things which one understands. The old stereotypes which children believe; e.g., that those with mental handicaps are stronger and more violent than their normal peers and that those with emotional disorders are also mentally retarded, may be overcome.

Books for very young children are rare in this genre, so they were not included in this research. The focus was on fiction books for upper elementary grades, four through six. Also included were some more difficult, young-adult-type books for talented and gifted readers.

There are many ways that teachers administer to "children in conflict." There has been quite a differentiated history regarding these children, some of which follows.



In the ages before Christ, treatment of behavioral disorders was nonexistent or negative, although Plato theorized that mentally ill people should be given special treatment after the commission of crimes. In the "Dark Ages" of psychiatry following the death of Galen, young people were punished for their behavior disorders by bleeding them to get rid of "bad spirits" (Swanson and Reinert, 1986, p. 6).

In the 1700s to 1800s writings began to appear to educate the public regarding behavior disorders. Two landmark authors were Jean Itard (Wild Boy of Aveyron) and Benjamin Rush, commonly known as "the father of American Psychiatry" (Swanson and Reinert, 1986, p. 6).

In the late 1800s Clifford Beers suffered from a psychosis, from which he recovered and reported his experience in A Mind That Found Itself. Additional information about psychiatry appeared in the early 1900s when texts began to be written blaming psychological disorders on heredity, overwork and preoccupations with religion and steered the mass consciousness away from believing that inherent weaknesses are the causes of these disorders. The organic viewpoint conceptualized mental illness to be a brain disease (Swanson and Reinert, 1986, p. 7).

At the same time Sigmund Freud studied human emotions, and child psychiatry began. Ellen Key, the Swedish sociologist, proclaimed the 20th century as the "century of the child." Diaries of Darwin and Pestalozzi set forth "developmental psychology."

In 1905 Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon pioneered with what is now known as the Stanford-Binet individual intelligence test. The "inner life" was studied with the Rorschach test beginning in 1921 (Swanson and Reinert, 1986, p.8).

In the early 1950s, Thomas Szasz stated that mental illness symptoms cannot be related to nervous system lesions, but should be viewed as communications by the patients concerning their beliefs about themselves and the world (Corsini, 1984).

The Iowa Assessment Model of Behavior Disorders grouped behavior disorders into clusters for specificity in 1985. These clusters were used to determine the particular disabilities in the book analysis in this paper. Gile (1985) sets them forth as follows:

**Cluster I: SIGNIFICANTLY DEVIANT DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS**  
The educator considers behavior's impact on the learning process. The student's actions interfere with reaching planned goals or objectives of the classroom. Disruptiveness affects relationships (p. 26).

**SIGNIFICANTLY DEVIANT AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS**  
The student has aversive responses to others with behavior such as fighting, defiance, destructiveness, bullying, lying and stealing. Hostile aggression causes a victim suffering. Instrumental aggression gains status or objects. Aggressive behavior is disruptive when it occurs in the school. Deliberate noncompliance is called passive aggression (p. 27).

**SIGNIFICANTLY DEVIANT IMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS**  
When a student takes hasty action with little forethought and a lack of inhibition in restraining impulses, that student is impulsive. This is associated with hyperactivity. Kleptomania is a form of impulsive activity (p. 28).

Cluster II: SIGNIFICANTLY DEVIANT WITHDRAWN BEHAVIORS.  
A student retreats from threatening situations to decrease inner anxiety. Extreme variance involves a constant fantasy-filled state (p. 28-29).

SIGNIFICANTLY DEVIANT ANXIOUS BEHAVIOR.  
This results from a form of stress.  
"State anxiety" is from an emotional state and includes feelings of nervousness, apprehension and tension.  
"Trait anxiety" is a feeling of generalized dread. Symptoms are unhappiness, sleep problems, hypochondria and nervous habits. These children need excessive reassurance (p. 29).

Cluster III: SIGNIFICANTLY DEVIANT THOUGHT PROCESSES.  
These children are psychotic. The chronic condition is schizophrenia. The individual's consciousness is characterized by disconnected or unrelated verbal ideas. This is one of the most severe behavior disorders (p. 30).

Cluster IV: SIGNIFICANTLY DEVIANT BEHAVIOR PATTERNS (Autistic-like).  
This is characterized by a lack of attachment to others. Characteristics include: indifference to all, delays in language, echolalia (repeating others), pronoun reversal, and poor language comprehension. The condition has an early onset (p. 30).

The books in this research were analyzed to see if they gave an accurate portrayal of the upper elementary behavior disordered child. Readers of these books may be students with the actual behavior disorders or those without them. Other readers may include parents, teachers, or anyone who has an interest in disabilities.

Bibliographies are available which include materials about behavioral difficulties. The beauty of books is that they can be with us at any time--we do not have to make

an appointment to use them. They are portable; they do not require electricity.

Books can perform three functions: give information, model behavior, and affirm beliefs. Griffin (1986) has reported on these findings.

In regard to the first function, we find that books can supply new factual material, different ways of approaching problems and awareness of alternative beliefs.

Modeling is one of the most powerful learning techniques available to us. It can be used to develop new behaviors, strengthen or weaken existing behaviors, or serve as a cue to produce a thought or action that is already in the individual's repertoire. One of the components of modeling is imitation. Imitation occurs when an individual (in this case, the reader) exhibits the same response as another individual (in this case, a character in the book, most likely the main character).

The other component, identification, refers to the adoption of either a pattern of behavior, a symbolic representation of the model, or a belief system similar to that of another (again, the character provides the necessary qualities). We can conceptualize these two components by describing imitation as an external or observable event while identification is an internal process.

The third function that a book can provide is affirmation. This can be simply described as a feeling obtained by the reader that he/she has thoughts, feelings, and ideas that are similar to those of others in society. There is a comforting feeling in knowing that we are 'normal' in comparison to our peers (p. xi-xii).

#### Problem Statement

Do fiction books about behavior disorders which will be read by students of upper elementary school age accurately and fairly describe the particular behavior disorder portrayed?

### Hypotheses

1. A majority of the behavior-disordered characters in the novels analyzed will be secondary characters.
2. A majority of the behavior-disordered characters in the novels analyzed will be male.
3. A majority of the books will depict the behavior-disordered character showing significantly deviant behavior in two or more of Gile's Clusters: Disruptive Behavior, Aggressive Behavior, Impulsive Behavior, Withdrawn Behavior, Anxious Behavior, Significantly Deviant Thought Processes or Behavior Patterns.
4. In a majority of the books the behaviorally-disordered characters will be shown interacting with other characters in school, in social settings, or in their homes; rarely will the books depict multiple settings.
5. There will be evidence of stereotyped perceptions of the behaviorally-disordered character by other characters in a majority of the books. These stereotypes will occur seven or more times in the same book.
6. A majority of the books analyzed will show stigma more than seven times in the same book.
7. The problems involving behaviorally-disordered characters in the books will not be improved by the conclusion of the stories in the majority of books.
8. No coping techniques will be portrayed for the behavior-disordered character in the majority of the novels analyzed.

### Assumption

A number of books about behavior disorders for upper elementary students are on the market, and these books will be read by students, parents, teachers, media specialists, and other adults. These books have the power to influence public opinion regarding behavior disorders, which may be representative of such disorders among upper elementary students.

### Significance

Young children should not, but do, form stereotypic views at an early age. They need to believe that the mainstreamed behaviorally disordered student has feelings which are real and that they should extend their hands in friendship to those less fortunate than themselves.

Teachers of mainstreamed students are always looking for literature about their "problem children." The analyzed books may give them insight into these problems. Teachers of special education students may also find these "narrative" type books to be helpful. They can compare what they know to what the books depict. They can model effective behaviors of teachers and dismiss failed attempts at discipline.

### Definitions

Kauffman (1985) defines the different behavior disorders listed in the introduction to this paper as follows:

Conduct Disorders involve such characteristics as overt aggression, both verbal and physical, disruptiveness, negativism, irresponsibility, and defiance of authority, all of which are at variance with the behavioral expectations of the school and other social institutions (p. 71).

Delinquent behavior is of three major subtypes. Socialized-subcultural delinquents tend to be lower in IQ and socioeconomic structure and experience less parental rejection than other types. They relate socially to bad

companions, engage in gang activities, and maintain their social status among their delinquent peers by their illegal behavior. Unsocialized psychopathic delinquents are aggressive, assaultive individuals who tend to feel persecuted and respond poorly to praise or punishment. They are irritable, defiant, explosive and extremely insensitive to other people's feelings. Disturbed-neurotic delinquents are overly sensitive, shy and worried. They are typically unhappy with themselves and their lives (p. 323).

Hyperactive/distractible children are inattentive and impulsive. Hyperactivity is not defined by high activity alone. There is only limited evidence to document quantitative difficulties in activity levels of hyperactive and normal children. The socially inappropriate characteristics and overactivity are implicit in the definition (p. 174).

Schizophrenia and autism are characterized by social withdrawal, immaturity, depressive somatic complaints, noncommunicative and obsessive-compulsive actions. Age of onset is the distinction. If the onset of the disorder occurs earlier than 30 months, the child is considered autistic. If onset occurs after the age of 30 months, the child is considered schizophrenic (p. 74).

Developmental disorders are attributed to some children who seem to develop normally and then slide back into an immature form of behavior that is characteristic of an earlier developmental period (p. 289).

An emotional disorder is a "mental disorder or condition in which emotional reactions are chronically inappropriate or disproportionate given the real situation" (Wolman, 1989).

Mental illness is "a disorder of behavior of organic or nonorganic origin which is severe enough to require professional help. This term is used interchangeably with mental and behavior disorder" (Wolman, 1989).

Upper elementary age is fourth through sixth grade, ages 9-11 approximately.

Stigma is a "mark of shame or discredit" (Webster, 1981), either verbal or written.

Stereotype is "something conforming to a fixed or general pattern; especially a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an over-simplified opinion or affective attitude" (Webster, 1981).

#### Limitations

1. The books analyzed were limited to fictionalized accounts published for children in grades 4-6.
2. The books were selected using the UNISTAR catalog and various bibliographies which include materials about behavior disorders. These materials were found in the Donald O. Rod Library, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa.
3. The researcher is not an expert on behavior disorders and may not have been able to distinguish among all the nuances of descriptions related to the behaviorally disordered.
4. The book collections used were not all-inclusive of sources. More books are available on the subject of behavior disorders than can be found in the above-named catalog and bibliographies.



## CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

The number of students who are behaviorally disordered varies, depending on the agency which is used as a source of information. National estimates vary from one percent to twenty percent. According to Norris G. Haring, of the University of Washington, and author of several books about behavior disorders:

The available evidence indicates that the estimate of 2% is too conservative, although that figure has been used for more than two decades by the United States Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. More recent estimates by Achenbach and Edelbrock (1981) and Cullinan and Epstein, and Kauffman (1986) would place the prevalence at 6% to 10%. However, based on reports of the service population, the United States Office of Special Education is reducing the estimate of prevalence to a range from 1.2% to 2.0%. (Haring, 1987, p. 22).

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services reported that the total number of children and youth served under P.L. 94-142... during the 1980-81 school year was 349,788, which represented 8.3% of all handicapped individuals served. This represents 0.72% of the total population between ages 5-17 years (Haring, 1987, p. 22).

This review describes the definition of behavior disorders. It sets forth nine theoretical approaches used in educating the behavior disordered child. The best environment for maximum learning is discussed. Practical interventions for problem behaviors are illustrated. Finally, specific ways which books may define the behavior disordered child are set forth in this chapter.

### Behavior disorders defined

During the 1950s only segregated schooling for the behavior disordered was available, according to Wood and Smith (1986) in a report of the history of behavior-disordered education. By the mid-1950s this began to change.

In the 1970s new texts and teacher's manuals were abundant, reducing the behavior disorders specialists' dependence on reading materials from other fields of expertise which were related to behavior disorders. Congress had found prior to the passage of P.L 94-142 in 1975 that there were more than eight million handicapped children in the United States; that their needs were unmet; and that they did not receive appropriate education equal to that of other children. One million children were totally excluded from schooling. Many handicaps were undetected. Public schools lacked adequate services for them, causing extra expense for parents of the handicapped. Teachers' training programs at that time did include training for special children, but state and local funds were not sufficient for special education programs. Federal assistance was needed but not provided for (Public Law 94-142, Section 3(b) (Shea, 1978, p. 4). As a result of these findings, P.L. 94-142 was signed on November 29, 1975, by Gerald R. Ford, mandating "a free appropriate public education be provided for all handicapped children" (Shea, 1973, p. 3). This law supported the rights of orthopedically impaired children and those with learning disorders, mental retardation, blindness, deafness (sensory deficits) and behavior disorders or emotional disturbances.

The Federal definition of serious emotional disturbance was a "condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance" (Haring, 1987, p. 51). Those characteristics are: an inability to learn not explained by intellect, senses or health; no maintenance of relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate feelings at inappropriate times; unhappiness or depression; developing fears or physical symptoms associated with school or personal problems. This definition includes schizophrenia and autism but not social maladjustment unless the maladjusted is seriously behaviorally disordered (Haring, 1987, p. 51).

The goal in educating the handicapped is to encourage and facilitate the handicapped child's return to full-time functioning in the regular school and environment with his/her peers. The progression from special services to the regular school environment is known as "mainstreaming" (Shea, 1978).

There are nine theoretical approaches on which educators rely, as a rule, in educating the behaviorally disordered, according to Swanson and Reinert (1986, p. 12-14).

1. Behavioral approach: believes in the power of learning and changing outside behavior (Pavlov and Skinner). Methods are: instructing by objectives, drill and practice, reinforcement, measuring until criterion is reached.

2. Biophysical approach: believes in genetic influences, neurological damage, or biochemical imbalance. Use of drugs, structured classrooms, programmed activities, controlling outside stimuli, and control of task difficulty.
3. Sociological approach: behavior deviant of norm (what a group defines as undesirable), and self-destructive behavior. Uses change in school structure.
4. Ecological approach: behavior disturbance is a result of the environment, which includes family, educational, health, recreational, and vocational groups.
5. Developmental approach: cognitive and affective processes interact. Uses instruction to promote developmental stages rather than increasing achievement. Uses task analysis.
6. Academic approach: helping children academically by increasing their capacity to learn and lessening their information-processing deficits. Then they are better able to cope with the classroom's learning requirements.
7. Psychodynamic approach: derived from psychoanalysis, makes children aware of their feelings and how to deal with them. Emotional behavior believed to be determined by past experiences.
8. Psychoeducational approach: one step beyond psychodynamic with further focus on overt behavior.
9. Countertheoretical approach: divergent views. Basically, humanize education, deemphasize labels, and emphasize individual child diversity.

#### Environment for behavior disordered

With the passage of P.L. 94-142, not all problems were solved. Regular classroom teachers worried that they were unprepared for teaching special education students.

An examination of teacher behavior variables indicated that problem children received more negative affect from teachers, obtained fewer social contacts with them and were asked less frequently by their teachers to express their personal views and preferences on academic and class-related issues.

Non-problem children were involved in more sustained intellectual questions from their teachers while problem children were confronted with convergent-evaluative questions from their teachers (Fry, 1983, p. 83)

Not only teachers were affected by the changes.

Administrators feared increasing costs and overcrowded classrooms. And, most importantly, the handicapped students felt stress about how to behave in a "normal classroom." The overall goal of equal education for all was not strong enough at all times to quell these fears. But advocates still adhere to the reasoning that if students are presented with integrated classrooms at a young age, the next generation will accept disabilities more readily than this one has.

The federally mandated instrument used for teaching is the individualized education program (IEP). This program should include exposure to therapeutic literature, annual goals and short-term objectives. Goals and objectives are reviewed annually, to determine whether outcomes are met and to gauge student progress. The appropriateness of the child's placement and relevancy of this to his/her needs are determined. The IEPs do not replace daily, weekly and monthly instructional plans (U.S. Education Department, 1980, p. 15).

The environment of the regular classroom or library media center in which the behavior disordered student is taught is important when sharing literature. Class size plays a role. A high student-teacher ratio increases teacher or library media specialist stress and reduces individualized instruction. Wood, Smith, and Grimes (1985) found seating is important in the library media center. Straight rows imply teacher authority. A semicircle invites more student interaction. A big decision involves whether the mainstreamed student should be isolated, e.g. close to the teacher's desk and away from distractions.

The "props" in a library media center affect attention of behavior disordered students. There should be comfortable chairs of varying physical sizes. Aesthetic qualities count very much. Maslow and Mintz did a study in 1956 with an ugly room (gray walls, unattractive furniture) and a beautiful room (two large windows, indirect overhead lighting, attractive furniture). Student reactions to these environments were dramatic. In the ugly room the students had fatigue, headaches, irritability and hostility. In the beautiful room they had feelings of comfort and enjoyment and wanted to continue their tasks. Color is important. Warm colors of yellows, peaches, and pinks stimulate primary grade children, while green, blue-green and gray aid in concentration (p. 125-127).

### Educating the behavior disordered

The very difficult problems which are represented in this study come from within children due to psychological defects. In early schooling children should become less preoccupied with themselves and have a trust in their environment.

Self-concept is one of the most important factors to educators. It is defined as: how we see ourselves and how we feel others see us. According to Edwards (1972), a child's self-concept affects school success. If the student has a negative self-concept, this student may become "abusive, aggressive, hard to control, full of anger and hostility at a world that will not give him a chance" (p. 213). The child feels this way because of the hostility and disapproval in his own life.

Morse, Smith and Acker (1977) relate these practical interventions to problems created by the behaviorally disordered child. When a child is distracted or insecure, one should adapt the environment to serve the child's needs; if the parents expect too much of their children, help them through counseling to interact more positively; using easier materials may quell outbursts; reading skills may be helped with remedial materials so oral reading will not be an embarrassment to the child.

For on-the-spot solutions to problem behaviors, use the "life space interview" (p. 21). The teacher

and student work through the problem, getting the child's views and exploring possible solutions. This changes distorted perceptions, and positive relationships with the child are gained. Pairing up two children for academic work can sometimes build allies. This gives them identification with appropriate people in the environment. Taking some time to get the students together for group therapy helps. This type of non-directive guidance in which school and social problems are discussed develops rapport among group members.

Russell Dolce (1984) draws on 13 years of experience to set forth some guidelines which should be followed in order to be an effective teacher of the behavior disordered. He says to be fair, because children are the best judges of fairness. Give ample praise, be consistent, follow through on rules, talk changes over with the class, teach responsibility for one's own actions, and let the students accept the fact that making mistakes is human (p. 155-157).

Create a workable reward system: determine what is expected from the system, e.g. to change behavior. Decide what and how often the children should be rewarded and the consequences for noncompliance. Decide on reasonably priced prizes or privileges that don't require constant administrative approval. Use immediate, then intermittent, then hardly-at-all rewards. Adhere to system rules, and be sure the students understand this is a means to an end.



They should not receive awards for daily life activities, and revise the system if needed. The students usually let the teacher know when they do not require rewards (p. 157-158). Keep in contact with parents, preferably in conferences (especially effective at student's home) or by the telephone (p. 159).

Use intuition to "read your students", and do not take anything personally. When a child strikes out, it is because of the authority for which the teacher stands and is not personal. Have a sense of humor, and expect the best of the students, not settling for less when it is known that the student has capabilities for more (p. 159-160).

Books which describe behaviorally disordered children in school settings should be expected to show evidence of these current educational theories and practices.

#### Books and the behavior disordered

Creative thought is involved in creating emotional pieces as well as in reading fictional books. One needs to remember there is worth in vicarious experience. Reading of someone else's mistakes and joys can help a person to repeat the experiences in the memory component of his/her brain in the future. Therapeutic stories have value, depending on how they are used and what standards went into selecting them.

The help from books is of two types:

First, the slow, steady growth into a deepened self from the experiences of reading real literature; second, an immediate first aid for emotional illness, which may be found in the here-and-now books with a mission, not lasting literature, but as necessary as a shot of penicillin for a particular infection. Information itself is one kind of armor against difficulty. (Newell, 1957, p. 23)

The books identified and analyzed for this research could be used in the following activities:

The following are examples of thought-provoking activities that can follow the reading: role-playing, dramatization, mock interviews with the book's main character, bulletin boards, recordings, films, filmstrips, supplemental reading lists, and radio and television programs related to the reading. Teachers can read open-ended stories, or they can stop reading a story just short of the conclusion and ask the class to end the story. The teacher should then finish reading the story to the class so students can compare their conclusion with the author's. (Dreyer, 1989, p. xvi).

This researcher chose fictional books (novels) because they have cognitive and affective appeal.

Notes from a Different Drummer covered 36 years of publishing about various disabilities and identified 311 relevant fiction works. In the six years' time between the publishing of that book and More Notes from a Different Drummer, 348 additional books met the same criteria for disabilities which were included in the original Notes.

Emotional dysfunction was second to orthopedic disorders in the number of books related to disabilities.

Almost 17% of these special fictional characters either carry specific clinical labels or exhibit patterns of destructive, irrational behavior, including depression, compulsive and/or obsessive actions, suicide-proneness, or frequent delusional episodes. Autism and anorexia nervosa are included in this grouping, even though some professional controversy exists over the most appropriate designations for them. (Baskin and Harris, 1984, p. 35)

There is no guarantee that the child will grasp the simple principles and incorporate them in his/her own life experiences. Children resent "preachment" and sentimentality. These types of books should be avoided.

The trend in fiction is to have one "problem child" focused on in a book for ease of single-child identification. The quality of the character portrayal will be evident from the author's personal understanding of children.

## CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Bibliographies list books about emotional disturbances and disorders. The researcher used five of them to aid in selecting books about behavior disorders for the upper elementary child, grades four through six. They are: More Notes from a Different Drummer, (Baskin and Harris, 1984); Accept Me as I Am, (Friedberg, Mullins and Sukiennik, 1985); The Bookfinder 4, (Dreyer, 1989); Special Needs Bibliography, (Griffin, 1986) and Young People With Problems, (Pardeck, 1984).

The UNISTAR catalog at the University of Northern Iowa Library was also used to identify books. Descriptor words used to find the books for analysis were: Behavior-- Juvenile Fiction, Aggressive Behavior, Autism, Problem Child, Bullies, School Stories, and Emotional Disturbances.

Forty-eight titles were initially identified as appropriate for this research. Of those, 25 which described the behavior disordered condition in children were found to be available to the researcher.

A character identification was done to denote sex and age of each behavior disordered character in each novel. Giancolo (1965) defines quality characterizations as follows:

The characters of the books should be lifelike and complete--yet individual entities. Regional, racial, religious or nationality groups should be pictured in

an atmosphere which is accurate, showing the traditions and customs and the origination of each. Fiction, biography, drama, and poetry can effectively contribute to the social education of the readers (p. 898).

To determine whether a book depicted significantly deviant interactions of the main behavior disordered character, the overall actions of this character were analyzed. Significantly deviant interactions are: disruptive behaviors, aggressive behaviors, impulsive behaviors, withdrawn behaviors, anxious behaviors, significantly deviant thought processes, and significantly deviant behavior patterns. Notation was made as to how the behavior-disordered character reacted to people at school, home, or in social settings. Stereotypes that are included in books are expressions of the book characters, not those of insensitive authors.

Friedberg, Mullins and Sukiennik (1985) have set forth the most common stereotypes concerning people with disabilities. The stereotypes this researcher looked for were: "The disabled person as pitiful and pathetic, as an object of violence, as sinister and/or evil, as capable of extraordinary achievements despite his/her handicap, as being laughable, as being one's own worst enemy, as being a burden, as incapable of fully participating in everyday life (p. 20-21). These stereotypes were chosen from Friedberg, et al., as being the most applicable to young children.

The researcher has identified ways to determine whether a book has a stigma (a rude remark denoting shame or discredit) depicted in it or an attitude representing the same from a supporting character. Stigma were represented in the form of remarks such as "retard, looney bin, funny farm, nut hut, insane, crazy, slow, mental, strange, bizarre, psycho, looney, sick in the head, bonkers, bats in the belfry, a few buttons missing, missing some marbles, gone bananas, mad, or 'other'." Negative behavior by other characters was also noted, in the form of cruel treatment, ignoring, doing physical harm or "other."

The literature studied revealed diverse ways of dealing with the topic of behavior disorders in upper elementary fiction. Keeping a tally for the number of times a stereotyping or stigmatic remark or action by other children or by adults occurred provided the data.

A thorough reading of the novel determined if the problem(s) in the story were solved by the conclusion of the book. "Solutions" occurred when the behavior disorder was shown to be remediated by actions of school personnel such as a teacher, counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Perhaps friends and family were able to alleviate the problem. In some cases the condition might have been improved by self-examination.

Any behavior used as a coping mechanism by the behavior-disordered characters or their teachers in the story or

those suggested by other characters were noted. Morgan and Jenson (1988) suggest different coping mechanisms. Some of them are: Behavior management (increasing appropriate behaviors by reinforcement and decreasing inappropriate behaviors by punishment); generalization ("the extension of newly acquired behavior to settings in which treatment procedures have not been implemented") (p. 156); classroom behavior and survival skills, self-management (less dependence on teachers), self-evaluation, self-instruction, self-reinforcement, and learning social skills.

Bekkedal (1973) sums up the value of a content analysis study very well:

If children do gain ideas and impressions about the world around them from the books they read, as is generally believed, it is surely important for adults to know what kind of world the books portray. Content analysis can help us provide a more comprehensive view of the contemporary world as it is pictured in children's books (p. 124).

CHAPTER 4  
Analysis of the Data

Twenty-five books about upper elementary behavior disorders were selected and read by this researcher. A checklist (Appendix B) was developed and used to analyze each novel.

The first hypothesis was, "A majority of the behavior disordered characters in the novels analyzed will be secondary characters." Nine behavior disordered characters were main characters; sixteen were secondary characters, so the hypothesis was accepted.

Table 1  
Behavior Disordered Child Characters

Character	Number	Percent
Main	9	36
Secondary	16	64
Total	<u>25</u>	<u>100</u>

In many of the stories the main character expressed his/her feelings about how a bully (the behavior-disordered secondary character) was terrorizing him/her and how the child reacted to this harassment. These stories were Courage, Dana; A Dog on Barkham Street, (the bully's story as seen from the dog's viewpoint); Ghosts in Fourth Grade, (James scares Mitchell with a secret makeup on Halloween); Hang On, Harvey, (Harvey confronts Jon Jamison);



The Kid with the Red Suspenders (the bully tricks the main character into playing hooky); The Last Wolf of Ireland; The Magic Book (a book with spells may be the way to rid the main character of a bully); Millie Cooper, 3B, (Millie wanted to gain the bully's friendship); The Monster's Ring, (Eddie should be scared into being nice); The Once in Awhile Hero (the bully, Chuck, was always threatening the main character). All of these stories described how the non-behavior disordered child dealt with the conflicts presented by the behavior disordered bully.

Some stories dealt with how the main character helped a secondary character with a behavior disorder. I Will Call Ft Georgie's Blues described the way an older brother helped his younger brother as the younger brother developed a mental illness. Alan and Naomi focused on how Alan helped Naomi, his neighbor. Inside Out tells of how an older sibling helps the younger brother with autism.

The stories in which the main character was the behavior disordered child were interesting. They gave a more succinct feeling and definition of the behavior disordered condition. The Language of Goldfish clearly described a girl's descent into psychosis, and The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear also showed the inner despair of a boy gradually slipping into psychosis. The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates connected bullying activity with school failure. The Bears' House explained the fantasy life of an outcast.

The Ape Inside Me was about a bully and his inner feelings. Please Don't Say Hello narrated the way in which a boy with autism was treated. Slake's Limbo described the way a boy was always being beaten up by people so he descended into a world of aloneness and alienation. There's a Boy in The Girls Bathroom shows an excellent portrayal of the behavior disordered boy who offered a description of his feelings of bitterness about the way he was treated and why he reacted in the ways he did. The Bully of Barkham Street depicted how Martin Hastings went from being a bully to self-discovery of his worth as a person.

The second hypothesis stated that a majority of the behavior disordered characters would be male. Kauffman (1981) states:

Boys are more often considered to exhibit disordered behavior than are girls by ratios ranging from 2:1 to 5:1. This statement holds for nearly every classification of disorder, including the severe/profound disorders known as childhood autism, schizophrenia, or psychosis. Aggression and chronic disruptive school behavior are more often reported as problems among children of lower than of middle or upper social class. The bulk of school-related behavior problems are reported in the middle childhood and beginning teen years with boys tending toward increasing aggression and conduct problems and girls tending toward increasing patterns of neurotic withdrawal with age. (p. 169)

Table 2

Gender of Behavior Disordered Characters

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	21	84
Female	4	16
Total	25	100

Fran Ellen Smith (The Bears' House) tried to save her family from breakup despite her own problems. Carrie Stokes (The Language of Goldfish) was an artist and a dreamer who did not want to accept the onset of puberty. Naomi Kirshenbaum (Alan and Naomi) had moved to the United States from France and had a very difficult time of communicating normally. The female bully in The Present Takers, however, was one of the worst bullies of the whole group. She engaged in very destructive activities and hurt others. She gave no thought to her general bad temper.

In the books which had boy bullies, many times the behavior disordered boy might have thought of his behavior as being masculine. These books are: The Ape Inside Me, The Bully of Barkham Street and A Dog on Barkham Street, Courage, Dana; The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates, Ghosts in Fourth Grade, Hang On, Harvey; The Kid With the Red Suspenders, The Last Wolf of Ireland, The Magic Book, Millie Cooper, 3B; The Monster's Ring, The Once in Awhile Hero, Radio Fourth Grade, and Tough Beans.

Six books dealt with boys who were not bullies: The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear was schizophrenic. Georgie (I Will Call It Georgie's Blues) was mentally ill. Inside Out and Please Don't Say Hello dealt with autistic boys. Slake (Slake's Limbo) had withdrawal symptoms, and Bradley Chalkers (There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom) showed disruption, aggression and impulsive behavior but no real bullying.

A total of 21 boys and four girls were portrayed as behavior disordered characters. This confirmed the second hypothesis.

Gile (1985) has described four clusters of behavior disorders. They show significant deviation from normal behavior. The clusters are: Cluster I (Disruptive, Aggressive and Impulsive Behavior), Cluster II (Withdrawn and Anxious Behavior), Cluster III (Deviant Thought Processes) and Cluster IV (Behavior Patterns--Autistic-like). The third hypothesis stated that the majority of the books would show behavior patterns in two or more clusters.

Children may be depicted as showing conflicting emotions at different times in their lives. This was the case in the following books: The Bears' House, The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear, I Will Call It Georgie's Blues, Inside Out, Please Don't Say Hello, Slake's Limbo, and There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom.

Three of the books had complex behavior disordered characters who exhibited different cluster characteristics at the same time. In Alan and Naomi, Naomi was withdrawn and showed autistic symptoms. Eddie, in The Ape Inside Me, was disruptive and aggressive but fantasized about professional fighting. Bradley Chalkers, in There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom, was disruptive, aggressive and impulsive, yet he still fantasized with puppets and lacked attachment to others.

The other stories dealt with Cluster I only, being about bullies who showed disruptive, aggressive or impulsive behavior or a combination of the three. Ten stories showed involvement in two clusters; fifteen did not.

The hypothesis indicated that there would be two or more clusters of behavior represented in the majority of the books analyzed; therefore, this hypothesis was not accepted. See Appendix C for a representation of which categories of each cluster were found in each of the books.

The fourth hypothesis indicated that the stories would show single settings the majority of the time. Rarely would they show school, social or home setting combinations.

The stories that depicted a school only setting were some of the bully stories. They were a little superficial in their dealing with the behavior disorders problem. A school and family setting was a rather common combination. The authors tried to show why the behavior disorder existed due to the family life of the character. The "school and social" combination and "school and family" did not yield as much information about the behavior disordered character's background.

Both The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates and There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom showed the characters' reactions at birthday parties and at school, combining reactions of socializing with schoolmates and family at the same time. Often a bad home life can influence school behavior, as it

did in The Ape Inside Me, The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear, The Present Takers, and Slake's Limbo. In The Language of Goldfish and The Bully of Barkham Street, the behavior disordered characters' families did not treat them badly, but they still had trouble relating to people in all three settings. The books about autistic children (Inside Out and Please Don't Say Hello) show the importance of school, home and social settings in the adjustment of these characters.

Table 3 shows the data for all single settings or combinations. The majority of the stories showed multiple settings, so this hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3

Interactions of Behavior Disordered Characters in  
Different Settings

Setting	Number	Percent
School only	4	16
Social only	0	0
Home only	0	0
School and social	3	12
School and home	7	28
Social and home	1	4
School, social and home	10	10
Total	25	100

The fifth hypothesis dealt with stereotyping. A tally was made for each stereotype indicated in item number five on the checklist in Appendix B. If seven of the stereotypes were found, the book was considered to show definite stereotyping.

The most common stereotype was being "sinister/evil" with bullying activity. In The Present Takers Melanie Prosser does physical violence to the main character, has a gang, calls names, steals a bag, intimidates, and stomps on Lucy's feet.

Bradley Chalkers (There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom) is stereotyped as not being very intelligent and receiving negative attention:

"Did you check out a book?"

"No. Mrs. Wilcott won't let me. I used to, a long time ago, before I met you. I used to check out books and not return them. I used to scribble in them and rip them up. So she won't let me check any books out anymore. The whole time I was there she kept watching me, saying, "I don't want any trouble from you, Bradley."

He ate another slice of cucumber. "I just wanted to look at a book. I wasn't going to ruin it."

"I know," said Carla. "And after a while, Mrs. Wilcott will know that, too."

"I'm trying to be good," said Bradley.

"But nobody will give me a chance."

"They will. It just takes time." (p. 104)

Aremis Slake (Slake's Limbo) was always being beaten up and taunted by his teacher. He was an object of violence. In Inside Out, James, the autistic child, was seen as being a burden and achieving extraordinary things despite his handicap.

James went back to the doctor in six months and was tested. The doctor said James was autistic, which was the first diagnosis that made sense to my parents. See, autism isn't a disease where your body gets sick and you can say you have a fever and a sore throat or a cough and a runny nose. Instead "autism"

describes the way a person behaves. Most autistic kids, like James, act as if other people don't exist. They seem to be lost in their own world. They don't go near people. Usually they get along with things better than people, like James spinning his pennies and staring at lights and building with Tinkertoys, and they can do the same things over and over and over again for hours (p. 12).

These same types of extraordinary achievements of an autistic boy were mentioned in Please Don't Say Hello.

Eddie could recite world capitals accurately at age eight.

In Radio Fifth Grade, Brad Jaworski was seen as being very sinister by always picking fights. He was also laughed at often because of a series of stories he wrote about cats named "Fuzzy and Puffy" and how they always got in fights. He thought it was popularity that gained him all the new attention. It was really just students laughing at his radio broadcasts.

Jon Jamison was the typical bully in Hang On, Harvey. He was evil and sinister until Harvey confronted him at the end. Likewise, in The Last Wolf of Ireland, Paul Chandler was evil, picking fights with younger, smaller children and kicking cats and dogs. He was ugly, with hair being the "color of congealed oil." He forced Devin to eat worms, but he backed off after Devin learned how to fight.

Martin Hastings (A Dog on Barkham Street) was depicted as being big for his age, even though he seemed less threatening than the other bullies in this research, with parents siding with him in some instances. Martin's inner feelings were shown in The Bully of Barkham Street.



## Abstract

In the American educational system, more elementary behavior disordered students are being mainstreamed into the traditional classroom. Books about young people with behavior disorders are being accepted and understood by behavior disordered and non-behavior disordered children and adults. The purpose of this study was to determine how behavior disordered children are portrayed in children's fiction.

The researcher analyzed 25 children's fiction books by means of a checklist in order to test these hypotheses: 1) that the majority of the behavior disordered characters were secondary; 2) that the most common gender of the main behavior disordered character was male; 3) that two or more of the following clusters of deviant behavior occurred: Cluster I (Disruptive, Aggressive, or Impulsive Behavior); Cluster II (Withdrawn and Anxious Behavior); Cluster III (Thought Processes); and Cluster IV (Behavior Patterns, Autistic-like); 4) that the settings in which the stories occurred would be in school, in the home, or in a social situation, not combinations of these; 5) that stereotypes existed; 6) that stigma occurred; 7) that the behavior problems were not improved; and 8) that coping techniques were not used.

The results of this study include acceptance of Hypotheses 1, 2, 5 and 8, and rejection of Hypotheses 3, 4, 6 and 7.

In Courage, Dana, there is original stereotyping of Charlie Everest's bullying activity, as evidenced from this excerpt:

"Let's get away from here," Sharon pleaded. I certainly didn't see any reason to stay, so I joined her, and we ran out of the yard. We kept running for a couple of blocks, worried that Charlie might be following us. But he wasn't, so we slowed down after awhile.

"That was awful," Sharon said. "I hate him so much."

"You and me both," I said. "I wish I had slugged him."

"You couldn't," Sharon said. "He would have killed you if you'd even tried."

"But I feel like such a failure," I said. "Besides, I read that if you stand up to a bully, he'll just collapse. Like the Cowardly Lion."

"Bullies are only like that in books," Sharon said. "If you'd stood up to Charlie any more back there, you'd need plastic surgery for the rest of your life."

"But if nobody stands up to him, he'll just bully people forever," I said. "He'll turn into a wife beater."

"Then don't marry him," Sharon said. "Really, Dana, you did all you could."

"But I didn't do anything!" I cried. "He spit at me! Do you know how disgusting that is?"

"Yuck," Sharon said. "Did he hit you?"

"No, thank goodness," I said. Just the thought of it made me feel crawly. I shuddered. (p. 71)

In The Kid With the Red Suspenders the bully, Rob, is seen as sinister in his name-calling, lying about homework, staying in for recess and knocking Hamilton's papers on the floor. But the worst thing he does is in making others join him in his bad deeds and influencing other students.

In The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear, the author goes in and out of reality to show Roger Baxter's schizophrenic condition. Roger was seen as being pitiful and pathetic. He had a speech impediment that prevented him from saying R's.

In The Once in Awhile Hero, Chuck McGrew proved to be one of the most devious characters. He beat kids up, destroyed a notebook, called names, threatened, urinated on heating ducts, told lies and almost broke another boy's arm.

In The Language of Goldfish, Carrie was temporarily incapable of participating in everyday life, as is seen in this excerpt:

Her head was whirling. The kaleidoscope pieces began to slide wildly, growing huge, like shelves of rock slipping along a fault. The roaring drowned the choir, the running water, Mrs. Ramsay's voice. Carrie desperately wanted her feet to move. With a vast, wrenching effort she ran.

She found she was running down Hartman. Her old duffle coat flapped from her shoulders like broken wings. She couldn't remember going to the locker to get it or leaving school or anything at all until that moment. Wind-whipped snow stung her face. Her feet were icy. She watched them running, slapping down on the wet pavement like objects unattached. Her breath came painfully. Her chest was full of claws. I am going crazy, she thought, and the thought became a scream. Out loud? She couldn't tell. The noise in her chest and the wind and the slap of her feet and the great roaring inside her head deafened her (pp. 48-49).

Overall, there was little apparent stereotyping by the authors; rather, the authors demonstrated stereotyping by the reactions of other characters. The findings for this hypothesis were surprising, with the number of books showing

major stereotyping being a lower number (14) than expected. The hypothesis was accepted, however, because Table 4 data show a majority of books depicting seven or more occurrences of stereotypes.

Table 4  
Occurrences of Stereotyping

Stereotyping	Number	Percent
Seven or more occurrences	14	56
Six or fewer occurrences	<u>11</u>	<u>44</u>
Total	25	100

The sixth hypothesis stated that stigma (a rude remark, attitude, or negative behavior) would be shown seven or more times in each book for the majority of the books.

Alan and Naomi's characters demonstrated the most stigma, using the word "crazy" 35 times about a helpless young girl who had been in a concentration camp during World War II.

He was as much of a nothing as...as Naomi. Why was she looking at him? Because he was as crazy as she was? Crazy people can tell that others are crazy, right? And he WAS crazy. He wasn't like the other boys. What other boy in his right mind would sit here in this screwball room with a dummy and a doll and a crazy girl? He wasn't like the other boys. He wondered if he was a boy at all. Maybe it was some sort of trick. Maybe he was a girl. The thought horrified him; maybe that's why they picked him for Naomi! (p. 61)

The other books showing seven or more occurrences of stigma were: The Ape Inside Me, The Bears' House, The Bully of Barkham Street, Courage, Dana; Ghosts in Fourth Grade, The Language of Goldfish, The Magic Book, and The Monster's Ring.

Today's authors of children's books are more sensitive than this researcher originally predicted. Children are depicted as being more tolerant to each other than was expected. The name-calling and behavior that were the worst were those by the behavior disordered child. Other characters were sympathetic to the behavior disordered condition. In some cases, others were afraid of the behavior disordered character and would not respond negatively to them.

Only nine books used stigma, 16 did not. The hypothesis predicted a majority of books would show stigma seven or more times; therefore, it was rejected.

Table 5  
Occurrences of Stigma

Stigma Occurrences	Number	Percent
Seven or more occurrences	9	36
Six or fewer occurrences	<u>16</u>	<u>64</u>
Total	25	100

The seventh hypothesis stated that the problems involving the behavior disordered character would not be solved by the end of the books.

The stories in which the behavior disordered character showed no improvement were: Courage, Dana; Hang On, Harvey; I Will Call It Georgie's Blues, The Kid with the Red Suspenders, The Last Wolf of Ireland, and Slake's Limbo.

In the majority of the novels, the school helped most often, followed by doctors (psychologists and psychiatrists) as well as friends. One of the most glowing attempts of problem-solving was when Martin Hastings (The Bully of Barkham Street) learned to admit the problems he had and went on a diet.

The problems of the behavior disordered character were improved at the conclusion of the majority of the novels, so this hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6

## Behavior Disorder Problem Condition Status

Condition Status	Number	Percent
Condition improved	19	76
Condition deteriorated	6	24
Total	25	100

The eighth hypothesis stated that a majority of the stories would not offer coping techniques.

Only two books about bullies offered coping techniques, The Ape Inside Me and The Bully of Barkham Street. The other four were not about bullies--The Bears' House (Fran Ellen came out of her fantasy-filled state and learned not to suck her thumb); The Language of Goldfish (Carrie

learned behavior management and self-instruction. When she heard the roaring in her head, she learned not to panic and waited for it to stop); Please Don't Say Hello (Eddie improved his spinning, hand flapping and pronoun reversal through self-management and learned to make eye contact a bit better); Inside Out (James was starting to talk and take commands at school through behavior management).

"In a way," said Edie. "See, we're putting a lot of pressure on James in school. We're making demands on him. We're asking him to do things he's never had to do before, like hang up his jacket, wash his hands, put away his toys. He's used to having those things done for him. Since he's not sure about us or the school, and doesn't know how we'll react if he gets mad, he's doing all his getting mad at home. It's hard for children like James to trust people, so he's not taking any chances with the new faces at school. But he trusts you a little more and probably thinks it's okay to get mad around you." (p. 76)

Only six of the 25 books offered coping techniques.

A large majority of the books do not offer coping techniques, so this hypothesis was accepted.

Table 7

Coping Techniques for the Behavior Disordered Characters

Coping technique	Number	Percent
Offered	6	24
Not offered	19	76
Total	25	100

## CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Recommendations and Summary

The majority of the behavior disordered characters showed aggressive behavior. Bullying is rarely an institutionalizing condition, so many people may see bullies as being typical, ordinary children. In some instances this may be true. Bradley Chalkers (There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom) Eddie (The Monster's Ring), O.C. Goodwin (Millie Cooper, 3B), Jasper Denletter (Tough Beans), Joshua T. Bates (The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates), Martin Hastings (A Dog on Barkham Street), Norm Winthrop (The Magic Book), Rob (The Kid with the Red Suspenders), and Jon Jamison (Hang On, Harvey), all seem like garden-variety bullies. It is interesting to note, though, that all of these novels were written in a predominantly humorous vein.

The bullies that seemed cold, mean and unlikely to change were Chuck McGrew (The Once in Awhile Hero), Brad Jaworski (Radio Fifth Grade), Melanie Prosser (The Present Takers), Mitchell Managhan (Ghosts in Fourth Grade), Eddie Hall (The Ape Inside Me), Paul Chandler (The Last Wolf of Ireland) and Charlie Everest (Courage, Dana). All of these books had humorous elements, but the bullies were portrayed as evil and sinister.

The remainder of the characters were autistic, psychotic or generally confused about life. They were all pictured as harmless and introspective. They turned all of their anger inwards.



The typical behavior disordered character was male, as Kaufman (1985) asserts. The behavior disorders classrooms that this researcher has visited have been predominantly male.

The stories that were not about bullies were positive, for the most part. All of the neurotic/psychotic children, Aramis Slake (Slake's Limbo), Georgie Sloan (I will Call It Georgie's Blues), Roger Baxter (The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear), Naomi Kirshenbaum (Alan and Naomi), Fran Ellen Smith (The Bears' House) and Carrie Stokes (The Language of Goldfish) were receiving help at the conclusion of the books. Eddie Mason (Please Don't Say Hello) and James (Inside Out), the two autistics in this research, and their families seemed to have resigned themselves to this chronic condition.

The bullies listed previously as cold and unlikely to change seemed to be negative role models. The bullies that were "garden-variety" seemed more positive. The reader gets the feeling that they will change.

The results of this analysis did yield some surprises. A favorable finding resulted in the fact that the majority of books showed settings in all three situations: school, social and family. Another favorable finding was the lack of stigma, and a third was that improvement of the behavior disordered condition was shown. Books for children show some positive outlooks towards the behavior disordered condition.

Five of the eight hypotheses were accepted, based on the books analyzed. The hypotheses were based on special education theory.

The behavior disordered character's age was usually between 9-11 to help the young reader identify with this character. Exceptions were Eddie Hall (The Ape Inside Me), 15; Charlie Everest (Courage, Dana), 7th grade; Jon Jamison (Hang On, Harvey), 13; Aremis Slake (Slake's Limbo), 13; Roger Baxter (The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear), 7th grade; Naomi Kirshenbaum (Alan and Naomi), 12; and Carrie Stokes (The Language of Goldfish), 13. These are acceptable to children, though, because of the need and curiosity to read books about slightly older students. The reading level of the books themselves corresponded to intermediate ages.

The story about younger children, Millie Cooper, 3B, (O.C. Goodwin, grade 3) would be of interest to children of all ages.

The following three stories would be appealing to grades 4-6 since the main characters of approximately that age told about their younger brothers. They were about Georgie Sloan, age 7 (I Will Call It Georgie's Blues), Eddie Mason, age 8 (Please Don't Say Hello) and James, age 4 or 5 (Inside Out).

Friedberg, et al. (1985) acknowledge the themes present in literature about the disabled. There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom showed the behavior disordered child how to

live with his disability. Bradley Chalkers was helped to control his emotions by a counselor. In The Language of Goldfish, Carrie Stokes was helped by a psychiatrist to practice relaxation when she started to panic. She found a new meaning to life.

Alienation was depicted in many of the books. All of the books not depicting bullies showed a certain loneliness on the part of the behavior disordered character. Many of the "bullies" showed alienation. Sometimes authors may depict this because of society's reactions to disabilities.

A pervasive motif is the belief that people are more alike than different, that all people have flaws and disabilities to some degree, and that even the person with the most severe disability can contribute to those around her or him and to society at large. This motif can be found whether writers are angry or accepting, whether they are actively critical of attitudes expressed by society and professionals or have had positive experiences, and whether the disabling condition has improved or has even led to death. (Friedberg, et al., p. 42)

All of the behavior disordered children in the books were going to school and contributing to our "normal" society. Only one, Carrie Stokes, did physical harm to herself by taking a drug overdose. Her suicide attempt was stopped, however, and she survived as one of the most well-adjusted characters in these books. Georgie Sloan ended up in a state of catatonia, but the author, Suzanne Newton, ended the story by implying that his family would be stronger through counseling.

Relationships between adults and children were not portrayed very often in the books analyzed. In the school stories with bullies, teachers and administrators occasionally intervened. For the most part, however, the books examined the worlds of the children.

The novels dealing with non-bullies were about the characters discovering themselves. The bully stories in which the bully was not the main character showed how the main character, the object of the bully's misdeeds, dealt with the behavior disordered child. The bullies who were main characters tried to work through their behavior problems and succeeded in a new way.

Lonsdale and Mackintosh (1973) comment on this self-examination:

The most important person with whom one has to live is oneself. Yet living comfortably with oneself is one of the most difficult tasks an individual has to accomplish in his life, particularly in our country where there are fewer rituals connected with coming of age than there are in many other countries. At a very young age, boys and girls begin to ask questions about themselves. "Who am I?" "Am I somebody?" "Do the people who know me care whether or not I am here?" This is a common refrain with many boys and girls as they struggle to find themselves, and it is also a common theme in literature (p. 118).

#### Recommendations

Lonsdale and Mackintosh offer ways in which literature can be used. The books in this research could be used in the following ways: for fun and relaxation; to help individuals define their roles in home, school, and

community; to understand interrelations in society; for insight into our own personality problems and understanding others'; developing a set of values in harmony with society; building a sensitivity to quality and developing a permanent interest in literature (p. 24).

An extension of this research would be a study on behavior disorders in older children, teenagers and adults. This would include a multitude of books on mental illness. There are a number of books about the reactions of children and teenagers to parents with mental illness.

A study on bibliotherapy would be beneficial for students with behavior disorders. Most of them can read. Many of them are extremely bright and sensitive. They would appreciate the beauty of literature.

All children should be exposed to the literature in this research. Every grade in every school in this nation has a bully or student who is different from the rest. These books bring an understanding to the non-behavior-disordered child. They create a feeling of empathy towards others.

#### Summary

The researcher analyzed fiction books about the behavior-disordered student in grades 4-6, approximately. At least one character in each of the 25 books analyzed was behavior-disordered. The reading level was for grades 4-6.

The analysis showed that most of the characters were secondary ones and were male. Most showed aggressive behavior. A majority of the stories showed the characters interacting in school, home and social settings. Stereotypes did occur often, but stigma did not occur as often. Improvement of the behavior disordered condition often resulted, but coping techniques were seldom shared.

Books about older children with behavior disorders are easier to find than those about younger children. Children using specific coping mechanisms with their disabilities were not found in a majority of the books; however, the children depicted were still active in leading fairly normal lives.

Relationships with adults were not a high priority in these books. The interrelationships of children were dealt with in a majority of the books. Many times the behavior disordered children were pictured as going through periods of self-examination. The books analyzed in this research try to instill in children a feeling of independence and a realization of self-worth.

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- Wood, Frank H., Carl R. Smith and Jeff Grimes, eds. The Iowa Assessment Model in Behavior Disorders, A Training Manual. Des Moines: State Department of Public Instruction, 1985.



## APPENDIX A

Books Used in Content Analysis

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- Bates, Betty, Tough Beans, Leslie Morrill (illus), New York: Holiday House, 1988.
- Chambers, Aidan, The Present Takers, New York: Harper and Row, 1983.
- Coville, Bruce, The Monster's Ring, Katherine Coville (illus), New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.
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- Gaeddert, LouAnn Bigge, The Kid with the Red Suspenders, Mary Beth Schwark (illus), New York: Dutton, 1983.
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- Hopper, Nancy J., Hang On, Harvey!, New York: Dutton, 1983.
- Korman, Gordon, Radio Fifth Grade, New York: Scholastic, 1988.
- Levoy, Myron, Alan and Naomi, New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Malterre, Elona, The Last Wolf of Ireland, New York: Clarion Books, 1990.
- Martin, Ann M., Inside Out, New York: Holiday House, 1984.
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- O'Neal, Zibby, The Language of Goldfish, New York: Viking Press, 1980.
- Pfeffer, Susan Beth, Courage, Dana, Jenny Rutherford (illus), New York: Delacorte Press, 1983.

Platt, Kin, The Ape Inside Me, New York: Lippincott, 1979.

Platt, Kin, The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear,  
Philadelphia: Chilton, 1968.

Sacher, Louis, There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom,  
New York: Knopf (Distributed by Random House), 1987.

Sachs, Marilyn, The Bears' House, Louis Glanzman (illus),  
Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971.

Shreve, Susan Richards, The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates,  
New York: Knopf (Distributed by Random House), 1984.

Stolz, Mary, The Bully of Barkham Street, Leonard Shortall  
(illus), New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Stolz, Mary, A Dog on Barkham Street, Leonard Shortall  
(illus), New York: Harper, 1960.

APPENDIX B  
CHECKLIST

1. Bibliographic Information:

Age or grade level recommended \_\_\_\_\_

2. Character Identification:

Name of behavior disordered character: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Main character or secondary character \_\_\_\_\_

3. Significantly deviant behaviors

(according to Gile's Cluster Development of Behavior Disorders)

Cluster I:

Disruptive behaviors:

Student's actions interfere with reaching planned goals  
and objectives of classroom \_\_\_\_\_

Affects relationships \_\_\_\_\_

Aggressive behaviors:

Fighting \_\_\_\_\_ Defiance \_\_\_\_\_ Destructiveness \_\_\_\_\_

Bullying \_\_\_\_\_ Lying \_\_\_\_\_ Stealing \_\_\_\_\_

Deliberate noncompliance \_\_\_\_\_

Impulsive Behaviors:

Hasty action with little forethought \_\_\_\_\_

Lack of inhibition in restraining impulses

(associated with hyperactivity) \_\_\_\_\_

Kleptomania \_\_\_\_\_

Cluster II:

Withdrawn behaviors:

Retreat from threatening situation \_\_\_\_\_

Fantasy-filled state \_\_\_\_\_

Anxious behaviors:

State anxiety (nervous, apprehension, tension) \_\_\_\_\_

Trait anxiety (generalized dread) \_\_\_\_\_

Unhappiness \_\_\_\_\_ Sleep problems \_\_\_\_\_ Hypochondria \_\_\_\_\_

Nervous habits \_\_\_\_\_

Cluster III:

Thought processes:

Psychosis \_\_\_\_\_

Schizophrenia \_\_\_\_\_

Cluster IV:

Behavior patterns (autistic-like): \_\_\_\_\_

Lack of attachment to others \_\_\_\_\_ Indifference \_\_\_\_\_

Language delays \_\_\_\_\_ Echolalia \_\_\_\_\_ Pronoun reversal \_\_\_\_\_

Poor language comprehension \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B--Page 2

4. Evidence of the way in which the behavior-disordered character reacts to people at:

School:

Social setting:

Home:

5. Occurrences of stereotypes of BD character by other characters:

Pitiful \_\_\_\_\_ Pathetic \_\_\_\_\_ Object of violence \_\_\_\_\_  
 Capable of extraordinary achievements despite handicap \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sinister/evil \_\_\_\_\_ Laughable \_\_\_\_\_ Own worst enemy \_\_\_\_\_  
 Being a burden \_\_\_\_\_ As object of curiosity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Incapable of **fully** participating in everyday life \_\_\_\_\_  
 One-dimensional, no emotional complexity \_\_\_\_\_  
 Always receiving, never giving \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Occurrences of stigma present (rude remark or attitude denoting shame or discredit):

Remarks:

retard \_\_\_\_\_ looney bin \_\_\_\_\_ funny farm \_\_\_\_\_ nut hut \_\_\_\_\_ insane \_\_\_\_\_  
 crazy \_\_\_\_\_ slow \_\_\_\_\_ mental \_\_\_\_\_ strange \_\_\_\_\_ bizarre \_\_\_\_\_ psycho \_\_\_\_\_  
 looney \_\_\_\_\_ sick in the head \_\_\_\_\_ bonkers \_\_\_\_\_ bats in the belfry \_\_\_\_\_  
 a few buttons missing \_\_\_\_\_ missing some marbles \_\_\_\_\_  
 gone bananas \_\_\_\_\_ mad \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Occurrences of negative behavior of other characters toward behavior-disordered character:

Cruel treatment \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ignoring \_\_\_\_\_  
 Doing physical harm \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. Improvement of BD character's problem(s) by:

School \_\_\_\_\_ Counselor \_\_\_\_\_ Psychologist \_\_\_\_\_  
 Psychiatrist \_\_\_\_\_ Friend(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_  
 No solution \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Coping mechanisms used by BD character:

Behavior management \_\_\_\_\_ Self-evaluation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Generalization (mainstreaming) \_\_\_\_\_ Self-management \_\_\_\_\_  
 Self-instruction \_\_\_\_\_ Self-reinforcement \_\_\_\_\_  
 Learning social skills \_\_\_\_\_  
 No coping mechanisms used \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C  
 OCCURRENCES OF CLUSTERS IN BOOKS ANALYZED  
 (Gile's Cluster Development of Behavior Disorders)

	Cluster I Disruptive	Aggressive	Impulsive	Cluster II Withdrawn	Anxious	Cluster III Thought Processes	Cluster IV Behavior Patterns (Autistic-like)
Alan and Naomi				x	x		x
The Ape Inside Me	x	x		x			
The Bears' House		x		x	x		
The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear		x		x	x	x	
The Bully of Barkham Street	x	x	x				
Courage, Dana		x					
A Dog on Barkham Street		x					
The Flunking of Joshua T. Bates		x					
Ghosts in Fourth Grade		x					
Hang on, Harvey		x					
I Will Call it Georgie's Blues	x			x	x		
Inside Out	x	x	x	x	x		x
The Kid with the Red Suspenders	x	x	x				
The Language of Goldfish				x	x	x	
The Last Wolf of Ireland		x					
The Magic Book	x	x					
Millie Cooper, 3B	x	x					
The Monster's Ring		x	x				
The Once in Awhile Hero		x					
Please Don't Say Hello		x	x				x
The Present Takers		x	x				
Radio Fifth Grade		x					
Slake's Limbo		x		x	x		x
There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom	x	x	x	x			x
Tough Beans		x	x				