

Differentiating Parent Practices Related to Adolescent Behavior in the Free Time Context

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The purpose of this study was to examine parenting practices associated with adolescent free time use. Interviews ($n = 17$) were conducted with parents of adolescents (12-14 years) in two communities. Eight were from a university-based community in the northern U.S., and nine were recruited from rural communities outside a large metropolitan center in Eastern Canada. The parents in this study used a number of practices to structure, regulate and support their adolescents' behavior in the free time domain. These practices extended from: (a) parents' *beliefs and expectations* of the free time context, (b) the ways in which parents *communicated and enforced* these beliefs and expectations, (c) parents' *actions to direct their adolescents' activity* engagement, (d) strategies used to *monitor* the adolescents' activities, (e) the *provision of resources* to support preferred activity engagement, and (f) parents' efforts to *support autonomous behavior* in the free time context. The results are discussed in terms of extant literature on parental structuring and support of adolescents' free time behavior and leisure interests.

KEYWORDS: *Adolescent development, free time domain, parenting practices*

We try to be pretty positive. We make sure he gets to where he needs to be on time. We try to follow up through participation. We make sure to give him a time to shine. (Peter's mother)

Introduction

Parents are one of the main socializing agents in the life of an adolescent (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Stein-

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berg, 2000) and they have both a direct and indirect influence on how an adolescent spends his or her free time. As Collins et al. suggested, "specific parental influences, consistently experienced, likely accumulate to produce larger meaningful outcomes over the childhood and adolescent years" (p. 226). The free time context is an especially important realm in which parents can influence whether adolescents develop and adopt skills and competencies that support a healthy, self-directed, responsible and autonomous form of functioning, or whether they spend their time engaged in unproductive or maladaptive ways that deter development.

At adolescence, parents must manage youths' increasing amount of free time and their desire for directing how free time is spent. Balancing and negotiating the dialectical relationship between parent authority and adolescent autonomy is often a challenging endeavor for both the parent and the adolescent (Steinberg, 2000). The free time context can become a "contested terrain" (Kleiber, 1999) between the adolescent and parent, with each vying for respective control over how that time is used and with whom.

The purpose of this study was to describe and examine parenting practices related to structuring, regulating, and supporting adolescents' free time behavior and leisure interests. In particular, we were interested in parenting practices that optimally support the development of preferred leisure pursuits. For the purposes of this study we adopted working definitions of free time and leisure based on a conventional understanding of free time as a temporally bounded context (e.g., the time when adolescents were not in school, such as after school and evening weekdays and weekends during the school year) and leisure as a subset of activities and experiences within that context. Parents in this study were asked to identify the range of activities, from obligatory (e.g., chores or homework) to preferred (by the adolescent), which the adolescent *regularly* engaged in during his/her free time (e.g., when not in school). Therefore, the whole array of free time activities (from expected, daily activities such as chores, to organized activities such as clubs, to informal activities such as television watching, or socializing with friends) was relevant to this study.

Parent Influences on Adolescent Development in the Free Time Context

Parental influence over adolescent time use and leisure behavior has been approached from a number of distinct yet complementary perspectives. Developmental psychologists have primarily been interested in parental influences on specific domains such as academic performance (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001), peer relationships (Fletcher, Darling, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1995; Mounts, 2001), and risk taking during free time (Barnes & Farrell, 1992; Barnes, Reifman, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2000; Baumrind, 1991; Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Moon, Jackson, & Hecht, 2000), and to a lesser extent, extra-curricular involvement (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos, 2000; Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). In some cases issues related to the role of leisure activities in the constructive use of free time have been

examined (e.g., Czikszenmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993; Larson, 2000; Larson, Dworkin & Gillman, 2001; Mahoney & Magnusson, 2000), but for the most part, the range of strategies that parents use to manage both what the adolescents "want to do" and "have to do" in the overall domain of free time for their adolescent has been of secondary interest.

Within leisure studies, the literature is mainly comprised of studies focused on parental influences regarding decisions to initiate or cease participation in a leisure activity sponsored by a recreation agency (Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Hultsman, 1992, 1993) and characteristics of adolescent leisure within the scope of family leisure (Larson & Richards, 1994; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Additionally, there are some studies that have examined the relationship between leisure behavior and developmental outcomes (e.g., Shaw, Kleiber & Caldwell, 1993) and socialization into specific activity contexts (Green & Chalip, 1997). There has been comparatively little attention to the degree to which parents structure their adolescents' use of free time, and the consequent relationship to aspects of adolescent well-being and development. Shaw and Dawson (2001), for example, conducted a study with parents of pre-adolescents (10-12 years old) and found that parents do purposefully structure leisure experiences for children. However, they did not examine these parents' efforts to provide positive leisure experiences for their children within their role of managing and structuring their adolescents' overall free time (e.g., including chores and homework).

Parenting Styles

There is some consensus that parental influences on adolescent development can be understood within certain typological styles of parenting (Baumrind, 1971; Collins, et al. 2000; Steinberg, 2000). However, there is debate regarding how these *styles* translate into parenting *strategies* and *practices*. Parenting style refers to the *manner* in which parents carry out their actions and communications and is often interpreted as the overall emotional climate surrounding parent and adolescent interactions (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Parenting styles are comprised of two dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness (Baumrind, 1971; 1991). Demandingness refers to the extent to which parents are overtly controlling in their parenting, whereas responsive refers to the extent to which parents show affective warmth, acceptance and involvement (Baumrind, 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). There is evidence that the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship shapes peer choices and academic achievement (e.g., Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos, 2000). For example, adolescents whose parents are authoritative are less influenced by peer pressure than are adolescent whose parents are permissive or authoritarian (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). In this study we were interested in examining the behavioral enactments of parenting styles through parents' day-

to-day practices associated with structuring and managing their adolescents' use of free time.

Parenting Practices

Parenting practice refers to what Fletcher, Elder, and Mekos (2000) described as behavioral, goal-oriented actions of parents. When conceptualizing parental influence on a specific developmental outcome, parenting style has a moderating effect on parent practice. While this distinction between parenting style as a general manner or way of parenting and practice as a behavioral action adds clarity to conceptualizing parental involvement and influence, researchers have not been consistent in the operationalization of these terms (Barber, 1997). For example, Fletcher et al. (2000) include "limit-setting" within their definition of the authoritative parenting style. However, limit-setting can be interpreted as a goal-directed parental behavior, meaning that it can also be interpreted as a parent practice. Similarly, parental monitoring has been described as parents' knowledge of their adolescents' whereabouts, but typically measures adolescent self-disclosure rather than parenting practices.

Parental Influences over Adolescent Use of Free Time

While there is evidence of the relationship between parenting and different aspects of adolescent well-being and academic achievement, as described earlier, there have been a dearth of studies which have examined the relationship between parenting and adolescent "leisure" (see Caldwell, Darling, Payne, & Dowdy, 1999; Larson, Dworkin, & Gillman, 2001; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000, as exceptions). There is some evidence that, consistent with studies of adolescent academic achievement, adolescents whose parents use authoritative parenting practices engage in fewer delinquent or risk behaviors in the free time context than adolescents whose parents are permissive or neglectful (Caldwell et al., 1999; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). However, the distinction between parental support and parental over-control is unclear, and variations in the range of parenting practices parents utilize in different situations (e.g., between types of activities) and the developmental consequences of parenting for adolescents remains unexplored.

There is a need to extend beyond merely examining parents beliefs, intentions and dispositional styles to more closely examine what parents actually *do*—the practices that influence (positively or negatively) how adolescents spend their time, and the extent to which their behaviors support optimal adolescent development. The focus of this study was to identify and describe the situations and ways parents fostered activity engagement, provided instrumental resources to support participation in an array of free time and leisure activities, and communicated expectations about positive free-time use. In particular we were interested in parents' perceptions of those

activities they believed were “good” for the adolescent, and the practices they used to structure or manage the adolescents’ free time so as to ensure ongoing commitment to and engagement in these activities.

Conceptual Framework

There is little consensus on the degree to which inductive, qualitative designs should extend from existing theory and research (Britt, 1997; Creswell, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Given the amount of research on parental influence on adolescent functioning in sub-domains of the free time context, we opted to follow Yin’s (1994) recommended strategy for case study design and developed a conceptual framework based on the literature and an existing theory. To conceptualize the dynamics of parental influence on free time, Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) was adopted as one component of the guiding framework. SDT is an explanatory framework that applies across activity domains and addresses the processes and behaviors associated with autonomous forms of self-regulated behavior and motivation. More important to this study, SDT addresses the role of *socializing agents* and contextual factors that support or inhibit the expression of more internally motivated behaviors.

Two subtheories underlie SDT: Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) and Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). CET indicates that individuals are intrinsically motivated to pursue their interests, so long as the social environment supports this expression of intrinsic motivation. OIT explains amotivation, and the process of internalization as it applies to types of extrinsically motivated behavior. According to OIT, extrinsically motivated behavior can become more internally driven and autonomous through the process of internalization (assimilating and adopting social requirements and regulations). More autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation share conditions of engagement similar to intrinsically motivated behavior. To a large extent, the social factors that support the expression of intrinsic motivation also support the process of internalization (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Grolnick, Deci, and Ryan (1997) conceptualized how aspects of parenting promote self-determined adolescent behavior and developed a model representing social-contextual dimensions associated with positive parenting. They operationalized positive parenting as interpersonal involvement, structuring, and parental support of adolescent autonomy. *Interpersonal involvement* refers to the parent’s investment of time and resources in the child’s activities. This involvement encompasses both taking interest and providing warmth and caring. *Parental structuring* is the provision of guidelines and constraints on behavior, including communicating expectations, providing a rationale, explaining consequences, and providing feedback. *Parental support of adolescent autonomy* refers to the opportunities for making choices that parents provide to their adolescents. Autonomy support incorporates encouraging self-initiative, minimizing use of controls, and acknowledging the feelings and perspective of others.

According to OIT, internalization requires that parents provide the “structures” to be internalized, and intrinsic motivation requires that “contextual supports for autonomy and competence” are needed for one to be motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). Therefore, the way in which parent practices support both internalization and intrinsic motivation serves as a useful framework for examining adolescent free time use.

There are some limitations, however, to the SDT framework. First, choice and control are at the heart of autonomy and the pursuit of leisure activities, but these concepts are often difficult to operationalize. For early adolescents, choice is limited by definition, as a full range of activities and behaviors are not possible (e.g., driving). As well, choice may mean choosing to enroll in soccer, which structures daily life for 10-12 weeks, or it may mean choosing whether or not to go to soccer practice *today*. Additionally, there is virtually no research on how parents frame choice and set structures to help early adolescents learn greater self-direction, nor on how parents manage young adolescents’ free time during a period of increasing autonomy. How parents and adolescents manage and negotiate the mix of “have to” and “want to” dynamics of free time is only partially informed by SDT. Therefore, the goal of this study was to both examine SDT within the context of free time and to descriptively represent parent practices in context in order to more fully understand them as they relate to adolescents’ use of free time, *particularly* leisure activities.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore parental practices concerning young adolescents’ patterns of free time use and involvement in leisure. Three research questions guided data collection and analysis. First, we were interested in identifying the kinds of rules and expectations parents set regarding free time and how these were communicated and enforced. The second research question was directed at identifying the time and resources parents invested, how they went about making decisions regarding the provision of resources, and their role in planning and coordinating their child’s free time activities. Finally, we sought to identify parent practices surrounding facilitating adolescent choices and decision-making.

Research Design and Methods

A qualitative, case study design (Cresswell, 1998; Yin, 1994) was employed. Case studies are used to explore a phenomenon (“the case”) bounded by a particular context, event, process, or social group. We followed Yin’s framework for case study research, which does require a literature review, theory development prior to data collection, and analysis based on the conceptual framework. This approach is distinct from grounded theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and other traditions of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998, pp. 85-87).

For our purposes, families with adolescents provided interview data for a multiple case-study design that allowed for both descriptive and explanatory analyses of parenting practices in relation to our conceptual framework. The study conceptual framework was based in SDT (in particular, Grolnick et al., 1997) and was complemented with descriptive questions designed to identify how parents carry out their role and to uncover additional insights that support or run contrary to using SDT as a means to understand parent practices related to adolescents' use of free time. The case study approach to answering the research questions allowed for a greater depth of understanding of how parents set parameters around and supported their adolescents' free-time use and activities while also assessing the plausibility of understanding parent practices in relation to SDT.

Sample Characteristics

Participants were drawn from two communities. Eight parent and adolescent dyads were recruited from a university-based city in the northeastern U.S. and nine dyads were recruited from rural communities outside a larger metropolitan center in eastern Canada. A snowball sampling technique was used to identify parents of early adolescents (12-14 years). Initial contact was made within the U.S. university town with an educated parent and adolescent within the targeted age. In an effort to obtain some diversity in the sample, initial contacts were sought with a family who lived in a rural and lower socioeconomic area in eastern Canada. In both situations, initial (and subsequent) contacts were asked to identify one or two additional families who may be willing to participate in the study. In order to be eligible to participate in the study, one parent and one adolescent from each family had to be willing to participate in interviews. Within the sample, five dyads were single parent households and four families were of African or Asian ethnicity. Based on observations of the home environments, a range of family incomes were represented. Table 1 profiles the 17 parent and adolescent dyads.

Data Collection Methods

After obtaining written consent to participate in the study, the parents and adolescents were interviewed separately. Typically, the interviews occurred in the family home. Three interviewers were trained in the semi-structured interview format. To gain a sense of the adolescent's free-time repertoire and to direct parental responses to specific free time events, each parent was asked to characterize the way the adolescent regularly spent his or her free-time through a guided, structured "yesterday" interview in which parents were asked to talk about how the adolescent spent his or her time the day before the interview, within the last week, within the last month, and during the school year. Upon completion of this task parents were asked to consider this entire repertoire of typical activities when responding to other questions in the semi-structured interview. Although the interviews occurred

TABLE 1
Profile of Study Participants¹

Pseudonym	Age/Gender of Adolescent	Marital Status/ Adolescent Ethnicity	Living Situation/ Employment Status
Alan's Mom	13/male	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-American	Suburban, own home Mother/father work f.t.
Andy's Mom	13/male	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-Canadian	Rural, own home Father works f.t./mother p.t.
Ben's Mom	13/male	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-American	Suburban, own home Mother/father work f.t.
Dana's Mom ^a	12/female	2-parent, ? ^b siblings Asian-American	Suburban, own home
Faith's Mom	13/female	1-parent, no siblings Euro-Canadian	Suburban, rent apartment Work part-time
Katie's Mom	14/female	2-parent, 1 sibling Bi-racial	Suburban, own home Mother/father work f.t.
Leah's Dad	13/female	1-parent, 1 sibling Euro-American	Suburban, own home Father works f.t.
Leon's Mom	14/male	1-parent, 3 siblings Euro-Canadian	Rural, own home Mother works p.t.
Lisa's Dad	13/female	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-Canadian	Rural, own home Mother works f.t.; father p.t.
Paul's Mom	13/male	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-Canadian	Rural, own home Mother/father work f.t.
John's Mom	13/male	2-parent, no siblings Euro-Canadian	Rural, own home Father works f.t.; mother p.t.
Josh's Mom	13/male	2-parent, 1 sibling Bi-racial	Rural, own home Father/mother work f.t.
Mariah's Mom	14/female	1-parent, 2 siblings African-Canadian	Suburban, rent duplex Mother works f.t.
Matt's Dad	13/male	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-American	Suburban, own home Mother/father work f.t.
Peter's Mom	13/male	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-American	Suburban Mother/father work f.t.
Rachel's Mom	14/female	2-parent, 1 sibling Euro-American	Suburban Mother/father work f.t.
Roxy's Mom	14/female	2-parent, 1 sibling African-Canadian	Suburban, own home Mother/father work f.t.
Sarah's Mom	13/female	1-parent, no siblings Euro-American	Suburban, rent apartment Mother works f.t.

^aNote: "Dana's" mother elected not to have her interview tape recorded.

^bmissing data

during the summer, the goal was to create a picture of the adolescent's typical pattern of free time use, considering both the previous school year and current summer patterns. The semi-structured interview questions were based in part on Grolnick et al.'s (1997) conceptual framework and complemented with questions developed to guide systematic and contextualized descriptions of the parent practices related to adolescent patterns of free time activities. Appendix A provides sample questions. Interviews were audiotaped and ranged from 60-120 minutes in length.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Pseudonyms were assigned in place of the real names of the adolescents, parents, siblings and friends. Complete transcripts were read by two of the researchers prior to coding. Coding was used to organize the data into common categories across interviews. Initially, coding occurred both inductively (based on salient points made by parents that were relevant to the research questions) and deductively, from the conceptual framework. Using a highlighting function within the *Atlas.ti* software program the following codes were applied to the data across all the interviews: Beliefs and perceptions, autonomy-related, parental control, parental structuring, and forms of parental resources. This initial coding involved assigning a label to highlighted sections of the text by one of the researchers. The other two members of the research team then systematically assessed the coding for clarity, consistency and comprehensiveness. Areas of text with emergent themes not captured in the initial framework were also identified. During a series of meetings the research team reviewed the transcripts and achieved consensus on a revised coding scheme (e.g., parental knowledge and parental reflections on parenting were added; autonomy-related was revised to focus specifically on parental autonomy-support). One member of the team subsequently went back through each of the files to recode the data. After this coding had been completed, the research team subsequently looked across the categories to examine the relationships (or patterns) between them. Pattern matching, within-case and across case comparisons were made.

Results

The parents in this study utilized a number of practices to structure, regulate and support their adolescents' use of free time. These practices extended from: (a) parents' *beliefs and expectations* of the free time context, (b) the ways in which parents *communicated and enforced* these beliefs and expectations, (c) parents' *actions to direct their adolescents' activity* engagement, (d) strategies used to *monitor* the adolescents' activities in the free time domain, (e) the *provision of resources* to support preferred activity engagement, and (f) the parents' efforts *to support autonomous behavior*. The data presented

here reflect the differential influences that parents had on their adolescents' behavior in the free time domain.

Parents' Beliefs and Expectations for Activity Engagement

While we specifically set out to identify parent practices, it was evident that much of what these parents described was related to their values and expectations about the use of free time. In part, these beliefs were based on their own perceptions of priority activities, the benefits of certain leisure activities, as well as generalized expectations about age-appropriate and socially acceptable behavior. Parents' beliefs and expectations guided parent practices associated with establishing and enforcing rules and boundaries for free time use. Once these parameters were established, the adolescent was relatively "free" to operate within these guidelines.

Most of the adolescents were expected to "know right from wrong," and to keep their parents informed about their plans for their free time. Katie's mother remarked: "I mean we can't protect them forever, but we can teach them right from wrong." Talking about the expectation of keeping her informed, Faith's mother commented, "I know where she is, what she is doing, and who she is doing it with. And that is the way it's going to be. It has to be." Leon's mother stated: "It is expected that I know where you are. That is one rule of the house."

Parents also had very clear expectations regarding priority activities and these served to structure how the adolescent's time was spent. Most parents expected their son or daughter to complete his/her homework or chores *before* he/she was allowed to do other preferred activities. In fact, preferred activity engagements were typically restricted or contingent on getting priority activities done. As Faith's mother explained, "As long as she's got the commitment part done, then she pretty much has free rein with her time." Leah's father stressed: "I mean if you can't live up to what you are supposed to do then you can't do other things. . . . I know what they want to do and I try to use some leverage to try to get them to do what I want them to do." Similarly Rachel's mother indicated: "She's responsible for putting laundry away and we can't go to any of these places [e.g., church youth program, basketball, piano lessons] until those things are done." Matt's father stated, "When he comes home he does his homework because he can't do anything else until he's finished with that."

Several parents also expressed that once an initial investment was made in an activity pursuit such as competitive sports or music lessons, it was their expectation that their adolescent stick with this activity. This coincided with a generalized expectation about "trying hard." As Leah's father said, "All I ask is that she gives it all that she has." Rachel's mother explained: "I wouldn't say it's a rule but I think both her father and I have raised the kids to not be quitters so if they are going to commit to something they're going to follow it through. . . . Likewise, Katie's mother reiterated her rule about

not quitting in response to Katie's plea to give up the clarinet. "It was a rule that you had to play until grade 9, and that's what you're going to do. You can't change it half-way through the year."

Parenting Practices: Communicating Rules and Expectations

Parenting practices refers to the things that the parents did or did not do to take action to structure, regulate or support their adolescents' free time use. As indicated previously these practices extended from the parents' global beliefs and expectations associated with the free time context. These beliefs not only defined what parents saw as their *role* as parents of an adolescent but also what they believed they could legitimately expect of their adolescent in terms of obligations and freedoms for his or her free time use. Parents enacted their beliefs by establishing and communicating rules that set general parameters for their relationship and for the adolescent's free time use, making decisions for their adolescent regarding some forms of activity engagement, and strategically monitoring their adolescents' activities. These parenting practices, in conjunction with the provision of resources that were at the adolescent's disposal, served to set the affordances and constraints associated with the free time context.

In most cases, the parents spoke about the importance of communication in their family. Often this communication occurred during drives to and from an adolescent's activities or in the context of a shared family activity. As Alan's mother said, "Whenever we go [out] we talk, we go shopping we talk, we are in the car we talk, we drive four hours we talk." In fact, several parents said they enjoyed providing transportation because it gave them time alone to talk. As Roxie's mom commented, "I find it's good that I drive her places, 'cause usually that's when we get to talk, when we're sitting in the car. So that works out pretty well." Leon's mother described how important it was to both of them that they have time to sit in their living room and "just talk." Mariah's mother also noted, "We have lots of talks. She knows that there's nothing that she can't come to me and tell me. . . . And we may not agree, but that's not a big deal."

Reinforcing rules and expectations. Several parents indicated that in the context of conversations with their adolescent, they would often provide explanations or rationale for their expectations about certain activities. Particularly in situations where the adolescent did not want to continue with an activity, but the activity was important to the parents, the parents would often re-state their expectation about the importance of keeping commitments, discuss reasons for not quitting, or they would negotiate continued participation by saying the adolescent could quit after the school year was finished. For example, Mariah and her mother discussed Mariah's desire to quit playing the saxophone by negotiating that she could quit after she completed the year. "But we talked about it and I said 'Well, try it. Try it for one year, and if you don't like it that's fine.'" Ben's parents discussed decisions in terms

of the pros and cons of certain activities: "Making sure that he sees what might happen with one choice as opposed to another—and what might happen on down the road if he chooses one thing or another. The main thing is just trying to talk it through with him."

Enforcing rules and expectations. When parents described the ways they communicated expectations to their adolescents, several mentioned that as it related to chores or homework, it was "just a rule" and there was no negotiation, or that the adolescents accepted doing chores because they understood they were expected to contribute to being part of a family. In general, parents reported a high amount of compliance with rules.

Many parents enforced rules or expectations associated with chores or homework by taking away or threatening to take away a preferred free time activity or privilege. As Ben's mother said, "Usually it ends up being something taken away because something didn't get done, which he sometimes thinks is punitive." Josh's mother described how she will threaten to turn off the television: "If I've asked him so many times to clean his room or something. 'I'm turning the TV off and it doesn't come on until your room is cleaned.' And that will get him moving." Alan's mother also said that they withdraw activity privileges if proper grades or homework expectations are not met. Likewise, John's mother described how they had taken away all his extracurricular activities when they found out that he was not doing his homework.

For each family, there were times of disagreement about chores or homework, but for the most part the parents in this study expressed that their son or daughter was living up to their expectations regarding the use of free time. Two parents (Katie's and Sara's), however, reported that chores and homework were a constant source of tension. In both cases these parents expressed concern for managing the lack of compliance or bad behavior. Describing their daily routine, Sarah's mother said, "we eat dinner . . . and then I fight with her for 3 hours to do the homework." Katie's mother described an ongoing battle with Katie over chores. However, for her the expectation of doing chores was important in spite of the conflict, because, "It's trying to teach her a little bit about responsibility."

Parent-Directed Activity Engagement

As a result of their own situation (e.g., working full time), their beliefs about what their adolescent needed (or could manage him/herself), or their beliefs about what was good for their adolescent, many parents made decisions about activity involvement for their adolescent. Paul's mother talked about a summer camp program as "my babysitting program." The parents of the 13-year-old boys, in particular, explained that they would typically make decisions about their adolescent's activity involvement, such as swimming lessons or summer camps, and then would tell him what he was registered for. For example, John's mother said, "I'll just register him and just

go ahead and once bowling starts he'll just say fine. It's just one of those things," while Josh's said, "Sometimes it would be a little bit of a struggle, and we'd get him there [bowling] and he would be fine."

There were also some parents who *required* certain recreational activities that seemed to be based on beliefs about the importance of having leisure-related skills. Two families insisted their adolescents acquire certain "survival skills," such as swimming competencies, for when they were older. Rachel's mother explained: "My husband and I both think that swimming is a lifelong skill and they don't see it right now but they'll appreciate it later."

For others, being skilled at some leisure pursuit, such as music, was viewed as an important end in itself. As Peter's mother explained: "We feel that music is a discipline and it is just as important as English or Math. We have the responsibility to give him skills that will allow him to have a hobby or an interest as an adult and music is a very good way to do this." Likewise some parents in the study believed that active engagement in a variety of leisure pursuits was an important part of fostering their son or daughter's positive development. As Faith's mother said:

Her time is filled with good things. She doesn't have 'nothing to do' that she has to hang around the mall, get involved with people that she shouldn't, get involved with drugs and drinking and all that stuff, because her hours are filled with good stuff. And she may not enjoy it every minute but in the long run it balances out and she's okay with it.

Situational redirection. In some situations parents directly intervened to *redirect* how the adolescent was spending time, "making" the adolescent stop doing one activity and switch to another preferred by the parent. For example, Paul's mother talked about always needing to kick Paul and his friends out of the house to play. John's mother said she will make him "turn the TV off at 8 o'clock, and he has to read until bedtime." Katie's mother described her ongoing battles with Katie over her computer use: "I'll say to Katie, 'It's time to get off the computer. You're not spending the whole day on the computer.' And she says she has nothing to do. . . . I said 'go do what you do, something. If you don't get off the computer you'll be banned from the computer for the rest of the day.'" Several parents described similar conversations over television watching, many of which would result in adolescents not being permitted to do their preferred activity until they had done something else that was more acceptable to the parent.

Activity as a means of control. In some cases, parents made adolescents participate in an activity as a means of controlling problem behaviors. For example, Andy's mother talked about making him read, despite him not liking to read, "as a way of keeping him in one place and from fighting with [whomever]." And in the case of Sara, her mother said, "I've been making her go with me to the gym because I can't let her home alone. . . . I don't really give her a choice." Sara's noncompliance with rules recently established pertaining to free time use led to Sara being "grounded for life." Sara's mother expressed her frustration about having to set stricter rules:

“With Sara you have to tell her everything, you have to foresee everything—like when you ride your bike to school you go straight into school—just everything is a rule.” Nonetheless, Sara’s mother felt she had to bend other rules, such as TV watching, which was another source of tension for her. “I couldn’t trust her to just go to [her friends]. She has to sneak and go downtown so I let her do the computer and the TV so that she doesn’t do these [other] things. . .” While Sara’s mother is not happy to have Sara watch TV, in her mind it was a better option than having Sara sneak downtown to hang out with friends she believes are a high risk.

Guided activity engagement. Rather than having direct control over the adolescents’ time use, as just described, often parents guided time use. That is, when some engagements were clearly unacceptable, parents would offer alternative choices or solutions. For example, Andy’s mother said that while they gave Andy the option of not attending full-time summer camps, “We wanted him busy, we didn’t want him vegetating in front of the television.” For Andy’s mother, this meant driving Andy back and forth to golf lessons and to spend time with friends. Interestingly, Andy’s mother also stated that she wanted to be informed when he was having friends over so she could make plans to keep them busy. “I hate having them laying around the house. That’s why I wanted him to ask me before he brings them over because I want to make sure that they’re going to be busy.” Similarly, Roxie was given the choice of attending a summer youth leadership course at the local community center or going to her grandmother’s house, but that “hanging out at home” was not an option.

Limit Setting and Strategic Monitoring of Adolescents’ Activities

Many of the parents instituted specific strategies for monitoring activity involvement that varied depending on the type of activity and the extent to which it was a “problem” for the adolescent to self-monitor. Strategies for monitoring were particularly apparent as the parents talked about their adolescents’ activities surrounding television, telephone and computer use, as well as spending time with friends.

Parents talked about limiting computer services and privileges by removing instant messaging or restricting or reducing the amount of time their adolescent could spend on the computer as a way to ensure that their adolescent would not get to risky websites or start on-line relationships with older people. Two parents had a password, which only they had access to, so the parent had to log on before the adolescent could access the Internet. Paul’s parents put a block on the television so only certain acceptable channels would be available. “Certain channels are banned from him that are notorious for um . . . something I wouldn’t want him to watch.” For Paul’s mother, this was important because she was not home when he came home from school and she didn’t feel she could directly control what he watched on TV otherwise. Other parents were more indirect. The computer was set up in a common room, such as the living room or family room. As they walked from

room to room, they would look over the adolescent's shoulder. As Lisa's father described, "You know, you're always going by loading the washing machine, you know, so you get a pretty good idea of what's going on."

Many parents felt they needed to monitor with whom their adolescent was spending time. Katie's mother explained that even though she may know a friend of Katie's by sight, she still felt she needed to talk to the parent before allowing Katie to sleep over at this friend's house. Roxie's mother also felt that she needed to know where a family lived or who the parents were before Roxie would be able to stay at a friend's home. "She thinks I'm too overprotective but a friend that I don't know the parents, I definitely have to go and see where they live, and, you know, I go and introduce myself to the parents and try to talk to them on the phone." Mariah's mother also explained how she would spend time on the front porch with Mariah and her friends as a way to monitor what they were doing and the relationships within her group of friends. "A lot of times, when they are here as a group, I talk to them as a group. . . . Sitting there for a couple of hours and have a conversation. That's what I want her to be able to do, and her friends." As a result, Mariah's mother said that she "didn't mind" that Mariah had a boyfriend because, "I know him, he knows me and he's one of the kids that come[s] and sit[s] on the doorstep."

To the extent that parents felt they could "trust" their adolescent's judgment about friends, the parents let their adolescents be more autonomous in the pursuit of spending time with friends. As Matt's father said, "He makes good choices about stuff and when his friends go beyond it he stops—he has no trouble stopping and saying I'm not doing it and what he stumbles over he takes the consequences." Conversely, parents like Sara's who felt they could not trust their adolescent's judgment (most often because he or she demonstrated poor judgment in the past) expressed their need to have even more control over who their adolescent spent time with.

If friendships were potentially problematic, then parents imposed even stricter rules regarding the adolescent's interactions and activities with these friends. For example, because Roxie hung out with friends who Roxie's parents knew smoked, Roxie's parents had a "non-negotiable" no-smoking rule. "I know her friends smoke, but to me children don't smoke so it's non-negotiable. You don't smoke. So there's different things that we're stuck on or I'm stuck on that just, there's no negotiation for." Mariah's mother had a rule about the age of the kids that Mariah could hang out with. "She's not allowed to associate, well not associate but hang out with anyone over 15 and that's basically no one in high school." Faith's mother decided to restrict Faith from spending time with one friend after the friend would call and talk about things Faith's mother perceived to be disruptive. However as Faith has gotten older, Faith's mother felt she could not restrict Faith's contact altogether, so she permitted Faith to have this friend over to her house where she could monitor what went on, but would not let Faith go to this girl's house.

Providing Resources for Adolescent's Use of Free Time

As indicated previously, parents' beliefs and expectations about the free time context guided their decisions regarding the kinds of resources they would invest to support and manage their adolescents' free time activities. Within the financial means afforded them, all the parents in this study provided a range of resources that structured and supported their adolescents' use of free time, including time, money, space in their home, and rides to support free time endeavors. Despite busy schedules most parents took their son or daughter to lessons or games and would try to stay to watch them practice or compete. Parents talked about helping with homework, providing for sleepovers, regularly going to the library, buying books, lessons or video and sports equipment, getting a computer and computer games, or investing time in leadership roles within their child's organization, such as Scouts or coaching a sports team.

Investment in "positive" activities. Some parents explicitly acknowledged that the resources they provided to their adolescent were important "investments" in promoting positive activity engagement. This sentiment was expressed by Faith's mother who stated, "When Faith was young, I did everything in the world I knew how to do. . . All the things that we have done are never going to go away." She talked about a myriad of activities, from berry picking to getting Faith to help make cookies and gravy for Christmas, to going to outdoor concerts, buying her seeds to plant and going to the second-hand bookstore. She believes that participation in these activities has enabled Faith to now have the ability to choose from a wide repertoire of interests. Lisa's father also described how supplies for crafts or games are in open view. As Lisa's father explained, "It has to be there where they can get to and they don't have to ask my permission. I mean that top drawer is open to anybody in the house."

Shared family activities. In addition to the above examples, other parents in the study described doing shared activities with their adolescent, including playing cards, chess or video-games, watching movies or television together, going to the gym, swimming or hiking together, eating meals together, working on a jigsaw puzzle together, going shopping, and special activities such as traveling on day trips, vacations and to family gatherings. For example, Leon's mother described telling her children that Sundays were their day to spend together as a family. She explained "we just kind of look for something to do together," like building virtual projects with a computer software program. "It might be nothing more than just sitting around together through the day or sometimes we'll break out Monopoly®."

Even though most parents seemed to try to make time to spend with their adolescent, some expressed guilt over "not being there" as much as they felt they should. For example, Leah's father said he would try to go for an ice cream with her despite maintaining a busy medical practice and being a single parent of three children. He explained, "I have this guilt about being

a good parent and so in some respects I'd like to be at more games and do more things like that, but again, it's a constant balance to decide who gets what time and do I get any time." Likewise, Paul's mother, who also worked full-time, expressed her guilt and concern about not being able to more closely monitor what Paul did after school: "I'm not happy with the amount of TV and stuff he watches, but I try and convince myself that by the time he was watching a lot of this that he'd already developed his sense of right and wrong."

Developing skills and interests. As indicated previously, several parents in this study expressed their beliefs about the importance of fostering their adolescent's development of skills and interests. This occurred through the strategic provision of resources to support new activity pursuits. Some parents seemed to try to foster activity interest by taking their child on summer vacations or day trips to new areas, involving them in community service projects, or signing them up for theme camps or lessons that would allow them to explore new interests (e.g., a drama camp). Other times, they shared an activity interest. For example, when Matt expressed an interest in playing the guitar, Matt's dad took lessons alongside him. In addition, parents' own activities or volunteer commitments fostered their adolescents' involvement in those activities. Alan and Peter's mothers each talked about their own role in their families' church because of their son's weekly involvement in their church's choirs.

Some parents would also invest time searching for community opportunities in response to an adolescent's expressed interest. For example, Rachel's mother reported that she "helped her [Rachel] look for opportunities to be involved in the theatre." While most parents in the study did actively support their adolescent's pursuit of interests, some parents were unsure what to do to foster further involvement (or seemed unaware that this is something they might want to do, as in Katie's and Sara's mother's cases, described previously). For example, Josh's mother acknowledged Josh's interest in rock collecting but was unsure how to further support him in developing this interest. "There's things that he would really like to do that I'm not sure how, how to do that with him." Even though she knew of his interest in rock collecting she did not seem to be aware of the ways she could foster his own progressive pursuit of this interest. John's mother similarly acknowledged John's interest in art, but expressed no attempts to foster continued involvement outside of buying him some supplies for school.

Structuring Opportunities for Greater Autonomy and Responsibility

Beliefs that the adolescent could be more self-determined seemed to be derived, in part, from normative age expectations, but also recognition of the adolescent's own maturity or personality. For example, when asked if Lisa (who was also 13) would be expected to be more self-directed as she got older, Lisa's dad replied "Well no, because she's always kind of done her own thing. So, it's not even a question." In contrast, the two parents of 13-

year-old boys expressed that they still had to make most of the decisions for their sons.

Facilitating choice. Providing opportunities for greater autonomy was, in large part, related to parents' expectations for increased self-responsibility as the adolescent was getting older, coupled with their belief that they could increasingly "trust" their adolescent to make wise decisions related to activities and friends in the free time context. For example, when Faith was younger, Faith's mother said she would always check the books she was reading for "adult content," but that she now trusts Faith's ability to make good choices about the books she reads.

Some parents in the study acknowledged that it was their responsibility as a parent to better prepare their son or daughter to be a more responsible person. In many ways this directly related to their beliefs and expectations about the importance of chores and homework. Faith's mother's explanation is indicative of her direct efforts to structure opportunities for greater autonomy: "Basically I'm just trying to help her develop herself into a responsible young adult. A thinking person." However, some parents also recognized that at a certain age their adolescent would be relatively "free" to make his or her own choices about everything from hairstyle to body piercing. As Roxie's mother indicated, "We said definitely nothing until she's 16, and now she's just waiting for the day she turns 16. She'll get her car, her license, the nose pierced, the tattoo. I mean she's got the whole agenda. So we'll see what happens."

Encouraging self-management. Many parents noted that their support of greater autonomy was related to their adolescent's prior demonstration of self-regulation. In order to help their adolescent become more self-responsible the parents would expect their son or daughter to take more responsibility for planning or coordinating their own free time schedules. For example, Josh's mother talked about expecting Josh to phone his own friends, for the first time, to invite them to his 14th birthday party. Rachel's mother said Rachel now has her own calendar. Andy's mother said they now expect him to make his own arrangements to get together with friends to play golf, but that she will drive him when he has something concrete in place. For some parents, their adolescents' desire for time at home alone signaled growing independence. Paul's mother commented that although they want Paul to join them on outings, she understands that his decision to stay home reflects the fact that "he enjoys the time on his own, the independence."

Parents' autonomy support. Knowing when to provide opportunities for greater self-responsibility was a source of uncertainty for some parents in the study. This was particularly true in situations in which the adolescent wanted to try new activities that previously would have been restricted when he or she was younger. Now, however, several parents expressed they needed to just "trust" their adolescent would do the right thing. As Mariah's mother said, "I don't need to know. . . . She has to learn and I have to learn. She has to learn that I trust her and I have to learn that what I want her to learn

and things that I've taught her, she's learned to use when she goes out." Mariah's mother gave an example of how she needed to trust that everything was okay when Mariah was at a beach party with her friends:

I don't have control over what's going on at the beach right now. But I believe and I have to believe that what's going on is actually what's supposed to be going on. They're up there, they're carrying on, they're playing, they're swimming, they're splashing and when they're finished, they'll be back with no problems. But, if there is a problem, I do know that she will come back and she will let me know.

From the above quote it is clear that, in part, what enabled Mariah's mother to feel that she could give Mariah more freedoms was that she had an open line of communication that had fostered a sense of trust in Mariah's choices surrounding her time with peers.

When the adolescent wanted to do an activity but the parent did not see it as contributing directly to his/her development, then he or she was more responsible for making it happen. For example, although Roxie's parents willingly paid for her guitar lessons and bought her a guitar, they required her to purchase her own "D.J." equipment. Sara's mother was willing to pay for Sara to attend a fitness club, but she expected Sara to improve her behavior and to earn money to contribute to buying an electric guitar. In situations where the parent did not seem to be personally invested in the activity the adolescent was doing—and where there were other ways the adolescent could demonstrate commitment to goals—then parents would leave it to their adolescent to decide to sustain participation in an activity. For example, Leah's dad commented that when Leah decided to quit swimming competitively, he "kind of discouraged her from doing it but I didn't feel strongly enough about it that I made her." However, it seemed that swimming was not as important to him as the competitive soccer in which she continued to be involved. Likewise, Andy's mother said that he had to make a choice between continuing to play hockey competitively or to pursue a newfound interest in golf. While she did say it would be his choice, and that she has a sense that Andy prefers golf, she also added that Andy's father would be "devastated" if Andy decided to quit the hockey team, for which he was the coach.

Discussion

The focus of this study on the practices and strategies parents used to structure their adolescents' use of free time is consistent with a recent theoretical focus on "family management" practices (Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999; Larson et al., 2001). Family management refers to "the executive role that parents play as managers of children's daily worlds. . . . to orchestrate, instruct, discipline, provide support, and supply important physical and psychological resources to their children" (Larson et al., p. 145). The results of this study provide a differentiated framework for describing what parents do as it relates to the use of free time and leisure

activities. Self-determination theory was used as a guide to better understand how parents supported, orchestrated, and directed adolescent free time activity.

In this study, we utilized a parenting model by Grolnick et al. (1997) to initially conceptualize what parenting practices might be associated with optimally supporting adolescent development in the free time context. As indicated previously they operationalized positive parenting as interpersonal involvement, structuring, and parental support of adolescent autonomy. We will discuss the results in relation to research questions guiding this study, the SDT conceptual framework (SDT), and literature on parental structuring and support of adolescents' free time behavior and leisure interests.

First, we were interested in identifying the kinds of rules and expectations parents set regarding free time and how these were communicated and enforced. We considered these practices to be aspects of *structuring*, described by Grolnick et al. (1997) as the provision of guidelines and constraints on behavior. Consistent with this conceptualization, we found evidence of the practices parents used to structure their adolescents free time use, including communicating expectations, the provision of rationale, explaining consequences, and providing feedback. Some parents in this current study reported explaining their rationale to their adolescents and discussing with them the consequences associated with different choices and behavior. They also emphasized the importance of communication, and made specific times to talk with their adolescent.

However, the concept of structuring proposed by Grolnick et al. (1997) does not appear to fully capture other ways in which the parents in this study structured their adolescents' use of free time. For example, we found strong evidence across the families in this study of very well defined beliefs and expectations about what parents perceived to be the best or most developmentally productive activities for their adolescent to do in his/her free time. Interestingly, what seemed to be different between families were not these beliefs, but rather the degree to which the parents had strategies or practices in place that were effective for bounding their adolescent's free time at the same time permitting or fostering activity engagement preferred by the adolescent.

In addition, the findings from this study related to structuring were also consistent with a large body of research on *parental monitoring*. One dominant theme in the literature related to adolescent free time and engagement in risk behavior is parental monitoring (Kerr & Stattin, 2000), which has been conceptualized as parents' efforts to know their adolescents' whereabouts away from home. Mahoney and Stattin (2000) found that adolescents whose parents knew what they were doing were less likely to engage in risk behaviors in their free time than adolescents who were largely left to structure their own free time. Most of this research has focused on adolescents' activities outside the home, such as at friend's homes or in public places (e.g., hanging out in a mall). In this study, however, there was evidence of the multiple strategies parents used to ensure their adolescents' safe and ac-

ceptable involvement in activities (e.g., computer use) within the home. The differential practices represented in this study in regard to at-home endeavors, particularly the degree to which parents felt they needed to constantly redirect and closely regulate time use, may be important precursors to parental monitoring and knowledge of adolescent engagements and adolescent self-disclosure (Darling, Hames, & Cumsille, 2000) away from home.

Our second research question was directed at identifying the time and resources parents invested, how they went about making decisions regarding the provision of resources, and their role in planning and coordinating their child's free time activities. We considered these practices to be aspects of *interpersonal involvement*, conceptualized by Grolnick et al. (1997) to refer to the parent's investment of time and resources in the child's activities, and their provision of interest, warmth and caring. In this study, we were able to provide evidence of a range of parent investments in their adolescents' free time pursuits and of the extent to which parents communicated—to us and their children—their interest and caring. We also found evidence of resources, beyond just time and money, to support and structure their adolescents' interests and free time use, such as providing space in the family home for kids to spend time together, and ensuring that supplies and equipment for preferred activities were readily available. Nonetheless, we found that activities that were important to the parent were associated with higher expectations and greater levels of parental investment of resources than those the parent did not believe to be as important. Additionally, most of the parents used the adolescents' activity interests as leverage to gain compliance and adherence to parental expectations for carrying out priority activity engagements, such as homework and chores.

Descriptors of parental involvement in this study are consistent with other studies of parenting styles and practices (e.g., Fletcher et al., 2000; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). It was clear from the parents in this study that there were varying degrees of warmth, trust and closeness expressed by the parents in their study, and that this manifested differentially in the kinds of strategies they used to structure their adolescents' free time use. Whereas some parents described the importance of openness and communication, others emphasized compliance with rules.

Our third research question focused on identifying parent practices associated with facilitating adolescent choices and decision-making, consistent with Grolnick et al.'s (1997) conceptualization of *parental support of adolescent autonomy*. There was evidence in this study of parental autonomy support by encouraging self-initiative, minimizing the use of controls, and acknowledging the adolescents' interests and motivations. In addition, there was evidence of the extent to which parents' trusting of their adolescent was pivotal in their willingness to provide their adolescent with opportunities for more self-directed leisure behavior. Those parents who appeared to exude a sense of confidence and trust in the adolescent's preferences, decisions, and time use also described the ways in which they were increasingly allowing their adolescent to have more control over how he/she spent his/her free time

and with whom. This is not to say that these same parents did not experience dilemmas about appropriate action—they did. However, the parents who expressed that they “trusted” their adolescent also appeared to believe that their child had acquired a set of skills, had adequate resources, and the ability to use free time constructively. Therefore, they expected and trusted some situational independence.

While we may assume that parenting practices emanate from parent beliefs, there is evidence from this study that parent influences are not unidirectional (Collins et al., 2000). For example, to the extent that an adolescent complies with parents’ initial expectations, then parents may respond accordingly by giving their adolescent more freedom, describing this as “trusting” their adolescent more. The extent to which the parents in this study invested resources in free time opportunities, including their own personal involvement, suggests that adolescents’ expression of interest in new patterns of involvement as well as their degree of noncompliance may affect parents’ very personal beliefs. Therefore, this may be a source of anxiety for parents. Strong emotional responses to children’s behaviors has been associated with parenting (Steinberg, 2000) during adolescence; however, the recent focus away from beliefs to practices may fail to fully grasp the underlying role that beliefs may play in the emotional responses of parents.

Because of the rich descriptions of parenting practices provided by parents in relation to the range of activities in which adolescents were involved in their free time, we are able to provide empirical evidence of parenting practices that extends Grolnick et al.’s (1997) conceptual framework to encompass the interrelated and context-dependent nature of parenting practices not reflected in their model. From the data it was clear that parental involvement in directing and structuring the adolescents’ free time use was extremely complex. Particularly difficult to ascertain, however, was whether parental practices represented legitimate authority and power for setting expectations, rules, and limits and thus, autonomous support or conversely indicated controlling actions. There is evidence that leisure is optimally experienced when adolescents have self-determined, personally expressive choice (Kleiber, 1999; Kleiber, Caldwell & Shaw, 1993) and that boredom is a typical response to perceptions of too much adult control (Caldwell et al., 1999). The Grolnick et al. framework emphasizes adolescent choice and decision-making. While we have evidence that parents tried to support adolescent activities (from a parent perspective) and development of the ability to make good choices, such autonomy support was difficult to tease out. For example, the adolescent’s expression of a desire to drop out of an on-going engagement, such as music lessons, can reflect the adolescent’s choice to begin and subsequently end participation. Is parental persuasion or prohibition of this action over-controlling? Similarly, is the situational redirection of the adolescent’s current engagement controlling? Some of the difficulty of interpreting this aspect of parenting practice may be related to the parental perspective as the sole source of data in this study. While analysis of the parent and adolescent data together may further clarify this complexity,

this is beyond the scope of this current investigation. Further elaboration of measures of parental control that allow us to distinguish between practices that are developmentally appropriate and supportively controlling versus over-controlling is needed.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that parenting practices associated with adolescent use of free time are multifaceted and interconnected. This is evidence of the interconnection between areas of research (e.g., academic achievement and free time use) that are often studied separately. For example, parental structuring of free time is motivated by the practical need for supervision, activities parents believe to be valuable are emphasized, and the desire to inhibit risky endeavors results in closer monitoring of time use. One of the compelling findings in this study was the degree to which parents were intentional and systematic in their enactment of their beliefs and expectations about free time use, through their communication strategies, through the provision of instrumental recourses to support their adolescents activity engagement, and through their structuring of the free time context by monitoring and directing activity participation.

Conclusion

The statement by Peter's mother at the beginning of the paper summarizes a proactive approach to structuring and supporting her son's development in the free time context. Those parents in this study who seemed to believe their adolescent should and *could* be more autonomous also seemed to actively create opportunities for autonomous action. Future research is needed to extend these preliminary findings to the study of differential influences of parenting practices on adolescent leisure behavior in larger population samples. In addition, a better understanding of these practices in relation to differences in adolescent leisure behavior is required. In particular, more research is needed to determine how different parent beliefs and practices differentially affect time use, leisure, and the experience of boredom, interest and motivation, and how these in turn may influence adolescent risk behavior in the free time context. In addition, future research that examines the processes by which parents and adolescents negotiate how the adolescent spends his or her free-time, the situations in which autonomy is granted or not, and the situations where free-time use is contested is required.

While this study has allowed us to examine parenting practices associated with structuring adolescents free time use, there are several limitations inherent in the study design, and thus the inferences that can be made from the data. First, the study was not designed to discern the extent to which the adolescents' and parents' pre-existing personalities and parenting styles, relationship and beliefs influenced current parenting practices. Nor can we make statements about the extent to which SES, age, gender, ethnicity and family structure mediated or moderated parenting practices. For example, there is evidence that parenting practices related to supporting adolescent

autonomy are contextual. To the extent that adolescents live in low-risk environments, autonomy-supporting behaviors are associated with positive social functioning whereas for adolescent in high-risk contexts, expressions of autonomy were linked with negative indices of social functions (McElhaney & Allen, 2001). For the most part, the families in this study all lived in low-risk environments, despite evidence of lower SES or some parent-adolescent conflict. In addition, we have not examined parenting practices in relation to broader developmental, social, cultural and historical contexts, for example the extent to which major and minor life events and stressors within the family and extra-familial (e.g., neighborhood) contexts shape everyday parenting behaviors. There is a need to examine the adolescent and parent data together, to determine the extent to which there is congruence in perceptions between parents and adolescents with regard to the role parents are seen to play in structuring their adolescents' free time use. Each of these is an important next step in leisure research in this area.

Lastly, this study was framed within and informed by developmental psychology. Further studies of parenting practices from alternative epistemological frameworks, such as critical theory or structural functionalism, would inform our understanding of parenting practices in relation to broader social forces, such as gender or race. However, these questions, while interesting, were beyond the conceptual and methodological scope of this current investigation.

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Appendix A

Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Thinking about the kinds of things that [child] does, is there anything you wish he/she was doing more of? not doing?
2. In general, what kind of rules have you set about how [child] uses his/her free time? Any expectations?
3. How do you communicate these rules and expectations?
4. How do you reinforce these rules and expectations?
5. What kinds of choices has [child] had in regard to participating . . . (various activities)
6. How important is it that your son/daughter make his/her own decisions about use of free time?
7. What kinds of things have you done to foster [child] making his/her own choice? taking responsibility for participation?
8. Have the kinds of choices you provide changed in the last year or so?
9. Describe the time and resources you provide to [child] in regard to his/her free time.
10. How do you make decisions about the amount of time and resources you provide?

11. What role do you take in planning and coordinating his/her involvement?
12. What situations do you feel you need to make the decisions or be more involved in the decision-making?
13. Are there any aspects of his/her participation that concern you but you feel you can't directly control?