Mount Saint Vincent University

Department of Family Studies and Gerontology

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gendered Language in Online Parenting Education

by

Christina A. Cameron

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology

September 20, 2013

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Mount Saint Vincent University

Department of Family Studies and Gerontology

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gendered Language in Online Parenting Education

by

Christina A. Cameron

Approved:

_____

Deborah Norris, Ph.D.
Thesis Advisor
Associate Professor, Family Studies and Gerontology

_____

Áine Humble, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Family Studies and Gerontology

_____

Monique Mullins Roberts, M.A.
Coordinator of the Dartmouth Community Health Board

ABSTRACT

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gendered Language in Online Parenting Education

Parenting education resources offer concrete skills, information, and support to increase individuals' competence as parents (Krafchick, Zimmerman, Haddock, & Banning, 2005). Increasingly parents are beginning to supplement and even replace print resources with online material. The internet offers convenience, anonymity to users, and an alternative method for family life educators to deliver information (Daneback & Plantin, 2009; Duncan & Steimle, 2004).

Given this centrality in parenting education practice, it is important to consider what information is being presented to parents online. More specifically, how are ideologies concerning gender and the family reflected in the language of parenting education websites? This study examined at how gender is embodied in online parenting education through doing a critical discourse analysis of selected websites. Implications for the practice of critical FLE were developed through analysis.

The analysis of four parenting education websites found that two of the websites analyzed (Pampers and Ask. Dr. Sears) presented gender-neutral information and two of the websites (Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine) presented gender-specific information to parents. Findings indicated that gender messages were directly mostly at mothers, whereas there was a lack of information directed at fathers. Overall the website evaluations indicated that all four parenting websites presented gender-specific messages in one or more of the following areas: website images, videos, titles, website authors, and marketing.

Analyzing how gender is presented in parenting education is important because gender is a critical variable in the socialization of children and in the organization of family relationships.

In turn, through informing parents on the process and outcomes of gender socialization parents are equipped with the knowledge that allows them to be aware when raising their children, critically analyze gender expectations, and help them in making informed choices concerning how to deal with these expectations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gendered Language in Online Parenting Education

Often parents turn to parenting education resources for concrete skills, information, and support to increase their competence as parents (Krafchick, Zimmerman, Haddock, & Banning, 2005). Parents are beginning to supplement and even replace print resources with online material. The internet is a convenient resource accessible to individuals to gather information (Duncan & Steimle, 2004) and is free as long as one has access to a computer and the internet (which is offered at local libraries) (Daneback & Plantin, 2009). Moreover, the internet provides information that is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year (Amare, 2007), and it provides a level of anonymity to users (Daneback & Plantin, 2009), which is important when individuals are seeking information concerning personal matters. Family educators are also able to use the internet as another method to deliver information and provide support to individuals (Duncan & Steimle, 2004).

A market-research study by Yahoo! found that the internet was used by 86% of new parents-to-be to search for information on pregnancy and was claimed to influence and simplify their life by more than half of them (Daneback & Plantin, 2009). Given this centrality in parenting education practice, it is important to consider what information is being presented to parents online. More specifically, how are ideologies concerning gender and the family reflected in the language of parenting education websites?

Ideology refers to sets of values and ideas that support the established order and are embodied within everyday practices, actions, and decisions (Brookfield, 2005). Ideologies are motivated representations organizing assumptions about gender and the family among others (hooks, 2006). Gender ideology refers to views concerning what is appropriate conduct for men and women (Kroska, 2001); whereas family ideology refers to norms and values that instruct

individuals on what the "ideal" family should be, which involves gender roles and a division of

labour that appears to be natural (DeVault, 1991). In actuality these gender roles are not natural

abilities of men and women but rather learned behaviours that practiced in everyday life

(Brookfield, 2005; DeVault, 1991).

Macro-level ideologies such as gender and family ideologies are present in everyday

activities like parenting and are reproduced through discourses (DeVault, 1991). Discourse is a

vehicle for communicating ideologies and serves as a means by which related ideologies sustain

their powers of relation (Mill, 2004). Discourse is present in different forms of communication

such as magazines, journals, television, newspapers, movies, books, and the internet, and it

mediates the ideologies (Smith, 1990) or values, beliefs and categories embodied therein. These

values, beliefs, and categories represent a way of looking at the world, a representation or

organization of experience—ideology. Different representations of experience are encoded by

different modes of discourse and the communicative context that the discourse is embedded in is

the source of these representations (Mill, 2004).

Ideology and language/discourse/text are closely related and overlapping (Mill, 2004). It

is through discourse that ideologies are developed in society; discourse provides methods and

schemata for turning local actualities into standardized and conceptual forms (Smith, 1990).

Discourse is not something that exists in and of itself and can be analyzed in isolation, but is

something that produces something else (a concept, an effect, an utterance). For example, men

and women are constrained to a limiting range of behaviours because of a set of discourses about

masculinity and femininity. The discursive framework of femininity may determine the ways a

woman thinks about herself and others in relation to power, the bodily stances she adopts, and

the types of clothes she chooses to wear. Discursive frameworks distinguish the boundaries for negotiating what it means to be gendered (Mill, 2004).

The ways that individuals are oppressed within social structures can be revealed through the close systematic analysis of text (Mill, 2004). Recognizing the social organization of textually mediated discourse helps identify the ideologies conceptualized as culture rather than as actual lived activity (Smith, 1990). For the purpose of this research I have focused on discourses on the internet concerning gender in parenting education. Online parenting education refers to information and support about parenthood, pregnancy, and babies/children offered through the internet. The internet serves as an information source for parents, which makes it a means for communicating discourse (Daneback & Plantin, 2009).

hooks (2006) refers to "motivated representations" to describe how the media consciously manipulates representations by presenting certain types of images as a way to produce a certain kind of impact. When men were off at the world wars women were sent to work in the factories and when war was over mass media was used to get women out of the factories and back into the homes. In the same sense, now movies are the lead propaganda machine being used by mass media to move women back into patriarchal thinking and out of feminism. For example, the media presented a backlash against feminism in the movie *Leaving Las Vegas* by presenting a "new/old" version of the desirable woman that was misogynist and sexist based. The media consciously makes representations concerning race, gender, and class that reproduce stereotypes and maintain power for those who hold it (bell hooks, 2006). In turn, studying gendered language in parenting education is important because it serves as a motivated representation for maintaining power relations through the use of gender and family ideologies in

parenting education information that is then translated in the practices of parenting and the socialization of children (Krafchick et al., 2005).

Through being aware of the "motivated representations" that present gendered stereotypes conveyed through language, parents can become educated on how to make informed choices and critically analyze these expectations. Further research in the area can help assist parents and family professionals with selecting books that reflect their own ideologies and in critically analyzing the gender content they encounter in online parenting advice. Family professionals can also learn from clients who have consumed such information through gaining a deeper understanding of the messages and using the information as a starting point for discussion (Krafchick et al., 2005).

The purpose of this proposed research is to explicate (give a detailed explanation of) how gender is embodied in online FLE through a critical discourse analysis of selected websites. I have adapted the following research questions from Krafchick et al.'s (2005) work to guide my study:

1) To what extent is gender embodied in leading parenting education websites on the general topic of parenting?

2) What are the prominent themes about gender in these parenting education websites?

3) For each parenting education website, what gender messages are presented in an overall website evaluation?

In answering these research questions, I hope to gain an understanding of the presence of gendered language in online parenting education so that implications for the practice of critical parenting education can be developed. Creating awareness of the presence of gendered language

in parenting education can help parents in selecting parenting education that reflects their

personal ideologies (Krafchick et al., 2005).

Review of the Literature

The objective of the following section is to review scholarly literature in the areas of Family Life Education (FLE), gender, and online FLE to develop an understanding of what research has been conducted in the areas and consider areas for further research. The first section examines the definition of FLE and developments in field, and then turns the discussion to paradigms and practices in FLE. The second section discusses gender theory, microlevel and macrolevel influences on gender and their interrelation, changes in the new generation of parents, and the restructuring of institutions. Lastly, the third section reviews scholarly literature conducted on online FLE by identifying themes, gaps, and unanswered questions. It is important to note that although this review focuses on gender stereotypes in online FLE, gender inequality is present in all levels of society in general through the enforcement of limitations and expectations placed on each gender (Krafchick at al., 2005). However, for the purpose of this research the focus will be narrowed to gender stereotypes in online FLE parenting education.

Family Life Education

Definition and history of development. Over the years there have been several definitions of FLE, however, the definitions have been criticized for being idealistic, ambiguous, and vague and thereby of little value in providing guidance to those who practice and study FLE (Arcus, Moss, & Schvaneveladt, 1993). Thomas and Arcus (1992) reference Frasier who notes one of the difficulties in defining FLE in a meaningful way, stating that it "could not be defined in any meaningful way unless it delineated for whom, at what stage of development, and in what context this education was to occur" (p. 3).

Thomas and Arcus (1992) attempt to address the ambiguity of FLE by offering a definition highlighting the general purpose and subject matter of FLE and content areas. These

authors claim that the purpose of FLE is "to strengthen and enrich individuals and family well-being" (p. 3). Furthermore, Thomas and Arcus (1992) recommend that FLE focus on the following seven topic areas: human development, interpersonal relationships, family interaction, family resource management, education about parenthood, ethics, and family and society. Although FLE covers a number of different topics that overlap with related fields, it is considered to be a distinct field and is broad in order to accommodate the variety of needs of families (Thomas & Arcus, 1992). For the purpose of my research I focused on the content area of parenting education in the FLE field.

The historical development of FLE involved conceptualizations about knowledge, human needs, and action that reflected the dominant ideologies of that time and were developed from the discipline of human technologies. The dominant ideologies of the era included the ability to discover and apply knowledge to all human beings, the universality of human needs, and the idea that action resulted from the acquisition of knowledge (Morgaine, 1992). FLE began with the goal to eliminate family problems as a way to improve society during the industrialization era. Research later found that FLE programs followed bureaucratic inconveniences that expected people to conform to ideals. Lifestyle, cultural or ethnical influences, and personal preferences were rarely considered in the programs' content, goals, or scheduling. FLE then moved towards a preventative approach in the late 1960s, which allowed families without identified problems to be presented with information also derived from human technology research. The new information presented to families included facts and skills for the improvement of everyday life. Through families incorporating these changes in an efficient and standardized form it was thought the ideal society could emerge and social ills would be reduced (Morgaine, 1992).

During the first half of the twentieth century there were many FLE developments that helped expand the field. FLE expanded to include sex education, health education, home management, and child development. Moreover, journals about FLE began to develop, as well as, organizations and conferences at the local, state, and national level. However, there was still no consensus on a definition of FLE and issues and concerns became prevalent in the field by the mid-century. These issues and concerns involved the division of labour—recruiting, selecting and preparing family life educators, how to teach values—public demand for programs but lack of public acceptance (e.g, sex education), lack of research upon which to base programs, and problems conducting evaluations in general and insufficient evaluations to gauge program effectiveness (Arcus, 1995)**.**

The 1960s brought several advances in FLE, including the development of a graduate program for FLE (although still limited in numbers), the development of a special journal for FLE (The Family Coordinator now known as Family Relations*)*, the establishment of committees and commissions, such as the Committee on Educational Standards and Certification for Family Life Educators in 1970 to examine teacher criteria, and the development of new organizations like the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). In addition, the human potential movement in the 1960s influenced the development of marriage and family enrichment programs. Many of the enrichment programs operated through religious institutions but secular programs were also developed (Arcus, 1995)**.**

With the decrease in support that parents receive from immediate friends and family along with the increase in risk-awareness and the changing circumstances of parenting under post-modernism, parents are consuming an immense amount of information about their own as well as their child's health and development. Parents are turning to a variety of resources,

including: books, magazines, television shows, and the internet (Daneback & Plantin, 2009). The increasing availability of the internet to the general population has made it a major source that individuals turn to a variety of information, including personal matters and family well-being. The internet is a particular area of interest because it offers information that is fluid whereas print books are etched in stone until the next edition is released. Moreover, the internet provides information that is accessible which makes the audience of online text much larger than print texts (Amare, 2007). Therefore, the topic of online parenting education is an interesting area to study (Daneback & Plantin, 2009).

Ideology. Ideology, as a concept in social thought, refers to assumptions about what is valued, what is accepted as true, and what is worthy of belief and attention (McGregor et al., 2008). There are two dimensions that make up ideologies: (a) how society should work and (b) the blueprints or rules that are used for attaining these ideal situations. Successful ideologies are invisible and go unquestioned because they seem ordinary. An example of a successful ideology is patriarchy. Patriarchy is an overarching ideology that involves the social organization of contemporary society according to the dominant male gender and it has had an influence on the development of FLE. In-depth studies by Pendergast and McGregor (2007) urge FLE to not comply with this dominant ideology (McGregor et al., 2008).

Paradigms. Whereas ideologies provide beliefs, assumptions of values and truths, paradigms are how everything is explained and sometimes ignored through self-contained systems of meaning (McGregor et al., 2008). Paradigms are shared thoughts by a common group of people, such as members of a scientific community or professionals. These shared thoughts are guiding ideologies, frameworks, or patterns (Morgaine, 1992). In other words, paradigms provide a lens for how people make sense of their world within the value and belief systems of ideologies,

which, in turn, reveals the meaning of everyday experience for individuals (McGregor et al., 2008; Morgaine, 1992). Instrumental/technical, interpretive, and critical-emancipatory are the three paradigms of knowledge (Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Morgaine, 1992). The three paradigms each produces different types of knowledge and action based on its rationality (Humble & Morgaine, 2002). It is important to discuss ideologies and paradigms and their relation to FLE because ideologies produce paradigms and in turn shape research methodologies, analytical orientations, and theoretical perspectives that are then reflected in parenting education. Professional FLE practices have the potential to remain strong if practitioners are aware of how ideologies and paradigms shape FLE practice (McGregor et al., 2008).

However, historically, FLE has become too comfortable with what is known as the technical approach. This is an issue in FLE because policies and dominant ideas of the past have led to the repression of intellectual challenges aiming to address and improve the human condition. If the current field of FLE is to promote empowerment, enlightenment, and efficacy, then it could lead to rich potentials for the human condition (McGregor, Pendergast, Seniuk, Eghan, & Enberg, 2008). Through exploring why FLE is grounded in the technical approach reasons for resistance to shift to alternative approaches are made clear. The purpose of this section is to discuss ideologies and paradigms and their role in FLE. Through discussing each paradigm and its assumptions the situational appropriateness of each paradigm in FLE will be considered (Morgaine, 1992). In addition, examples of practices in FLE that reflect each paradigm will be provided. Special attention will be given to the Levels of Family Involvement model (Doherty, 1995), a Value Reasoning approach (Arcus, 1980; McGregor et al., 2008), and feminist perspective (Allen & Baber, 1991; MacDermid, Jurich, Myers-Walls, & Pelo, 1992) in FLE.

Through exploring the different paradigms, future initiatives supporting the shift from the

technical approach to a critical/emancipatory approach in FLE can be discussed.

    Instrumental/technical paradigm. From the natural sciences the instrumental/technical

paradigm evolved. It involves controlling and shaping an indvidual's environment through

addressing and satisfying human needs and wants (Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Morgaine, 1992).

Workers within human technologies, who became known as professionals and considered

experts, were given prestige, power, and privilege in the eyes of the clients and the general

public. Information derived from human technology research was used to improve and create the

ideal society and eliminate and prevent family problems. This resulted in standardization,

standards of efficiency, conformity, and bureaucratic organization, to help individuals make

change. The instrumental/technical paradigm believes that through research the discovery of the

laws of human behavior can be achieved and that through controlling human actions and

predicting cause and effect relationships human needs can be satisfied. In addition, the

instrumental/technical paradigm believes that independent of human uniqueness there exists a

single reality of life. According to the instrumental paradigm, knowledge acquired through

empirical research can be applied to all individuals who share common characteristics.

Professionals can then distribute these understandings with the expectation that life changes will

be achieved once individuals have acquired this knowledge (Humble & Morgaine, 2002;

Morgaine, 1992).

    FLE ascribed to the instrumental/technical paradigm like the rest of the Western world

and excluded the interpretive and critical-emancipatory paradigms (Humble & Morgaine, 2002;

Morgaine, 1992). Although the instrumental/technical approach reflects ideas concerning human

needs, change, knowledge and action of a particular time and the situational appropriateness of

the paradigm has been questioned, it still continues to be utilized by professionals. One of the contributing factors is family life educator's commitment to help individuals change themselves coupled with a lack of awareness of underlying principles embedded within this paradigm (Morgaine, 1992). The instrumental/technical paradigm is valued more in practice due to the tendency for people to resist new ideas and favour ways of viewing the world and making sense of things that happen to them (McGregor et al., 2008). The overreliance on the instrumental/technical paradigm resulted in the assumption that no matter the circumstance of the individual, the teaching of skills and facts would result in change. However, there needs to be a congruency between the educators' desired outcomes and the learners' interests and needs in order to work towards a more just society (Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Morgaine, 1992). A learner-centered approach is common in alternative paradigms and helps create justice through helping individuals understand their subjective experience and gain clarity of perceptions, interpretations, actions, plans, values, and feelings (Morgaine, 1992).

Often FLE programs based on the instrumental/technical paradigm take a behaviouristic approach that focuses on controlling human interactions that are seen as the cause of problems. These teaching methods are based on empirical research and use programs that are popular and readily available. For example, financial planning programs, disciplining and communicating with children, and time management skills are types of FLE programs that focus on teaching skills and methods. Teaching such knowledge based on the instrumental/technical paradigm can be effective if individuals lack the information, methods, and skills to achieve their desired goals and recognize that changes are needed, but life changes cannot be presumed if there is not a readiness and motivation by the individual (Morgaine, 1992).

Because FLE was historically grounded heavily on the instrumental/technical approach—the expert, how to, quick fix this has led to a familiarity and comfortable acceptance of the technical approach in FLE which is problematic because it reflects ruling ideas of the past that repressed the improvement of the human condition in elite actions and policies (McGregor et al., 2008). Although technical approaches to FLE can be effective, the use of an interpretive approach is an alternative teaching method that should be utilized more as it effectively addresses the unique experiences and needs of individuals that makes practice more inclusive (Morgaine, 1992).

Interpretive paradigm. Interpretive knowledge can be effective for helping individuals reflect on their life and incorporate life changes unlike the instrumental/technical paradigm that focuses on controlling and shaping human action to achieve life changes for all individuals (Humble & Morgaine, 2002). The interpretive paradigm is "based on the human need to understand self and others" (Morgaine, 1992, p. 13). The focus of this paradigm is to interpret the meanings that constitute social realities. A key belief of this paradigm is that individuals organize their lives through "defining the objects, events, and situations which they encounter" (Morgaine, 1992, p. 13). The interpretive paradigm believes that to gain insight into human needs and interactions, instrumental/technical research methods are not always appropriate. In addition, the interpretive paradigm believes that many human actions cannot be predicted or controlled and such attempts are not considered ethical. Moreover, the interpretive paradigm believes that there is no single reality of life—knowledge is constructed by social realities. It is through reflecting on meaning or gaining an understanding that change can be achieved. Thus, the interpretive paradigm sees individuals as having different realities and reflecting on their experiences is essential for facilitating change (Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Morgaine, 1992).

Interpretive FLE models treat individuals' experiences as unique and do not treat them as conforming to a "norm". Practitioners who use the interpretive model view individuals' knowledge as coming from their own life experiences. This knowledge forms their reality and provides meaning for actions taken. Methods of the interpretive approach include mutual support and dialogue that involves curriculum allowing individuals to reflect on meanings in their daily lives. Additionally, interpretive practices help individuals gain an understanding of their subjective experiences by providing clarity of feelings, values, perceptions, interpretations, plans, and actions (Morgaine, 1992).

To benefit from the interpretive paradigm individuals reflect on personal experiences. Rather than manipulating individuals' circumstances to achieve the desired end, reflection on everyday experiences helps individuals see how their life experiences intersect with their personal value system. Changes in perception may evolve from reflections that reveal underlying meanings of beliefs, interactions, needs, and goals. In turn, individuals may be motivated to make life changes when their problems seem more manageable (Morgaine, 1992).

An example of an approach used in FLE to address values is a Value Reasoning approach. McGregor et al. (2008) discuss Value Reasoning as one of the approaches to practice that offer standards to ensure that FLE practice is empowering, contextual, sustainable, and emancipatory, which leads to rich potentialities for the human condition. A Value Reasoning approach is beneficial to use in addressing practical problems, which require judgments about what should be done and decisions concerning moral and reasoned thoughts and actions. An example of a practical problem may be "am I obligated to be well nourished?" (McGregor et al., 2008, p. 51). Practical, moral problems that endure from one generation to the next are known as perennial problems. These problems are associated with perpetual family needs, such as: food,

shelter, personal development and family relations, clothing, and resource management and consumption. A Value Reasoning approach helps address practical perennial problems by using critical thinking to examine underlying values and superficial facts and come to a reasoned judgment (McGregor et al., 2008).

The Value Reasoning approach helps individuals learn to reason about values through a seven step process. First, individuals must identify the value claim or value question by differentiating between value judgments and factual claims, choosing a value claim to analyze in an area of interest, and clarifying the value claim being evaluated so that everyone shares the same meaning or understanding. Secondly, individuals must gather supporting and refuting factual statements and create a reasoning assembly chart with supporting claims on one side and factual claims on the other. Third, individuals need to assess the truth of factual statements by using analytical and empirical means. Fourth, individuals need to clarify the relevance of facts by pairing value principles with factual claims so that the relevance of the factual claim to the overall value claim is revealed. To further clarify the relevance of facts individuals can identify the point of view (religious, political, beauty, health) that factual claims are made and recognize points in the reason assembly chart according to point of view so that the relationship between facts and values is made explicit and apparent. Fifth, individuals can make a tentative value judgment by examining both sides of the reasoning assembly chart and by testing their judgment through reasoning from general to specific to either accept of reject their original value claim based on any new information. Sixth, they can then test the acceptability of their tentative value judgment by determining whether they can accept the value principle implied in their judgment. Two of the most common tests include the universal consequences test and the role exchange test. The universal consequence test involves the individual considering what would happen if

everyone was to do what was proposed and considering how they would feel if everyone did

that? The role exchange test involves the individual considering how they would feel if they

were to change positions with the person being affected by the situation as a result of the

proposed solution to the problem? Lastly, step seven involves the individual making a final

judgment based on one's test to accept, reject or modify their proposed value claim (Arcus,

1980; McGregor et al., 2008).

A Value Reasoning approach to FLE allows individuals to think more clearly about their

judgments, as well as, those of others, rather than having judgments imposed on them.

Individuals are able to deal with value conflict and examine value systems objectively. A Value

Reasoning approach still allows family life educators to focus on broad, abstract values that are

important, such as equality, justice, and social responsibility (Arcus, 1980). Although research

does not clearly discuss the extent to which a Value Reasoning approach has been implemented

in FLE it is an area that should be revisited because it provides an approach to FLE that

incorporates methods for evaluating value systems, reflecting on personal values as well as

values of others, and how to deal with conflicting values (Arcus, 1980).

Critical/emancipatory paradigm. Whereas the interpretive paradigm focuses on

reflecting on personal life meanings, understandings and values of concepts, the

critical/emancipatory paradigm goes further by examining assumptions embedded within

everyday realities. This paradigm began to be used for practice when the human need for

freedom, personal autonomy, and justice became of interest to social scientists and human

technology professionals (Morgaine, 1992). Assumptions of the critical/emancipatory paradigm

are similar to the interpretive paradigm in that they include the same beliefs that there are

multiple realities that exist and that it is not always appropriate for gaining an understanding into

human interaction through instrumental/technical research methods. They also share the belief

that many human actions are not controllable and it is not ethical to manipulate or control others.

Additional assumptions of the critical/emancipatory approach include the notion that life

experiences and social conditions help form perceptions and ideas about life and relationships.

Furthermore, individuals who are oppressed or in self-defeating situations have distorted

perceptions that causes their situation to perpetuate. However, the critical/emancipatory

paradigm believes that individuals are capable of realizing the aspects that hinder optimal

development of self and interpersonal relations through developing critical insight (Morgaine,

1992).

Often family ideals are restricted, constrained, or denied by societal influences. The

critical/emancipatory paradigm allows individuals to reflect on discrepancies between everyday

realities and everyday ideals, which reveals hidden influences and historical facts that provide

meaning to the situation that resulted in the life discrepancies. Through bringing awareness to

individuals they can begin to recognize and challenge the constraints placed on them by society

(Morgaine, 1992).

Feminist FLE practices provide an example of the critical/emancipatory approach at work

in that it aims to help individuals become aware of the constraints placed on them by society

(MacDermid et al., 1992). Teaching methods following a critical-emancipatory feminist

persepctive help reveal how oppression is perpetuated through underlying structures that have

embedded messages (Humble & Morgaine, 2002). Feminists are at the forefront of change in

FLE—"Feminism is both a critique of existing social arrangements and a political agenda for

personal and institutional change" (Allen & Baber, 1991, p. 382). MacDermid et al. (1992)

outlines three feminist assumptions. The first assumption involves sensitivity to disadvantaged

groups, which includes individuals oppressed by class, race, age, ethnicity, disability, or sexual preference. The second assumption shared by feminists is that "the personal is political", which refers to how the social system is not separate from everyday life and imposes reality on it. Feminists focus on social contexts as they impact personal experience and try to translate personal experience into social critique and community action. The third assumption is that feminists have a "double vision of reality". This refers to the ability to be conscious of and working to change oppressive practices and institutions while being successful in the current social and educational system. These three feminist assumptions are then applied to the content and methods of, and participants in, FLE. In terms of content, feminist critiques have informed the process of conducting research and expanded our understanding of children and families. In terms of methods, using a feminist perspective helps engage learners by facilitating their empowerment and connectedness within the educational process. Participants' unique characteristics, strengths, and needs are highlighted by using a feminist perspective (MacDermid et al., 1992).

In addition, a feminist FLE perspective aims to expand the definition of family to make practice inclusive to all families. However, due to an outdated status quo concerning family structure and process, the traditional family form continues as the ideal family form in social consciousness. In the postwar era of the 1950s the "modern family" was the ideal form that reached it peak of 60% whereby the male is viewed as the breadwinner/dominant husband/father and the female as the full-time homemaker/wife/mother (Allen & Baber, 1992). A more recent study by Bibby in 2004 showed that 58% of Canadians believe the nuclear family (a married man and women with at least one child) is the ideal family form. Challenges to traditional marriage can be seen in the high divorce rates, the trend toward delaying marriage, and the

declining rate of marriage. Intimate relationships are constructed in other ways, such as: feminist

marriages of heterosexual couples committed to truly egalitarian relationships, non-marital

cohabitation, and the commitments made by same-sex couples (Allen & Baber, 1992). Feminism

has offered a critique of the traditional family that helps create awareness about the physical,

emotional, and financial cost to women (Blaisure & Allen, 1995). However, a study by Blaisure

and Allen (1995) found that couples committed to ideologies about marital equality did not

necessarily translate their beliefs into practices of marital inequality. Expectations for traditional

marriage have been challenged by the multiplicity of family forms that has allowed the

restructuring of intimate relationships (Allen & Baber, 1992). Allen and Baber (1992) make

reference to the need for a revolution in FLE to work towards a paradigm shift in which "no

family form is privileged as normal or given priority" (p. 379).

Doherty's (1995) Levels of Family Involvement (LFI) model complement's each of the

three paradigms—the instrumental, interpretive, and critical emancipatory. The LFI provides an

example of how each of the paradigms are at work on a scale in that it is a stepping stone process

whereby the first paradigm is achieved before moving onto the next. The LFI shows how one can

move beyond the instrumental and to interpretive and/or critical emancipatory approached.

Doherty (1995) outlines the LFI model, a model designed to balance the objectives of

family education and family therapy. The five levels of the LFI model are arranged hierarchally

from minimal involvement with families to family therapy. Level one entails a minimal

emphasis on the family where family members are only used for legal or practical reasons. Level

two involves collaborate activities with family members around information and advice. Level

three involves the same level of activities as level two with information and advice but also

includes feelings and support by involving personal disclosure as part of the educational process.

Level four includes both processes of level two and three but goes beyond by providing assessment and a planned effort to help provide change. Level five moves beyond FLE boundaries by providing more than just educational information by providing treatment for psychological and family problems through an extended series of sessions and through stimulating change in family interaction. Most training programs in FLE, child development, and human development and family relations are grounded in level two of the LFI model and training programs do not provide sufficient training in level three of the LFI model. Therefore, the LFI model can be used to define training and development goals for individuals, professionals, and family educators (Doherty, 1995), which allows professionals to move beyond instrumental/technical approaches of level one and two to interpretive and critical/emancipatory approaches, such as level three.

Conclusion. The accepted paradigm, the instrumental/technical, in FLE may be hindering rather than facilitating change when the underlying foundational assumptions and societal ideologies about the family remain hidden. While acknowledging that the instrumental/technical approach has its place in FLE, it should not be used exclusively. Rationale decision making should be used to find a match between human needs and interests and the appropriate paradigm of knowledge and action (Morgaine, 1992). Through the FLE field being aware of the dominant and emerging ideologies and paradigms there is potential to change and practice differently (McGregor et al., 2008). The interpretive and critical/emancipatory approaches are alternative paradigms that help individuals recognize and overcome constrains of society and recognize family needs as complex, dynamic, and diverse (Morgaine, 1992). Therefore, there is a need for a paradigm shift in FLE, to move away from a focus on past

ideologies and towards the promotion of empowerment, enlightenment, and efficacy (McGregor. et al., 2008).

Gender Relations

Analyzing how gender is presented in popular online parenting education websites is important because it is a critical variable in the socialization of children and organization of family relationships (Krafchick et al., 2005). Gender is more than a role assigned or assumed to men and women, and more than an individual characteristic of males and females. Gender is infused in all of life; it has no specific context or site (Thompson & Walker, 1989). Gendered activities are socially constructed as "natural" abilities of women and men; however, in actuality these are learned behaviours that are practiced (DeVault, 1991). Gender in families includes beliefs and ideology, structural constraints and opportunities, meanings and experiences, actual arrangements and activities, interaction and relation, and diversity and change (Thompson & Walker, 1989). In both formal teachings and in informal messages from conversations with friends, communications media, and folk stories, public discourse on gender is recognizable. At the same time, family-level gender discourses are co-constructed by individual family members as they interact with each other. Gender appropriate behavior in a particular family is communicated to infants, children and adolescents by everyday actions, such as dressing, bathing, feeding, and clothing. Parents' and children's gendered behaviours are often, but not always, consistent with stereotypes about their biological sex or sex typed, such as when infant girls are talked to more by their parents than boys (Blume & Blume, 2003; Krafchick et al., 2005). As a result, children's self-image, self-esteem, and emotional reality are influenced by gender socialization. Additionally, their play, relationships, education, occupations, and interests are influenced by gender norms (Krafchick et al., 2005). Examining gender theory, macro-level

and micro-level influences on gender, and changes in gender in the new generation will help

when analyzing gender in online parenting education.

   To explain the impact gender has on individuals and how it is infused within different

levels of society, the following section first discusses gender theory, and then turns the

discussion to micro-level and macro-level influences on gender and their interrelation, such as

the family at the micro level and social institutions at the macro level. Lastly, the discussion

focuses on changes such as gender arrangements, family life, life-course patterns, and work

trajectories, in the new generation and the restructuring of institutions, while recognizing

tensions that remain between the two. Recognizing accomplishments and ongoing struggles with

gender arrangements will help in working towards developing critical parenting education

resources.

   Gender theory. According to Ferree (1990), gender theory focuses on "how specific

behaviors and roles are given gendered meaning, how labor is divided to express gender

difference symbolically, and how diverse social structures—rather than just families—

incorporate gender values and convey gender advantages" (p. 868). Ferree (2010) further

contests that "the gender perspective rejects gender as a static norm or ideal (the so-called *gender*

role), and instead defines gender as a social relation characterized by power inequalities that

hierarchically produce, organize, and evaluate masculinities and femininities through the

contested but controlling practices of individuals, organizations, and societies" (p. 424). Through

using a critical conceptualization of gender, parents can learn how to recognize, critically

analyze, and resist the controlling practices of individuals, organizations, and societies that

produce power inequalities and which may be present in parenting education rather than

reproduce the social constructions that constrain and limit choices and possibilities (Krafchick et al., 2005).

Gender is conceptualized as a process of social construction whereby maleness and femaleness are unequal social values in oppositional categories (Blume & Blume, 2003; Ferree, 1990). The social construction of gender refers to the institutional and social practices or the cultural discourse which our experience of gender is organized (Blume & Blume, 2003).The unequal social values of men and women refers to the construction of gender as polarized dichotomies (i.e., aggressive and nurturing, reason and emotion) whereby there is a suppression of natural similarities for social means (Ferree, 1990).

Ferree (1990) describes the work of "doing gender" as "taken for granted" and "made invisible" due to the social practices of being a man or a woman appearing as natural abilities and inevitable traits rather than as something that is learned (Ferree, 2010, p. 869). "Doing gender" refers to the interactional process whereby individuals claim a gender identity and communicate it to others (Ferree, 1990). Throughout daily life gender constructs are enacted. Gender is rooted in ideology and is related to hierarchy, disadvantage, and stratification (Thompson, 1993). According to Thompson (1993) the ideal man is independent, self-made, and ambitious whereas the ideal woman is comforting, cooperative, attentive, and compassionate. As a result of these distinctions the possibilities for care are constrained in marriage and there are separate spheres for men and women (Thompson, 1993). Moreover, ongoing interactions and all sorts of objects have gendered meanings that are shaped by the constraints and concrete resources of social structures. For example, there are gendered meaning of the colours pink and blue: pink is for girls and blue is for boys. Through separating the specific roles of each gender from men and women individuals are able to develop qualities that everyone has the potential to

develop rather then categorizing traits as masculine and feminine. The gender perspective provides a structural analysis of family relationships at the micro-level, like parenting for example (Ferree, 1990).

Micro-level influences on gender. Parents play an important role in the gender development of their children. Differential patterns of interaction with sons and daughters are seen as one of the ways that parents reinforce gendered behavior (Lindsay, Mize, & Pettit, 1997). Lindsay et al. (1997) study found that girls are more likely to participate in pretend play than boys and boys were more likely to participate in physical play than girls. Both boys and girls participated more in pretend play in the presence of mothers than in the presence of fathers. Furthermore, parents of girls were more likely to be involved in pretend play than parents of boys; fathers of boys were more likely to participate in physical play than fathers of girls and mothers of girls and boys. In addition, parents may also influence children's gender-specific play behavior with peers. Boys are more likely to engage in physical play with peers and girls are more likely to engage in pretend play with peers. Therefore, the contextual differences in parent-child play interaction may contribute to different socialization settings for boys and girls that may lead to gender-segregated interactions with peers (Lindsay & Mize, 2001).

Macro-level influences on gender. Institutions can also serve as a point for large scale restructuring to occur and create social change. Although gender inequalities have come a long way since the fifties, sixties, and seventies, institutional influences on gender are present more than ever in the marketing of children's toys. For example, Waterlow's (2013) study on how marketers have increasingly made "boy toys" blue and "girl toys" pink reflects institutional influences on gender present in the 20th century. Companies have moved away from the use of gender-neutral colours, reds, whites, and blues; girls' toys are mostly domesticated and focus on

a concern with appearance whereas the boys' toys encourage adventure and activity with cars, action figures and, science sets. In 1995 advertising and marketing of toys started becoming explicitly or subtly gender specific and moved away from directing toys to children in general. At the institutional level there are gender stereotypes in children's products that are marketing ideologies to families. In turn, these products and their ideologies are "sold" and become part of reinforcing ideologies at the micro-level with child's play in the home. Thus, there is a "trickle down" effect whereby micro-level ideologies are created and sustained by macro-level ideologies (Waterlow, 2013).

   The interrelation of macro-level and micro-level influences on gender. Gender theory has treated the family as one of a number of the interrelated institutions in which gender is constructed, reproduced, and transformed and not as a separate sphere (Ferree, 2010). According to Ferree (2010) "individual gendering activities are situated in larger structures that have their own institutionalized gender practices and meanings" (p. 424). Integral to this theoretical perspective is the macro-micro dynamic (Ferree, 2010). Gender discourses at the macro-level are used by individuals in micro ways. Culture appears at the macro-level as "discourses of commonsense, appropriateness, and normality—what have been termed ''ideologies" and "cultural models" (Ferree, 2010, p. 426). Attention to cultural discourse helps in presenting a context for understanding accountability, which is important in gaining an understanding of the interactional process of doing gender. Macrostructures include not only material inequalities of resources and power, but also discourses of difference, cultural schemas, and social groups, such as nations, communities, genders, and races. Specific gender discourses of value and identity display such macro-level culture. For instance, a frequently cited example concerning a boy who wore a barrette to nursery school shows how gender discourses contain cultural stereotypes from

the macro-level (Blume & Blume, 2003; Ferree, 1990). An excerpt from the example is as follows:

> After repeatedly insisting that "Wearing barrettes doesn't matter, I have a penis and testicles," Jeremy finally pulled down his pants to make the point more convincingly. The other boy was not impressed. He simply said, "Everybody has a penis; only girls wear barrettes!" (Blume & Blume, 2003, p. 788)

The example shows how an individual as an "actor" uses gender "scripts" of social class, family or culture in everyday interactions (Blume & Blume, 2003). Through focusing attention on cultural discourse there is a context for understanding accountability in more locally and historically situated terms (Ferree, 2010).

   Changes in cultural diversity and demographics. The generation today is considered "children of the gender revolution" in two senses. Individuals grew up being exposed to their parents' unexpected economic insecurities, expanding options for women and, coping with new family forms. Members of this generation are further negotiating their transition to adulthood and facing dilemmas concerning whether and how to develop their own ties to jobs, offspring, and partners (Gerson, 2009). Cultural diversity and growing demographics have provided individuals with new ways to work, build families, and live. The once predominant homemaker-breadwinner family form is outnumbered by single-parent, dual-earner and same-sex couple homes. Home centered mothers are outnumbered by career and work committed women, including single and married women with and without children. A variety of time-demanding and insecure jobs have replaced the "traditional" career whereby male workers are loyal to their employers as a way to gain economic security and support their children and wives. As

individuals travel new pathways through family and work in adulthood the life course has become more unpredictable and fluid (Gerson, 2009). However, gender influences still remain.

There are tensions between changing lives and resistant institutions. Institutions rooted in the earlier era resist social shifts such as revolutions in gender arrangements, family life, life-course patterns, and work trajectories. "Ideal workers" who provide uninterrupted fulltime (often overtime) are rewarded in the workplace by employers. This ideal is now seen by workers as a requirement to move up but also to just keep their place. In the home, parents, especially mothers, are faced by the demands of "intensive parenting" as privatized caretakers. Although there is an uncertain and fluid nature of intimate commitment for relations the ideal of permanent marriage persists (Gerson, 2009). As a result, there are personal dilemmas for men and women. Women remain the primary caregiver for their children even though they are increasingly providing income. Although men would like to be involved fathers their social status and "marriageability" continues to be primarily measured by their success in the job market. Individuals are not fully able to embrace change and break free from existing structures, ideologies, institutions and other restricting forces. If institutions remain in the earlier era they are unable to effectively meet the needs of individuals and support them in embracing change and overcoming restricting forces, such as: ideologies, structures and institutions. There is a need for a deeper understanding of the cultural and structural conflicts playing out in men and women's lives in order to be able to explain and develop effective strategies for overcoming the tension between private needs and public demands (Gerson, 2009).

Conclusion. Gender is a critical variable in the socialization of children and parents and in the organization of family relationships. According to feminist theorists, throughout all levels of society, gender inequality is promoted through the enforcement of limitations or expectations

on both genders. Yet, individuals are prevented from becoming fully actualized as a result of these gender expectations. In turn, there are many limitations on individuals, such as their professional aspirations, emotional expression, and family dynamics (Krafchick et al., 2005) and although there have been changes in the attitudes and practices of this generation, tensions remain between the changing lives and social institutions (Gerson, 2009). Therefore, the process and outcomes of gender socialization continue to have a powerful influence on children, which is why parents should be informed and aware of its presence. Through informing parents about the process and outcomes of gender socialization parents are equipped with the knowledge that allows them to be aware when raising their children, critically analyze gender expectations, and help them in making informed choices concerning how to deal with these expectations. Thus, an important factor in successful parenting is paying attention to gender (Krafchick et al., 2005).

Online Family Life Education

Many parents often seek support, concrete skills, and information to increase their competence as parents. Parenting advice that is economical, accessible, and likely to succeed is important for parents in today's fast-paced culture (Krafchick et al., 2005). Young parents may be detached from a network of friends and families with the increasing mobility of our culture. As a result, there may be a lack of traditional learning and growth of parents from social structures, which leads to alternative support. The internet not only provides resources for planning a family, pregnancy, and parenting, but also provides a readymade community for individuals sharing similar situations. According to Rashley (2005), parents are beginning to supplement and even replace print resources with online material, which makes online parenting education an interesting area to study. Often websites provide information that is free and that is backed by opinions of medical professionals (on reputable websites) (Rashley, 2005).

This section reviews scholarly literature conducted on online FLE by identifying themes, gaps, and unanswered questions. Then a review of scholarly literature on gender representations in FLE will be presented along with suggestions for areas of future research.

The internet as an information source for parents. The internet provides parents with an alternative information source. According to Daneback and Plantin (2009) parents are turning to the internet for parenting information due to changing circumstances in parenthood under postmodernism. For example, under postmodernism the family is seen as a network of close relationships rather than as a closed social unit. There is a decrease in parents' support from immediate friends and family and an increase in risk-awareness (Daneback & Plantin, 2009). Traditionally, new mothers gained support in their new parental role from their mothers, however, maternal support has been more difficult to receive with the increase in the mobilization of the population. Mothers have become more isolated and have lost daily support from family and other close relations from whom they previously received support (Daneback & Plantin, 2009; Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005). Additionally, many women also noted that with the fast pace-of-change in modern society the information they receive from their own mothers or elderly relations is 'out-of-date' and their experiences are not valid anymore. Instead, parents are using information they receive in parenting magazines, TV shows, books, online (Daneback & Plantin, 2009).

The internet also provides parents with experiential information whereby the experiences of others who are in similar situations are provided because descriptive information is seen as not being enough. Modern parents' needs for information on parenting may be due to women's shorter stay in the hospital. Providing support and information to new parents helps them feel secure in their new roles as parents when returning home rather than leaving them with questions

and in need of information in their new roles. The internet in turn provides an opportunity for

parents to share their experiences and provides a source of social support. Parents are able to

establish contacts with other parents who may be experiencing similar situations; whether that is

behavioural problems with their two year old or having a child with an illness. The internet is not

only a way for parents to gain information but a way for parents to share information and

expertise that they have developed over time (Daneback & Plantin, 2009).

  Social support in online family life education. Online FLE has provided a type of

online community for parents by providing social support. Social support is identified as a reason

that individuals turn to the internet. More specifically, social support is identified as being sought

out more by individuals who have children who are handicapped (Miller, 2006) or individuals

who have a child(ren) suffering from a variety of different illnesses (Bremberg and Sarkadi,

2005). Parents seek social support online because they are able to find other individuals who are

in similar situations and the internet provides a level of anonymity which provides comfort in

seeking out certain information (Daneback and Plantin, 2009). However, it is important to note

that the use of online social support by foster families was low (Finn and Kerman, 2004).

Furthermore, Drentea and Moren-Cross's (2005) study that explored social support and social

capital for mothers on the internet found that social capital is increased in communities of

mothers of young children during a time that women as new mothers are isolated. Social capital

refers to resources within social structures that are mobilized and/or used in purposive actions

(Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005), whereas social support refers to communications that help

reduce uncertainty in relationships and enhance an individual's perceptions of personal control of

their experience, such as perceptions of empathy, desire to give and receive, and interpersonal

acceptance (Finn & Kerman, 2004). More precisely, social capital operates through information-

giving, community protection, and emotional support to help the mothers of infants. Such social capital provided mothers with valuable information concerning caring for their children and helped alleviate stress (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005).

Research concerning online FLE focuses on websites that have a particular focus towards a specific target audience (Alder-Baeder, Gelatt, & Seeley, 2010; Edirippulige & Porter, 2007; Finn & Kerman, 2004; Hasman & Zafron, 2010;Miller, 2006). The target audience of websites include: foster families (Finn & Kerman, 2004), caregivers of adults with intellectual disabilities (Hasman & Zafron, 2010), children with hearing loss (Edirippulige & Porter, 2007), parents of children with a disorder (Miller, 2006), step families (Alder-Baeder, Gelatt, & Seeley, 2010), and fathers (Dollahite, Hawkins, & Morris, 1999). Research seems to focus on FLE aimed a specific target audience. Through research focusing on websites with a specific target audience, the analysis is confined to a certain group of the population and does not apply to the study of online parenting education on a broader level. More research is needed on the general topic of online parenting.

Geographic areas and methods for research in online family life education. Research on online FLE has also been focused on websites offered in particular geographic areas, including Australia (Edirippulige & Porter, 2007), Sweden (Bremberg & Sarkadi, 2005), the United States (Rashley, 2005), and the United Kingdom (Madge & O'Connor, 2005; Madge & O'Connor, 2002). Other research concerning online FLE has analyzed particular websites, such as BabyCenter (Rashley, 2005), Forever Families (Duncan & Steimle, 2004), Parents Network (Bremberg & Sarkadi, 2005) and BabyWorld (Madge & O'Connor, 2005; Madge & O'Connor, 2002). Again, narrowing the focus of research to websites in particular geographic areas or

specific websites presents certain perspectives that reflect the geographic area or websites and prevents the research from being applied on a broader level.

Moreover, the methods used to analyze the websites varied for each study. Duncan and Steimle (2004) conducted a formative evaluation that used web-based software to access website use of Forever Families website and conduct an online survey. Rhetorical analysis of website structure and gendered language in the website BabyCenter was done by Rashley (2005), but the study did not provide a clear description of methods used for analysis. A literature review was used to determine how the internet is used by parents and professionals (Plantin & Daneback, 2009). A web-based questionnaire survey of users of the largest Swedish parenting website was used to determine if users' perceived support in their parenting role and whether the support was socially biased (Bremberg & Sarkadi, 2005). A web-based questionnaire survey was used to determine general patterns of website use of the UK website BabyWorld and semi-structured virtual group interviews were used to gain a deeper understanding of the themes from the questionnaires (Madge & O'Connor, 2002, 2005). A content analysis was done on FLE websites that were grouped into topic areas for the framework for lifespan FLE to determine gaps in information available to parents online (Elliott, 1999). Qualitative research on FLE websites directed towards fathers was done with six websites to determine the number of users and the best practices with fathers and how they were developed (Dollahite et al., 1999). The variation in methods, websites examined, and focus of research presents information that is situationally specific, which makes it difficult to compare studies. Developing and using consistent methods and narrowing the focus of research while analyzing several websites will be helpful in gaining a better understanding of online parenting education. In addition, it is important to note that only

one study (Rashley, 2005) looks specifically at the topic of gendered language in online

parenting education, which is why there is a need for further research in the area.

      Other studies on gender representations in family life education. Although Rashley

(2005) focuses on a particular website, BabyCenter, and does not give a clear description of

methods, her research still provides insightful information that is useful for conducting further

research in the area of gendered language in online FLE. Rashley analyzed how traditional

gender expectations are presented, how parenting sites were chosen by parents, and parent's

responses and resistance to the expectations found on the website. Her study revealed how the

large commercial site BabyCenter at first appears to present a progressive attitude concerning

mothers' and fathers' equal division of labour; however, traditional expectations whereby

childcare is primarily the mother's responsibility was revealed in close rhetorical analysis of the

website's language and structure (2005).

      Other studies that provide insightful information on how gender is portrayed in FLE

include gender analysis in books, magazine photos, and coloring books. A study by Krafchick et

al. (2005) examined six best-selling self-help books by conducting a content analysis to

determine how gender in parenting was addressed. The study found that stereotypical messages

were found in 82% of implicit messages about gender across all books (Krafchick et al., 2005).

Other studies investigating the presentation of gender in pictures in magazines and colouring

books found that gender stereotypes are prevalent. Fitzpatrick and McPherson (2009) found in

the analysis of 56 contemporary coloring books that gender stereotypes were common; males

were presented as more active. Similarly, Martinson, Hinnant, and Martinson's (2008) study on

photos in parent magazines found that men and women were presented in stereotypical gender

roles. Mothers were portrayed often as supportive and nurturing, whereas fathers were portrayed

most often as directive and playful (Martinson et al., 2008). There are various implications that result from presenting such stereotypical gender roles.

Although the studies discussed above show how gender stereotypes persist, there remain key differences in the studies. The focus is on print sources and pictures in addition to content (Fitzpatrick & McPherson, 2009; Krafchick et al., 2005; Martinson et al., 2008. Fitzpatrick & McPherson's (2009) study focuses on coloring books for children opposed to sources directed towards parents. Moreover, particular sources were used according to geographic location and time period in the studies (Fitzpatrick & McPherson, 2009; Krafchick et al., 2005; Martinson et al., 2008). Krafchick et al. (2005) chose books based on popularity between 1997 and 2002, Martinson et al. (2008) chose magazine issues between 2006 and 2007, while Fitzpatrick and McPherson (2009) selected coloring books in California, US. Thus, each study selected content for their study based on specific periods of time or specific to a certain geographic area. The studies may yield different results if they were done during a different period of time or in a different geographic area. Therefore, there is a need for further research in the area. Although the studies vary they provide guidance for future research in the area by providing information concerning prevalence of gendered language, methods used for analysis, and focus of analysis.

Conclusion. Other research in the area of online FLE has focused on social support, particular areas of FLE aimed towards a specific target audience, specific geographic areas, specific websites, and the methods of analysis varies from formative evaluation, web-based questionnaire survey, and semi-structured virtual group interviews to a lack of descriptive methods. Studies have rarely focused particularly on gendered language in online parenting education on a broader scale by examining several websites with consistent methods. There is a need to conduct further research in the area of online FLE concerning gendered language

presented in information for parents in popular parenting websites. Studying gendered language

in parenting education is important because it shows whether gender stereotypes are reinforced

in parenting resources that promote traditional gender roles for parents and their children.

Through being aware of the presence of gendered language parents can become educated on how

to make informed choices and critically analyze these expectations. Further research in the area

can help assist parents and family professionals with selecting parenting education material that

reflect their own ideologies and in critically analyzing the gender content they encounter in

online parenting advice. Family professionals can also learn from clients who have consumed

such information through gaining a deeper understanding of the messages and using the

information as a starting point for discussion (Krafchick et al., 2005).

　　　　After reviewing scholarly literature in the areas of FLE, gender, and online FLE it is

apparent that further research concerning online parenting education and gender representations

is needed. Additional research on gender representations in online parenting education could

analyze several popular parenting websites and use consistent methods to determine whether

gender representations in online parenting education are occurring on a larger scale (Krafchick et

al., 2005).

Theoretical Framework: Critical Theory

Critical theory was used to guide my research. The aim of critical theory according to Brookfield (2005) is to "illuminate the ways in which people accept as normal a world characterized by massive inequities and the systemic exploitation of the many by the few" (p. 2). Hegemony, discourse, power, and alienation are key forces that work together as a system in a way to produce and maintain ideologies that maintain unjust structures in society. Hegemony is the process whereby individuals learn to embrace beliefs and practices that support their own oppression. Ideology is discursive in that it is created and sustained through linguistic forms of expression embodied in discourse, which reinforce the power relations supported through ideology. This is an example of a hegemonic process at work because language serves as a medium of social power and domination that works to legitimize organized forces without individuals being aware of their compliance in their own ruling. When individuals develop a critical consciousness they are able to become aware of the forces at work that are restricting them from reaching their full potential (Brookfield, 2005). Online parenting education can serve as a method for perpetuating inequalities but also as an instrument in helping individuals develop a critical consciousness. Online parenting education can help individuals become aware of ideologies concerning gender and the family that may be present on websites.

One of the central learning tasks of critical theory is practicing ideology critique that involves individuals acknowledging how everyday practices and situations are embedded within unjust dominant ideologies. Through unmasking power, reclaiming reason, and learning liberation, individuals can become aware of the system at work that produces and maintains ideologies and perform ideology critique, create awareness and ultimately work towards social change. Through helping individuals become aware of oppressive structures in society they can

unmask the power behind the structures and forces of oppression. Individuals can further reclaim reason by not accepting the way things are as "natural" and learn how to challenge oppressive structures at work. Individuals can learn liberation through unmasking power and reclaiming reason that helps them work towards being free of oppressions and gain equal rights (Brookfield, 2005).

The aim or purpose of inquiry of critical theory is to critique and transform political, social, ethnic, cultural, economic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit people through advocacy and activism. There are multiple layers of reality that are governed by underlying, hidden structures. According to critical theory knowledge consists of structural and historical insights that can be transformed over time. Knowledge continues to grow over time through a dialectical process of historical revisionism, whereby ignorance gives way and individuals become informed. Generalizations can occur when there is a similarity in the mix of political, social, ethnic, cultural, economic, and gender values. Through dialectical interactions myths and hidden structures can be revealed, which helps individuals become informed and aware of their unrealized potential and transformations can occur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Neuman, 2006).

Basic beliefs of critical theory: epistemology, ontology, and methodology. When conducting social research epistemological, ontological and methodological considerations vary according to the paradigm a researcher follows. Epistemology refers to the question of what is or should be accepted as knowledge; ontology refers to the question of what is the nature of reality; and methodology refers to how the inquirer goes about finding out whatever she/he believes can be known (Bryman, 2004). Critical theory holds an ontological belief of historical realism and the epistemological viewpoint of subjectivist/transactional. According to critical theory's ontological belief of historical realism, virtual reality is shaped by economic, social, cultural,

political, gender, and ethnic values that are crystallized over time (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2005). Analyzing gendered language in online parenting education will show how parenting education websites serve as one of the means that virtual reality is shaped by those values crystallized over time. For example, parenting education websites present information concerning gender that reflects certain gender roles for men and women. Due to the values that have crystallized over time these gender roles are presented as natural abilities for men and women, however, these traits are in fact learned.

The epistemological belief of subjectivism/transactional that critical theorists hold is concerned with value-mediated findings (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, 2005). The research questions provide an example of how there is subjectivity present in my research; the questions that I have chosen reflect my interests, values and beliefs. The researcher cannot separate their self from what is being inquired into, thus making the researcher an instrument.

Lastly, critical theorists employ dialogic/dialectical methodological techniques (Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, 2005). Dialogic/dialectic techniques include oral communication as well as written text. Through analyzing gender content on parenting education websites I will be able to reveal the presence of gender stereotypes in online parenting information. My research will help in achieving social change in the practices of institutions, the profession of FLE, and society as a whole through recommendations, conclusions, and other practical interventions (van Dijk, 2003). By informing professionals in the field through my research paper and presentation, information on the presence of gendered language in online parenting education can be passed on to parents so that they can become aware of the social construction of gender roles as natural abilities for men and women. Parents can begin to critically analyze the content they encounter and choose parenting information that reflects their own ideologies.

Conclusion. Using critical theory as my theoretical framework for my research has helped in revealing underlying structures of power relations in gendered language in online parenting education. In turn, individuals can become aware of how language is a force that works to constrain and exploit them to maintain power relations. Creating awareness helps work towards social change and transformation (Bryman, 2004).

Research Methodology

The theoretical framework of critical theory has largely influenced the area of Critical

Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is a type of analytical research that involves the analysis of

how text and talk in the political and social context enact, reproduce, and resist inequality, social

power abuse, and dominance (van Dijk, 2003). According to van Dijk (2003), CDA does not

have a unitary theoretical framework, but has more of a shared perspective encompassing a range

of approaches rather than a step-by-step process. van Dijk proposes basic concepts for a

theoretical framework that critically relates cognition, discourse, and society. The basic concepts

include a focus on macro vs. micro, power as control, control of public discourse, and mind

control. Thus, there is no standardized form for doing a CDA; I have drawn on text-analytical

tools that work best for the research I conducted on gendered language in online parenting

education.

CDA primarily focuses on social problems rather than on paradigms. In order to study

social problems adequately, the work of CDA is multidisciplinary and focuses on how discourse

is a part of society and culture. There is a historical component to discourse and the connection

between society and text is mediated. Discourse is a part of society and culture that works to

produce ideologies and CDA aims to uncover, disclose, and reveal what are hidden and/or

implicit forms of discursive dominance or underlying ideologies. In addition, CDA focuses on

how power relations are enacted, confirmed, reproduced, legitimated, or challenged through

discursive structures. CDA does not just try to describe discourse structures, but uses

interpretation and explanation to reveal properties of social interaction and social structures. Any

methodology and theoretical approach is acceptable for CDA as long as the approach is able to

effectively study social problems such as racism, colonialism, sexism and other forms of

inequality. As a result of studies in CDA, solidarity is formed or sustained with dominated groups and social action can be accomplished through discourse (van Dijk, 2003).

For my research I drew on steps outlined by Huckin (1997) for doing a CDA. A general approach to CDA involves approaching the text in two ways. The researcher first approaches the text as an ordinary reader would in an uncritical manner. Second, the researcher then steps back and revisits the text in a critical manner. Approaching the text in a critical manner involves asking questions, revisiting the text at different levels, mentally comparing it to related texts, imagining how it could have been constructed differently, and so on. It is important to keep the first stage in mind during the second stage because that allows the researcher to focus on features that the unwary reader may potentially be misled by (Huckin, 1997).

Further details for examining the text critically in the second stage include three main steps. The first step involves examining the text as a whole (referred to as framing). Step two involves examining the text sentence by sentence. Step three involves examining phrases or words, and contextualized interpretation (Huckin, 1997). I created a checklist of the components of CDA to consider when analyzing text in so that CDA was infused in my analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1

Critical Discourse Analysis Checklist

1. Examining the text as a whole: Framing

   a. Visual aids

   b. Background

   c. Omission

   d. Presupposition

   e. Discursive difference

2. Examining the text sentence by sentence

   a. Topicalization

   b. Agency

   c. Omission

   d. Presupposition

   e. Insinuation

3. Examining phrases or words

   a. Connotations

      i. Labels

      ii. Metaphors

   b. Register

   c. Modality

4. Contextualized Interpretation

   a. Considering the context of the text

   b. Considering larger sociocultural context

(Huckin, 1997).

Throughout my analysis components of the CDA checklist were identified. The methods and how they were applied are further discussed in the coding procedures section. I now turn to a discussion of the components of the CDA checklist.

When examining the text as a whole it is important to determine the genre of the text and how the text conforms to it. The genre refers to the type of text, such as a journal article, manual, textbook, government position paper (Huckin, 1997). In the case of my study the genre of the text was mostly websites consisting of nonprofit organizations, commercial websites, and health organizations. Through knowing the genre of the text the analyst is able to detect and interpret deviations critically. Deviations may include omissions in the text (leaving something out) or manipulation of text (i.e., loaded words to slant the perspective). An important part of text production and interpretation is framing, which refers to how the content of a text is presented and what angle/slant the writer is taking (Huckin, 1997). Visual aids (photographs, formatting devices, diagrams, sketches, and other visual embellishments) also serve as a powerful way of framing text. Closely related to framing is foregrounding and backgrounding, which is when a writer emphasizes certain concepts (foregrounding) and de-emphasizes others (backgrounding) (Huckin, 1997). An example of a form of backgrounding is omission. Readers may also be manipulated by presupposition, which is the use of language in a way that certain ideas are taken for granted. Lastly, attention to discursive differences is important as they can also be used to manipulate the reader (Huckin, 1997). Discursive difference refers to mixed messages in text whereby contradictory information is presented.

Next, the analyst reads sentence by sentence. Sentences may be topicalized, whereby the topic of one sentence continues in the topic of the next. Topicalization is a form of foregrounding where the topic chosen in the sentence can create a perspective and influence the reader. In

addition, agent-patient relations (who is exerting power and who is passive) may be noticed

subconsciously in a sentence, i.e. who is the agent? Who exerts power? Who is passive? Lastly,

presuppositions and insinuations can also occur at the sentence level. Both are manipulative and

hard to challenge, but for different reasons. Presuppositions are often statements the author

appears to be taking for granted, whereas insinuations have double meanings allowing the author

to claim innocence when challenged (Huckin, 1997).

Examining phrases or words involves considering the connotations (special meaning the

word carries) of words. Connotations are conveyed through labels and metaphors or other figures

of speech. Another thing to consider is the register of a text, which is the formality or

informality, subject field, and degree of technicality. In addition, the modality, which refers to

the tone of statements, is a feature of discourse to consider. Words and phrases such as may,

could, must, might, will, it seems to me, and it's possible that are modal verbs and phrases to pay

attention to (Huckin, 1997).

Lastly, considering the contextualized interpretation involves considering the context of

the text. Considering the context of the text helps to reveal the larger sociocultural context of the

text. This goes beyond the meaning of the text on the page and interprets the text from particular

social contexts (Huckin, 1997).

Data Collection

The sample consisted of four parenting education websites found through convenience

sampling: (a) Pampers, (b) Ask Dr. Sears, (c) Parents Connect, and (d) Families Online

Magazine. Convenience sampling is a form of non-probability sampling and involves the

selection of a sample because of the convenient accessibility to the researcher (Bryman, 2004;

Lunsford & Lunsford, 1995). The website Alexa (alexa.com), an online web information

company, "top sites" section was used to select the parenting education websites. Within the section top sites the tab "by category" was selected; then a series of different subcategories were selected. The following sequence of subcategories that were selected included: "Home", "Family", "Parenting", and "Resources". I then yielded a list of websites and began from the top of the list applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria to select websites for my study.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria. Websites had to meet the following criteria to be included: (a) be considered a website directed towards parents, and (b) include parent-based information resources such as articles. Websites were excluded if they meet any of the following criteria: government websites, online FLE website directories, online support groups, websites requiring membership with login or fees, commentaries, blogs, personal web pages, websites without information-based resources (articles), websites that focused specifically on gender, and websites with a specific focus and/or target audience (i.e., mothers, foster parents, parents of children with disorders, parents of adult children with intellectual disabilities). Websites analysis continued until saturation was achieved themes and no new information was found. Thereby, the same themes were emerging repeatedly and no new categories were found. Within the websites that were selected, articles were excluded for the following reasons: polls, solely product advertisement, articles that focus solely on medical information or facts about health, articles submitted by parents, links to content outside of the webpage, and when articles on a particular topic reached saturation.

When analyzing website content various categories and subcategories of each website were considered. Within the various categories and subcategories of each website, articles were selected randomly to determine if the article met the inclusion/exclusion criteria and if gender messages were present. If the inclusion criterion was met and gender messages were present then

articles were copied and saved into a word document to be analyzed in the next step of analysis. If no gender messages appeared in the articles then there was an overall website evaluation done to gain an understanding of other ways that gender messages were transmitted to the reader.

Within my study there were four websites used for analysis. Two of the four websites in my study were only used in the first part of analysis because the website content appeared to present "information-based" content in a general neutral manner. However, upon analyzing the overall website I found that there were still gender messages present that should be included in my study. Therefore, the "CDA checklist" (which was discussed previously and will be discussed more later) was applied to do an overall website evaluation and record other ways that gender messages were present.

Coding procedures

Open coding and inductive data analysis procedures combined with methods of CDA (outlined previously) were used to analyze the text critically (Huckin, 1997). The qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA was used for importing documents, coding, and analysis. For gender content an open code was assigned to the meaning unit that succinctly captured the essence of the gendered meaning unit (Krafchick et al., 2005). An open code was yielded through the process of breaking down, comparing, examining, categorizing, and conceptualizing data. The process of open coding develops concepts that are later grouped and turned into categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, as cited in Bryman, 2004). CDA guided my research while open coding ensured that the text was being analyzed critically. After reading and open coding all applicable content from each of the four websites a constant comparative method was used to collapse initial codes (Krafchick et al., 2005). The constant comparative process is a part of grounded theory that involves a process of maintaining a close connection between

conceptualization and data. I used memo writing as a way to record thoughts throughout the

process so that the correspondence between concepts and categories and their indicators were not

lost (Bryman, 2004). As content on the four websites were analyzed, themes that emerged from

each website and between websites were identified. Next, second-level codes were developed by

comparing themes and developing relevant categories and meanings (Krafchick et al., 2005).

Second level codes are overarching codes that are more general and work towards categorizing

open codes into themes (Krafchick et al., 2005). I then did a second analysis of the data to gain a

better understanding of the codes and to identify prominent concepts and themes concerning

messages about gender and parenting advice. Through using an inductive method, themes

emerged directly from the data, which in turn is where the results were generated (Krafchick et

al., 2005).

CDA was infused in the analysis by considering the text as a whole, the text sentence by

sentence, and examining phrases and words to reveal underlying meaning and hidden forces that

perpetuate ideologies (van Dijk, 2003). Throughout the coding process components of the CDA

checklist were identified. This further helped identify the ways that text presented "motivated

representations" (hooks, 2006). Lastly, the components of the CDA "checklist" were applied to

each website to determine what gender messages are presented in an overall website evaluation.

Website Descriptions

Through providing a description of each of the websites included in my study I hope to

provide a better sense of the websites used for my analysis. I have included a separate list of the

references used from each of the parenting education websites in the Appendix. It is important to

note that although a website may state that content is written by a "professional" or "expert"

and/or may look "professional" in appearance that does not make the information provided

accurate. It is important for website readers to be weary of the sources of information and claims that are made.

Pampers (pampers.ca) is a website produced by the US based company Proctor and Gamble. The company is well known for their line of baby products. The website presents a "warm" and "happy" image of parenthood whereby mothers and babies appear to be "perfect" in a sense. The images present as class-based in the fact that they appear to be suburban families. The visual images are vibrant, clear, and crisp which makes it appear credible and visually appealing to website readers. The website is divided into sections on pregnancy, newborn, baby, toddler, and preschooler. Within the sections there are articles that have a wide range of topics. The topics are specific to the age category of the child and could range from breastfeeding, car seat safety, bedtime routines, to toilet training, painting, air travel with children, and preschool readiness.

Ask Dr. Sears (askdrsears.com) is a website produced by Bill Sears, MD and Martha Sears, RN. Bill Sears has worked in pediatrics for over 30 years and has raised eight children with Martha. They have more than 40 pediatric books and have appeared on more than 100 television shows including *Oprah, CNN, Good Morning America, and 20/20*. Three of their sons, Jim, Bob and Peter, are also doctors and contribute to website content. The visual quality of the website with its white background, few pictures, and plain and simple appearance sets the tone for the information to be found. The base colours of the website are white, green, and blue and there are pictures of the Sears family on the main page whereby the four men are in doctor's uniforms with their name and title underneath their picture; whereas Martha is wearing a pink sweater and is simply referred to as "Martha" and there is no mention of her title as a registered nurse. The author credentials and website appearance present an educational and middle to upper

class feel for readers. There are advertisements for health products and links to other

organizations and websites. The main sections found on the website include pregnancy and

childbirth, breastfeeding, parenting, attachment parenting, family nutrition, vaccines, and family

wellness. Within those sections there are topics that range anywhere from childhood illnesses,

discipline and behavior to recipes and food diet information.

Parents Connect (gocitykids.parentsconnect.com) is a US based website by the company

that is also the makers of well-known brands such as Noggin, Nick Jr., Nickelodeon, Nick@Nite

and The N. The website presents as taking a non-judgemental approach to parenting by stating

there is no right or wrong way to be a parent and their slogan states "We're Not Perfect, We're

Parents". The website presents a very fun and playful feel in the vibrant colours and images. It

appears "kid friendly" with the playful images and images of well-known cartoon characters.

The website at first glance appears not to be class based but upon a closer look there is a lot of

marketing of products which makes it more directed at middle to upper class parents. The fact

that the website is based by a well known company makes the information seem like it is

credible and from a reliable resource. The main sections of the website include: pregnancy,

parenting, for parents, community, gift guide, seasonal, local, videos, polls and contests. The

subtopics within the categories range from parenting information according to the child's age,

parenting advice from a Nanny, family travel, relationship advice, to recipes, gift guides, and

discussion boards.

Families Online Magazine (familiesonlinemagazine.com) website aims to provide

"expert" advice to parents on topics such as: parenting advice, school, finance, and health. The

images on the homepage are "wholesome", family oriented, and present as middle-class. The

images present as idealistic in the fact that they focus on happy images and not the realities of

parenting that include frustration and other emotions. There is a picture of "the doctors", who are Caucasian men, along with their title on the bottom of the homepage. The overall website appearance is plain and simple with white background and mostly black text. The pictures are in colour, but have a dull appearance. The layout of pictures and website content is basic. The website appears credible but not as "fancy" or "vibrant" as websites of large corporations, such as Pampers or Parents Connect. The main sections found on the homepage include family fun, parenting, health, life and style, travel, save money, school and community. The subtopics of articles vary and range anywhere from book reviews, counselor's advice, Christian parenting advice, dad's opinions to ways to save money, nutritional information, and beauty and decorating advice.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting research it is important to take into account ethical considerations. I identified specific websites used in the study, however, because I conducted a CDA using information available to the public via the internet and does not involve participants there were no ethical considerations for conducting my research.

Results

The following section presents the results of my research by highlighting major themes and findings. The findings suggest that there are gender messages present in parenting education websites. The overall website evaluations found that there were gender messages presented in all four websites examined. Although Pampers and Ask Dr. Sears present gender-neutral content in the website article content, other images, videos, titles, and labeling suggest otherwise. The second stage analysis found gender messages in two out of the four websites. Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine had prominent gender messages. I will now turn to a discussion of the results in detail according to each research question.

Research Question 1: To what extent is gender embodied in leading parenting education websites on the general topic of parenting?

The total number of gender specific, mixed messages, gender neutral, non-stereotypical, and other messages directed at parents, children, mothers, and fathers for each website was determined. The category gender specific refers to gender stereotypical content, which is defined as information that is consistent with socially constructed gender expectations. "Mixed messages" refers to text that includes both gender specific and gender-neutral messages. Non-stereotypic information is defined as content that offers an alternative to culturally defined gender expectations. Non-stereotypical gender content includes rules, assignment of chores, or interactions that are not based on the gender of the parent or child. Gender-neutral refers to content directed at both genders. The category "other messages" refers to content that was not classified under the other identified categories. The content identified is the total number of occurrences in each website. Therefore, the articles were not identified as falling under a single category and were not labeled as "stereotypical" or "non-stereotypical". For example: articles

could have contained content that is applicable to multiple categories outlined above or content could have occurred multiple times within the same article.

Pampers and Ask Dr. Sears were not included in the second stages of the critical discourse analysis because gender messages were not found in website articles. The term baby or child was used and general parenting information was offered that did not make reference to gender. To help provide an understanding of why these two website were not used I will provide exerts of sample text from each website. Examples of statements from articles in Pampers that present information-based content include: "Babies with a nightly bedtime routine sleep better, so consider establishing a relaxing ritual and sticking to it. Keep your evening games quiet and calm, and then transition into your bedtime activities. You could give your baby a bath, read a book, sing lullabies, or flip through a family photo album" (Baby Sleep Solutions: From 7 to 9 Months, n.d. para. 2). Another example includes: "To keep your baby's skin healthy, you need to maintain its natural softness and strength. Even if your baby's skin isn't peeling, it will benefit from using moisturizers" (Mancini, n.d., para. 8).

Information-based content from Ask Dr. Sears, under the category "Attachment Parenting" includes the following example: "Attachment parenting is a style of caring for your infant that brings out the best in the baby and the best in the parents. Attachment parenting implies first opening your mind and heart to the individual needs of your baby" ("Attachment Parenting", n.d., para. 1). Another example from the topic "Parenting" and subcategory "Discipline & Behaviour", includes the following exert: "Model an apology. Even adults sometimes resort to name-calling. We've caught ourselves occasionally yelling, "You're being a brat!" in frustration when a child is being willful. If your children hear a steady stream of "you're lazy," or "you're stupid," they will pick up on the habit, since it seems to be an acceptable way

for parents to vent emotion" ("Name Calling", n.d., para.3). These examples show how the term

"parent(s)" and "child(ren)" are used rather than reference to mother or father or girl or boy. The

use of general terms such as those makes the information applicable to individuals in general

rather than a particular gender. In addition, the content does not focus on gender specific things

but rather on providing information about parenting in general.

Although Pampers and Dr. Sears present as gender neutral in website content, there were

still apparent gender messages found on the websites. An overall website evaluation of Pampers

and Ask Dr. Sears was done as a way to capture the gender messages presented. The analysis

found that gender specific content was embodied through pictures and subtle messages that were

included from videos (Pampers) or authors of website content (Ask Dr. Sears). The overall

website evaluations will be discussed in more detail later on in the paper.

Findings from Parents Connect contained the following messages about children, parents,

fathers, and mothers. See Table 1 below.

Table 1

Parents Connect (*gocitykids.parentsconnect.com*) *Findings Summary*

Website: Parents Connect	Gender Specific	Mixed Messages	Gender Neutral	Non-Stereotypical	other messages
Children	12 (60%)	0 (0%)	7 (35%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Parents	0 (0%)	7 (58.3%)	5 (41.6%)	0 (0%)	0
Fathers	10 (83.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (16.6%)	0 (0%)
Mothers	518 (91.19%)	1 (.17%)	0 (0%)	2 (.35%)	47 (8.27%)

Table one shows that the greatest number of gender specific messages were directed at mothers with over 90%. The other categories, children, parents and fathers did not come close to compare. The gap in numbers shows that the majority of parenting education website content was directed at mothers and presents the most gender specific content. Examples of gender specific content about mothers will be provided and discussed in detail later on in the chapter (along with gender specific content about fathers and children).

Content directed at parents was found to be either gender neutral (41.6%) or present mixed messages (58.3%). Gender-neutral content about parents included messages that refer to "parents" in general and does not single out mothers or fathers alone. Examples of content include:

> When you're a parent, you often spend most of your time taking care of someone else. Not that you mind, but it's easy to get so swept up in nurturing your child that you forget that the little one's parents deserve a little pampering, too. ("Finding Me Time", n.d., para. 1).

and "OK, so you're already a nervous Nellie of a new parent. And what's at the top of the Newborn Worry List? SIDS" (SIDSEducator, n.d., para. 4). Mixed messages about parents included content that would appear to be directed at parents but insinuated that mothers was the target audience. For example the introduction page to the section on "Exercise for Parents" states: "It's important for parents to stay in good shape—and running after your kids isn't always enough exercise for parents. We've got loads of creative ideas and tips about how to get the exercise you need!" ("Exercise for Parents", n.d., para. 1). After reading subcategory articles on "Exercise for Parents" it is apparent the target audience is mothers and not parents in general.

It was found that information directed at fathers was either gender specific (83.3%) or non-stereotypical (16.6%). Gender specific content about fathers included messages that refer to fathers "inability" to care for a child "properly". For example:

> Don't be that mom who thinks she's the only one who knows how to care for the children and the house the right way. Well, it's OK to think that, but play along so you can get a nap. Let Daddy bathe the baby, even if he fails to use soap. ("10 Imperfect Mom Truths", n.d., para.12)

An example of non-stereotypical content about fathers is the discussion of feelings. For example: "Dad must show that he does care and loves his children. Help him figure out a way that he can spend more time with your kids, as well as the whole family" ("Child Acting Out in Father's Absence", n.d., para.7).

Lastly, content directed at children was found to be mostly gender specific (60%), while there was also gender neutral (35%) and other messages (5%) found. Gender specific content about children included gender association with colour. Further examples of gender specific content about children will be provided later on in this section. Gender-neutral content about children include statements that do not identify characteristics or colours with a certain gender. Examples include messages such as: "The delivery ward nurses brought you your new bundle of joy wrapped like a perfect salmon skin roll" ("The Baby-Gami", n.d., para. 1) and "Between 9 and 12 months of age. Children at this age are fearless, full of grace and self-confidence, and very explorative" ("Baby Sleep Boot Camp: Naptimes", n.d., para.3).

Findings from Families Online Magazine (familiesonlinemagazine.com) contained the following messages about children, parents, fathers, and mothers. See Table 2 below.

Table 2

Families Online Magazine (familiesonlinemagazine.com) Findings Summary

Website: Families Online Magazine	Gender Specific	Mixed Messages	Gender Neutral	Non-Stereotypical	Other Messages
Children	30 (66.6%)	2 (4.4%)	6 (13.3%)	0 (0%)	7 (15.5%)
Parents	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.25%)	10 (62.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Fathers	8 (36.36%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (18.18%)	10 (45.45%)
Mothers	64 (91.42%)	2 (2.85%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.42%)	3(4.28%)

Table two shows that there was gender specific content occurring in each of the categories; however, the majority of gender specific content from Families Online Magazine was directed at mothers (91.42%). Other gender specific content was directed at children (66.6%), fathers (36.36%), and parents (31.25%). Examples of such content towards mothers, fathers, and children will be discussed later in the section.

Over 30% of the content was gender specific toward parents. The following example discusses gender differences in behavior and relationship expectations:

A second consideration is simply that there are major differences in how men are in

relationships compared to how women are. Women generally don't understand men

because the men don't act like women and similarly, men don't understand women

because they don't act like men. ("Building Happy Relationships", n.d., para. 7)

Another significant number is the gender neutral content about parents (62.5%). This includes statements such as: "Is there a comfortable chair in the room already that can be used by mom and dad for midnight feedings?" (Administrator, 2011d, para. 2) and "Decorating the nursery is often a parent's source of excitement and pride, and helps the parents prepare psychologically for the arrival of the baby" (Ackerman, 2010, para. 5). These examples refer to both mom and dad or use the term parents in reference to feeding the baby and decorating the nursery, which presents the activities as gender neutral.

Moreover, there was (13.3%) gender neutral content about children that encouraged the expression of feelings and involvement in sport for children in general and did not make reference to gender. Exerts from the articles include:

It is important to help your children understand that anger is not all bad. You want to help them express their frustration and age appropriately. One way to do this is to help them increase their feeling vocabulary. Words like sad, sleepy, hungry, bored, afraid, jealous often better describe how a child may be feeling (Munford, 2011, para. 6)

and "Sports can be many things to our children, fun, thrill, emotion, feelings, pride, and many more. Our kids more than ever are being driven by sports everywhere; they know the name of every player in soccer, basket-ball, baseball, football . . ." (Powel, 2012, para. 1). In addition, there was a mixed message about associating a child's gender with the colour for decorating a child's room. The following statement suggests that traditional gender colours are used for decorating a child's room but also encourages the use of new colours as well: "Although many people still like to use the traditional colors of pink and blue for baby's rooms there are plenty of other attractive color combinations which can be used very effectively when decorating a baby's bedroom" (Administrator, 2011g, para. 1).

Lastly, there was non-stereotypical content found about mothers (1.42%) and fathers (18.18%). Mothers are discussed as the breadwinner of the family—"I ask if they realize that, quite possibly, the mother is the family breadwinner, bringing home health insurance and other necessities for the family?" (LaRowe, 2012, para. 1). In contrast, the non-stereotypical role of the "stay-at-home" dad and feelings of fathers were discussed—

> I'm a stay-at-home dad and I'm finding the whole thing incredibly isolating . . . Support. Yes, men are getting more used to sharing their feelings these days, but we still don't do it as often as we probably should-particularly in front of women. (Brott, 2010, para1-3)

More interestingly, there was one article that presented mixed messages about mothers roles. Locke referred to mothers as the primary care provider through excluding the father's roles, but also blamed the mother for not talking to their baby—

> How many times have you seen a mother getting on the bus and whipping out her mobile to chat or text with friends while the baby in the stroller is left to his or her own devices. So maybe mothers are not talking so much to their children anymore. (Locke, 2013, para. 2)

In sum, Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine had a relatively strong focus on gender in the website content while the other two websites (Pampers and Ask Dr. Sears) had minimal attention focused on gender in the website content.

Research Question 2: What are the prominent themes about gender in these parenting education websites?

To address this research question, open coding combined with CDA was used to yield prominent themes about gender. CDA was infused in the analysis by considering the text as a whole, the text sentence by sentence, and examining phrases and words to reveal underlying

meaning and hidden forces that perpetuate ideologies (van Dijk, 2003). Prominent themes about

gender were identified about children, fathers, mothers, and parents. Themes emerged in two

websites: Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine. The greatest number of prominent

themes about gender was found in the Parents Connect website.

Themes about children in Parents Connect: gender role messages concerning 1)

representations of gender with colours (i.e., blue for boys and pink for girls) and 2) messages

about gender roles for girls that focus on a concern with appearance. The first theme,

representations of gender, refers to terminology and symbolic structures with gendered

meanings. Themes concerning the representation of gender include statements such as: using "a

flock of rubber duckies floating across a pond (large round or oval mirror). Tie pink or blue

ribbons around the duckies' necks" or use "inverted colander filled with lollipops stuck in the

holes. Tie each lollipop with a pink or blue ribbon" (Warner, 1998, para. 2) or " if you've chosen

to host a surprise shower, enclose a few pink and blue jellybeans along with a note that reads,

"Shhh...it's a surprise. Don't spill the beans" (Long, n.d, para. 10).

The second theme, gender role messages for girls focuses on a concern with physical

appearance. These gender messages were presented as being socialized within the family. The

following statement is an example of gender roles for girls passed on by their mother: "As a little

girl, I used to watch my mother make herself beautiful every day before work or at night before a

party. A dab of color here, a spritz of perfume there—she taught me that beauty is simplicity"

(Emme, "Easy Makeup Tricks for Moms", n.d., para.1).

In Parents Connect there was a lack of discussion of father's role in parenting. The

information that was offered about fathers is presented in reference to mothers, whereby it is

information provided to mothers about the fathers role and is not directed directly at fathers. The

information for fathers is related to pregnancy and their role in parenting. Examples of information for fathers provided to mothers include: "If you're having trouble trying to conceive and your doctor thinks the issue may be with your partner's parts and not yours, he'll refer him to a urologist for a fertility checkup" ("Trying to Conceive: Male Fertility Physical Exam", n.d., para. 1) and "If you encounter difficulty trying to conceive, your partner will need to go through an infertility workup. It's pretty painless though, we swear. He'll just need to provide a semen sample…" ("Trying to Conceive: Testing Semen for Infertility", n.d., para. 1).

A further example of information for fathers about their role in parenting directed at mothers is shown in the following excerpt: "Dad must show that he does care and loves his children. Help him figure out a way that he can spend more time with your kids, as well as the whole family" (Sophy, n.d, para. 7). The information suggests that mothers have to "teach" fathers how to express their feelings and emotions to their children. This further suggests that expressing feelings and emotions is not a natural trait that men have. In sum, there is a lack of information directed at fathers; the information that is presented about fathers presents gender roles in the fact that messages are indirectly directed at fathers through mothers and suggests that men expressing emotions and feelings is not a natural trait.

The first theme identified about mothers in Parents Connect was mother's health with subthemes about mental health and healthy eating. The second theme was concerned with mother's body image, with subthemes about self image and appearance, positive and negative effects about being concerned with appearance, marketing products related to appearance, and how health is associated to appearance. The last theme was concerning mother's roles/duties which included subthemes about "mom" messages, mother's parenting, and stereotypical images of mothers. It is evident that most of the website content is directed towards mothers.

Regarding the first theme, mother's health, the main message was about "me time" for mothers, which refers to different forms of self-care involving stereotypical gender activities as a way of getting a break from parenting. Examples of self care activities that were suggested include: going to the spa, making an at-home spa, taking a bubble bath, reading, going out with girlfriends, dressing up, putting on makeup, or having a cup of tea in a quiet corner. Within the self-care activities there were messages about appearance. For example comments found in "6 Ways to Keep the Me in Mommy!" presents messages about how being concerned with your appearance will make you look cute or feel like a hot mama—"*Dress Up!* No need to get fancy, but sometimes throwing on something other than sweats and a t-shirt can make you feel like a hot mama (rather than just *somebody's mama*) again" (n.d., para. 5) or "*Slap on Some Makeup!* We're not talking full-on evening glam, but, this mom will tell you, a little lip gloss goes a long way to keeping you looking cute!"(n.d., para. 3). The messages suggested that women should be concerned with their appearance and strive to look "hot" or "cute", which presents stereotypical gender role messages to women.

In addition, self-care was presented as a way for mothers to stay healthy and maintain their ability to care and provide for their children. The following excerpt provides examples of suggestions of gender stereotypical activities for women and also insinuates that the mother's role within the family is vital: "*Pamper Yourself!* Go for a mani/pedi. Get your hair done. Take a bubble bath. Taking care of numero uno is important. Because we all know if mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!" ("6 Ways to Keep the Me in Mommy!", n.d., para. 7). The same message was seen in the following passage from the article "Taking Care of Yourself When You're Busy Taking Care of Everyone Else":

When you're a mom, it's hard to carve out a sec to take care of yourself. There are kids to

feed, spouses to romance, work to be done. There just simply aren't enough hours in the

day! But one thing that's for sure is that if mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy. So

make sure you take the time to take care of YOU!. (n.d., para. 1)

The messages suggested that it is primarily women's role and responsibility in care providing for

the family.

Another health concern presented for mothers regarded healthy eating. There were

messages that presented general information on how to eat healthy but there were also messages

that connect healthy eating to weight loss and achieving desirable appearances. The following

excerpt presents healthy eating in terms of appearance, in a way that puts the idea of achieving a

desirable image as the reason for healthy eating rather than as a overall concern with health and

well-being— "Maintain your hard-earned bikini (OK, *tankini*) body and keep the kids from

bouncing off the walls by replacing sugar- and calorie-loaded summer favorites with these tasty,

healthy alternatives" ("Healthy Summer Food Swaps", n.d., para. 1).

Additional messages regarding mothers' body image were seen in the second theme;

there are messages about self-image and appearance that discuss topics such as: exercise, "beauty

tips", and desirable appearances for women.

Exercise resources were discussed and how they are applicable to women, in particular

mothers. The article "Fitness Websites That Create Customized Workout Routines" (n.d)

provides a list of resources and their descriptions. Examples of comments included in the website

descriptions include: "They even have a Fit Mom program specifically for postpartum mamas!

(para. 2)", "Perfect for busy moms. Can we get an "ohm" for that?"(para. 2), "It creates workouts

just for you based on your gender, age, ability and fitness goals" (para. 4), and "This site lets you

create free, custom-made videos that target your trouble spots (hello, mummy tummy) and fit into your busy schedule" (para. 6). Another article, "Easy Exercises for Mamas" (n.d), stated how a woman's fitness routine can change after having a baby—"Even if you were a total workout queen pre-baby, once you're a mom, you're wondering who has time for all THAT. The truth is, you need to make the time" (para. 1). Fitness is also promoted as a self-care initiative for mothers to maintain their health so in turn they can care for others—"After all, being strong and fit will make your days easier (And what mom doesn't want that?). Besides, if you're not healthy, who will take care of your family? So, make it a mission to carve some time out for yourself…" (para. 6). Messages about stereotypical gender roles were presented about exercise again in connection to women's concern with appearance and self-care as a way to maintain role as a care provider.

Moreover, with regard to the theme body image, stereotypical gender messages about appearance for women are presented. Beauty tips discussed range from topics about hair and fashion to make up and skincare. With regard to women being concerned with their appearance, there were also the message that there are "desirable" appearances for women. "Desirable" appearances for women involve maintaining a youthful image and achieving "sexy". Descriptive words from the websites Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine that denote "desirable" appearances include:

> Elegant, classy, touch of glamour, gorgeous, beauty, beautiful, "dolled" up, flat stomach and firm thighs, big "boobs", slimmer, chic sophisticated, not showgirl, boho chic, smoother, seamless image, hot, confident, put-together, femininity, youthful glow (without the acne!), prevent wrinkles, reduce the appearance of lines, sexy, smokin' hot, cleavage, sweet, effortlessly sultry, cool, sassy, "perfect". Victoria's Secret model

Articles suggest that women should be concerned with their appearance to hide imperfections and to be self-critical. The following statement further illustrates the theme:

Flatter Your Figure

To hide a tummy: Stand up straight. Wear tops that sit at the hips not the waist. Ruched tops are also great.

To hide boobies: Nursing or still losing baby fat? Go for scoop- or square necklines. If you wear a deep V-neck, put on a little cami beneath.

To hide junk in your trunk: Try wide leg trousers that sit lower on your waist; long, tailored jackets; and tailored dresses in a solid color. ("Party-Ready Fashion for Moms", n.d, para. 9)

Other statements that exemplify this theme include: "For less than 10 bucks a bottle, it's a cheap way to make you feel gorgeous again (even if your butt is the size of a sofa)" (Alison, "Get Healthy Hair When Pregnant", n.d., para. 1), "While fully dressed, go take a good look in the mirror to assess what's under there. What is sticking out versus what is being sucked in? Do your cups runneth over? Every pinch, every roll, every line can be either minimized or highlighted (and not in the good way) by the undergarments you choose" (Emme, "Fashion for Moms: Get the Right Size Bra", n.d, para. 1), and "Firm It Up. No, not your abs (though it couldn't hurt, postbaby), but we're talking about your baby's mattress" ("Baby Sleep: SIDS Prevention", n.d, para. 9). These statements present stereotypical gender messages for women about appearance that focus on imperfections and self-criticism.

In contrast, messages from Parents Connect that present benefits of women having a concern with body image include: the encouragement of creativity, enhancing natural beauty, having a concern with appearance for self and not others, and how appearance is related to

confidence and feeling good about oneself. Statements that exemplified those themes include:

"Work out! It's not only good for your self-image, exercise helps you live a longer, happier,

healthier life" ("Taking Care of Yourself", n.d., para. 2), "But I've learned that true beauty is

about appreciating what you have and who you are" (Emme, "Makeup Trends and Moms", n.d,

para. 1). "… it feels good to make the extra effort to look good. Not for anyone else, but for

ourselves. Today, tell yourself you're worth an extra 12 minutes to fix your hair, and embrace

the "mom 'do'". (Emme, "Simple Hairstyles for Moms", n.d., para. 1), "In order to be a healthy,

strong and confident mama, you have to take care of yourself—body and soul. This means

allowing your body to find its natural weight, shape and style, and not fight it to the point of

obsession and disappointment" (Emme, "Emme on Nourishing Your Body and Soul", n.d.,

para.1), and

> When it comes to your hair, there really are no hard-and-fast rules. If you follow rules to
>
> do this or don't do that based on your skin color and face shape without venturing out and
>
> trying your own creative twist, life just wouldn't be that interesting, would it? (Emme,
>
> "Finding the Perfect Haircut", n.d, para. 1).

Although there were messages that present positive effects for having a concern with

appearance there were also mixed messages about women's concern with self-image. Examples

include statements such as: "Just because you're a mom doesn't mean you don't want to look

fab! Not that you need makeup to look beautiful . . . but we'll help keep you looking fab with our

tips for makeup for moms" ("Makeup for Moms", n.d., para.1) and "DO go au naturel. No, I'm

not saying completely bare-faced, but using neutral tones and simple glosses often get the job

done beautifully" (Emme, "Makeup Trends and Moms", n.d., para. 5). The messages were

contradicting in the fact that they stated that women should enhance their natural beauty but at the same time still encouraged women to wear makeup and provided makeup tips.

Moreover, other messages presented to mothers were about how health is associated with appearance. The focus was on harmful chemicals to avoid and good vitamins and food for one's health and appearance. Themes about body image presented a lot of marketing products related to appearance. There were pictures, direct links to product information and marketing language present in almost every article in the section "Your Life". In addition, when discussing the theme body image the term "for moms" was often included as a way to direct the information at mothers. This theme will be discussed further in the section below on "mom" messages.

With regards to the third theme, mother's roles/duties, there were "mom" messages, which include terminology presenting a certain tone for the information provided to the reader, as well as, stereotypical messages about women's self-image and their roles as mothers. "Mama" and "mommy" are examples of terminology used throughout articles that influence the tone of information. The tone presented the information in a way that infantilizes it and is demeaning for women. Further terminology presenting stereotypical gender messages about women's self-image included: hip mama, hot mama, super mom, smokin' hot mama!!, and "the mom 'do". The tag line "for moms" was frequently included in the titles of information, which presented "beauty tips" as a way to direct the information at mothers. Examples include: "Fashion for Moms: Dressing for Your Shape", "Hair Care for Moms: Getting the Right Cut", "Make Yourself Over Mama Boot Camp", "Makeup Trends and Moms", "Makeup for Moms", "Makeup Essentials for Moms", "Makeup for Moms: Makeup-Case Basics". Some of the messages even goes as far as stating how self-image changes for women when they become a mother—"Now that we're moms, makeup can take on a whole different meaning" (Emme, "Makeup Trends and Moms",

n.d., para. 1). Moreover, examples of "mom" messages that presented stereotypical gender messages about mothers' roles include: "mommy priorities", "I keep them in my mom bag, in the car, everywhere!", "Essential Items for Working Moms" (Lipinski, n.d.), and "pregnant mom duty". These "mom" messages denote the sense that mothers' have certain priorities, needs, and duties to fulfill their role as a mother.

Regarding the subtheme, *stereotypical images of mothers*, there were many additional subthemes that emerged, such as: sacrifices, budgeting, women's inherent caregiving roles and responsibilities, and the day-to-day work of mothers, which involves multitasking and a lack of time to complete many roles and duties (which requires planning ahead and "keeping it simple"). Examples of sacrifices that mothers make include: "You've sacrificed your bank account, your career, your free time, your romantic life with your partner, YOUR WAIST ... all in the name of raising great kids" ("Beat Depression: 14 Ways", n.d., para. 1), "When you're a mom taking care of everyone else 24/7, it can be tough to find a sec to take care of yourself" ("Avoiding Parent Burnout", n.d., para. 1), and

> Retain some of your pre-parent interests so you don't completely lose touch with who you were before baby. Did you love to read? Work out? Travel the world? Keep it up! (Well, that last one may have to be put on hold for a while, but still). ("Make "Me" Time for Girlfriends", n.d., para. 4)

It is also important to note another apparent theme (to be discussed later in detail) was how the messages presented to mothers are elitist. Thus ideologies of class were inherent in the messages. Moreover, budgeting was discussed as a way for mothers to maintain beauty while continuing to cover expenses of having a child and everyday living—

Your kids and their many needs (diapers, gummy bears, Bakugan toys ...) aren't exactly

helping out with the rent. And while your dollar may seem like it doesn't go the distance

it once did, that doesn't mean you have to forgo your looks to pay the bills. Instead of

that expensive lip gloss you're addicted to, check out these cheapie beauty finds. Some of

'em even beat the pants off of their pricier counterparts. So go treat yourself. You might

even have enough money left over for a Slurpee. ("Budget Makeup (That Works!)", n.d.,

para. 1)

Other messages about budgeting focused on marketing beauty products to mothers. Statements

such as: "But the bottom line? You can keep it affordable AND keep yourself beautiful at the

same time" (Emme, "Drugstore Cosmetics vs. Name-Brand Makeup", n.d., para. 4),

"Accessorizing is a great way for any mom to update her look for a lot less time and money.

(Two things we moms are always looking for!)" (Emme. "Fashion for Moms: Accessorize!",

n.d., para. 1), and "A sexy pout can be yours, and all it takes is affordable stuff from the

drugstore and our easy application tips" ("How to Get Fuller Lips", n.d., para. 1). These

messages suggested that mothers are so busy doing for everyone else that they do not spend time

or money on their self; therefore, through suggesting make-up as affordable it makes it okay for

mothers to spend money on their self.

Furthermore, messages presented about women's inherent caregiving roles and

responsibilities were seen in the following passages: "Besides, if you're not healthy, who will

take care of your family?" ("Easy Exercises for Mamas", n.d., para. 6), "When you're a mom,

it's hard to carve out a sec to take care of yourself. There are kids to feed, spouses to romance,

work to be done. There just simply aren't enough hours in the day!" ("Taking Care of Yourself",

n.d., para. 1), and "Between playing chef, nurse, chauffeur, playmate, storyteller, disciplinarian,

homework helper and everything else, it's easy to lose yourself" ("6 Ways to Keep the Me in

Mommy!", n.d., para. 1). These statements presented gender stereotypes about women's primary

role and responsibility as the careprovider. It further provides details of the different roles and

responsibilities that mothers have to take care of their family, including: cooking, entertaining,

supervising, and helping their child(ren) in different ways.

The day-to-day work of mothers was discussed in terms of multitasking and a lack of

time to complete many roles and duties. The following example is of how multitasking was used

by mothers to complete the many tasks as a care provider—

> And as soon as I am back on my feet to chop this, stir that and heat something up, the
>
> requests start pouring in about putting in a DVD, helping someone in the bathroom,
>
> breaking up a fight, getting down a toy, seeing something funny on TV, listening to a
>
> joke, watching someone jump really high! . . . All while running outside to play. Then
>
> back in. And then back out. And back in. And out . . . (Nettles, "Don't blame me!", n.d.,
>
> para. 2)

Multitasking was a major theme further discussed in terms of women as the primary

caregiver while maintaining appearance (fashion, applying make-up, and doing hair), exercising,

and working. The following excerpt shows how little time mothers have in getting ready and

how they have to use multitasking to get ready while caring for their child:

> You've just showered, picked up whatever was laying on the closet floor to wear and are
>
> about to slap on some makeup when your 2-year-old announces he's ready to go outside
>
> RIGHT NOW, MOMMY! If you choose to avoid the tantrum over looking pulled
>
> together (really, who wouldn't?), keep an essential-makeup kit in your diaper bag or
>
> purse for on-the-go applications. ("Makeup essentials for moms", n.d.)

Other examples that illustrate the theme of women multitasking to careprovide while trying to stay fit and exercise includes: "So the next time you run errands or play with your kid, think about how you can make it more of a physical activity. Walk to the store instead of driving…" ("Easy Exercises for Mamas", n.d., para. 2) and "The Strollometer. It transforms any infant stroller into a computerized workout … It's like having your very own personal trainer alongside you, logging in your workout times, all while you watch Junior suck on his toes" ("The Strollometer", n.d., para. 2).

Additional statements that exemplified the theme of multitasking in terms of the role of working mothers are seen in Lipinski's (n.d.) article, "Essential Items for Working Moms", which stated, "There is nothing worse than having to stop and pick up diapers or wipes when you're burnt out after a late meeting" (para. 5) and "Any working mom will tell you that the whole "being a parent and having a job" thing can be super tough at times. Here's a list of tricks and tips that will help make it easier to juggle" (para. 1).

The theme, planning ahead and "keeping it simple" is closely related to the theme multitasking. Because of mother's roles as the primary caregiver there is a lack of time for self-care—"You'll be lucky if you get to pee or shovel a PowerBar down your throat today, never mind find the time to shower, blow-dry and style your hair" ("Hair Care for Moms Too Busy to Wash Their Hair", n.d., para. 1). Other statements that exemplified the theme include: "For busy moms, anything we can do to cut our primping time is a good thing. So next time you've got a date night … [and] you're going to be running ragged all day long, don't sweat it. You can prep your hair ahead of time, by trying these day-to-evening hair tips…" (Emme, "Day into evening hairstyles", n.d., para.1) and

While you may squeeze in that three luxurious minutes to shower, you may only have

about another three minutes to take care of your hair. Fortunately, you don't need a crate

full of hair products to achieve your best look. As with everything mom-related, the best

thing to do is to keep it simple. Here's a list of the hair necessities… ("Basic Hair Care

Products", n.d., para.1).

The messages about multitasking, planning ahead, and "keeping it simple" continues with the

theme that women's role within the home and careproviding is an inherent trait and primarily the

woman's responsibility. In sum, the majority of prominent themes about gender were directed

towards mothers in Parents Connect.

Themes about parents in Parents Connect: few articles that discuss equal participation in

parenting whereby both mother and father was mentioned or the term "parent" was used. Articles

that did appear to present information directed at both parents, upon closer analysis of article

content, the information was actually directed at mothers. For example, the topic of exercise is

titled "Exercise for Parents" and states "It's important for parents to stay in good shape—and

running after your kids isn't always enough exercise for parents. We've got loads of creative

ideas and tips about how to get the exercise you need!" (n.d., para. 1). Examples of articles

included within the section include: "Easy Exercises for Mamas", which provides exercise that

mothers can incorporate into their life while caregiving; "Fitness Websites That Create

Customized Workout Routines", provided exercise resources that are gender specific for women

(n.d), and "Emme on Nourishing Your Body and Soul", started out by stating "In order to be a

healthy, strong and confident mama, you have to take care of yourself—body and soul" (Emme,

n.d., para. 1) and went on to give advice directed at mothers. Other content that appeared to be

directed at parents but sent mixed messages is an article on baby sleep. The article started out

referring to "new parents" and "their" new baby, but as the article went on the language changed

to "her" and the information was directed at mothers—

> It is a very seductive message, especially for new parents who are sleep deprived and
>
> emotional from the dramatic transformation that has occurred in their lives with the
>
> introduction of their new baby. It may not feel natural for a parent put her baby in a
>
> separate sleeping space, especially when the baby is fussing. After all, mothers share the
>
> same body with their babies for nine months and it only seems natural to be as close as
>
> possible to them when they are sleeping. (SIDSEducator, n.d., para. 4)

Thus, the term "parent" began to equal "mother". In sum, the majority of website content was

about mothers and there were few articles about parents in general. Although some articles may

have appeared to be about parents, they presented mixed messages in the content.

Themes about children in the Families Online Magazine included*:* gender role messages

concerning representations of gender (i.e. blue and pink, decorating, baby names, and separate

male and female images). A key message about gender roles for boys was to repress feelings,

whereas a key message about gender roles for girls was a concern with appearance.

With regard to the first theme, representations of gender, there was reference to

differences in appearance for boys and girls by discussing colour and activities—"For the 2011-

2012 school year, color makes a big comeback," Burke said. "For girls, mixing sporty pieces

with more formal ones is on trend, with bright pops of color like bubblegum pink. For boys, the

inspiration comes from the outdoors, with hunter looks and Fair Isle patterns in cotton sweater

knits (Burke, "School Fashion Trends 2011", 2011, para. 2).

Another reference to representations of gender was found in the discussion of decorating

children's rooms, whereby there are differences in colour and interests according to gender. For

example, the article "Decorating a Nursery for a Boy and Girl Twins" stated that there are differences in decorating a room for a girl and boy,

> If you know that you are having a boy and girl, the nursery decorating can become a bit tricky. Try one of the ideas below to create a nursery that is perfectly suited for both the little boy and little girl who will soon be making an appearance. (Administrator, 2011b, para. 1)

The article, "Decorating a Nursery for a Boy and Girl Twins", continues to give direct examples of differences for decorating a boys and girls room with reference to colours. For example:

> … on your son's side of the room, pair yellow with light green or blue to add a touch of masculine color to the space. On your daughter's side of the room, incorporate touches of pink and lavender with the yellow. Use white as a neutral color to tie all of the colors of the room together. (Administrator, 2011b, para. 2)

A further example of decorating the nursery discussed the use of plaid and colour in the nursery. The description of "Plaid for Him" insinuates that plaid is naturally masculine when in "dark, deep colours", like blue, navy, green or red; whereas, "Plaid for Her" discussed plaid as being "made" feminine. Colours such as, pinks, purples, white, yellows and creams, along with fabrics with a "markedly feminine feel" are suited for girls. There was also reference to red, green, and white as being used to "fit into a feminine bedroom" (Administrator, 2011e, para. 2-3). These examples present clear gender differences for boys and girls.

The oppositional categories of gender extends to the next theme, boys repressing their feelings; it is thought that the use of aggression rather than feminized practices, such as, talking about feelings is more effective for boys—

Our more feminized world of total tolerance does not allow a young man to seek justice which causes him to be resentful and angry. Males are taught it is bad to fight or even be aggressive over any insult no matter how egregious the offense.

Again, I'm not promoting violence, bullying, or unchecked aggression, but this kind of feminization of young males not only results in a more intensified level of aggression, but also produces passive men who often internalize this anger and frustration which then manifests itself in destructive passive-aggressive behavior. (Johnson, 2011, para. 1)

In contrast, examples of messages presented about girls and their appearance can be seen in the article, "3 of the Best Bonding Activities for Moms and Daughters" by American Nanny (2012). It included statements such as: "Pamper Yourselves with Pedicures. What little girl doesn't want pink sparkly toes?" (para. 5), Get all dolled up [with your daughter] and head out to a nice lunch or dinner (para. 6), and "Get dressed up and have a real or pretend tea party, depending on the age of your daughter" (para. 4). The messages presented ideologies of gender that are learned through socialization within the family.

Themes about fathers in Families Online Magazine included: a lack of discussion of father's role in parenting. The majority of the articles focused on mothers and their role in parenting and omitted the father's role. The information that was offered specifically for fathers has a lack of focus on parenting advice and presented more of a personal reflection of childhood and the authors' points of view. For example, the article "Who are the good guys?" by Bruce Sullan (2011) only makes one reference to parenting—teaching kids values and who the good and bad guys are. The rest of the article focuses on "bad guys" and wars. The lack of information for fathers presented gender ideologies that suggested a father's role (or lack of) in parenting.

Themes about mothers in Families Online Magazine included: mother's roles/duties with subthemes about stereotypical images of mothers that include prominent messages about women's roles and responsibility for caregiving, and the day-to-day work of mothers that involves multitasking and planning ahead and "keeping it simple". Other subthemes concerning stereotypical images of women that were more subtle due to not being discussed as frequently, but are worth mentioning included sacrifices women make as a mother, cleaning, women being associated with the kitchen, and budgeting.

One of the more prominent subthemes about mother's roles/duties is their role and responsibility for caregiving. Terminology used to denote whose role and responsibility for caregiving suggested that it is the mother's. The following statement exemplified this theme:

Since, during the early days of infancy, mom will be spending almost as much time in the nursery as the baby herself, it is important to plan for comfortable seating and pillows. A happy, comfortable mom will be better able to take care of herself and her baby (Administrator, 2010f, para. 2),

Additional statements included: "This is especially important when mom and nanny are trading off the babies to each other. The more information each has the better care for the children" (LaRowe, "Caregiver Communication", 2012, para. 4), "We all know that managing home with an infant is quite hectic, as moms have to take care of many things related to infant. These things can be his feed schedule, sleep time, shower time, and many more" (Administrator, 2012a, para. 4), and "Being a full time mom is hard work, you spend most if not all of your time running around looking after kids, washing clothes, cooking and generally anything but worrying about how fashionable you are" (Peterson, 2012, para. 1). Therefore, the role and responsibility of

caregiving focuses on mothers, while the father's roles and/or the shared responsibility of parents in caregiving was absent.

The other prominent subtheme concerning the day-to-day work of mothers that involves multitasking and planning ahead and "keeping it simple" was seen in the following excerpt:

Fitting everything into the day is a real struggle for most moms, especially those who manage kids, career and home. If you're like many moms, you experience the constant tug of war between hoping that the day ends quickly and wishing there were extra hours in the day. Though both of those are seemingly impossible, there are a few things you can due to stretch the time in your day. (LaRowe, "Time Management for Moms", 2012, para. 1)

Additional examples of articles that specifically address the topics of multitasking and planning ahead for mothers include: "Top Tips: Managing Kids, Career and Home" from the book *Working Mom's 411* (LeRowe, 2012), "3 of the Best Bonding Activities for Moms and Daughters", which states that "Moms are busier than ever managing their kids, career and home, It can be hard to find the time and energy to nurture the mother daughter relationship, but doing so must be a priority" (LeRowe, 2012, para. 1), and "Build a Wardrobe for Busy Moms" which states "Being a full time mom is hard work, you spend most if not all of your time running around looking after kids, washing clothes, cooking and generally anything but worrying about how fashionable you are" (Petereson, 2012, para. 1). The themes multitasking, planning ahead and "keeping it simple" exude the role of mothers within the home and as a careprovider.

The more subtle subthemes that were not discussed as frequently, but are still equally important messages, were about stereotypical images of women concerning: sacrifices women make as mothers, women being associated with the kitchen, and budgeting. These subtle

subthemes are equally as important because they present images of women being associated to the domestic sphere—the kitchen and caregiving. These themes were exemplified (respectively) in statements such as: "I used to have the latest up to the minute technology and electronic gadgets; now that I'm a mom of six I have a used ripped stepped-on spiral notebook and a pencil with a very dull lead" (Moeller, "Now that I'm a Mom of Six...", 2012, para. 1), "Every mom loves to cook different kinds of meals for her kids" (Administrator, 2012c, para. 5), and

> Managing a family economically along with various types of household deeds is not a simple task. For this, moms have to think and plan. Now their job is easy, as Stay at Home Mum App can be purchased for just $2.99. Using this amazing app, moms can come across various handy tips related to how to save money, how to survive within limited budget, how to cook economical-budget foods, and many more, which is a facility for all moms" (Administrator, 2012c, para. 2).

These examples go beyond providing the intended messages and offer insight into how technology is changing the work of mothers to make it "easy".

Themes about parents in Families Online Magazine: a lack of discussion about mothers' and fathers' equal participation in parenting. There were few articles that included a discussion of equal participation in parenting whereby both the mother and father were mentioned or the term "parent" was used. Examples of statements that referred to both parents include: "Is there a comfortable chair in the room already that can be used by mom and dad for midnight feedings?", "Decorating the nursery is often a parent's source of excitement and pride, and helps the parents prepare psychologically for the arrival of the baby" (Ackerman, 2010, para. 5), and "… the job of parenting and teaching our kids the values we live by rests almost solely with Dad and Mom" (Sullen, "Who are the good guys?", 2011, para. 4). Thus, these examples show exceptions that

present content as gender-neutral by using the term "parent". However, the majority of content was directed at mothers rather than parents in general.

In summary, content directed at mothers presented the most prominent themes about gender. The gender messages about mothers focused on health, body image, and mother's roles/duties and responsibilities for care providing. Content about children was mostly information based, however, there were still messages about gender representation through colours, names, and decorating, as well as, messages about girls having a concern with their appearance and boys repressing their feelings. There was a lack of discussion of fathers in general and their role in parenting. Additionally, there was a lack of inclusive terminology used to direct information at both parents (use of terms like parent(s) or reference to both mothers and fathers) and the little content that was presented about parents was misleading because when the term parent was used it was actually content that was directed at mothers. Overall, Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine had consistent themes about children, fathers, mothers, and parents. Parents Connect had more prominent themes than Families Online Magazine, which may be due to more articles focusing on the topics of beauty and health.

Research Question 3: For each parenting education website, what gender messages are presented in an overall website evaluation?

To address this research question, techniques of CDA were used to determine what gender messages were presented in an overall website evaluation. The first step of CDA for analyzing the text as a whole, framing, includes consideration of visual aids, background, omission, presupposition, and discursive difference. Throughout the website evaluations the different aspects for framing the text was identified as a way to determine if the website author used

framing as a way to present the reader with a certain perspective that perpetuates dominant ideologies.

Pampers' overall evaluation found that content concerning children was information based mostly on the topic of health. Content concerning parents was information based, directed mostly at parents with some topics specific to mothers due to mothers role in pregnancy and birth and omits fathers as a part of that role.

The target audience of Pampers is middle to upper class parents in general, with more content directed at mothers because of their role in pregnancy and childbirth. There was an omission of father's role in pregnancy and childbirth as a support. The visual aids presented class-based images of middle to upper class children and parents and there was a diversity of races represented. The following are examples of images found on the website:

("Pregnancy (All trimesters)", n.d.).

The first image is of a pregnant mother taking a picture of herself with her phone in her "clean" and "tidy" bedroom. This is class-based in the sense that she owns the latest technology in cell phones and the image of her bedroom in general presents a middle-upper class feel.

("Newborn (0-5 months)", n.d.)

The second image is of a mother and her newborn baby at the hospital. The image presents

individuals of a different racial background. The father is not present in the image, which creates

a focus on mother and child. The image presented gender stereotypes in the fact that the baby is

wearing a pink hat and blanket.

Moreover, visual aids in Pampers consisted of pictures, videos, and advertisements. Images

were of mostly Caucasian American/Canadian with a few other races such Asian, Indian, and

African American. Images included pictures of parents (with father kissing mother's pregnant

belly), pictures of child and mother, one picture of father with child, and other pictures of babies

in marketing products. The foregrounding emphasizes the positive aspects of parenting and the

backgrounding deemphasizes the challenges and struggles that parents may have. The images of

couples and mothers with their baby presented "happy" couples having a baby and the "perfect

mom" who appears happy and stress-free. The videos presented are said to be "real stories,

parenting tips, and other videos to help you through every stage of development". They present

class based images of a nuclear family. Examples of videos and images shown: ""From "I do" to

I'm pregnant!" follow Suzie and Steve's journey" presents an image of a middle to upper class

nuclear family and a traditional ordering of life events—marriage to baby. This stereotypical

image does not apply to the different types of family forms—single mothers, single fathers,

couples who choose not to marry, or different types of couples (same-sex, mixed race, older and

younger, etc.). If the images of parents are confined to the family form of the nuclear family then

other family forms may feel excluded, feel ashamed or embarrassed, feel as though the

information is not applicable to them or have various other effects. "Before baby #2, there's a lot

to do!" also presents traditional images of nuclear family (mom, dad, child) as they prepare for

second baby. The material items, such as their house and neighbourhood present middle-upper

class images. In addition, the video "Safety First! Tackling the task of baby proofing" there were

images of a middle-upper class Caucasian mother and father who lived in a suburban-like area

fenced in by a "white picket fence". The home was clean and organized. This image of the

family is idealistic and class-based and does not present the actualities of parenting that involve

stress and struggles. Other videos include: "Is breast best?" and "Learning to say, I'm Sorry".

Moreover, advertisements included in Pampers are for marketing products offered by the same

makers of the website (pampers and Proctor and Gamble products). There were links to other

websites marketing products by the same company (gifts to grow website).

The article credentials of Pampers appear to be diverse and reliable in the fact that the

authors appear to be "credible" "professionals". There are 18 authors: 10 female, 8 males who

range from young and old and credentials range from careers as a chef or author and the rest

have degrees that range from PHD to MBA, MA, M.D, R.N and other various degrees. The dates

of information are not provided to the reader; so it is not clear of how recent the information given is.

The overall evaluation of Ask Dr. Sears found that content concerning children was information based mostly on the topic of health. Content concerning parents was information based; directed mostly at parents with some topics specific to mothers due to mothers' roles in pregnancy and birth.

The target audience of the website was parents in general. The information was class-based because the website presupposes that website users are of a higher education level; the content was very health-based which may not be appealing to a parent of a lower class who may be less educated.

Visual aids in Ask Dr. Sears included: pictures and advertisements. Images were of Caucasian American/Canadian team of "experts" (four male doctors and one female, "Martha").

Meet *the* Sears Family   Dr. Bill   Dr. Jim   Dr. Bob   Dr. Peter   Martha
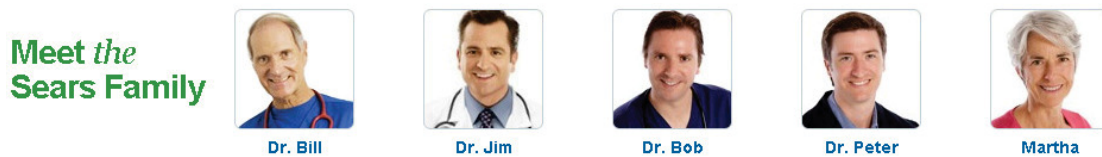
("Meet the Sears family.", n.d.)

The four male doctors and "Martha" presented traditional images of the male as the dominant breadwinner and does not recognize "Martha's" credentials. Upon closer analysis of the website authors it was revealed that Martha is a registered nurse. There were also images of Caucasian American/Canadian babies, a few pictures of a child with their mother, and no pictures of fathers. The images present people who appear to be of the middle to upper class. The visual aids thus make the presupposition that the reader is Caucasian American/Canadian of upper to middle class. Moreover, advertisements on the website included ads to other programs/services offered by the same makers of the website (Dr. Sears), information about Dr. Sears Institute, Dr. Sears

Foundation, email subscription of parenting tips from Dr. Sears, "The Baby Book" by Dr. Sears, and Facebook page.

The article credentials of Ask Dr. Sears appear to be credible but limited in diversity. The main homepage shows the credentials of male authors as doctors with the exception of the female, Martha, whose credentials are not given on the homepage but she is simply known as "Martha". Another section with author's details reveals that "Martha" is a registered nurse. In addition, the dates of information are not provided to reader; so it was not clear of how recent (up-to-date) or dated the information given was.

My overall evaluation of Parents Connect regarding content concerning children was that it was information based with subtle messages included about gender. The subtle messages presented were used as a way to gain interest of the reader, i.e. through humor or sarcasm or something to get the reader's attention and is "eye catching". Content concerning parents had topics that presented clear gender messages concerning gender roles for mothers and fathers; while the description of the gender role for fathers was not presented (omission) (which is stereotypical in itself). Although there was information that does not clearly state that it was for mothers or fathers there are embedded messages within the information that "assumes" (presupposition) the article is targeted at mothers, the female reader. Therefore, there was a discursive difference whereby content appears to present as gender neutral but has clear gender messages in the fact that the content is assumed to be directed at mothers.

The target audience of Parents Connect was Caucasian and African American/Canadian, middle to upper class mothers. The website was misleading in the fact that it appeared to present content to parents in general but upon closer analysis the target audience was mothers.

Foregrounding was used to emphasize content towards mothers and backgrounding was used to deemphasize and even omit content towards fathers.

Visual aids in Parents Connect are pictures, videos, and advertisements. The pictures presented images of mostly Caucasians (American/Canadian) individuals with some African American/Canadian. The gender of individuals in the pictures was mostly female with some males. In addition females in pictures were presented according to stereotypical gender roles for mothers, such as cleaning, caring for baby, and having a concern with appearance. Parents Connect gave an overall impression that information concerning children does not appear to be class based at "first glance". This is because the children are presented as "natural" in the sense that they are in their everyday environment, school and home and the image does not appear to be staged for a picture and give the image of "perfection". However, there were sections that focus on advertisements for products for the home (kitchen supplies and decorating) and there were embedded messages within information that assume a certain class, such as middle to upper class. Moreover, videos on side of the website page begin to play automatically which presses information on website visitors. The advertisements included on the website were for products for the home (e.g. kitchen appliances, decorations) which made the presupposition that website users were mothers, as stereotypically mothers are associated with the home and presenting products for the home was used as a marketing strategy. Lastly, there was a link to the sister website (website owned and made by the same company), "NicMom", which is a parenting website with videos and content directed towards mothers. Additionally, there was a newsfeed on the main homepage with topics recently posted to NicMom website (examples include: "Why Toddler Boys Play Differently Than Toddler Girls" and "Boy Hailed as Hero After Rescuing Sister; Our Kids Remain Average").

The article credentials in Parents Connect are questionable. In the section on "Your Life" Emme writes a lot of articles. She is a full figured spokesperson with Revlon cosmetic company and hosts the show "More to Love". She started her career on E! Entertainment's "Fashion Emergency" and has made many television appearances on "The Oprah Winfrey Show", "20/20", "The Insider", "Good Morning America", and many other television shows. She has written four books and is a member of a number of associations including: Hearts of Gold (serving NYC's underprivileged children and women), member of the advisory boards of Ophelia's Place (Syracuse NY's eating disorder resource), ambassador for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and chair ambassador of the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) ("Emme Author", n.d.). In addition, there are sections of articles that can be shown by "expert articles", however, there are many articles that do not include the author's full name or credentials. Often it appeared as though information submitted by parents appeared in the expert articles category by mistake. In addition, dates of information were not provided to the reader (only a couple provided) so it was not clear of how recent the information given is.

The overall evaluation of Families Online Magazine found that content concerning children focused on gender in the earlier years of the baby and even before the baby is born. There was a focus on color-coding gender in decorating the nursery/child's room and suggestion of names for boys and girls. There was a lot of marketing of products for children that presented capitalist messages connected to gender and class. Other content about parenting a child was mostly information based with messages mainly focused on the parent's role in providing care. The few messages that were presented discuss feelings, communication, and sports in a gender-neutral manner whereby it is important for both genders and did not use gender specific examples. Discursive differences were seen in the section "Exercise for Parents". The section

title presented as though the information was applicable to parents in general, however, upon analysis of the section articles the information was clearly directed at mothers. Examples include titles such as "Easy Exercises for Mamas" and "Emme on Nourishing Your Body and Soul". This topic will be discussed further in the second stage analysis of the Parents Connect website.

Content concerning parents are topics that present clear gender messages concerning gender roles for mothers and fathers. While the description of the gender role for mothers was presented there was an omission of father's roles, which is stereotypical in itself. Discursive differences are seen with the fact that although there was information that did not clearly state it was for mothers or fathers, there were embedded messages within the information that presupposed the article was targeted at mothers, the female reader.

The primary target audience of content in Families Online Magazine was mothers whereas fathers were omitted. The majority of the section on pregnancy was directed at mothers, as much of the information is directly related to what females are experiencing. However, it is important to note the male's role in reproduction and as a support throughout the pregnancy. Thus foregrounding was used to emphasize content towards mothers and backgrounding was used to deemphasize and omit information towards fathers.

Visual aids in Families Online Magazine were pictures and advertisements. The pictures presented images of mostly Caucasians with some Africans and Asians of American/Canadian background. Images included mostly females according to gender role for mothers, caring for baby, whereas males were presented in expert roles. Information concerning children did not appear to be class based because the images appeared to be "natural" in everyday settings and not "perfect". However, there were sections on lifestyle, which focused on material items and

sends messages that assume a certain class (upper to middle class). Families Online Magazine included advertisements mostly about: parenting books, paternity clothes, and baby clothes.

The article credentials for Families Online Magazine appear to be reliable. Information about authors of articles was usually provided; including their name and credentials or place of work. Authors included a combination of males and females. However, it is important to note that on the website homepage there were pictures of some of the authors of website articles. They were three doctors who were middle-aged Caucasian men. It presents the traditional image of the male as a doctor, which is a male dominated field. The authors of the articles did not appear to be only the three doctors presented on the homepage, but there was a rather diverse selection of authors. Therefore, there were mixed messages about authors of website content. In addition, the dates of articles were provided, which were mostly recent, up to date information.

In conclusion, each of the four websites presented gender content. Pampers and Ask Dr. Sears presented gender messages through visual aids while Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine presented gender messages in both content concerning mothers and fathers and through visual aids. Through evaluating the websites by examining the text as a whole, framing, and considering the use of visual aids, background, omission, presupposition, and discursive difference, it was apparent that gender messages were present. Various methods for framing the text were found in the overall website evaluations. Key messages found were that foregrounding and backgrounding were used to emphasize information about parenting towards mothers and to deemphasize or even omit information about parenting towards fathers. Presupposition was another method used to assume that website readers were of a certain gender, education level, class, and/or race. Visual aids were a method that made content more inclusive to website readers of a certain gender, education level, class, and/or race. Additionally, they were used to

promote ads that in turn presented capitalist ideologies perpetuating gender and family

ideologies. Lastly, discursive difference was used to send mixed messages concerning the target

audience. The target audience appeared to be parents in general but in actuality it was mothers.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe the gender content of four parenting websites found through Alexa's (an online web information company) "top sites" section. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was drawn on throughout the analysis to identify how text was used to create "motivated representations". The CDA checklist discussed previously in the research methodology section was applied and the three steps for examining the text were considered during analysis and the various methods used to create "motivated representations" were identified.

In examining these websites, several themes emerged. First, all of the websites contained stereotypical messages about gender in visual aids, with two of the websites also containing gender stereotypical messages in content concerning mothers, fathers, and children. The website content underscores a central premise of critical theory whereby "motivated representations" work to create and sustain taken-for-granted assumptions about ideologies such as gender and family (hooks, 2006). There are interactions between and among all of these assumptions that reinforce the power relations serving specific purposes. The assumptions are reinforced by embedded messages found in the website content, advertisements, and visual aids of parenting education websites.

Content on the parenting education websites implicitly promoted gender and family ideologies that constrain and exploit human kind through maintaining gender inequalities in discourse and visual aids (hooks, 2006). Although the results section does not focus heavily on visual aids, the gender messages presented are equally as important to consider. I will now turn to a discussion of key themes that emerged from my research.

Implicit Promotion of Gender and Family Ideologies in Visual Aids

The findings in this study support family ideologies concerning what the "ideal" family should be and a division of labour that appears to be natural (Krafchick et al., 2005). The images were of couples and mothers with their baby; they presented as "happy" couples having a baby and the "perfect mom" who appeared happy and stress-free. The videos presented were said to be "real stories, parenting tips, and other videos to help you through every stage of development" (The Proctor & Gamble Company, 2013). They were traditional images of a nuclear family (a married heterosexual, Caucasian, middle-class, home-maker-breadwinner family with at least one child) that is viewed as the ideal family form (Allen & Baber, 1992; Ferree, 2010; Gerson, 2009). Foregrounding was used to emphasize the image of the traditional "ideal" family who are happy and stress-free while backgrounding was used to deemphasize the realities of parenting that can be chaotic and stressful. Yet, the images presented in the videos are far from "real" stories that apply to all parents.

Martinson, Hinnant, and Martinson's (2008) study on photos in parent magazines found that men and women were presented in stereotypical gender roles. Mothers were portrayed often as supportive and nurturing, whereas fathers were portrayed most often as directive and playful. Another study that yielded similar results concerning gender stereotypes in images was by Fitzpatrick and McPherson (2009). The study analyzed images in contemporary colouring books and found that men were presented as more active. Implicit gender stereotypes, such as family ideologies in visual aids of parenting education websites perpetuates gender roles for men and women that limit their everyday practices, actions, and decisions (Krafchick et al., 2005). Similarly, the websites examined in my study presented implied messages about what a family "should" be. These messages were often idealistic and were not reflective of reality, which in

turn has individuals strive towards images of parents that are not realistic. These are examples of "motivated representations" in the fact that they present ideologies that reinforce assumptions about gender and family. The representations presented further work to serve the interest of those in power (hooks, 2006). In this case, it is the interest of Caucasian, middle to upper class men that are served. Additional implicit messages about gender roles were seen in the website discourse.

Discourse Reinforces Ideologies

Ideologies are developed and sustained through discourse (Smith, 1990). In Parents Connect and Families Online Magazine there was discourse that reinforces gender ideologies. According to the third stage of CDA, I found that the interpretation of the website content was affected by words or phrases: connotation, modality, and register (Huckin, 1997). In Parents Connect the connotations of the terminology used to describe mothers affected the modality, which sets a certain tone for the information that is presented. Using such terminology as mama, mommy, and mommies, affects the register of the text in so that it is informal and infantilizes the information. The term "mommy" for example is often used by a young child to refer to their mother and does not have the same formal tone as terms like mom or mother. In turn, using such terminology can affect how information is presented to the reader.

Additionally, discourse was used to promote gender ideologies for women. There were messages concerning "desirable" appearances for women that focused on beauty and fitness. Using CDA to analyze the text sentence by sentence (the second stage of CDA) I found that topicalization, whereby the topic of one sentence continues in the topic of the next was used to present messages that influenced the reader (Huckin, 1997). The topic of beauty and fitness influences the reader about "desirable" appearances for women. This further presents messages

that "desirable" appearances for women involve maintaining a youthful image and achieving "sexy". There were messages that even suggest that the characteristics of a mother are different than a woman without children.

Emphasizing these characteristics of women is the use of foregrounding by the author. These descriptive words send out connotations, messages of what characteristics a woman "should have" and/or strive to have. Discourses implying characteristics that women "should have" is the use of presuppositions by the author and are examples of gender ideologies. These gender ideologies are presented through discursive frameworks that distinguish the boundaries for negotiating what it means to be gendered (Mill, 2004). These characteristics present as "natural" for women whereas in actuality they are learned behaviours that are practiced (DeVault, 1991; Brookfield, 2005).

According to CDA, one of the means through which these behaviours are learned is through discourse because it is a part of our culture and society. Our culture and society has a historical component whereby ideologies have been developed and sustained over time. Discourse works to produces ideologies and CDA aims to reveal underlying ideologies (van Dijk, 2003). It promotes gender roles whereby everything from structural disadvantages to implied personality traits and dichotomous thinking are learned early in life and through different societal settings (Ferree, 1990). In addition, gender roles promote categorization and stratification whereby individuals strive to conform to images that are idealistic and those who do not meet the characteristics of the gender role are not socially accepted. As a result of these unrealistic expectations, women often are self-conscious and have low self-esteem (Ferree, 1990). The results of my study have shown how parenting education websites perpetuate gender ideologies about unrealistic expectations for women. For example, messages concerning

"desirable" appearances for women that focus on beauty and fitness are "motivated representations" that perpetuate unrealistic expectations for women.

There were also pictures, direct links to product information, and marketing language used to try to sell a product or sell an "image" or "look" to women and/or mothers. This presented certain agent-patient relations whereby the website author is the power agent who is asserting power over the reader by telling the reader what "image" or "look" to strive for. The reader is passive because she or he is consuming the information that presents a certain perspective (Huckin, 1997). These marketing techniques reinforce and sustain capitalist ideologies. Capitalism is another method for promoting ideologies—"Thought is therefore viewed as being determined by the two central props of dominant ideology—capitalism and bureaucratic rationality" (Brookfield, 2007, p.70). By using marketing on the parenting education websites individuals are presented with thoughts concerning ideologies about gender and family. These messages presuppose what a woman should like, what a mother should look like, what a woman's role is in parenting. The messages that presuppose what a woman/mother should look like and their role in parenting is class based. It serves the image of Caucasian, middle to upper class, educated women. The messages also serve the interest of Caucasian, middle to upper class men by presenting women in a caring role, which is often associated with weakness. Likewise, men are also presented with gender messages. The omission of marketing towards men presupposes gender and family ideologies concerning a man's role (or lack of) as a parent. The ideologies about gender and family create and sustain power relations. Therefore, discourse is another method in which the ethic of capitalism is used as another way to push people into ways of living that perpetuates gender oppression (Brookfield, 2007).

Whereas there were prominent gender and family ideologies in discourse about mothers there was a lack of discourse about fathers (omission). The lack of information for fathers presents gender and family ideologies in itself by making the presupposition that men do not have a primary role in care providing. Traditionally, women are seen as the homemaker/wife/mother whereby they are the primary caregiver and are responsible for taking care of the home, whereas men are seen as the breadwinner/dominant husband/father who does not have a primary role in caregiving (Allen & Baber, 1992).

The results are similar to previous research in the area around gendered messages in parenting education in that similar gender messages concerning mothers and fathers were found. Certainly, differences in methods for data collection and types of information source (books, magazine, and websites) can create variations between the studies. For example, comparison between this study and a study by Krafchick et al. (2005) on the six best-selling parenting advice books found similar results in that gender stereotypes were promoted implicitly, however, there were different methods used to yield the results.

Mixed Messages

Although there were messages that encourage women to enhance their natural beauty they can be contradictory as they continue to give recommendations for make-up tips or discuss imperfections and self-criticism. Therefore, content may be explicitly stating to enhance natural beauty, but there were implicit messages in content, advertisements, links, and pictures that encourages otherwise. Using the CDA method as a guide, this is an example of discursive difference that is used by the website author to manipulate or confuse the reader. A study by Rashely (2005) found similar mixed messages in that the website BabyCentre appeared to be presenting an equal division of labour for mothers and fathers; however a close rhetorical

analysis found that child care was presented in a traditional sense as the mothers primary responsibility.

Another use of discursive difference was found in the mixed messages concerning the target audience of specific sections of website content. Upon closer analysis of article content, the information was actually directed at mothers, with titles such as "Easy Exercises for Mamas" and "Emme on Nourishing Your Body and Soul". Although the website may have appeared to be presenting information directed at parents, it is implied that information was targeted at mothers. Targeting the information at mothers insinuates that (a) mothers need to be concerned with their appearance, (b) mothers are the primary caregiver, (c) there are specific exercises for mothers (to target trouble areas, "baby" weight), and (d) mothers need to use multitasking to care for children and find time to work out. These results are comparative again to Rashley's (2005) study of the website BabyCenter, found that the website appeared to have a progressive attitude concerning mothers' and fathers' equal division of labour; however, traditional expectations whereby childcare is primarily the mother's responsibility is revealed.

"Hidden Agenda" of Discourse

Through using CDA I have revealed that there are underlying ideologies present in these four online parenting education websites. Discourse has been used as a way to perpetuate family and gender ideologies and as such act as "motivated representations" (hooks, 2006). Through using CDA to examine the text as a whole, to examine the text sentence by sentence, and to examine words and phrases, I was able to identify various methods used by the website author to perpetuate ideologies in discourse. The various methods I have identified in the websites throughout my analysis are part of CDA and include the use of visual aids, backgrounding, omission, foregrounding, presupposition, discursive difference, topicalization, agent-patient

relations, insinuation, connotations, register, and modality. These various methods have been used as a way to present the reader with misleading information that has a hidden agenda. In this case, the hidden agenda was gender and family ideologies that create differential roles for men and women and in turn result in gender inequalities which, in turn, reinforces power relations thereby serving the interests of those that hold the power. Through using CDA's interpretation and explanation I have been able to reveal properties of social interaction and social structure that work to produce family and gender ideologies both at a micro and macro level. Social interactions that I have identified in my study that reproduces family and gender ideologies include: gender discourse concerning mothers' and fathers' roles (or lack of) as parents, women's concern with appearance, and representations of gender through colours and names. Examples of social structures identified in my study include the organization of gendered activities like parenting and class-based images of parents. Mothers are presented as having the primary caregiver role whereas there is a lack of discussion concerning the father's role. The social structure of the family maintains a hierarchal role whereby the father is seen traditionally as having the dominant role whereas the mother is the care provider (Allen & Baber, 1992). The class-based images of families also create hierarchy and status in favour of those who are privileged. Thus, ideologies are reproduced and enacted within the micro level of the family and also at the macro level of society; conformity to gender roles is apparent in everyday activities and appearances of men and women (Brookfield, 2005).

Significance of Findings

These results show that parenting education websites serve as another vehicle for transmitting gender stereotypes that are present in ideologies concerning gender and the family in the virtual world. According to Krafchick et al. (2005) considering gender in parenting

education websites is important because it is a critical variable in the socialization of children and the organization of family relationships. In turn, ideologies concerning gender and the family promote gender inequalities and enforce expectations or limitations on both genders, which prevents individuals from becoming fully actualized. In other words, individuals are not able to reach their full potential because of limitations placed on them by family and gender ideologies. If one examines careers for example, trades work is predominantly a male field whereas nursing and hairdressing is predominantly a female field. Therefore, individuals may choose a career based on gender ideologies and not based on skill or interest, in turn preventing individuals from becoming fully actualized. These expectations can result in power differentials for men and women and undermine relationship quality (Krafchick et al., 2005). The overall website evaluations have also shown that class and race are factors to consider in addition to gender messages and family ideologies. Thus, an analysis of gender cannot be conducted without giving attention to race and class (Brookfield, 2005).

The initial focus for my research was on gender roles in parenting websites with expectations that gender roles would be directed at children as websites are providing information on how to care for a child. The information presented about children appears to be mostly information based with few subtle messages about gender roles used as a way to gain a reader's interest. It is interesting that the information presented about children that appears to be health-based information does not present gender ideologies. However, the information that is presented about clothes, decorating, and names for children presents clear gender messages. These gender messages are presented to children before they are even born. This is interesting because these are representations of gender that mean so much more than what is simply stated. These gender messages are presumptions about the gender roles for boys and girls. Associating a

child's gender with pink or blue goes beyond the colours you see; it presents connotations that

are just the beginning of how messages are transmitted about gender and the separation of roles

for men and women. The separation of roles for each gender promotes the dichotomy of

masculine and feminine and limits individuals potential in developing qualities that everyone has

the ability to develop (Ferree, 1990). These masculine and feminine messages are also associated

with gender inequalities, which extend from power differentials to acceptability of emotional

expressiveness, and to pay differences for men and women (Spees & Zimmerman, 2003).

Upon further analysis of website content I discovered that the gender roles are present in

information mostly directed at mothers and not just in information on how to care for a child.

Gender roles were identified in other roles/duties that mothers have in housecleaning, cooking,

and care providing. Additional gender stereotypical information was provided on topics about

mother's health and body image, which provided stereotypical examples of topic areas that

confine women to discursive frameworks for what it means to be feminine (Mill, 2004). There

may be more implicit and explicit gender messages directed at parents due to the fact that parents

are the readers directly consuming the information. The social conservatism of the United States

(which is where the four websites were produced) is evoked in the four websites. Websites may

choose to direct information at parents as a marketing technique to sell products as well as

ideologies concerning social conservatism. In addition, websites are "selling" inherent ideologies

about gender and family in society; which are then transmitted from parents to the child through

socialization.

It is equally important to recognize the presence of gender roles towards mothers and

fathers because these gender roles are often transmitted through the process of socialization,

whereby the family is an area of primary socialization. As a result children are taught by their

parents what is "appropriate" and "inappropriate" behaviours of each gender and how they interact (Krafchick et al., 2005). The lack of information for fathers also plays a role in socialization as their role is not seen as significant in caregiving, thus presenting messages about gender roles for fathers.

Implications for Practice

It is important for individuals to recognize gender representations and the effects it can have on men and women. Language serves as a force to maintain power relations through constraining and exploiting individuals (Bryman, 2004). Gender representations are a means by which power inequalities produce, organize, and evaluate femininities and masculinities situated in individual gendering activities and part of the larger structures (Ferree, 2010). FLE practitioners, parents, authors of parenting education, and other professionals should be informed about the implications of living in a gendered society.

The results from this study can be used by family practitioners to illustrate potential risks of online parenting education (Krafchick et al., 2005). Thus working towards one of the central learning tasks of critical theory—practicing ideology critique. By practicing ideology critique individuals can acknowledge how unjust dominant ideologies, such as gender and family ideologies, are embedded within everyday practices and situations (like parenting) (Brookfield, 2005). In turn, it can help create awareness in so that parents can recognize gender content and critically analyze content (Krafchick et al., 2005).

Morgaine (1992) suggests reconceptualizing family life education (FLE), moving away from the historical, technical approach and towards the critical-emancipatory approach. The critical-emancipatory approach helps individuals consider the ways in which their personal development has been affected by assumptions, myths, and systemic structures. In turn,

individuals gain enlightenment about their distorted perceptions and take steps in working towards achieving change. Through practitioners using a critical-emancipatory approach in FLE they are providing a platform for individuals to achieve change and challenge ideologies built in social structures. Using dialogue in practice helps individuals reflect on personal experiences and reflect on discrepancies between everyday ideals and their realities. Considering discrepancies can help reveal hidden information and historical facts that contributed to the discrepancies and help provide meaning (Morgaine, 1992). For example, practitioners' use of a critical-emancipatory approach may help parents recognize the hidden information in parenting education websites that contribute to gender and family ideologies. Awareness can help individuals unmask the power behind the forces of oppression. Individuals can reclaim reason by challenging oppressive structures and not accepting the way things are as "natural". Ultimately, individuals can become liberated from oppression that results from gender inequalities and gain equal rights (Brookfield, 2005).

Limitations and Suggested Areas for Future Research

There are several limitations concerning the external validity of this study that are important to address. External validity refers to the generalizabilty of results to other social settings (Bryman, 2005). The generalizability of results is limited due to each website being different. Although there was a small sample size and use of Alexa, an online web information company, to select websites, each website is still different. Each website was made by a different company and had different authors who wrote the articles contained in the website. Each company and author has different training, experience, and perspectives and no two websites are the same. Therefore, it is not realistic to assume that based on these findings that other websites would contain similar messages to the ones found in this study.

There are several suggested areas for future research. The subject of gender is part of the interlocking systems of race and class that constitute ideologies and the practice of domination (Brookfield, 2005). Although I have considered race and class in the overall website evaluation that included visual aids, the areas could be considered more in-depth. In addition, future research could analyze parenting education content on television, videos, books, and other websites. Comparisons could be made between parenting education websites made by educational institutes, local family resource centers, or other countries and not just the United States. Other studies could look at parenting education content specific to same-sex couples, religion, and culture. Studying gendered language in parenting education is an important area to continue to study as long as individuals continue to be constrained and exploited by gender inequalities in society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, through conducting a critical discourse analysis of online parenting education I have found that there are apparent gender messages present in online parenting education websites. Two of the parenting education websites, Pampers and Ask Dr. Sears, predominantly present gender-neutral content. However, visual images and titles on the websites present gender specific content, which in turn presents gender messages to the reader. The other two websites analyzed in my study, Parents Connect and Online Families Magazine, present predominantly gender specific content and images that were directed at mothers (with Parents Connect having the greatest number of occurrences). The lack of information directed at fathers also presents gender messages due to the lack of focus on their role in parenting. In sum, it is important for parents to be cautious of online parenting education websites and critically analyze the material they encounter. It is the "motivated representations" (hooks, 2006) about gender like those found in my study that perpetuate gender stereotypes and place limitations on the abilities for boys and girls and men and women (Krafchick et al., 2005). Therefore, through individuals becoming aware of the presence of gender stereotypes we can work towards change and equality.

References

Alder-Baeder, F., Gelatt, V.A., & Seeley, J. R. (2010). An interactive web-based program for

    stepfamilies: Development and evaluation of efficacy. *Family Relations, 59,* 572-586.

    doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2010.00624.x

Allen, K. R., & Baber, K.M. (1992). Starting a revolution in family life education: A feminist

    vision. *Family Relations, 41,* 378-384.

Amare, N. (2007). Where is she? Gender occurrences in online grammar guides. *Research in the

    Teaching of English, 42*(2), 163-187.

Arcus, M. E. (1995). Advances in family life education: Past, present, and future. *Family

    Relations, 44,* 336-344.

Arcus, M. E. (1980). Value reasoning: An approach to values. *Family Relations, 29,* 163-171.

Arcus, M. E., & Thomas, J. (1992). Family life education: An analysis of the concept. *Family

    Relations, 41,* 3-8.

Arcus, M. E., Schvaneveldt, J. D., & Moss, J. J. (1993). *Handbook of family life education* (Vol.

    1). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Blaisure, K. R., & Allen, K. R. (1995). Feminists and the ideology and practice of

    marital equality. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57,* 5-19.

Blume, L. B., & Blume, T. W. (2003). Toward a dialectical model of family gender

    discourse: Body, identity, and sexuality. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 65,* 785-794.

Brookfield, S. (2007). *The power of critical theory for adult learning and teaching*. Maidenhead:

    McGraw-Hill.

Bibby, R. W. (2004). *The future families project: A survey of Canadian hopes and dreams*.

    Ottawa, ON: Vanier Institute of the Family.

Bremberg, S., & Sarkadi, A. (2005). Socially unbiased parenting support on the internet: Across-

  sectional study of users of a large Swedish parenting website. *Child: Care, Health &*

  Development, 31(1), 43-52.

Brookfield, S. D. (2005). *The power of critical theory: Liberating adult learning and teaching.*

  San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.),

  Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research (pp.303-342). Thousand Oaks, CA:

  Sage.

DeVault, M. (1991). *Feeding the family: The social organization of gendered work.*

  Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Diekma, A. B., & Eagly, A. H. (2000). Stereotypes as dynamic constructs: Women and men of

  the past, present, and future. *Perspectives of Social Psychology Bulletin, 26,* 1170-1188.

  doi: 10.1177/0146167200262001

Dollahite, D. C., Hawkins, A. J., & Morris, S. N. (1999). Virtual family life education: A

  qualitative study of father education on the world wide web. *Family Relations, 48,* 23-30.

Drentea, P., & Moren-Cross, J. L. (2005). Social capital and social support on the web: The case

  of an internet mother site. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 27,* 920- 943.doi: 10.1111/

  j.1467-9566.2005.00464.x

Duncan, S. F., & Steimle, B. M. (2004). Evaluation of a family life education web site. *Family*

  Relations, 53, 367-376.

Edirippulige, S., & Porter, A. (2007). Parents of deaf children seeking hearing loss-related

  information on the internet: The Australian experience. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf*

  Education, 12, 518-529. doi:10.1093/deafed/enm009

Elliott, M. (1999). Classifying family life education on the world wide web. *Family Relations,*
     48, 7-13.

Ferree, M. M. (1990). Beyond separate spheres: Feminism and family research. *Journal of*
     Marriage and Family, 52, 866-884.

Ferree, M. M. (2010). Filling the glass: Gender perspectives on families. *Journal of Marriage*
     and Family, 72, 420-439. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00711.x

Finn, J., & Kerman, B. (2004). The use of online social support by foster families. *Journal of*
     Family Social Work, 8(4), 67-85. doi: 10.1300/J039v08n04_04

Fitzpatrick, M. J., & McPherson, B. J. (2009). Coloring within the lines: Gender stereotypes in
     contemporary coloring books. *Sex Roles, 62,* 127-137. doi:10.1007/s11199-009-9703-8

Gerson, K. (2009). Changing lives, resistant institutions: A new generation negotiates gender,
     work, and family change. *Sociological Forum, 24,* 735-753. doi: 10.1111/j.1573-
     7861.2009.01134.x

Hasman, L., & Zafron, M. L. (2010). An analysis of online resources for parents, siblings, and
     other caregivers of adults with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Consumer Health on*
     the Internet, 14(1), 33-41. doi: 10.1080/02763860903543312

hooks, B. (2006, Decemeber 10). *bell hooks pt 2 cultural criticism and transformation* [Video file].
     Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQ-XVTzBMvQ

Huckin, T. N. (n.d.). *Critical discourse analysis*. Retrieved October 8, 2012, from
     http://eca.state.gov/education/engteaching/pubs/BR/functionalsec3_6.htm

Humble, A. M., & Morgaine, C. A. (2002). Placing feminist education within the
     three paradigms of knowledge and action. *Family Relations, 51,* 199-205.

Hughes, R. (2001). A process evaluation of a website for family life educators. *Family*

Relations, 50(2), 164-170.

Krafchick, J. L., Zimmerman, T. S., Haddock, S. A., & Banning, J. H. (2005). Best-

selling books advising parents about gender: A feminist analysis. *Family Relations, 54,*

84-100.

Kroska, A. (2001). Do we have consenus? Examining the relationship between gender ideology

and role meanings. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 64*(1), 18-40.

Lindsey, E. W., & Mize, J. (2001). Contextual differences in parent-child play:

Implications for children's gender role development. *Sex Roles, 44,* 155-176.

Lindsey, E., Mize, J., & Petit, G. (1997). Differential play patterns of mothers and fathers of sons

and daughters: Implications for children's gender role development. *Sex Roles, 37,* 643-

661.

Lunsford, T. R., & Lunsford, B. R. (1995). The research sample, part I: Sampling. *Journal of

Prosthetics and Orthotics, 7*(3), 105-112.

Madge, C., & O'Connor, H. (2005). Mothers in the making? Exploring liminality in

Cyber/Space. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 30*(1), 83-97.

Madge, C., & O'Connor, H. (2002). On-line with E-mums: Exploring the internet as a medium

for research. *Area, 34*(1), 92-102.

MacDermid, S. M., Jurich, J. A., Myers-Walls, J. A., & Pelo, A. (1992). Feminist teaching:

Effective education. *Family Relations, 41,* 31-38.

Martinson, M., Hinnant, A., & Martinson, B. (2008). Visual depictions of gender in parenting

magazines. *Media Report to Women, 36,* 12-20.

McGregor, S., Pendergast, D., Seniuk, E., Eghan, F., & Enberg, L. (2008). Choosing our future:

Ideologies matter in the home economics profession. *International Journal of Home Economics, 1*(1), 43-62.

Mills, S. (2004). *Discourse*. London: Routledge.

Miller, J. (2006). Finding support online: Parents are finding comfort and support in virtual hugs. *EP Magazine,* 42-44.

Morgaine, C. (1992). Alternative paradigms for helping families change themselves. *Family Relations, 41,* 112-17.

Neuman, W.L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (6th ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Plantin, L., & Daneback, K. (2009). Parenthood, information and support on the internet. A literature review of research on parents and professionals online. *BMC Family Practice, 10*(34), 1-12. doi:10.1186/1471-2296-10-34

Rashley, L. H. (2005). "Work it out with your wife": Gendered expectations and parenting rhetoric online. *NWSA Journal*, *17*(1), 58-92.

Smith, D. E. (1993). *Texts, facts, and femininity: Exploring the relations of ruling.* Taylor & Francis. Retrieved April 1, 2012, from http://lib.myilibrary.com.www .msvu.ca:2048?ID=32011

Spees, J. M. G., & Zimmerman, T. S. (2003). Gender messages in parenting magazines. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy,* 14(3-4) 73-100.

Thompson, L. (1993). Conceptualizing gender in marriage: The case of marital care. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55,* 557-569.

Thompson, L., & Walker, A. J. (1989). Gender in families: Women and men in marriage, work, and parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 51,* 845-871.

Warner, D. (1999). *Baby shower centerpiece ideas.* Retrieved January 20, 2013, from

Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/pregnancy/

preparing-for-baby/baby-shower-ideas/baby-shower-centerpieces.html

van Dijk, T.A. (2003). Critical discourse analysis. In H. E. Hamilton, D. Schiffrin, & D. Tannen

(Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (p. 352-371). Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell

Publishers.

Waterlow, L. (2013). *Too much in the pink! How toys have become alarmingly gender*

stereotyped since the Seventies... at the cost of little girls' self-esteem. Retrieved August

31, 2013, from Mail Online Website: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-

2338976/Too-pink-How-toys-alarmingly-gender-stereotyped-Seventies--cost-little-girls-

self-esteem.html

Appendix

Reference List: Website Articles

Ackerman, J. (2010. *Lighting for a newborn's bedroom*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from

  Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com

  /families/index.php/parenting/baby-parenting/baby/248-light-newborn.html

Administrator (2012a). *Amazing iPad apps*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families Online

  Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/index.php/

  parenting/parenting-advice-archive/1399-ipad-apps-mom.html

Administrator (2011b). *Decorating a nursery for a boy and girl twins*. Retrieved January 30,

  2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/

  families/index.php/parenting/baby-parenting/baby/581-decorating-a-nursery-for-a-boy-

  and-girl-twins.html

Administrator (2012c). *Expectant mothers: Ways to save*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from

  Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/

  index.php/finance/family-finance/1224-expectant-mom-save-money.html

Administrator (2011d). *From Guest Room to Nursery*. Retrieved August 31,

  2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/

  families/parenting/baby-parenting/baby/519-from-guest-room-to-nursery.html

Administrator (2011e). *Making plaid work in the nursery*. Retrieved January 30,

  2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/

  families/index.php/parenting/baby-parenting/baby/520-plaid.html

Administrator (2010f). *Mom's comfortable furniture for a baby's nursery*. Retrieved January 30,

  2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/

families/index.php/parenting/baby-parenting/baby/346-nursery-furniture.html

Administrator (2011g). *New color choices for a baby's room.* Retrieved August 31,

2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/

families/parenting/baby-parenting/baby/612-new-color-choices-for-a-babys-room.html

Alison (n.d.). *Get healthy hair when pregnant*. Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon

Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/pregnancy/get_back_

georgous_hair.html

Avoiding parent burnout with some me time. (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2013, from

Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

life/life-balance/me-time/Avoiding_Parent_Burnout.html

Baby sleep boot camp: Naptimes. (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/baby/weissbluth-sleep-baby-

naptime.jhtml

Baby sleep: SIDS prevention (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parenting-your-kids/baby/sleep/

prevent_SIDS.html

Basic hair care products every mom should have. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2013, from

Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

life/beauty-for-moms/hair-care-for-moms/basic-hair-care.html

Beat depression: 14 ways to stop bumming and start booming!. (n.d.). Retrieved January 21,

2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/

parents/your-life/health-for-moms/mental-health-for-moms/beat-depression.html

Brott, A. (2010). *Sons and daughters: Avoiding gender stereotypes*. Retrieved August 31, 2013,

from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/

families/index.php/parenting/dad-sense/218-sons-and-daughters-avoiding-gender-

stereotypes.html

Budget makeup (that works!). (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/beauty-for-

moms/makeup-for-moms/budget-makeup.html

Burke, E. (2011). *School Fashion Trends 2011*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families

Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/index.php/

life-a-style/42-fashion-beauty/805-school-fashion-trends-2011.html

Child acting out in father's absence. (n.d.). Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families   Online

Magazine Website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/life-balance/

balance-work-and-family-life/child_behavior_work.html

Easy exercises for mamas. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/exercise-for-

parents/exercises-for-moms.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Day into evening hairstyles*. Retrieved January 22, 2013, from

Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

life/beauty-for-moms/hair-care-for-moms/emme-evening-hairstyles.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Drugstore cosmetics vs. name-brand makeup*. Retrieved January 21, 2013, from

Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

life/beauty-for-moms/makeup-for-moms/emme-cheap-makeup.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Easy Makeup Tricks for Moms*. Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon

    Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/beauty-for-

    moms/makeup-for-moms/easy-makeup-tricks.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Emme on nourishing your body and soul*. Retrieved January 21, 2013, from

    Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

    life/exercise-for-parents/emme-body-and-soul.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Fashion for moms: Accessorize!*. Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon

    Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/fashion-for-

    moms/fashion-clothing-accessories.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Fashion for Moms: Get the Right Size Bra*. Retrieved January 20, 2013, from

    Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

    life/fashion-for-moms/emme-right-size-bra.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Finding the perfect haircut*. Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon

    Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/beauty-for-

    moms/hair-care-for-moms/emme-haircut-styles.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Makeup trends and moms*. Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

    Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/beauty-for-

    moms/makeup-for-moms/emme-makeup-trends-moms.html

Emme. (n.d.). *Simple hairstyles for moms*. Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon

    Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/beauty-for-

    moms/hair-care-for-moms/emme-simple-hair-styles.html

Emme author. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website:

    http://www.parentsconnect.com/biography/emme.html

Exercise for parents. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect

      website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/exercise-for-parents/

Finding me time. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect

      website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/life-balance/me-time/me-

      time.html

Fitness websites that create customized workout routines. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2013,

      from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/

      your-life/exercise-for-parents/customized-workout-routines-websites.html

Hair care for moms too busy to wash their hair. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2013, from

      Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

      life/beauty-for-moms/hair-care-for-moms/style-dirty-hair.html

Healthy summer food swaps. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

      Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/health-for-

      moms/healthy-eating-for-moms/healthy_summer_food_swaps.html

How to get fuller lips in 5 minutes (no botox necessary). (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2013, from

      Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

      life/beauty-for-moms/makeup-for-moms/how-to-get-fuller-lips.html

Johnson, R. (2011). *Angry young men*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families Online

      Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/index

      .php/parenting/dad-sense/575-young-men.html

LaRowe, M. (2012). *Caregiver communication*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families

      Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/index

      .php/parenting/nanny/842-caregiver-communication

LaRowe, M. (2012). *3 of the best bonding activities for moms and daughters.* Retrieved January

    30, 2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine

    .com/families/index.php/parenting/nanny/217-3-of- the-best-bonding-activities-for-

    moms-and-daughters.html

LaRowe, M. (2012). *Time management for moms*, Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families

    Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/index.php/

    parenting/nanny/1292-time-management-for-moms-v15-1292

LaRowe. (2012). *Top tips: Managing kids, career and home*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from

    Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/

    index.php/parenting/nanny/1189-kid-career-home.html

Lipinski, M. (n.d.). *Essential items for working moms*. Retrieved January 22, 2013, from

    Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

    life/life-balance/balance-work-and-family-life/working-moms-essential-items.html

Locke, R. (2013). *New ADHD study recommends talking to your baby*. Retrieved August 31,

    2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/

    families/index.php/parenting/ages-and-stages/child-development/1452-adhd-baby-

    talk#ixzz2e8R6nYzk

Long, B. (2003). *Top 10 ideas for a smooth baby shower*. Retrieved January 20, 2013, from

    Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/pregnancy/

    preparing-for-baby/baby-shower-ideas/planning-baby-shower-tasks.html

Makeup essentials for moms. (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

    Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/beauty-for-

    moms/makeup-for-moms/basic-makeup.html

Makeup for moms, (n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect

      website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/beauty-for-moms/makeup-for-

      moms/

Make "me" time for girlfriends, spas, working out ....(n.d.). Retrieved January 21, 2013, from

      Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

      life/life-balance/me-time/time-for-girlfriends-spas-working-out.html

Meet the Sears family [online image] (n.d.). Retrieved August 31, 2013, from Ask Dr. Sears

      Website: http://www.askdrsears.com

Moeller, C. (2012). *Now that I'm a mom of six...* Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families

      Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/

      index.php/fun/humor/1003-now-mom-six.html

Munford, S. (2011). *Anger management for children*. Retrieved August 31, 2013, from Families

      Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/index.php/

      parenting/dad-sense/550-anger-management-for-children-.html

Nettles. (n.d.). *Don't blame me!*. Retrieved January 21, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect

      website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/humor/dont-blame-me-for-being-

      crazy.html

Newborn (0-5 months) [online image] (n.d.). Retrieved August 31, 2013, from Pampers Website:

      http://www.pampers.ca

Party-ready fashion for moms. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents

      Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/fashion-for-

      moms/party-fashion-ideas.html

Peterson, R. (2012). *Build a wardrobe for busy moms*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from

      Families Online Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/i

      ndex.php/life-a-style/fashion-a-bea

Powel, C. (2012). *Children in sports - How to ensure healthy and positive competition*.

      Retrieved August 31, 2013, from Families Online Magazine Website: http://www

      .familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/parenting/ages-and-stages/child-

      development/1331-children-sports-competition.html

Pregnancy (All trimesters) [online image] (n.d.). Retrieved August 31, 2013, from Pampers

      Website: http://www.pampers.ca

SIDSEducator. (n.d.). *Baby sleep: In defense of back to sleep*. Retrieved January 22, 2013, from

      Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parenting-your-

      kids/baby/sleep/back-to-sleep-defense.html

Sophy, C. J. (n.d.). *Child acting out in father's absence*. Retrieved January 20, 2013, from

      Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-

      life/life-balance/balance-work-and-family-life/child_behavior_work.html

Sullan, B. (2011). *Who are the good guys?* Retrieved January 30, 2013, from Families Online

      Magazine Website: http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/families/index.php/

      parenting/dad-sense/817-who-are-the-good-guys.html

Taking care of yourself when you're busy taking care of everyone else. (n.d.). Retrieved January

      20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/

      parents/your-life/life-balance/me-time/taking_care_of_self.html

The baby-gami . (n.d). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website:

http://www.parentsconnect.com/pregnancy/preparing-for-baby/baby-shower-ideas/baby-gami.html

The strollometer. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/exercise-for-parents/The_Strollometer.html

Trying to conceive: Male fertility physical exam. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/pregnancy/trying-to-conceive/male_infertility_physical_exam.html

Trying to conceive: Testing semen for infertility. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/pregnancy/trying-to-conceive/testing_semen_for_infertility.html

Warner, D. (1999). *Baby shower centerpiece ideas.* Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/pregnancy/preparing-for-baby/baby-shower-ideas/baby-shower-centerpieces.html

6 ways to keep the me in mommy!. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/your-life/life-balance/me-time/ways-to-keep-me-in-mommy.html

10 imperfect mom truths. (n.d.). Retrieved January 20, 2013, from Nickelodeon Parents Connect website: http://www.parentsconnect.com/parents/humor/the-imperfect-mom-truths.html?print=true