MODERATING A MEAN AND SCARY WORLD:

FEAR-RELATED COPING STRATEGIES IN TELEVISION PROGRAMS

FOR THE PRESCHOOL AUDIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has suggested that young children primarily rely on social support and behavioral, rather than cognitive, coping strategies when managing fears of the dark and monsters. Research has also suggested that affirming reality may be less effective than other means, such as positive pretense, in helping children cope with fear. This thesis examined how preschool television programs addressed fear of the dark and fear of monsters. Both quantitative and qualitative content analyses were conducted with a sample of ten fear-related preschool programs. Results indicated that a variety of coping strategies were portrayed, with behavioral strategies portrayed more frequently than cognitive strategies. Reality affirmation was frequently presented, while positive pretense was less frequently portrayed. Most coping instances in the sample involved some form of social support. Future directions for research include further exploration of the impact such television programs have on the development of fear-related coping repertoires in young children.

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

"Do you ever hear loud, scary sounds on television? …You know, you can do something about that. When you see scary television, you can turn it off. And when you do turn it off, that will show that you're the strongest of them all."
(Fred Rogers, Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, circa 1986)*

Fear-inducing messages and imagery abound in television programming today. In recent years, societies have experienced several disastrous events including the 9/11 terrorist attacks, war, economic collapse, and kidnappings; natural disasters such as the Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, and earthquakes; and major illnesses such as H1N1. Such disaster-related threats have received increased attention by the media within news and television programs. Technological advancements in computer animation and special effects have allowed for even more realistic and grotesque images of supernatural entities in media programming. Not surprisingly, considerable research has demonstrated that media can elicit fear within children (Cantor, 2002; Cantor & Nathanson, 1996; Cantor & Sparks, 1984; Harrison & Cantor, 1999; Smith & Wilson, 2002). Some research also suggests a correlation between individuals' amounts of media exposure and increased feelings of vulnerability and threat (Comer, Furr, Beidas, Babyar, & Kendall, 2008; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994; Peterson & Zill, 1981; Smith & Wilson, 2000).

In response, children's television producers have addressed many of these ideas and situations within children's programming in an effort to impart some understanding of potentially frightening topics. Primary examples of relevant programming include episodes of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, as well as Sesame

Workshop's recent *Emotional Wellbeing Initiative*. Certainly, *Sesame Street* has a long-standing history of addressing such issues, with numerous episodes featuring topics like the death of Mr. Hooper, the fire at Hooper's store, and the loss of Big Bird's nest during a hurricane. Many other current educational preschool television programs have also taken the opportunity to address frightening topics, particularly young children's fear of the dark and fear of monsters.

The question of whether or not children's media may help calm the fears of young viewers has received little attention. One early experimental study found that an episode of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* designed to address children's fear of the television show *The Incredible Hulk* resulted in less reported fear among young viewers exposed to the intervention episode (Cantor, Sparks, & Hoffner, 1988). These promising results suggest that carefully designed educational programming may indeed have the potential to moderate children's fears. Rather than examining how children respond to programs that address childhood fears, this thesis seeks to bring attention to the content and availability of such programs by examining how preschool television programs that address fear of the dark and fear of monsters or imaginary creatures might contribute to a child's repertoire of fear-related coping strategies. Using a mixed methods approach, including a qualitative content analysis and a quantitative content analysis of select programs, the thesis addresses the following research questions:

1. How do educational preschool television programs address fear of the dark and monsters?

2. To what extent do such programs portray various cognitive and behavioral coping strategies?
3. To what extent do such programs seek to affirm reality or encourage the use of imagination in fear-related coping?

This thesis provides a review of the literature, including a developmental perspective of childhood fears, an examination of the research regarding fear-related coping among preschoolers, a brief examination of the role imagination may play in inducing-fear and alleviating fear, and the ways in which children may learn emotional content from educational television. The methods section describes the sample selection and the use of both quantitative and qualitative content analyses in addressing the research questions. The results section describes the findings and provides a detailed snapshot regarding how educational preschool television programs address fear of the dark and monsters. Finally, the discussion section considers possible implications of the findings, in addition to acknowledging limitations of this study and offering suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

A Developmental Perspective of Fear in Childhood

Humans experience four basic emotions, including happiness, anger, sadness, and fear. Considered a typical reaction to a real or imagined threat, a fear response involves three systems: overt behavior, covert feelings and thoughts, and physiological activity (Marks, 1987). Covert feelings and thoughts are considered to be the actual emotion experienced and one's interpretation of these feelings, while overt behavior refers to actions like running away or hiding. Physiological activity may include a racing heartbeat, shaking, sweating, and other responses associated with being afraid. A majority of typically developing children (as many as 95%) experience fears of some sort with varying degrees of intensity (Gullone, 2000; Muris, Merckelbach, Gadet, & Moulaert, 2000). Although fear may occur when a child is awake, scary dreams take place during sleep and are considered by some to be a distinct phenomenon (Muris *et al.*, 2000). Many scholars and child development experts agree that some fears are important for emotional and cognitive wellbeing (Sarafino, 1986). However, they also agree that being confronted with disturbing events that reach beyond a child's processing ability can have a negative effect on children's development (Cantor, 1998).

While it is generally accepted that certain fears and scary dreams are normal among children, little is known about the developmental pattern of these issues or how fears originate (Ollendick & King, 1994). Rachman (1977, 1991) suggested three mechanisms by which fear may be acquired in childhood:

conditioning (such as when children remember bad or frightening experiences that happened to them); modeling (such as when children witness parents, friends, or others react with a fear response to an item); and negative information (such as when children hear frightening things about an item from parents, teachers, friends, television, and so on). Lending support to Rachman's theory, Muris and colleagues (2000) found that more than half (55.2%) of their study participants attributed their main fear to exposure to negative information, primarily media exposure. Similarly, a vast majority of the children attributed their scary dreams to media exposure as well. It is important to note that, in addition to serving as a source of negative information, media exposure may serve as a source of modeling of fear responses. Additionally, children may associate particular events with particular emotions, and children may learn the causes of emotions through their desire to maintain, achieve, or attain a goal state (Denham, 1998). It is likely these various suggestions interact and work in tandem in the acquisition of fears in children.

Numerous factors mediate a child's response to a threatening stimulus. For example, geographic proximity to a traumatic event may intensify fear within children (Schlenger, Caddell, Ebert, Jordan, & Batts, 2002; Wilson, 2008). Fear is also greater among children who closely identify with the victims of the tragic events (Otto, Henin, Hirshfeld-Becker, Pollack, Biederman, & Rosenbaum, 2007). Socioeconomic status is another factor to consider, as children from lower socioeconomic communities tend to be more vulnerable to media-induced fear (Becker-Blease, Finkelhor, & Turner, 2008). Additional factors that mediate a

child's response to fearful subject matter include a child's experience with prior trauma and adversity (Becker-Blease *et al*., 2008), as well as gender, with elementary-age girls reporting more fear than boys (Muris *et al*., 2000). Finally, age and developmental period significantly impact a child's response to a threatening stimulus, although some specific stimuli that are considered frightening tend to be fairly common and consistent across age groups (Muris *et al*., 2000).

Younger children tend to focus on fears more closely situated to their immediate surroundings or imaginations. Theorists have suggested that young children under age eight tend to focus on and acquire information from visual cues, whereas older children increasingly use conceptual and abstract information (Bruner, 1966; Sparks & Cantor, 1984). Preschool children seem to be most upset by stimuli involving scary-looking, grotesque characters and events, regardless of the reality of the threat (Cantor & Sparks, 1984). According to a variety of studies, children between the ages of three and eight are primarily scared of animals, the dark, supernatural beings like ghosts, monsters, and witches, and anything that appears strange and moves suddenly (e.g., Bauer, 1976; Maurer, 1965). While fears of ghosts and monsters are prominent among preschoolers, these fears tend to diminish with age. Bauer (1976) examined the fears and scary dreams of 4- to 6-, 6- to 8-, and 10- to 12-year-old children and found that 74% of the 4- to 6-year-olds reported fears of ghosts and monsters. In contrast, 53% of the 6- to 8-year-olds and 5% of the 10- to 12-year-olds reported these fears.

Older elementary school children tend to respond more to abstract characteristics of a stimulus, such as the potential for personal harm (Cantor & Sparks, 1984). Children between the ages of 8 and 12 experience fears more frequently related to personal injury or physical destruction: accidents, disease, kidnapping, violence, natural disasters, and the death of a relative. During this time, they also become concerned about the judgments of others and begin to worry about academic performance (Muris *et al*., 2000).

Between the ages of 13 to 18 years old, more social and school-related fears emerge, although young people in this range still report frequent fear of personal harm and physical destruction. Having developed a fear of rejection, their concerns about grades, tests, and relationships begin to become more frequent (Muris *et al*., 2000). This group also begins to report fears concerning political and economic issues, such as world conditions, war, atomic bombs, and inflation (Cantor, Wilson, & Hoffner, 1986; Gullone, 2000).

Research suggests that particular fears may persist across developmental stages. In a study conducted by Muris and colleagues (2000) examining general fears, worries, and scary dreams, the top fears were generally similar across age groups with fear of animals, imaginary creatures, and personal harm listed as most notable. In a recent study by Cantor (2010), elementary students expressed the supernatural as a dominant fear. Results from this study complement results from a previous study in which fear of the supernatural was observed as a dominant theme for all ages (Cantor, 2004). Developmental considerations may explain the significant presence of this fear across age groups. Concrete-thinking and

perception-focused young children may experience fear because of the monstrous visual portrayals of supernatural figures in media. The more abstract possibilities of supernatural entities (such as an invisible personality causing damage) may generate a fear response in older children (Cantor, 2004).

In summary, fear is a prominent emotion experienced by children. Various factors impact how children respond to fear-inducing stimuli, including geographic proximity, previous exposure to adversity, gender, developmental stage, and so on. Studies examining children's fears have discovered trends across developmental periods. The fears of younger children tend to be visually oriented or situated in the child's immediate surroundings, while fears of older children tend to stem from more abstract or social concerns. However, certain fears persist across age groups, including fear of animals, personal harm, and supernatural creatures.

Imagination and its Relationship to Childhood Fears

Given the prominence of fear of the supernatural across developmental periods, it is important to consider the role and influence of the imagination in child development. Young children tend to immerse themselves in pretend play for long periods of time (Woolley, 1997), and many preschoolers (between 25% and 65%) have imaginary friends (Singer & Singer, 1990). Despite this proclivity for pretend play, children are able to distinguish fantasy from reality by age three or four (Harris, Brown, Marriott, Whittall, & Harmer, 1991; Harris, Kavanagh, & Meredith, 1994). Research has found that most children between the ages of three and five understand that ghosts, witches, dragons, and monsters are not real

(Harris, Pasquini, Duke, Asscher & Pons, 2006; Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2008). However, Harris and colleagues (1991) found that children might still experience fear of an imaginary entity even when they are aware that it does not exist. Initially, Harris and his colleagues hypothesized that the reason for this paradox may be that children might believe that an imaginary being can transform and become real or that it may still have some ability to harm them. However, later research found this idea to be inaccurate (Johnson & Harris, 1994).

A second possible explanation for this paradox among children may be related to their lack of abilities in remembering the source of their memories and knowledge (Gopnik & Graf, 1988). Children may have difficulty remembering whether something really happened or whether they just imagined it. Consequently, their confusion may make them unsure about discounting their fears based on their memories of what they think really occurred. Research about children's ability to differentiate real and imaginary events suggests that children younger than six years of age experience some trouble remembering if they really carried out certain actions or just imagined them (Foley, Aman, & Gutch, 1987; Foley & Johnson, 1985). It may be possible that preschoolers' fears continue because they are less able to rely on their understanding of the source of their experiences.

A third possible explanation for children's tendencies to experience fear of imaginary beings despite understanding reality is the "availability hypothesis" proposed by Harris and colleagues (1991). This hypothesis suggests that a child's perception of the likelihood for something to happen increases if they imagine it.

Imagining makes the pretended subject or entity more available to the mind, and this mental accessibility alters the perceived probability of its actual existence. This hypothesis finds support in a number of studies (e.g., Bourchier & Davis, 2000; Johnson & Harris, 1994). Recently, Bourchier and Davis (2002) have added to this hypothesis and proposed that other factors (such as individual differences, situational factors, and increased emotions experienced during pretend play) may interact with the "availability hypothesis." For example, when imagination results in an intense emotional response, such as fear, this emotional response may illicit other similar fearful ideas. Furthermore, in these situations, dismissing the effects of the increased cognitive availability may be particularly difficult because the emotion experienced is authentic (Sayfan, 2008).

Finally, another possible explanation for why young children experience fear of imaginary creatures (despite knowing they are not real) may be that they are less skillful in monitoring and controlling their fearful reactions. Young children are generally less able to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2002). Reality affirmation, an approach in which children shift their attention from an imaginary situation they are involved in to remembering that the imaginary creature is not real, can be particularly difficult for children (Harris, 2000; Woolley, 1997). As children mature in age, their ability to regulate their involvement in the imaginary world, especially by calling on their knowledge of the real world to ease their fears, improves significantly (Bourchier & Davis, 2002; Harris, 2000, 2002; Woolley, 1997). Similarly, the ability to regulate responses to fear by employing various coping strategies

becomes increasingly complex as they develop and mature (Sayfan, 2008; Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2009).

Coping with Fear During Childhood

Given that a majority of children experience fears of some sort (and that fear of the dark and fear of monsters are particularly prominent fears), it is important to consider how young children may cope with such experiences. Relatively little is known about how very young children cope with negative emotions or stress. Less is known about how coping among young children varies by emotion (such as sadness, anger, or fear) or situation. However, a brief examination of literature related to coping and emotion regulation does provide some insight. The following paragraphs will briefly address conceptualizations of coping and emotion regulation, the development of these processes in children, and how children in the preschool period manage aversive situations and negative emotions, such as fear.

Theory and research related to how children navigate aversive emotions and situations has been divided between disciplines and topical areas, namely *coping* and *emotion regulation*. Much of the research literature that addresses coping hardly addresses emotion regulation, and vice-versa, despite many overlapping concepts. For example, in the *Handbook of Emotion Regulation* (Gross, 2007), the subject index offers only fifteen references for the term *coping*. Similarly, in the *Handbook of Children's Coping* (Wolchik & Sandler, 1997), the term *emotion regulation* is indexed only seven times, with one chapter directly addressing the subject. However, despite separations in the research, several

recent conceptualizations of coping, as cited by Compas, 2009, have included direct links between coping and regulation (Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Guthrie, 1997; Oschner, 2007; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conceptualized coping efforts or strategies as cognitive and behavioral actions in a specific stressful situation which are intended to manage affective arousal or improve the problematic situation. Influenced by temperament and stress physiology, coping involves the regulation of behavior, emotion, attention, cognition, and motivation (Skinner & Gembeck, 2009). At the same time, coping strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, have been labeled as emotion regulation strategies in the research literature. According to Brenner and Salovey (1997), emotion regulation is one's capacity to manage his or her emotional reactions (including intensity and duration of arousal) in such a way that one's physiological-biochemical system, behavioral-expressive system, and experiential-cognitive system are affected. Emotion regulation processes are behaviors, skills, and strategies that work to alter, inhibit, and enhance emotional experiences and expressions. They may be conscious or unconscious and automatic or intentional (Brenner & Salovey, 1997).

Whether or not coping and emotion regulation are different processes remains unclear. Some researchers refer to coping as a feature of regulation because effortful or intentional responses may be involved when one copes with a challenging or stressful situation (e.g., Denham, 1998; Saarni, Joseph, Camras, & Witherington, 2006). Other investigators use the terms *coping* and *emotion*

regulation synonymously (Brenner & Salovey, 1997), arguing that both are involved when children use available resources to manage stressful encounters. Some researchers view coping as an organizing construct and suggest that self-regulation can be considered regulatory subsystems that work together to shape the actions that are described by coping (Eisenberg *et al*., 1997; Skinner, 1999 as cited in Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). An emerging view situates both coping and emotion regulation as overlapping processes in the broader construct of self-regulation (Eisenberg, Valiente, & Sulik, 2009). For the purpose of this study, *coping* and *emotion regulation* will be considered to be synonymous.

During infancy and toddlerhood, emotion regulation skills develop as a function of more basic regulatory processes. During the second year of life, young children demonstrate a transition from passive to active methods of emotion regulation (Rothbart, Ziaie, & O'Boyle, 1992). While toddlers are not completely able to control their own affective states, they are able to use specific strategies in an attempt to manage different affective states (Calkins & Dedmon, 2000). By the end of toddlerhood, children possess abilities for executive control that allow for them to control the arousal and the regulation of emotional reactions in a variety of contexts (Rueda, Posner, & Rothbart, 2004).

Important changes in children's understanding of emotion take place during the preschool and elementary school period, when emotion regulation skills assume a central role in the emergence of more sophisticated self-regulation (Calkins & Fox, 2002; Calkins & Howse, 2004). As children become better able to analyze emotional situations in greater detail, they gain knowledge of the

causes, consequences, and forms of expression of an increasing range of emotions. They also begin to distinguish between inner feeling states and outer expression. Additionally, they begin to relate desires and beliefs to emotions, allowing for an improved capacity to explain and predict emotional responses. Increasingly complex cognitive capacities contribute to their knowledge of a broader repertoire of emotion regulation strategies (Brenner & Salovey, 1997; Stegge & Terwogt, 2007).

A brief review of both coping literature and emotion regulation literature suggests age-graded changes in coping capacities. In examining what changes about coping strategies as children mature, research suggests that although use of situation-oriented problem solving is accessible throughout childhood, children's repertoire of problem-solving strategies broadens with age (Altshuler & Ruble, 1989). Preschoolers are much more aware of their social environment than are younger children (Cummings, 1987), and they have a larger coping repertoire that allows for much more differentiated response to the environment. Older children also recognize that different coping strategies work better with some people or situations than others (Aldwin, 2007). According to Compas, Worsham, and Ey (1992), the ability to generate multiple solutions to relational problems emerges around ages four to five, but more sophisticated means-ends thinking does not appear until ages six to eight, when concrete operational thinking develops.

With age, children's ability to consider a stressor from a variety of angles increases, and thus older children can more readily consider different problem-solving solutions relative to these different perspectives (Aldwin, 2007). Between

ages five to seven, as children approach the concrete operational stage, they experience a developmental shift that involves more sophisticated capacities for memory, cognition, social relations, emotion, and self-understanding (Cole, Teti, & Zahn-Waxler, 2003; Posner & Rothbart, 2007; Sameroff & Haith, 1996). Despite increases in their regulatory skills and abilities, preschoolers remain somewhat limited in their range of coping strategies in comparison to older children.

Given these developmental limitations, parents play an integral role in young children's coping and emotion regulation. Presumably because of limitations in cognitive development in comparison to older children, parents are still the primary source of social support for preschoolers (Aldwin, 2007). Additionally, parents strongly influence the development of coping strategies in young children. Kliewer, Sandler, and Wolchik (1994) suggested that parents do so by coaching their children as to the appropriate responses and strategies and by modeling these themselves. Although pursued less frequently, older siblings and grandparents can serve as alternative sources of support. However, friends are generally not used as sources of support among preschoolers. This may be due to young children's limited ability to verbalize and conceptualize their problems (Aldwin, 2007).

Given the prominence of fear among children, a developmental perspective of specifically fear-related coping is helpful to consider, yet little research has specifically examined children's development of coping strategies to manage fear. Of the research that is available, findings suggest that preschoolers

primarily find support in behavioral or non-cognitive strategies (Wilson, Hoffner, & Cantor, 1987). Such strategies may include visual desensitization (e.g., gradually exposing children to threatening cues), physical comfort (e.g., sitting with or holding children), parental restriction (e.g., turning off the television), and other behavioral actions (e.g., walking away to grab a snack or covering one's eyes) (Cantor, 2002; Wilson, 1989; Wilson & Cantor, 1987).

Though much less frequent, children may still employ cognitive strategies such as reality affirmation, the practice of calling on knowledge of the real world to remind oneself that an imaginary creature is not real (Sayfan, 2008; Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2009). Young children may also engage in positive pretense, a mental strategy that involves using the power of pretend to manage a fear. Examples of this strategy include pretending that the imaginary creature is harmless (such as picturing the monster as a baby monster or as a friendly monster) or imagining oneself to be endowed with super powers (Sayfan 2008; Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2009). Research by Sayfan and Lagattuta (2009) found that young children between the ages of four and six suggested positive pretense strategies more often than reality affirmation strategies in coping with both real and imaginary fears. This trend demonstrated a significant shift among seven-years-olds who suggested more strategies using reality affirmation rather than positive pretense. In this same study, younger children less frequently suggested using imagination as a form of distraction (such as thinking "happy thoughts") and rated it as less effective in coping with fear of the dark or monsters.

After the age of six or seven, children tend to increasingly find comfort in more cognitive strategies, including telling children something isn't real, emphasizing the positive motivations of a character, or minimizing the perceived threat of danger by explaining the probability of the event actually taking place (Cantor & Sparks, 1984; Wilson & Cantor, 1987; Wilson & Weiss, 1991). The tendency to rely on behavioral distractions does not decrease with age, however. As children develop, they continue to rely on behavioral distractions while adding cognitive strategies to their coping repertoires (Harris, 1989).

While research suggests that cognitive strategies may be more effective in reducing fear after the age of seven (Cantor, 2002), additional research suggests that some cognitive strategies can evoke fear when used with young children in some circumstances. A study by Wilson and colleagues (1987) suggests that when young children do not understand the statements being presented, the explanation might not only be ineffective, but may even inadvertently enhance children's fear responses. For example, Wilson and Cantor (1987) conducted an experiment in which an adult prepared children to watch a video by provided them with reassuring verbal explanations about a snake that would make an appearance on screen. The practice decreased older children's post-exposure, fear responses to televised scenes of a snake, but it actually increased such responses among younger children. These results have interesting implications for producers of children's television who must seek to determine how much information about a fear-inducing stimulus should be included in programs designed to reassure young viewers about particular topics.

According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, the difficulty that younger children experience with cognitive mediation strategies may be a result of developmental issues (Wilson & Cantor, 1987; Wilson, Hoffner, & Cantor, 1987). First, the child must be able to understand the information being presented in order to benefit from a verbal explanation. Second, the child must store the interpretation of the explanation in memory. Memory and its sophisticated information-storages strategies, including rehearsal, categorization, visualization, and mnemonics, begin to develop more fully in children after seven years of age (Siegler, 1998). Third, the child must be able to recall the stored information from memory and apply it to frightening situations. Such information storage and retrieval tasks are too challenging for young children but continually improve during the elementary school years (Cantor, 2002; Siegler, 1998, Smith, Pieper, and Moyer-Guse, 2008). However, around six years of age, children can begin to regulate their fears using reality affirmation when prompted. As they mature, they continue to become more skilled in employing this technique independently and spontaneously (Harris, 2000). This shift that occurs around the ages six to seven is consistent with Piaget's (1964) description of the appearance of the concrete operational stage, when children begin to make use of logic more effectively and efficiently and demonstrate an enhanced ability to consider situations with greater complexity.

In summary, research examining coping skills in the context of stress reveals that younger children tend to rely on behavioral coping strategies or social support from others, primarily parents, when experiencing adversity. As they

mature and develop, they begin to employ more complex, cognitive coping strategies. While little research is available regarding how young children cope with fear, recent evidence suggests that a similar pattern applies to children's management of fear responses. Imagination may play an important role as children seek to manage their fears of the dark or imaginary creatures. Such findings are important to producers of children's television programs as they determine which strategies are most appropriate to include in episodes that address children's fears.

Preschool Television Programs as Moderators of Fear

Can carefully designed television programs successfully ease children's fears? One study suggests that they might. In an earlier study, Cantor, Sparks, and Hoffner (1988) examined whether certain features of an episode of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* could help moderate children's fear of *The Incredible Hulk*, a popular series in the early 1980s featuring a benevolent doctor who turned into a green, monster-like Hulk when he was angry. Despite his grotesque appearance, the Hulk sought to save others from injustice or danger. In a survey at the time, over 40% of parents spontaneously named *The Incredible Hulk* as a source of fear among their preschoolers (Cantor & Sparks, 1984). A study by Sparks and Cantor (1986) found that preschool children and 9- to 11-year-olds experienced similar levels of fear in relationship to the popular series; however, the pattern of fear differed across age groups. Younger children reported more fear after the Hulk's transformation, while older children reported more fear when specific danger was present, before the transformation. Sparks and Cantor

proposed two reasons for the different patterns of fear. First, they proposed that younger children were over-responding to the Hulk's monstrous physical features. Second, they proposed that younger children did not understand that, despite the transformation, the Hulk was actually still the kind and helpful doctor.

In response to children's reactions towards *The Incredible Hulk*, Fred Rogers produced a two-part program of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* entitled "superheroes." In the episode, the actor who played the Hulk was introduced and spoke with Mr. Rogers while his character make-up was applied. The episode also took opportunities to explain the similar motivations and actions of the main character in his two different forms as both the doctor and the Hulk. Cantor, Sparks, and Hoffner (1988) conducted a study examining the effects of the interventions presented in the episode of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*. For the purpose of the study, they created two separate intervention tapes by editing the "superheroes" episode: one tape (the Visual Cues Version) featuring the application of the character's make-up and portions of the episode providing explanations related to his physical features and one tape (the Identity Version) featuring portions of the episode explaining the Hulk's motivations and good intentions. The control group viewed an episode of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* unrelated to *The Incredible Hulk*. Subjects in three different age groups (3-5, 6-7, and 9-10) watched either one of the intervention tapes or the control tape before seeing an episode of *The Incredible Hulk*. The Visual Cues Version was expected to gradually desensitize children to the scary physical appearance of the Hulk,

while the Identity Version was expected to emphasize the positive motives of the Hulk, therefore making his actions less frightening.

The results of the study revealed that the intervention tapes were generally successful in reducing children's fear responses to *The Incredible Hulk*. Children who watched either version of the intervention expressed less negative affect after the Hulk's transformation than did children who viewed the control tape. The mechanism by which the fear was reduced is not known, particularly as both intervention tapes created similar results. Consistent with the hypothesis, subjects who viewed the Identity tape were more likely to rate the Hulk's character similarly to the doctor, whereas subjects viewing the Visual Cues intervention or the control tape rated the Hulk much lower. These results suggest that an understanding of the Hulk's motivations eased the subjects' fear responses.

A couple of explanations were suggested for the calming effect of the Visual Cues intervention. It may have been that children were desensitized to the Hulk's grotesque appearance by watching the application of makeup (Wilson & Cantor, 1987). It may also have been that seeing the make-up applied may have reinforced the fact that the Hulk was not real (Cantor *et al*., 1988). Cantor and colleagues (1988) also suggested that both tapes might have been effective at reducing fear through a vicarious extinction process (Bandura, 1965). By being juxtaposed with the familiar and comforting character of Mr. Rogers, the Hulk may have become less threatening. Another alternative explanation is that Mr. Rogers appeared to enjoy his time with the Hulk and may have reduced fear by modeling fearless behavior (Cantor *et al*., 1998).

Findings from this study have important implications for the production of fear-related television programs for children. Young children spend a significant amount of time with television. According to Neilsen findings, children between the ages of two and five spend an average of thirty-two hours per week watching television (McDonough, 2009). Given that so many popular preschool programs address fear in their episodes, carefully designed television may serve as an influential source from which children may acquire information about how to cope with fear. While research has primarily focused on the possible negative consequences of media, time spent with media can contribute to children's cognitive, social, emotional, and health-related development in positive ways (e.g., Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, & Wright, 2001; Dorr, 1982; Huston & Wright, 1998; Wright, Huston, Murphy *et al*., 2001).

Theoretical Considerations

A theoretical understanding of how children acquire information from television programs provides some insight into how children might learn fear-related coping strategies from relevant shows. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory is a psychological and media effects theory that has been used to explain how children learn from television. Social cognitive theory is considered to be the most prominent among social learning theories. Rooted in behaviorism and social learning theory, social cognitive theory contends that people learn behaviors, internal standards, values, and cognitive strategies by observing the behaviors of others. In contrast to Skinner's theory of operant conditioning, Bandura posits that these behaviors can be learned without being directly reinforced. Among its

vast contributions, social cognitive theory has helped explain the nature and development of aggression, altruism, socialization of sex roles, and self-efficacy among individuals (Green & Piel, 2002). With its broad approach to understanding learning, the theory is applicable to a wide variety of disciplines.

The process of modeling is central to a discussion of social cognitive theory. By observing media characters, children may learn a number of positive and negative behaviors. Children are particularly likely to model the behavior of television characters as a result of their "developing concept of self and accompanying tendency to 'try on' varying thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors to discover which are likely to be suitable in differing circumstances and settings" (Comstock & Scharrer, 2007, p. 97-98). Bandura, Ross, and Ross theorized that imitative learning is, essentially, when the observer acquires responses imitatively by performing covertly the behavior exhibited by a model (1963). Television characters' actions, behaviors, and portrayals of roles serve as models that children can interpret and gain meaning from (Berry in Pecora, Murray, & Wartella, 2007). If children can observe and imitate viewed behavior as suggested by social cognitive theory, then television has the potential to help children learn a variety of fear-related coping strategies as they observe characters managing similar fears on the screen.

Another important theory to at least briefly consider in light of the current study is cultivation theory, developed by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1980, 1982, 1994). The cultivation hypothesis asserts that heavy television viewing cultivates, or leads to, perceptions of the world that reflect portrayals

seen in television. In other words, the more frightening, violence-laden media one consumes, the more frightening the viewer perceives the world to be. Signorielli found that young, heavy viewers of such media described "a heightened and unequal sense of danger and risk in a mean and selfish world" (Signorielli, 1987, p. 267). Lending support to this idea, one study found that heavy viewers of television estimated the frequency of real-world crime at much higher rates than did light viewers (Shrum, 1996). Research has suggested that the more the television program resonates with the personal experience of the viewer, the more powerful are the effects of heavy viewing (Gerbner *et al.*, 1980). However, other research has suggested that that specific *content* is more associated with negative effects than the *quantity* of time spent watching television (Rubin, Perse, & Taylor, 1988).

While much of the previously mentioned research centered on adults, it is believed that cultivation theory applies perhaps even more strongly to younger viewers because of their limited experience and knowledge, lack of cognitive maturity, and lack of competing sources of information (Bar-on, 2000; Potter, 1986; Rubin, 1986; Van Evra, 1995). Huston *et al*. (1992) reported that children who were heavy viewers of television were more concerned about getting sick and were more aware of various over-the-counter medical remedies. According to the cultivation hypothesis, it may be that children who view more preschool programs that discredit the existence of monsters may be more likely to acknowledge and accept this reality. Similarly, it may be that children who view more programs that acknowledge the safety of one's own room in the dark may be

less likely to be afraid themselves at bedtime. Amount of viewing alone, however, does not appear to be the most important cause of a cultivation effect. A cultivation effect that is observed may be a function of more complex variables, such as socioeconomic background or perceived reality (Potter, 1986). Levels of identification with television characters also need to be considered, as do developmental factors, such as the ability to comprehend and retain television information (Van Evra, 2004).

Conclusion

In conclusion, fear of the dark and fear of imaginary creatures are salient experiences for young children. Many children will experience these fears even if they acknowledge an awareness that monsters do not exist. Children may cope with such fears through the use of both behavioral and cognitive coping strategies. However, younger children tend to rely on behavioral coping strategies, namely social support from a parent, in order to find comfort when they are afraid. Because of limited cognitive capacities, younger children seem to be unable to take advantage of many cognitive coping strategies. However, recent research suggests that strategies employing the use of imagination may be helpful as children seek to manage their responses to fear. Children may call on their imagination to distract themselves from frightening thoughts, but this strategy may not be as effective as children engaging in pretense and using their imaginations to alter, confront, or reappraise fear-inducing stimuli. Previous research suggests that carefully designed educational television may help reduce children's fears of monsters. Indeed, many current preschool television series

address fear of the dark and/or monsters in at least one episode. Given that such programs may serve as a source from which children acquire information about coping strategies, this study will examine the content and messages of such programs in order to learn more about the nature of fear-related coping strategies made available to young viewers.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODS

The purpose of this study was to identify messages that popular preschool television programs portray about coping with fear. Fundamental questions guiding this study were:

1. How do educational preschool television programs address fear of the dark and monsters?
2. To what extent do such programs portray various cognitive and behavioral coping strategies?
3. To what extent do such programs seek to affirm reality or encourage the use of imagination in fear-related coping?

This study employed both quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis to examine a sample of preschool television programs. While quantitative content analysis generally seeks to "verify or confirm hypothesized relationships" or the presence of pre-determined variables, qualitative content analysis seeks to "discover new or emergent patterns" (Altheide, 1996, p. 16). Though structured, a qualitative approach tends to be more researcher-oriented, reflexive, and open to the development of new concepts and themes (Altheide, 1996). In other words, while quantitative content analysis verifies the presence of specific messages and themes, a reflexive qualitative approach explores the *meaning* and *context* of such messages and themes. Both methods of analysis were used in order to increase the validity and reliability of the study, to allow for consideration of the target objectives as designed by the predetermined categories, and to discover emerging

themes and concepts available in the programs. This chapter describes the methodology used to examine these research questions and is organized into the following sections: sample selection, qualitative content analysis, quantitative content analysis, and data analysis.

Sample

A primary goal of this study is to learn more about how preschool televisions programs address young children's fear of the dark and monsters. Therefore, a purposeful sample of preschool television programs was used. Before deciding which shows would be analyzed, essential criteria were determined (Merriam, 2002). The first criterion for the sample concerned the intended audience of the programs selected for inclusion. Only programs designed for preschoolers (ages 3-6) were considered. Three particular corporations (PBS, Disney, and Nickelodeon) currently provide more preschool programs than any other corporations available through most basic cable providers. This was confirmed by checking TV Guide listings online and by examining the daily schedules for channels available through local broadcast or basic cable. Additionally, PBS, Disney, and Nickelodeon each air at least one preschool program that ranks as one of the top-five most viewed programs according Nielsen ratings. Because of the popularity and quantity of programming available on these three channels, the sample was limited to programs available through PBS, Disney, and Nickelodeon, thus establishing the second criterion in the sample. In compiling a list of current programs, websites for each individual series were reviewed to confirm the intended age group in order to ensure that the

intended audience was three-to-six-year-olds. A list was compiled of the names of all of the preschool television series provided by these three channels during October 2010 (see Appendix A).

The third criterion concerned the subject matter of the episodes. Only television shows that addressed fear of the dark and/or fear of monsters as a principal storyline were considered. Episode descriptions of each series were searched using iTunes and a variety of websites (listed in Appendix B). The amount of detail used to summarize and describe episodes varied considerably. In some instances, generous descriptions were available. However, many times the episode summaries were no more than two lines in length. Episode descriptions that mentioned or suggested fear of the dark or monsters were noted, and a list of relevant episodes was compiled (see Appendix C). Given that many episode summaries contained very little information, it is possible that relevant episodes were overlooked and not included in this list.

A fourth criterion for selecting the sample concerned the availability of the episodes for research purposes. Episodes had to be available for purchase (on DVD or through iTunes), for viewing via Netflix, or for online viewing via websites (such as youtube.com) in order to examine them thoroughly. If episodes were not available through these outlets, the producers were contacted to see if it would be possible to get a copy of the episode on DVD from them for research purposes. Episodes that could not be accessed were not included in the sample.

A fifth criterion concerned a desire to ensure some diversity in the final selection of programs ensuring that programs from the three major channels were

included so that each of the three networks had somewhat equal representation in terms of the total length of content examined. In one case, selecting an episode from *Caillou*, a series on PBS, resulted in an overall sample of episodes from PBS that was quite a bit longer than the other two channels. Rather than using the entire episode in the study, only the relevant sections (two short stories) were included. Episode lengths of all selected programs were noted so that the final selection of episodes on each channel resulted in a quantity of program content that was similar among the three networks. However, because of the small sample size, comparison of content among providers could not be made.

In the process of compiling a list of relevant episodes, it was discovered that *Sesame Street* (airing on PBS) presented a unique situation. Rather than employing a strictly narrative format in which one story carries the episode, *Sesame Street* is comprised of multiple shorter stories. These stories are self-contained and can be re-used, a cost-effective production technique that allows potential for the development of future episodes by pulling pieces of previous episodes together. Sesame Workshop compiled a number of self-contained short stories related to getting ready for bed on a DVD entitled "Bedtime with Elmo." A description of the DVD specifically mentioned preschoolers' fear of the dark. Because of Sesame's prolific history and because of the availability of such relevant materials on one DVD, I decided to consider vignettes from this particular source in addition to the programs selected from the three channels.

The final selection of episodes chosen for the purpose of this study, including the episode name, the series name, the provider broadcasting the series,

and the approximate length of the episode considered for the content analyses, are listed in Table 1. The approximate length of the total number of shows in the sample by channel provider is presented in Table 2. The sample for the Disney Channel was approximately eight minutes shorter than the sample selected from PBS and Nickelodeon.

Table 1: Sample of Preschool Television Episodes Addressing Fear of the Dark or Monsters

Provider	Program Name	Show Title	Length
Nickelodeon	*The Wonder Pets*	Save the Black Kitten	11:00
Nickelodeon	*Blues Clues*	What's Blue Afraid Of?	24:00
Nickelodeon	*Max and Ruby*	The Blue Tarantula	8:00
Disney	*My Friends Tigger and Pooh*	Piglet's Monster Under the Bed	11:45
Disney	*Charlie and Lola*	Can You Maybe Put the Light On?	11:00
Disney	*Handy Manny*	The Haunted Clock Tower	12:00
PBS	*Caillou*	After Dark	9:00
PBS	*Sid the Science Kid*	Discovering Darkness	22:00
PBS	*Curious George*	Curious George in the Dark	11:38
Sesame Workshop	*Sesame Street: Bedtime with Elmo* DVD	Happy Thoughts (17:54-26:41-35:18)	17:00

Table 2: Approximate Length of Sample Programming by Provider

Channel	Combined Length of Programs
Nickelodeon	43:00
Disney	35:00
PBS	43:00
Sesame Workshop DVD	17:00

Qualitative Content Analysis

Altheide states the goal of qualitative analysis "is to be systematic and analytic but not rigid. Categories and variables initially guide the study, but others are allowed and expected to emerge" (Altheide, 1996, p. 16). According to Altheide, qualitative content analysis "is more oriented to concept development" (1996, p. 17). This analysis is "reflexive and highly interactive" (1996, p. 16). While the quantitative portion of analysis adheres to predetermined coding categories throughout the process, the qualitative analysis may serve to challenge pre-existing variables and to examine specifically what type of content might *not* be addressed in the program. Using qualitative analysis to study media is complex. Instead of counting the frequency of events or behaviors that fit predetermined categories and then statistically analyzing the results, the researcher remains involved in all phases of the research making necessary changes to the variable and coding categories as the research progressed. Subjectivity and interpretation bias in this type of analysis present challenges to the need for objectivity in a scientific investigation.

Qualitative content analyses, however, is considered to be highly interactive. Qualitative content analysis "follows a recursive and reflexive movement between concept development-sampling-data, collection-data, coding-data, and analysis-interpretation" (Altheide, 1996, p. 16). While preliminary categories initially guide the research, other categories are allowed to develop. The researcher develops a category, collects, analyzes, and interprets data that may result in the development of a previously unknown concept. The process

continues by returning to the sample, collecting, coding, and analyzing more data. The process is circular and emphasizes discovery and confirmation. Categories and variables are expected to emerge throughout the study, including an orientation toward *constant discovery* and *constant comparison* of relevant situations, settings, styles, images, meanings, and nuances (p.16). Finally, Altheide explains that the major emphasis of qualitative content analysis "is to capture the meanings, emphasis, and themes of messages and to understand the organization and process of how they are presented" (p. 33).

According to Altheide, "the meaning of a message is assumed to be reflected in various modes of information exchange, format, rhythm, and style – for example, the aural and visual as well as the contextual nuances of the report itself" (1996, p. 16). Altheide provides a helpful discussion of how qualitative content analysis can assist in discovering the overlapping concepts of frames, themes, and discourse within a sample. He explains that "themes are the recurring typical theses" that run through documents or, in the case of this study, shows (p. 31). Defining frames, Altheide continues: "Frames are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event. Frames focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will not be discussed. Certain themes become appropriate if particular frames are adopted" (p. 31).

A qualitative content analysis was used to examine themes and frames evident in popular preschool television programs, through an analysis of the discourse regarding coping with fear of the dark and monsters in the medium of television. According to Altheide (1996), "discourse refers to the parameters of

relevant meaning that one uses to talk about things" (p. 31). He explains that messages "carry the discourse that reflects certain themes, which in turn are held together and given meaning by a broad frame" (p. 31). Finally, "frame, theme, and discourse are also related to *communication formats*, which, in the case of mass media, refer to the selection, organization, and presentation of information" (p. 29). Altheide provides a helpful model (see Figure 1) that illustrates the overlapping concepts of format, frame, theme, and discourse within qualitative content analysis.

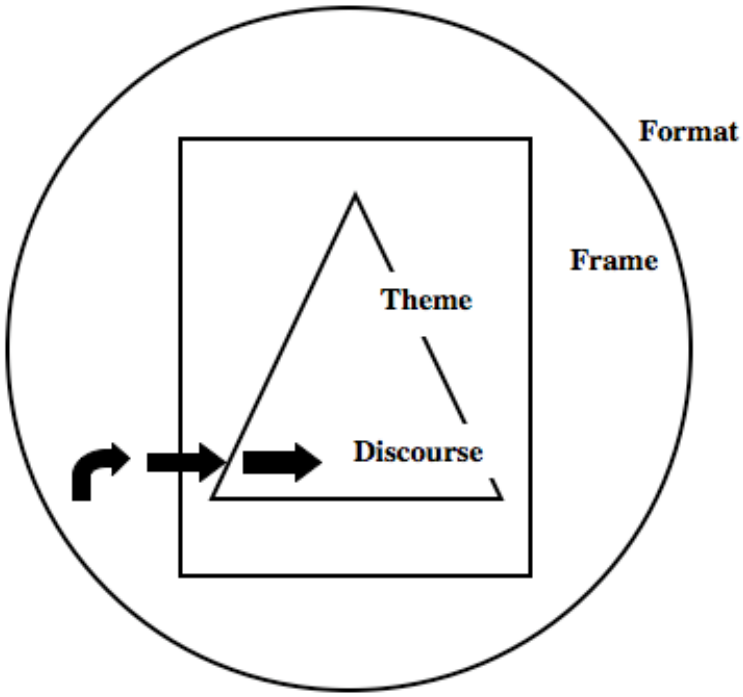


Figure 1: Qualitative Content Analysis Model as Illustrated by Altheide (1996)

Using this model as a point of reference, television episodes intended for preschoolers served as the format for the analysis. In order to answer the first

research question, that is, how do preschool television programs address fear of the dark and monsters, frames and themes were identified and revised throughout the data collection and analysis process. This identification process involved noting similarities and differences regarding messages and listing possible categories for emerging themes and frames. The list was revised throughout the data collection and analysis period to capture the themes and frames for the coping strategies that were examined.

The tasks outlined by Altheide were well-suited to this research. As recommended by Altheide, a couple of episodes were selected and a draft protocol was constructed listing items or categories to guide data collection (see Appendix D). In general terms, a protocol is a way to ask questions of a document; a protocol is a list of questions, items, categories, or variables that guide data collection. Categories that address the research questions set forth by this study include consideration of how fear-producing stimuli (namely monsters and the dark) are presented within the program, how characters respond to this fear, the role of parental figures in preschool programs, and the use of imagination as a strategy for managing fears. As suggested by Altheide, the protocol was continually tested during the data coding process and refined and revised as needed. According to Altheide (1996) the best qualitative research "is always very specific and descriptive" (p. 77). Steps were taken to present a descriptive, narrative account of each television episode by developing a coding protocol that was authentic and based on actual data, rather than *a priori* notions of strategies that might be used.

Quantitative Content Analysis

In addition to a qualitative content analysis, this study employed quantitative content analysis. Drawing from a conceptual framework of young children's fear-related coping strategies based on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) distinction of coping strategies as being either cognitive or behavioral in nature, a quantitative analysis was used to determine the prevalence of coping behaviors or suggestions as they were portrayed in popular preschool television programs. Predetermined categories were designed to quantify instances of certain actions (in this case, coping with fear).

Within the show, the scene was selected as the unit of analysis. Analyzing content at the scene level allowed for a closer examination of the messages within each episode. A scene was operationally defined as consisting of four possible components: 1) a shift from one visual setting to a completely new setting; 2) a shift in time; 3) an obvious change in train of thought or storyline; and/or 4) introduction of a new character (defined as those who are central to the scene's plot).

An example of a shift in scene is found in *My Friends Tigger and Pooh* when Darby and the other characters are singing a song, and suddenly a loud crashing noise interrupts them. The song ends abruptly, and the characters discover Piglet is caught in the monster trap. This is an example of a change in scene due to a shift in the train of thought (component 3) and introduction of a new character (component 4). However, simply because one of these components occurs does not necessarily signify a change in scene. For instance, in a scene in

Bedtime with Elmo when Bert and Ernie sing a song about using one's imagination to picture happy thoughts, there are multiple shifts from one visual setting to several completely new visual settings (component 1). New characters are also introduced at several points in this scene (component 4). However, these components do not signify a change in scene because the train of thought or storyline stays the same throughout.

Inter-rater reliability estimates on what constituted a scene were gathered by having a second graduate student, with a background in professional media and child development, code the start times of scenes in three of the ten episodes. Because scene shifts often employ the use of fades or a similar type of transition, it is not always possible for two different people to code the *exact* time a scene starts. By allowing for a four second difference between the coders' perceived starting time of a scene, allowances were made for such transitions. Therefore, agreement was determined if coders noted the start time for a scene within four seconds of each other. The first episode that was coded for scenes resulted in 77% agreement between the coders. Disagreements for identifying scenes within the first episode were resolved by discussion and establishing consensus between the coders. After the first episode was coded, additional coder training and clarification of the codebook procedures took place. The remaining two episodes were coded with 100% agreement, resulting in a strong estimate of inter-rater reliability for what constituted a *scene* in this study.

Variables coded within each scene included: the scene number, the scene start time, and the specific coping behaviors of characters. Lazarus and Folkman

(1984) conceptualized coping efforts or strategies as cognitive and behavioral actions in a specific stressful situation which are intended to manage affective arousal or improve the problematic situation. Coping efforts continue over time and may change in response to the changing demands of the situation. The term "emotion regulation" has been defined in a variety of ways, but a current and representative example is that of Kopp (1989): "Emotion regulation is a term used to characterize the process and characteristics involved in coping with heightened levels of positive and negative emotions including joy, pleasure, distress, anger, fear, and other emotions" (p. 343). For the purpose of this study, coping and emotion regulation were considered to be synonymous (Brenner & Salovey, 1997). For the purpose of coding, coping strategies were operationalized as actions, dialogue, and behaviors that were modeled or suggested by characters to manage fear of the dark and imaginary creatures.

As stated in the literature review, research has suggested that behavioral coping strategies (namely seeking comfort from a parent) may be more effective at alleviating fear among younger children rather than mental strategies. Do preschool television programs tend to emphasize behavioral or cognitive coping strategies, or do they portray a balance of the two? For coding purposes, these two specific dimensions of coping were considered. In each scene, the presence or absence of cognitive coping strategies and behavioral coping strategies was coded. In each scene, the presence of cognitive coping strategies was coded as a 1; the absence of cognitive coping strategies in the scene was coded as a 0. For the purpose of this study, cognitive, or mental, coping strategies were

operationalized as strategies that focus on the mind as a way of managing fear. Examples of mental coping strategies included thinking about something pleasant in an effort to suppress scary thoughts; thinking of something in order to distract oneself; and using logic and reason to remind oneself that monsters are not real and that the dark is safe. Behavioral coping was operationalized as an action one might take to alleviate fear. Examples of behavioral coping strategies included: seeking comfort from a stuffed animal; seeking comfort from a parent; hiding under covers; looking under a bed to confirm that it is empty; and turning on the lights.

Research has also suggested that some coping strategies, namely those that seek to affirm reality and logic, may be less effective at helping young children cope with their fear of the dark or monsters; yet adults tend to emphasize logic and reality when helping children overcome their fears of the dark or monsters (Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2009). Do preschool television programs tend to rely on affirming reality as a principle coping strategy? In order to examine this issue further, each scene was coded for the presence or absence of coping strategies that sought to affirm reality and logic. The absence of such strategies within a scene was coded as a 0; the presence of such strategies within a scene was coded as a 1. Examples of strategies that sought to affirm reality included reminding a child that monsters are not real; telling a child that shadows are simply everyday items; reminding a child that she is safe; and showing a child that no monsters are in the closet.

As discussed in the literature review, imagination may be used to help children cope with their fears of the dark and monsters. Research suggests that using imagination for the purpose of distraction may not be very effective at helping young children manage their fears of imaginary creatures and the dark (Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2009). However, recent research suggests that using imagination as a form of pretense may actually be an effective coping strategy among preschoolers (Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2009). Do preschool television programs encourage children to use their imaginations to manage their fears? If so, is distraction-related imagination portrayed more often than pretense-related imagination, or is there a balance of the two?

For the purpose of this study, each scene was coded for the presence or absence of strategies that employed distraction-related imagination strategies or pretense-related imagination strategies. Distraction-related imagination strategies involved using one's imagination for the purpose of thinking of something else that is *not* scary in order to suppress scary thoughts. Examples included characters thinking "happy thoughts" or characters thinking about an item or event that they were looking forward to. Pretense-related imagination was operationalized as actions or ideas that were grounded in the imaginary world and were very unlikely or impossible according to real-world logic. For example, characters may have sought to change the attributes of the monster in order to regard it as positive or harmless or used their imagination to pretend to have protective powers or to alter the scene in some way. It is important to consider that preschool television programs involve multiple levels of imagination. In a sense,

an entire episode of *Handy Manny* concerns the imagination as talking tools are certainly not *real*. Similarly, an entire episode of *My Friends Tigger and Pooh* may be considered imaginary as talking, anthropomorphic animals live in fully furnished trees. For the purpose of this study, imagination at the *show* level was not considered. Characters and settings at the show level were accepted as "real."

Once the data coding protocol was developed, a second coder scored three episodes, or approximately 33.3% of the sample. Coding of the first episode resulted in 77% agreement; the second episode resulted in 93% agreement; and the third episode resulted in 97% agreement. Disagreements in the coding were resolved by discussion to establish consensus between the two coders. With inter-rater reliability established, the coding procedure was finalized (Appendix E) and the remaining episodes were coded (Appendix H).

Analysis

Typical of qualitative research, data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously during this study. Merriam (1998) explained that the complex process of data analysis "involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 178). By placing coping strategies into predetermined categories, the use of quantitative analysis in this study yielded the prevalence of various coping strategies in a sample of preschool television programs. To better understand the meaning of these coping behaviors, qualitative analysis was used. The process of constant comparison in the qualitative analysis allowed for the potential of findings to emerge that might

have otherwise been overlooked or missed.

Specifically, the quantitative data were analyzed to determine the prevalence of particular coping strategies across scenes of preschool television programs that address fear of the dark and monsters. Comparisons of the quantitative data examined whether programs tended to promote behavioral or mental strategies more often across multiple scenes. Additionally, the data were examined to determine the prevalence of strategies that affirm reality. Furthermore, the data were examined to determine the prevalence of strategies that encourage imagination. As previously discussed, research suggests that imaginative distraction is not very effective among preschool-aged children. Recent research suggests, however, that the use of imagination in pretense may be effective in helping young children manage their fear of the dark or monsters. The data were also examined for the prevalence of imaginative distraction in comparison to imaginative pretense within the sample.

According to Altheide, "the meaning of a message is assumed to be reflected in various modes of information exchange, format, rhythm, and style – for example, the aural and visual as well as the contextual nuances of the report itself" (1996, p. 16). It is the responsibility of the researcher to physically (mentally) place his or her self within the media source and decipher the meaning of the message. In this study, qualitative content analysis made it possible to examine the specific types of coping strategies more closely. While the quantitative analysis confirmed the presence of behavioral coping strategies within a scene, the qualitative content analysis made it possible to determine the

types of behavioral coping strategies present in that scene. It also allowed for consideration of which types of coping strategies ultimately resolved characters' fears in the episodes. Furthermore, it allowed for a deeper examination of what messages were available in preschool television programs addressing fear of the dark and monsters.

CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS

Quantitative Content Analysis

As established in Chapter 2, ten different episodes of educational preschool television programs were viewed and coded for pre-determined variables including: the presence of behavioral and cognitive coping strategies, the presence of strategies that affirmed reality, and the presence of strategies that called for the use of one's imagination. Scenes that contained strategies that called for the use of imagination were further coded to examine whether this type of strategy was used as a form of distraction or as a form of pretense. The sample of episodes was comprised of 131 total scenes. Of these scenes, 76 portrayed fear-related coping strategies in some way (either by the actions or verbal suggestions of characters). As demonstrated in Figure 2, behavioral coping strategies were present in more scenes than cognitive coping strategies. It is important to note that the graph depicts the number of *scenes* containing coping strategies and *not* the number of *instances* of coping strategies. Some scenes had numerous coping strategies but were noted only as being a scene that positively contained some type of fear-related coping. There were 16 scenes that contained only cognitive coping strategies, 23 scenes that contained only behavioral coping strategies, and 37 scenes that contained cognitive coping strategies as well as behavioral coping strategies. Figure 3 compares the percentages of the distribution of scenes that contained coping strategies. Of the 131 scenes, 49% contained both cognitive and behavioral coping strategies in some manner. Behavioral coping strategies were present in 9% more scenes than cognitive coping strategies.

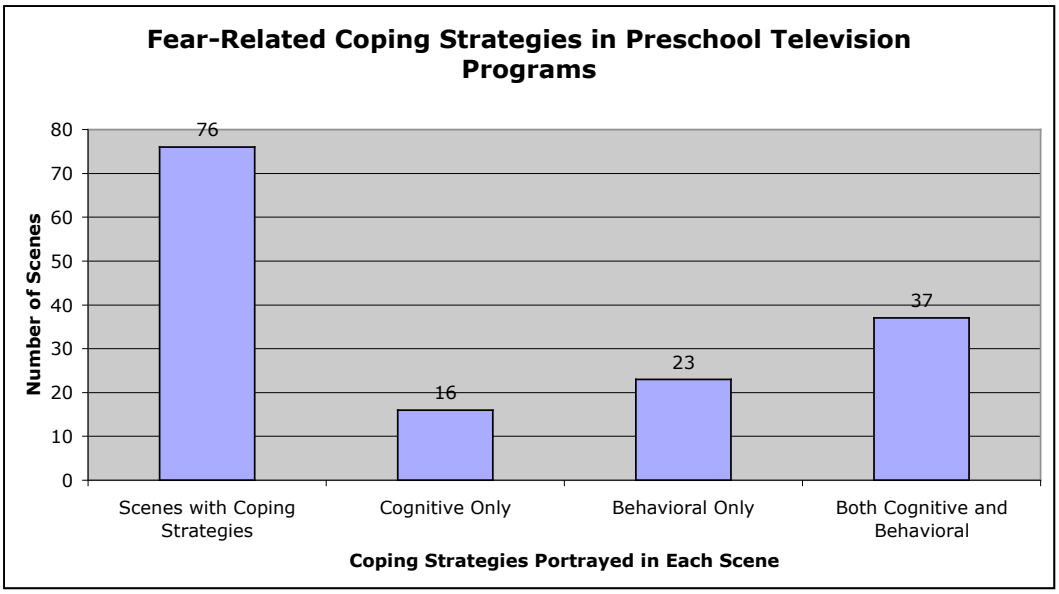


Figure 2: Fear-Related Coping Strategies in Preschool Television

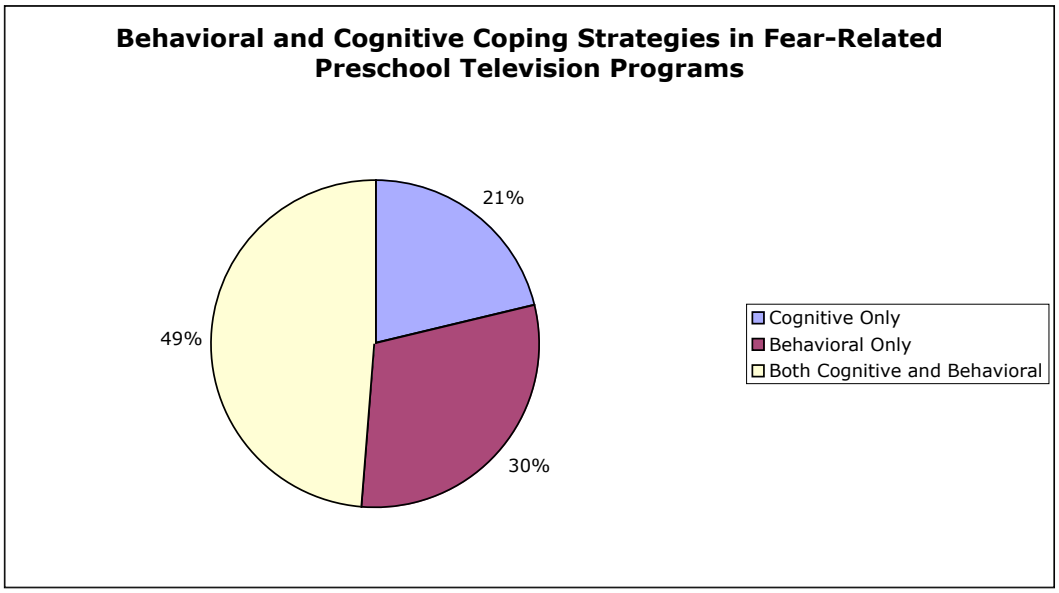


Figure 3: Behavioral and Cognitive Coping Strategies in Preschool Television

One example of a cognitive coping strategy can be found in the episode, "Curious George in the Dark." When George points to shadows in his room that are frightening him, the Man in the Yellow Hat seeks to comfort him by saying, "They're the same things in the dark as they are in the light. Your imagination got the best of you." An example of a behavioral coping strategy can be found in this same episode when George, frightened by the dark, runs around turning on every light in the house. In some cases, a coping strategy in an episode may be considered to be both cognitive and behavioral. For example, in the *Max and Ruby* episode, "The Blue Tarantula," Ruby opens up Max's closet to show him that it is empty as she verbally comforts him by saying, "There are no monsters in your closet." She attempts to comfort him cognitively by pointing out an aspect of reality and then affirms this notion by behaviorally approaching the closet.

Of the 76 scenes that contained fear-related coping strategies, 17 scenes (or 22%) contained strategies that suggested some use of imagination in order to manage one's feelings or perceptions. As shown in Figure 4, scenes portraying the use of imagination for this purpose were present in six of the ten episodes in the sample. Of these scenes, six contained strategies that portrayed the use of imagination as a form of distraction. One example was found in *Bed Time With Elmo* in which Elmo encourages Abby to think happy thoughts when he says to her, "If you fill your head with happy thoughts, there's no room in there for scary thoughts…You can imagine anything that will make you happy." After this conversation, the two of them sing a song about happy thoughts including the line, "All the things you think are up to you."

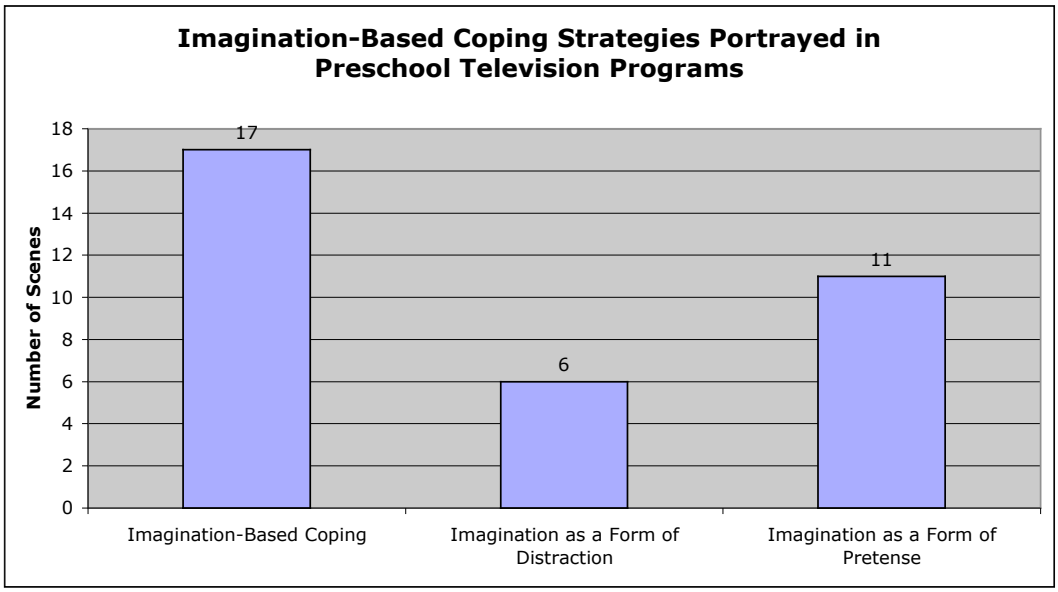


Figure 4: Imagination-Based Coping Strategies in Preschool Television

Of the 17 scenes that depicted or suggested the use of imagination in coping, 11 of these scenes included strategies in which characters used some manner of pretend to alleviate fear of the dark or monsters. For example, in the *Max and Ruby* episode "The Blue Tarantula," Ruby tells Max, "The Blue Tarantula only squishes bad bunnies." In this instance, rather than appeal to the fact that this character is fictional, she pretends that the Blue Tarantula does exist, but she points out an aspect of his character that might ease Max's concerns: Because Max is a *good* bunny, he needn't worry. Another example of pretense used for coping is found in the *Charlie and Lola* episode, "Can You Maybe Turn the Light On?" In this episode, Charlie tells Lola that ogres are really very nice and friendly, despite the fact that they're ugly. He then proceeds to tell her a story in which an ogre is crying because he is having trouble falling asleep and is too

ugly for anyone to sing a lullaby to him. He appeals to her sense of sympathy so that she perceives the ogre in a less-threatening way. In this particular instance, imagination is being used to transform the way a child perceives an imaginary character. In the sample, imagination as a form of pretense was found in 30% more scenes than those that portrayed using the imagination as a means of distraction.

Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, every episode in the sample contained at least one scene that affirmed reality as a means of helping characters cope with their fear of monsters or the dark. Of the 76 scenes that contained coping strategies, 39 scenes (51%) of the scenes included strategies that sought to affirm reality. One example can be found in the *Sid the Science Kid* episode "Discovering Darkness." In this particular episode, Sid's mother and Teacher Susie repeatedly remind Sid that the real world stays the same, regardless if it is light or dark. Another example can be found in the episode "The Wonder Pets Save the Black Kitten," when Linny reminds Ming Ming and Tuck that "there's no such thing as ghosts." The *Handy Manny* episode "The Haunted Clock Tower" provides yet another example. When Mayor Rosa tells Manny that the clock tower sounds like it may have a ghost in it, Manny tells his anthropomorphic tools, "I think there must be a logical reason for the strange noises. Logical is when something makes sense. That means there's probably a good reason for the strange noises….something we can see and fix." These examples and others will be considered further in the following qualitative content analysis.

Comparing the content of scenes that contain reality-affirming strategies to the content of scenes that contain imagination-based strategies reveals an interesting difference in messages to children. While reality-affirming strategies seek to remind children that monsters do not exist, strategies that employ the use of imagination may *not* deny the existence of monsters. In some cases, such strategies include allowing a child to consider the possibility that monsters could be there but engaging the child in such a way that they perceive the monster as harmless. Of course, not all pretense-related coping strategies leave room for the possible presence of monsters. For example, in "Curious George in the Dark," the Man in the Yellow Hat suggests that he and George pretend to go camping in the living room in an attempt to help George fall asleep when he's frightened by the power being out. In this sample, 56% more scenes contain reality-affirming strategies than imagination-based coping strategies. Figure 5 compares the frequency of scenes that contain reality affirmation with the frequency of scenes that contain imagination-based coping strategies.

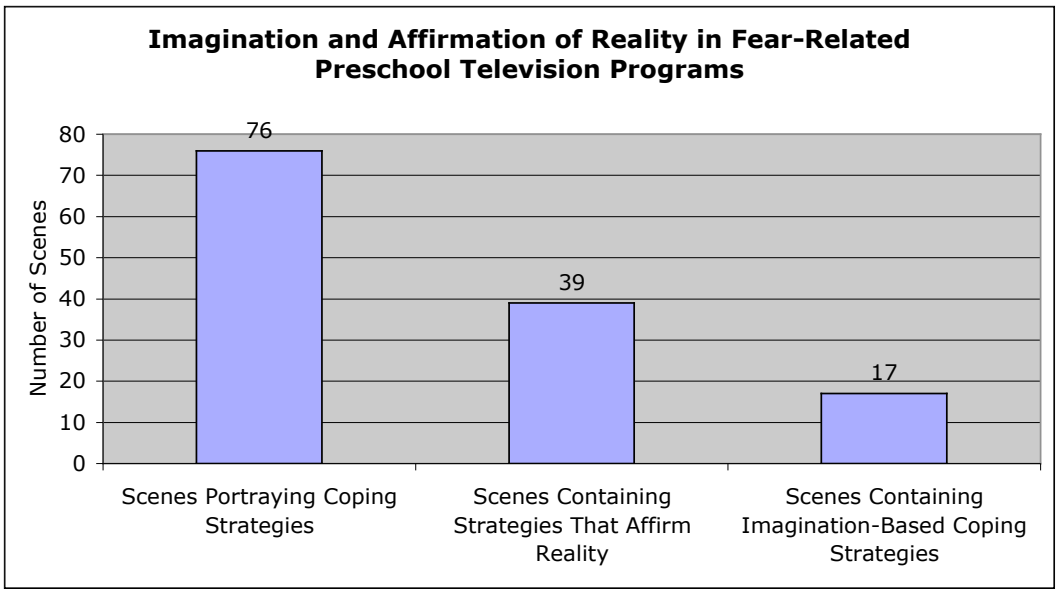


Figure 5: Imagination and Affirmation of Reality in Preschool Television

In conclusion, the quantitative content analysis confirmed the presence of key variables found in a sample of preschool television programs that addressed fear of the dark and/or monsters. More scenes contained behavioral coping strategies than cognitive coping strategies in this sample by 9%. Additionally, the analysis confirmed the presence of strategies that affirm reality, with 100% of the episodes of the sample containing at least one such example. While not nearly as prevalent as scenes containing reality-affirming strategies, the analysis also confirmed the presence of strategies that include using one's imagination to manage fears. More scenes encouraged using one's imagination in some form of pretend rather than using it as a means of distraction in an attempt to manage one's fears. The nature and context of the various coping strategies modeled and

suggested in the sample of programs will be examined more closely in the following qualitative content analysis.

Qualitative Content Analysis

The qualitative content analysis allowed for a closer look at the nature and content of messages about fear of the dark and monsters presented in the sample. As discussed in the previous chapter, a protocol was developed in order to examine specific aspects of the program content. According to the protocol, the coping strategies portrayed in each episode were listed and briefly described. Specific attention was given to what strategies ultimately appeared to resolve a character's fear in each episode. Additionally, episodes were examined for particular production strategies that producers and show creators might have incorporated as a means of helping children overcome fear. Episodes were further examined with regards to reoccurring messages and themes related to coping fear of the dark and fear of monsters.

Types of coping strategies in the sample

After all of the episodes in the sample were examined qualitatively, a master list of each incident containing a coping strategy was compiled. The list resulted in 164 distinct incidents where coping strategies were portrayed, described, or modeled in some form. Listing and labeling these incidents made it possible to see what types of strategies were more commonly portrayed. Common strategies depicted in the sample included seeking comfort from a stuffed animal or toy, seeking or receiving social support, approaching a fear stimulus in order to seek information about the object, avoiding a fear stimulus,

altering the environment in some way (such as turning on the lights), and affirming reality by appealing to logic. The number of times a particular type of coping strategy appeared in the sample of episodes is included in Table 3.

Table 3: The Number of Instances Specific Coping Strategies Were Portrayed

Types of Coping Strategies Found in 164 Instances	Number of Instances
Social Support	121
Reality Affirmation	67
Approach or Information-Seeking	42
Avoidance (hiding, running away, covering eyes)	42
Cognitively Reframing How the Dark or Monster Could be Perceived (emphasizing harmlessness)	18
Altering or Changing the Environment	15
Using Imagination to Distract Oneself or to Pretend to Alter the Situation	14
Telling Oneself That He or She is Not Afraid	3
Behavioral Distraction (i.e. listening to music)	1

In many cases, specific moments where characters were managing fears could be labeled as containing more than one coping technique. For example, after hearing a strange noise coming from underneath his bed, Ruby proceeds to protect Max and investigate the noise. She says, "Stand back, Max. Looking under a bed is a big sister's job." In this moment, Ruby is providing *social support* to Max, while *approaching* a fear stimulus in order to seek information

about it. At the same time, Max voluntarily hides behind Ruby, *avoiding* the fear stimulus. The sound turns out to be a jack-in-the-box, reaffirming her case that "There is no Blue Tarantula" (*reality affirmation*). This particular moment of coping included numerous techniques (social support, approach, avoidance, and reality affirmation). *Curious George* provides another example of an incident where a coping strategy was labeled in more than one way in Table 3. In the episode, the Man in the Yellow Hat pretends to camp in the living room with George when the power goes out during a storm. This coping incident was noted as both an instance of social support and an instance of using the imagination.

The use of social support in coping was the most frequently portrayed coping strategy in the various episodes. An incident was considered to involve social support if the act of coping included seeking the help of another character, providing help to another character, or characters working together. As seen in Table 3, 121 (or approximately 74%) of the distinct moments that contained fear-related coping included some form of social support. Within the sample, four of the programs (including *The Wonder Pets*, *My Friends Tigger and Pooh*, *Charlie and Lola*, and *Max and Ruby*) did not include parental characters in the storylines. However, in the absence of parents, characters in these programs still relied on one another for comfort and support. Charlie repeatedly comforts Lola by checking the room for monsters, adjusting the lighting of the room, and encouraging her to perceive the dark in different ways. In a similar manner, Ruby comforts Max by continually reassuring him that there is no Blue Tarantula.

Strategies that sought to affirm reality were also quite common, as noted in 67 incidents (approximately 41%) within the sample. Examples of this type of strategy included relying on logic, asserting the notion the monsters are not real, and reassuring characters that they are safe. As noted in the quantitative content analysis, reality-affirming strategies were present in every episode in the sample. In many cases, characters verbally assured others that "There's no such thing as monsters." Another key example of affirming reality was found in *Handy Manny*. In this episode, Manny and the tools seek to determine the source of the spooky sounds coming from the clock tower. Characters in the episode repeatedly state that there must be a logical explanation as they investigate and look for clues. *The Wonder Pets* episode provides additional examples of strategies that affirm reality when Linny encourages Ming Ming and Tuck to consider whether or not ghosts bark and have four legs like the "ghost" they are hiding from.

Interestingly, two seemingly opposing strategies, approach and avoidance, were depicted approximately the same number of times according to the list of incidents noted. For example, within the sample, characters avoided a fear stimulus by hiding, closing their eyes, and running away, 42 times. Particular characters tended to account for many of these recorded moments. For example, in *My Friends Tigger and Pooh*, Piglet frequently responds to fear by hiding in bushes and running away. This behavior is consistent with his timid, easily startled personality. Similarly, in the *Blue's Clues* episode, Blue frequently covers her eyes and hides behind objects like blankets and chairs. Somewhat surprisingly, characters *approached* a fear stimulus 42 times, most often as an

effort to seek more information about it and confirm that there was in fact no monster. In many cases, such as in *Max and Ruby*, *My Friends Tigger and Pooh*, *Charlie and Lola*, *Curious George*, and *Caillou*, characters look inside closets or under the bed to confirm that they are indeed monster-free. Other examples of this type of approach include characters like Curious George or Darby from *My Friends Tigger and Pooh* using a flashlight to determine what objects are casting particular shadows.

Given that each of the episodes included a character approaching a fear stimulus as a means of coping, the episodes were examined more closely to determine whether or not characters were approaching a fear stimulus alone or with social support. This question was considered for various reasons. In general where there is some fear of potential threat in the real world, there could be some danger in a child approaching a fear stimulus. Therefore, it might not be appropriate to model such behavior within educational preschool television. Of course, the fear stimuli in the sample were in all cases benign. Additionally, however, most children watching the programs might be unlikely to approach a fear-stimulus alone and may be less likely to believe a character in a television program that engages in such behavior. Figure 6 demonstrates how often a character approached a fear stimulus alone or with a group. Out of the 42 times a character (or characters) approached a fear stimulus in the sample, only three of these times involved a character doing so in a solitary manner. Caillou grabs a flashlight and attempts to discover what is making a strange noise in his room. In *Blue's Clues*, Steve approaches a spooky sound to determine its source, and in

Charlie and Lola, Lola approaches the ogre in order to sing him a lullaby. However, it is important to note that in this instance, she is approaching him in her imagination even though it is visually depicted on the screen.

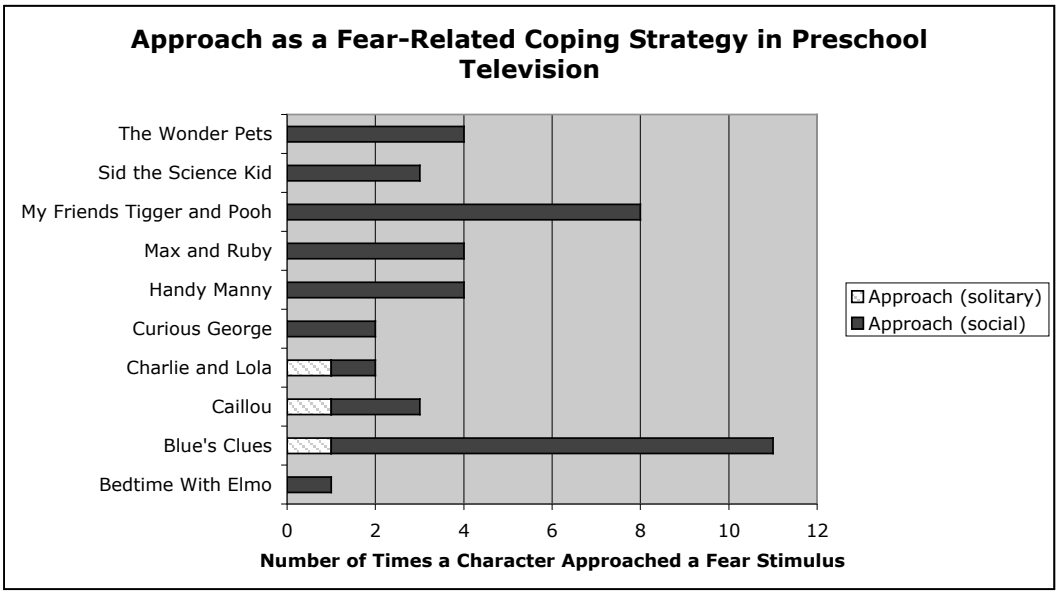


Figure 6: Approach as a Fear-Related Coping Strategy in Preschool Television

While somewhat less frequently portrayed than the strategies previously mentioned, other additional coping strategies were notably depicted. Altering the environment in some manner as a means of coping with fear was noted 15 different times. Characters were seen turning on the lights, closing the curtains, or opening their doors when they were afraid of the dark. Additionally, suggestions that seek to cognitively reframe how a character would perceive the dark was noted 18 times within the sample of episodes. Many of these focused on presenting the harmless nature of the dark. For example, Charlie seeks to comfort Lola's fears by telling her that some of her favorite things, like animals, come out

in the dark. In another example, Elmo's dad tries to comfort Abby and Elmo by explaining that, "There's nothing in the dark that isn't there in the light."

Furthermore, strategies that employed some form of imagination were noted 14 times. In some cases, characters suggest using one's imagination to distract themselves by thinking about happy things. In *Bedtime With Elmo*, an entire song is devoted to thinking "happy thoughts." More often, however, imagination is used as a means of pretending to alter the situation, such as when Curious George and the Man in the Yellow Hat pretend to camp in the living room, or to alter the way one perceives a monster, such as in Charlie and Lola. Charlie tells Lola a story that allows her to imagine the ogre as funny, harmless, and in need of sympathy. While imagination may have been credited as a source of fear in some episodes (including these), moments where characters distract themselves with happy thoughts or pretend to spend time with a monster that is harmless are moments when young viewers may be taught how to use their imaginations in positive ways.

Despite their much less frequent appearances, a couple of other coping strategies in the sample are worth mentioning. In a few of the episodes, some characters were noted as verbally telling themselves that they were not afraid. For example, Caillou lies alone in bed and sings, "I'm not afraid of monsters. I'm not afraid of monsters." Also, one example of *behavioral distraction* was noted in the *Caillou* episode when Caillou's father encourages him to listen to a music box in order to help him not hear the sounds of the branch hitting the window.

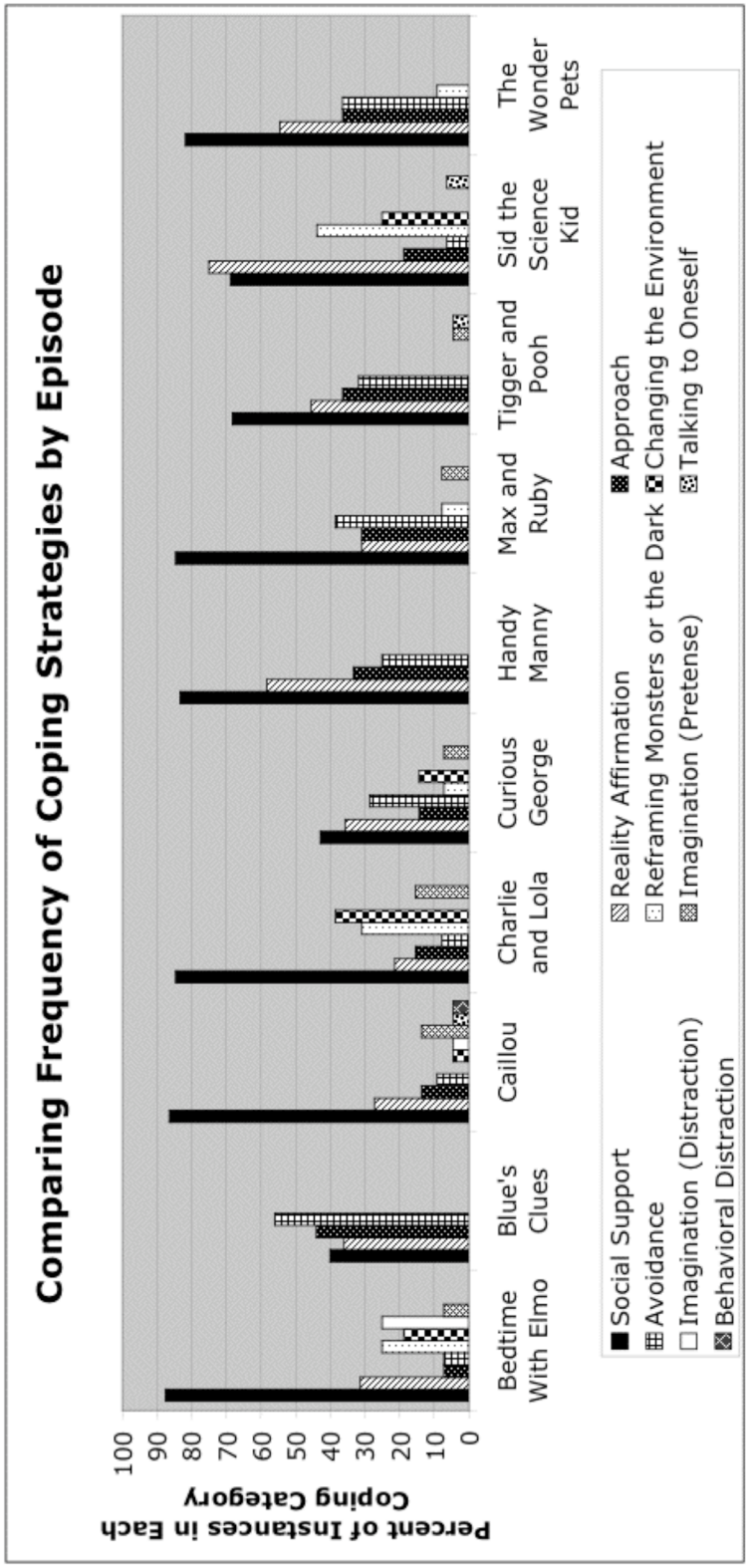
Figure 7 (see page 62) compares the percentages of instances of various coping strategies by program. While the previous data reveal that social support, reality affirmation, approach, avoidance, and cognitive reappraisal techniques were commonly found in the episodes, Figures 7 considers the percentages of the frequency of such strategies in order to compare how they vary across the different episodes. For example, Figure 7 demonstrates that 50% of the coping strategies in *Curious George* contain some form of social support, while more than 85% of the coping strategies in shows like *Caillou* and *Charlie and Lola* contain some form of social support. This is not to say that George is not supported as much as characters in other programs are. It does, however, suggest that George spends more time than other characters independently seeking ways to cope with his fears of the dark. Figure 7 highlights the fact that a greater percentage of coping strategies in *Sid the Science Kid* seek to affirm reality than other shows in the sample. This type of coping is consistent with the show's goal of teaching children basic scientific principles. Rather than dealing with imaginary creatures, a primary theme in the episode revolved around teaching kids about darkness in order to make it less threatening. *Handy Manny* is another show with a higher percentage of coping strategies that seek to affirm reality in comparison to other shows. Again, relying on reality affirmation in this program supports the series goal of encouraging children to fix and solve problems, as well as this particular episode's goal to teach young viewers the concept of "logic." According to the graphs, *Blue's Clues* had a higher percentage of avoidance strategies than other shows. In the episode, avoidance

strategies included every time Blue covered her eyes when she was afraid. It may be that because she is an animated, non-verbal character, creators of the show relied on this physical gesture as a primary way of indicating that Blue was afraid.

It is interesting to note that the shows that had the lowest percentage of instances of reality affirmation compared to other shows were also the shows that had comparatively higher percentages of strategies that encourage using the imagination. Both *Bedtime with Elmo* and *Charlie and Lola* were such shows. The figures also make it possible to see which shows contained a greater variety of coping strategies. While some shows, like *Blue's Clues* and *Handy Manny,* contained four different types of coping strategies, other shows, such as *Bedtime With Elmo*, *Caillou*, and *Charlie and Lola* contained a greater variety of coping strategies.

Finally, seven of the episodes depicted characters experiencing some kind of fear at bedtime, and five of these episodes portrayed a character seeking comfort from a stuffed animal or toy. Noting each distinct incident when a character sought comfort from a stuffed animal was not possible as some characters, such as Lola, held onto a stuffed animal throughout much of the episode. While she did have specific moments where she held her toy more closely or even spoke to her toy for advice, it was not possible to determine her motivation for holding him in each scene. However, it remains noteworthy that five episodes in the sample did depict a character seeking comfort from a toy when he or she was afraid.

Figure 7: Comparing Frequency of Coping Strategies by Episode



Resolution of fear in each episode

The qualitative content analysis also allowed for a closer look at which coping strategies ultimately resolved a character's fear within each episode. In some cases, an episode provided more than one instance of such a resolve. For example, in the *Sid the Science Kid* episode, "Discovering Darkness," Gerald's character overcomes his fear after watching May have fun in the dark, while Sid overcomes his fear later in the story by a combination of means. Actually, in Sid's case, the viewer does not see a clear moment that ultimately resolves his fear of the dark. During the car ride home from school, Sid tells his grandma that he is no longer afraid. It appears that a combination of events from the day worked together to help him overcome his negative feelings towards the dark. Throughout the episode, Teacher Susie and Sid's parents offer suggestions and insight to re-frame how Sid might perceive the dark.

Within the sample, there were 14 moments when fear of a character or characters was finally resolved. Most often these moments came at the end of an episode. Each of the moments involved some form of social support, even in episodes where parents were not present. For example, Max and Ruby seek comfort by sharing a bed when they are afraid of the Blue Tarantula. Similarly, Lola ultimately finds comfort in her brother's storytelling, and the characters in *The Wonder Pets* find the courage to approach a "ghost" together. In these three examples, fear is resolved in a manner fitting to each show's primary goals. Both *Max and Ruby* and *Charlie and Lola* are shows that seek to portray a positive sibling relationship in which a brother and sister work out their daily challenges

together, while *The Wonder Pets* is a show that seeks to emphasize teamwork and cooperation.

While every final resolution involved some form of social support, the strategies varied in other ways. Table 4 lists brief descriptions of the ways in which fear is finally resolved in each episode. Once the final list was compiled, the descriptions were examined for types of coping in order to look for emerging patterns. Nine of the situations involved reality affirmation and reframing how the darkness or fear-stimuli could be perceived, with many emphasizing that the dark is safe and even fun. Surprisingly, of the 14 strategies that appeared to ultimately resolve a character's fear, seven of them involved some form of approaching a fear-stimulus to either confirm what it was or at least confirm that it was okay. The Wonder Pets approach the ghost and discover that it's actually a puppy under a sheet. Steve leads Blue to approach the owl and perceive it as a friend. Characters in *Curious George* and *My Friends Tigger and Pooh* approach shadows with flashlights to confirm that there are no monsters and that things remain the same in the dark and in the light.

Table 4: Ways in Which Fear was Ultimately Resolved in Each Episode

Program	Resolution	Coping Strategies
Max and Ruby	Max and Ruby share a bed.	Comfort-seeking social support.
Charlie and Lola	Charlie tells Lola a story about the ogre to change the way she imagines him.	Social support, imagination as a form of pretense (to alter how one thinks about a monster)
Sid the Science Kid	Gerald is no longer afraid after May models how much fun it is to play in the dark and Teacher Susie explains that darkness doesn't change things.	Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how one perceives the dark
Sid the Science Kid	After a day at school that included numerous songs and activities that suggested perceiving the dark as harmless, fun, and even beautiful, Sid announces that he is no longer afraid.	Combination of various means including: social support, modeling, reality affirmation, approach as a means of seeking information, and reframing how one perceives the dark
The Wonder Pets	The Wonder Pets approach the "ghost" and remove the sheet, revealing a puppy.	Social support, reality affirmation, approach as a means of seeking information, reframing how one perceives a potential monster/ghost
My Friends Tigger and Pooh	Darby and the other characters use a flashlight to see what is underneath the bed.	Social support, reality affirmation, approach as a means of seeking information, reframing how one perceives the dark
Curious George	George and Jumpy Squirrel use a flashlight in a cave to determine the sources of different shadows.	Social support, reality affirmation, approach as a means of seeking information, reframing how the dark is perceived

Program	Resolution	Coping Strategies
Handy Manny	With the tools, Manny approaches the spooky sound and discovers that it's wind blowing through a broken window.	Social support, reality affirmation, approach as a means of seeking information, reframing how spooky noises are perceived
Caillou	Caillou finally falls asleep after his mother flips his pillow over to the "good dreams side."	Social support, imagination as a form of pretense
Caillou	Caillou's parents show him that the he's hearing a tree branch hit a window. They note that ordinary things sometime sound scary, and they give him his stuffed animal to cover his ears while he's sleeping,	Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how shadows are perceived, and comfort from a stuffed animal
Blue's Clues	Steve figures out that Blue is afraid of an owl's shadow. He introduces the owl to Blue as a friend.	Social support, reality affirmation, and reframing how Blue perceives the owl
Bedtime With Elmo	Following Bert's suggestion, Ernie distracts himself by imagining the room filled with balloons as he falls asleep.	Social support, imagination as a means of distraction
Bedtime With Elmo	Mr. Louie (Elmo's dad) teaches Elmo and Abby that things are the same in the dark as they are in the light. He reminds them that their eyes will eventually adjust to the dark.	Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how the dark is perceived
Bedtime With Elmo	Baby Bear closes the window and the curtains so that a large shadow (the "Boogie Bear") is gone.	Social support, altering the environment

As seen in Table 4, of the 14 moments when fear was ultimately resolved, three of these moments relied on some use of a character's imagination. In *Bedtime With Elmo,* Ernie imagines the room filled with balloons after Bert teaches him how to think happy thoughts in order to overcome his fears. In another example, Caillou is finally able to fall asleep after his mother switches his pillow to the "good dreams side." In *Charlie and Lola*, Charlie calms Lola by telling her a bedtime story in which the ogre is funny, sad, lonely, and tired and longing for someone to sing him a lullaby. Finally, only one incident of resolution involved altering the environment in order to overcome fear. In *Bedtime With Elmo,* Baby Bear closes the bedroom window and curtains to prevent the shadow of a tree from appearing on the bedroom wall.

Program content and structure as a means to alleviate fear

In addition to the coping strategies that were modeled or verbally suggested by characters, some episodes included production strategies that might also contribute to children's fear-related coping repertoires. For example, in *Charlie and Lola*, Lola fearlessly stands beside the large, green ogre. This juxtaposition of tiny, comfortable Lola beside a large, ugly ogre may also make the concepts of ogres appear less scary to child viewers. Another example of a production strategy that might contribute to easing fears in children can be found in *My Friends Tigger and Pooh*. During the credits, one of the characters provides a quick recap reminding viewers that there are no such things as monsters and that the monster under the bed was actually the shadow of a pile of art supplies. In *Sid the Science Kid*, viewers are encouraged to think like scientists—to investigate,

explore, and discover. The episode provides young viewers with activities they can do on their own at home to explore the concept that things do not change in the dark. Together, these strategies may encourage a sense of control and power in a young viewer. Another example of program content that may contribute to children's coping is found in the *Blue's Clues* episode, "What is Blue Afraid Of?" In one segment of the episode, Mr. Salt and Mrs. Pepper are looking at pictures that appear to startle them because the picture was taken too close to tell what the subject was. When viewers are asked to guess what the pictures are, it is revealed that they are extreme close-ups of normal, ordinary items like raisins, graham crackers, and celery. This activity may suggest that sometimes we may see something with our eyes and it appears scary, but really it is just an ordinary thing.

Messages and themes in the sample

In addition to examining specific types of fear-related coping within the sample, the qualitative content analysis also looked for emerging patterns in messages and themes found within the program content. As would be expected in a sample of shows portraying fear of the dark, some prominent themes that emerged within the sample included fear, the dark, imagination, and reality. The next section of this chapter will briefly examine the messages and framing of these topical themes within the sample.

Fear was portrayed in the sample as an emotional, behavioral, and physical experience. Many characters, such as Blue in *Blue's Clues* or Ruby and Max in the "Blue Tarantula" episode, physically shake when they are frightened.

Jumping when startled was also portrayed rather frequently in many of the episodes. In the *Blue's Clues* episode, as Blue is hiding under a blanket and shaking, Steve tells young viewers at home that Blue is "acting different." Interestingly, these types physical responses associated with fear were not verbally discussed or described within the programs in the sample. Some emotional and behavioral aspects of fear were also portrayed and, in some cases, described or discussed in the dialogue. For example, some of the episodes depicted characters having trouble sleeping because they were afraid. Caillou's mother tells him that he might feel tired and grumpy the next day if he doesn't get some sleep. In *Bedtime With Elmo*, the important notion that we can *feel* afraid without *knowing* or realizing that we are afraid was also discussed as Mr. Louie tries to help Abby overcome her fear of the dark. A few of the episodes also suggest that it's possible to feel afraid even if we know that monsters are not real. In *Handy Manny*, Manny and the tools discover that the spooky sound they heard was actually just the sound of wind blowing through a broken window. After this discovery, Rusty, one of the tools, still decides to stick close to Manny when he leaves the clock tower to retrieve his tools. Rusty mentions that, even though they figured out what the noise is, he's "not taking any chances." Additionally, the fear experience was not limited to one particular type of character in the programs. Nor was it limited to younger characters. For example, older sister Ruby seeks refuge from her fear by climbing into younger brother Max's bed.

Sources of fear within the sample included the dark, shadows, unidentified noises, bad dreams, windows, closets, the space under the bed, and imaginary

creatures like ghosts and ogres. In some cases where shadows were depicted as frightful, the cartoon image was such that the shadows appeared to resemble monsters. However, in these situations, there ultimately was some resolve that depicted the real source of the shadows, including rocks, trees, an owl, and piles of clothes, toys, and art supplies. Two shows depicted a potentially scary creature as an actual character in the story. In *Charlie and Lola*, an ogre is portrayed as an animated character stomping and making loud noises. His presence on screen coincides with a story Charlie tells Lola in which he reframes the ogre as a big, ugly character that is cranky and crying because he can't fall asleep without a lullaby. In addition to vying for the ogre to be viewed sympathetically, Charlie also presents the ogre as funny, narrating his voice in such a way that Lola can't help but laugh.

In *Blue's Clues*, Steve and Blue jump into a picture of a haunted house to help a young ghost who is frightened by noises. The ghost, with the voice of a child, is animated in such a way as to appear friendly. The young ghost's father appears at the end in a similar non-threatening manner, with a gentle voice and dinner in his hands. *The Wonder Pets* episode also portrays a "ghost." However, it's presented with the intention of obviously appearing to be a puppy wearing a sheet. The outline of the ghost forms the shape of a puppy, and its legs and tail are visible. In addition to the visual cues, the "ghost" runs around barking and panting. Finally, in *Tigger and Pooh*, the characters in the episode dress up to look like monsters in an effort to encourage the monster under Piglet's bed to come out and play. While Darby and Pooh and the others describe themselves as

monsters, their costumes include only one or two non-threatening accessories. For example, Darby wears ears and black clothes to suggest that she is a black cat; Pooh wears a cape suggestive of a vampire, and Tigger wears a pirate hat. Together they sing a song about how fun it is to be a monster. In each episode that presents a frightening stimulus, efforts are made to present the object or character in a less threatening manner. Importantly, nearly every episode in the sample explicitly mentions that there are no such things as monsters (or ogres or ghosts). In *Tigger and Pooh*, for instance, both Darby and Rabbit tell their friends, "There's no such thing as monsters." In *Max and Ruby*, Ruby says, "It's just a story, Max. There is no Blue Tarantula." The only exception to this occurred in *Sid the Science Kid*, which focused primarily on "darkness" itself as frightening. The only mention of "monsters" in this episode was as a joke told by May that elicited boisterous laughter from the other characters. Because monsters were not mentioned as a source of fear in the episode, it seems reasonable that the program would exclude a message that monsters do not exist.

Darkness is discussed as a source of fear in six of the ten episodes, with each program also including dialogue and content that attempts to reframe how one might perceive the dark. For example, in *Sid the Science Kid*, Teacher Susie suggests that darkness can be fun and even beautiful. *Curious George* also presents that idea that one can have fun in the dark as George plays with a flashlight and shadows. In most cases, episodes contained multiple ways of reframing the dark. Charlie tells Lola that the dark won't hurt her, that she needs the dark to fall asleep, and that some of her favorite things (like particular

animals) come out in the dark. *Curious George*, *Bedtime With Elmo*, *My Friends Tigger and Pooh, Caillou*, and *Sid the Science Kid* all attempt to reinforce the idea that things are the same in the dark as they are in the light, despite their different appearance in the dark. These episodes also depict characters approaching shadows in the dark in order to determine their sources, emphasizing the idea that knowing what something is can make it less frightening. Knowledge and understanding were repeatedly mentioned as important factors in overcoming fear of the dark. Finally, each of these episodes emphasize that everyone is safe in the dark.

Many of the shows also discussed imagination as a source of fear. *Charlie and Lola*, *Curious George*, *Max and Ruby*, *Caillou*, and *Bedtime With Elmo* all include the message that one's imagination may cause someone to think scary thoughts or may make someone think that an ordinary object or shadow is actually something frightening or threatening. In *Curious George*, the Man in the Yellow Hat shows George that the shadows he's afraid of are actually just ordinary objects in his room, and he says to George, "Your imagination got the best of you." When Caillou calls to his father for help at night, his dad responds by saying, "You probably just imagined something, Caillou." In *Bedtime With Elmo*, Abby asks Elmo if he's having trouble sleeping. She asks, "Do you keep thinking about scary things and no matter how hard you try to stop thinking about them you can't stop thinking about them? That's why I can't fall asleep." In this same episode, Bert tells Ernie, "You are imagining all those scary things in your mind. But you can imagine other things too." Interestingly, each of these

programs also depicts characters using their imaginations to cope with and manage their fears.

Conclusion

The qualitative analysis provided an opportunity to examine the nature and content of fear-related coping strategies contained with the sample of ten preschool television programs addressing fear of the dark and fear of monsters. As each episode presented more than one coping strategy, the qualitative content analysis also provided the opportunity to see what types of strategy ultimately resolved characters' fears. This in-depth look at the programs in the sample also made it possible to consider reoccurring messages and themes available to young viewers.

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION

Challenges and Limitations

Like most studies, the study was not without challenges and limitations. Because time and resources were limited, one student conducted most of the coding with the assistance of another graduate student. Ideally, two or more people would have coded every episode in order to ensure more precision and accuracy in the results. Additionally, it would have been ideal to code a larger sample size. Due to some shows containing less detailed descriptions of the episodes, it is possible that some potentially relevant episodes were overlooked and not considered for inclusion in the sample. Perhaps in the future additional episodes may be considered and this study may be expanded.

Furthermore, the current state of research related to children's fear-related coping is in its infancy, with few studies exploring the topic at the time of this writing. To date, little is known about how young children cope with fear. More studies are necessary to determine which types of strategies are most effective at helping children overcome their fears of the dark and imaginary creatures. Such results would be significant in comparing the types of strategies found within children's program television programs as they may indicate which shows have more potential for successfully alleviating fears.

Author experience and bias were also challenges that needed continual consideration throughout the study. It was impossible not to be personally connected to this work. As a mother, I have sat beside my three-year-old son and watched him turn off an episode of Playhouse Disney's *The Imagination Movers*

because it frightened him so much. Ironically, the show was about a monster that wanted to be less frightening. Similarly, I have had to calm my six-year-old daughter after an episode of the PBS show *Martha Speaks* when a song about the word "ominous" left her afraid. Such experiences and concerns may have made me more critical about the ways in which shows addressed children's fears. In addition to being a mother, however, I am also a young professional in the children's media industry and am friends with individuals that helped to create some of the episodes in the sample. Knowing some of these caring individuals with a passion for creating positive media for children, I needed to be mindful of my own assumptions about the shows intentions and possible outcomes. Furthermore, I have worked to create children's media and am aware of the lengthy, rigorous process involved in creating such media and the pains that are taken to make sure that what is being produced is of the highest quality. Interestingly, my position as a mother and my position as a children's media professional were at odds with one another sometimes. My hope is that my experience in these roles, tethered to my desire to be an objective scholar, worked together to help me consider the material in a manner more critical and genuine than if I had otherwise attempted this project.

Summary of Findings

As stated in previous chapters, the purpose of this study was to examine the nature and content of educational preschool television programs that address fear of the dark or fear of monsters. Rather than making predictions and testing hypotheses, this study sought to provide a descriptive snapshot of fear-related

preschool television programs currently available to children. Ten relevant educational preschool shows were examined both quantitatively and qualitatively via content analyses that considered the variety and nature of coping strategies suggested within the programs and the ways in which fear responses and fear stimuli were depicted. The study was guided by three research questions:

Research Question 1: How do educational preschool television programs address fear of the dark and monsters? Fear was portrayed in the sample as an emotional, behavioral, and physical experience. Interestingly, these types of physical responses associated with fear were not verbally discussed or described within the programs in the sample. Some emotional and behavioral aspects of fear were also portrayed and, in some cases, described or discussed in the dialogue. Sources of fear within the sample included the dark, shadows, unidentified noises, bad dreams, windows, closets, the space under the bed, and imaginary creatures like ghosts and ogres. In some cases where shadows were depicted as frightful, the cartoon image was such that the shadows appeared to resemble monsters. However, in these situations, there ultimately was some resolve that depicted the real source of the shadows, including rocks, trees, an owl, and piles of clothes, toys, and art supplies. Two shows depicted a potentially scary creature as an actual character in the story. However, efforts were made to present the object or character in a less threatening manner. Importantly, nearly every episode in the sample explicitly mentioned that there are no such things as monsters (or ogres or ghosts).

Darkness was discussed as a source of fear in six of the ten episodes, with

each program also including dialogue and content that attempted to reframe how one might perceive the dark. These episodes also depicted characters approaching shadows in the dark in order to determine their sources, emphasizing the idea that knowing what something is can make it less frightening. Knowledge and understanding were repeatedly mentioned as important factors in overcoming fear of the dark. Finally, each of these episodes emphasized that everyone is safe in the dark. Many of the shows also discussed imagination as a source of fear. Interestingly, each of these programs also depicted characters positively using their imaginations to cope with and manage their fears.

Research Question 2: To what extent do such programs portray various cognitive and behavioral coping strategies? The episodes contained a variety of cognitive and behavioral coping strategies including: social support, reality affirmation, avoidance, approach, changing the environment, reframing how one perceives the dark, and using one's imagination for the purpose of distraction or pretense. Many coping behaviors within the programs involved multiple types of coping strategies. Behavioral coping strategies were portrayed more frequently than cognitive coping strategies within the sample. The use of social support, presented in manners that involved various cognitive and behavioral coping mechanisms, was the most frequently portrayed coping strategy in the episodes.

Research Question 3: To what extent do such programs seek to affirm reality or encourage the use of imagination in fear-related coping? Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, every episode in the sample contained at least one scene that affirmed reality as a means of helping characters cope with their fear of

monsters or the dark. Of the 76 scenes that contained coping strategies, 39 scenes (51%) of the scenes included strategies that sought to affirm reality. In this sample, 56% more scenes contained reality-affirming strategies than imagination-based coping strategies. In examining the specific number of instances of coping found within the sample, 67 of the 164 distinct coping moments involved some form of reality affirmation. This equates to approximately 41% of the total number of coping instances. In contrast, only 14 distinct coping incidents (or approximately 8.5%) portrayed some use of imagination in responding to fear. More scenes encouraged using one's imagination in some form of pretense rather than using it as a means of distraction in an attempt to manage one's fears.

Discussion

Preschool television programs that address fear of the dark and fear of monsters portray a variety of fear-related coping strategies. While a variety of coping strategies were present in the sample, it appears that the use of strategies is consistent with what is currently known about how young children cope with their fears. As previously discussed, research has suggested that behavioral coping strategies are more effective at helping young children with their fears than cognitive coping strategies perhaps due, in part, to their limited abilities to make effective use of logic and consider situations with greater complexity (Piaget 1964, Wilson & Cantor, 1987; Wilson, Hoffner, & Cantor, 1987). In this sample of preschool television programs, behavioral coping strategies were portrayed slightly more frequently than cognitive coping strategies. In many instances where characters were encouraged to remember that monsters were not real,

behavioral coping accompanied the scenario. Rather than having a scene where a character was simply told that there were no monsters in the closet, another character would physically open the closet to confirm the notion. It may be that frequently portraying such behaviors may encourage young viewers to more firmly believe that monsters are not real. Additionally, children may view such actions and be more likely to model the behaviors themselves as they seek to cope with their own fears of the dark and fears of monsters. Given that some preschool shows are more researched-based and curriculum-based than others, it would be interesting to examine if more significant involvement of child development experts in the production process is associated with a greater variety of coping strategies in programs.

While little is presently known about what coping strategies are most effective with young children, preliminary research does suggest that some strategies, namely social support from a parent, may be more effective than others, such as reality affirmation, in helping children under the age of six alleviate their fears of monsters or the dark. Interestingly, both social support and reality affirmation are frequently suggested as fear-related coping strategies within the sample. It is interesting to consider why preschool television shows have chosen social support as a fear-related coping strategy so often. It may be a result of practical considerations: stories and situations are more interesting and entertaining with more personalities. However, it may also be a result of the prosocial nature of educational preschool television programs. Most, if not all, educational preschool shows seek to promote such prosocial skills, as

cooperation, altruism, and conflict resolution. In many of the episodes in this sample, characters work together to solve problems, namely that of identifying the source of shadows and strange or spooky noises. Additionally, characters tend to *want* to help one another. It is highly likely that an analysis of preschool shows that do not address fear will still contain numerous moments where characters support and help one another through other issues, such as sadness, disappointment, and frustration. Such behaviors are consistent with the prosocial nature of preschool television programs.

However, research has suggested that friends are generally not used as sources of support among preschoolers. This may be due to young children's limited ability to verbalize and conceptualize their problems (Aldwin, 2007). Rather than friends, children tend to prefer to rely on the social support of adults (primarily parents) instead. This finding suggests interesting implications for shows where adults are absent from the storyline. More research is needed to determine if exposure to programs like the ones in this sample might contribute to an increase in the amount of support young children seek from their friends (or provide to their friends). It may be that increased exposure to programs that model young children seeking and providing social support to other children may help viewers learn to articulate their own feelings and concerns, while gaining greater awareness into the feelings and concerns of others. In regards to producing programs, it may be useful for media professionals to create moments within episodes that teach children when it is appropriate or okay to reach out to a friend and when they should reach out to a parent instead. Considering the broad

approach used in this study, researchers may also want to examine the use of social support in television more closely, with specific attention toward comparing the giving and receiving of coping-related social support in programs.

The frequent use of reality affirmation in the sample is also important to consider. Research has found that most children between the ages of three and five understand that ghosts, witches, dragons, and monsters are not real (Harris, Pasquini, Duke, Asscher, & Pons, 2006; Sayfan & Lagattuta, 2008). However, Harris and colleagues (1991) found that children might still experience fear of an imaginary entity even when they are aware that it does not exist. Knowledge that monsters are not real or that the dark is safe may still not prevent children from being afraid of these stimuli. Yet, shows frequently employ the use of reality affirmation as a means of coping with fear. It may be that increased exposure to the message that "monsters are not real" may actually help children assimilate this strategy into their coping repertoires sooner than if they were not exposed to this message. More research is needed in order to examine whether or not this is a possibility. Additionally, previous research (Sayfan, 2008) has suggested that using imagination as a form of pretense or distraction may actually be more effective at calming children's fears than strategies that rely on reality affirmation. If this is the case, it may be valuable for creators of children's television programs to include more coping suggestions that employ the use of imagination in episodes that address fear of the dark or fear of monsters. However, despite the infrequency of young children calling on reality affirmation in alleviating their fears, the notion that monsters are not real is still important to include in

preschool television programs that do address such fears because omitting this notion could potentially have negative effects. For example, if a show were to primarily rely on imagination and pretense to change how children perceive monsters *without* acknowledging that monsters are *not* real, young viewers may watch the program and assume that monsters *are* real. As a result, they may walk away from the program more likely to be afraid.

As previously noted, approaching a fear stimulus was frequently portrayed as a means of addressing a character's fear. In all but three instances, approach involved some form of social support. In most cases, characters approached a stimulus to gather more information about it in order to confirm that there was nothing to be afraid of. While most viewers may themselves be too frightened to approach their own closets in order to confirm that it's monster-free, they may be more likely to accept the fact that on-screen characters do so with the support of their peers, siblings, or parents. It would be important for creators of children's programs to be aware of the potential dangers involved in portraying characters approaching a fear stimulus that actually could be threatening or harmful, such as a dog. In many real-life scenarios, fleeing is an appropriate response for children when confronted with a frightening, threatening stimulus as it increases their chances of safety. In all situations in this sample, characters approached a scenario that was ultimately non-threatening and safe. The examples in this sample may serve to teach children critical thinking skills that include asking questions, making observations, and relying on clues from the real world in order to draw conclusions about shadows or spooky noises. This, again, is another

possibility in need of future research.

In examining the portrayal of various coping strategies in preschool television programs, it is important to consider how the conventions of television may influence which types of strategies are more frequently portrayed. For example, the frequent use of approach and avoidance allows for the build of tension that leads to the climax of the story before it ultimately ends with some resolve. In short, approach and avoidance may facilitate more exciting, dramatic story telling. Because programs are typically confined to 11-minute or 22-minute intervals and have story lines that are self-contained within each episode, producers may feel limited to relying on coping strategies that could be considered to be more short-term, such as running away or quickly looking inside a closet to confirm that there are no monsters inside it. In some cases, short-term coping strategies such as avoidance may be considered to be maladaptive forms of coping if individuals do not learn to address their fears. However, young viewers watching their favorite character run away from a fear-stimulus may experience some sense of therapeutic validation of their own feelings. Producers may want to consider including more long-term coping strategies, such as encouraging some type of comforting nightly routine with a parent. Doing so may further motivate children and parents to explore a greater variety of coping strategies. Future research may want to compare the use of short and long-term coping strategies portrayed within preschool television while examining what the possible implications of such coping strategies might be. Future research may also consider examining and comparing the portrayal of more simple, lower-level

coping strategies with the presentation of more complex, higher-level coping strategies. It may be that higher-level coping strategies are underrepresented in children's programming,

In addition to considering how such programs may contribute to young children's development of coping repertories, it is important to consider the possibility that these shows may unintentionally frighten some young viewers. In some cases, shadows were depicted as frightening monsters that ultimately were shown to be non-threatening, everyday objects. Similarly, some episodes contained imaginary creatures, like ghosts and an ogre, that creators sought to portray as benign and friendly. However, because young children are so perceptually-oriented, it may be possible that some young viewers still respond to these visual portrayals with fear. While viewers may not be frightened by the stimuli included in the sample, some children may respond to the fear reactions of characters on screen. It is possible more empathetic children may watch one of their beloved animated characters shaking with fear and running away and they, too, may experience a physiological response while engaged in viewing the episode. This may not necessarily be a bad thing. It may be that children who experience such benign fear in the comfort of their own home (perhaps with an adult beside them or in the next room) may be more likely to understand and articulate such fears than children who do not share these experiences. It may be that experiencing such benign fears and ultimately realizing that one is safe in the comfort of one's own home may contribute to a child's coping repertoire. More research is needed to examine whether or not young viewers experience fear when

viewing such episodes and what the possible effects such experiences may be.

Given that so many popular preschool programs address fear in their episodes, carefully designed television may serve as an influential source from which children may acquire information about how to cope with fear. While research has primarily focused on the possible negative consequences of media, time spent with media can contribute to children's cognitive, social, emotional, and health-related development in positive ways (e.g., Anderson *et al*., 2001; Dorr, 1982; Huston & Wright, 1998; Wright, Huston, Murphy *et al*., 2001). If children *can* observe and imitate viewed behavior as suggested by social cognitive theory, then television *may* have the potential to help children learn a variety of fear-related coping strategies as they observe characters managing similar fears on the screen. The possibilities are exciting, but much more research is necessary to determine how young children cope with fear and whether or not relevant television programs contribute to these developing skills. For example, future research might examine whether exposure to programs from this sample results in increased articulation of fear-related coping strategies within young viewers in comparison to children not exposed to the episodes. Researchers may also examine if children with more exposure to the episodes experience less fear or shorter durations of fear. If it is determined that preschool television programs *do* actually work to alleviate young children's fears of the dark and monsters, it would be important to examine what specific factors contribute to these effects. It may be that children are more likely to overcome their fear of the dark if they view their favorite television character overcoming a similar fear (as opposed to

watching a character they only moderately enjoy engaged in a similar situation). It may also be that children who have less reactive temperaments may be more likely to call on fear-related coping behaviors they viewed on television when they are experiencing fear themselves. At this point, many questions remain unanswered.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates how ten educational preschool television shows address topics like fear of the dark and fear of imaginary creatures. Within the sample, a variety of coping strategies were used or suggested by characters seeking to alleviate someone's fear. In many cases, the strategies that were portrayed were consistent with what little information is known about how young children effectively cope with such fears. However, there may be room for preschool television programs to include a greater diversity of fear-related coping strategies, such as positive pretense or more long-term coping routines. Future work is necessary to determine if these findings apply to other relevant shows that were not included in the sample and to determine whether or not episodes can contribute to young children's coping repertoires. It may indeed be possible that such shows can serve to comfort and empower children as they seek to navigate their fears and concerns. In the words of Fred Rogers, a man well-versed in creating high-quality, sensitive media that often addressed children's fears of the dark, "…if we can bring our children understanding, comfort, and hopefulness when they need this kind of support, then they are more likely to grow into adults who can find these resources within themselves later on" (2002, p. 10).

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APPENDIX A
List of Current Preschool Television Programs

PBS KIDS
Barney and Friends
Between the Lions
Caillou
The Cat in the Hat Knows A Lot About That
Clifford
Curious George
Dinosaur Train
Mama Mirabelle's Home Movies
Sesame Street
Sid the Science Kid
Super Why
Thomas and Friends
World World

NICK JR
The Backyardigans
Blue's Clues
Dino Dan
Dora the Explorer
Franklin
Go, Diego, Go!
Jack's Big Music Show
Little Bear
Little Bill
Max & Ruby
Miss Spider
Moose & Zee
Ni Hao, Kai-Lan
Olivia
Oobi
Oswald
Pinky Dinky Doo
Team Umizoomi
The Fresh Beat Band
Toot & Puddle
The Upside Down Show
The WonderPets!
Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!
Yo Gabba Gabba

PLAYHOUSE DISNEY
Bunnytown
Charlie and Lola
Chuggington
Handy Manny
Imagination Movers
Jungle Junction
Little Einsteins
Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
My Friends Tigger and Pooh
Special Agent Oso
Timmy Time

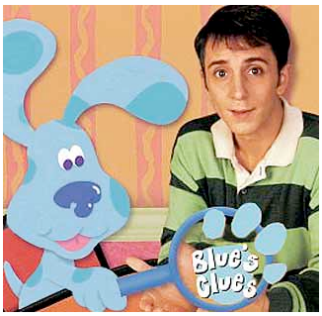
APPENDIX B
Websites and Programs Used for Sample Search

itunes
www.tvguide.com
www.epguides.com
www.en.wikipedia.org
www.pbskids.org
www.amazon.com
www.nickjr.com
http://tv.disney.go.com/playhouse/

APPENDIX C
List of Potentially Relevant Shows

Series	Show Title	Network
Charlie and Lola	Can You Maybe Turn the Light On?	Disney
Handy Manny	Haunted Clock Tower	Disney
Imagination Movers	A Monster Problem	Disney
Jungle Junction	The Spooky Road	Disney
Little Einsteins	Little Einsteins Halloween	Disney
My Friends Tigger and Pooh	Piglet's Lightening Frightening	Disney
My Friends Tigger and Pooh	Piglet's Monster Under the Bed	Disney
Timmy Time	Timmy's Monster	Disney
Timmy Time	Timmy Gets Spooked	Disney
Backyardigans	It's Great to be a Ghost	Nickelodeon
Backyardigans	Scared of You	Nickelodeon
Blue's Clues	What is Blue Scared of?	Nickelodeon
Blue's Clues	Dreams	Nickelodeon
Max and Ruby	The Blue Tarantula	Nickelodeon
Max and Ruby	Max's Big Boo	Nickelodeon
The Wonder Pets	Save the Bat	Nickelodeon
The Wonder Pets	Save the Black Kitten	Nickelodeon
Caillou	After Dark	PBS
Caillou	Starry Night	PBS
Clifford	Boo!	PBS
Curious George	In the Dark	PBS
Curious George	Scaredy Dog	PBS
Dinosaur Train	Night Train	PBS
Mama Mirabelle	Things That Go Yip, Howl, and Screech in the Night	PBS
Sid the Science Kid	Discovering Darkness	PBS
Super Why!	The Ghost Who Was Afraid of Halloween	PBS
Sesame Street	Bedtime With Elmo DVD	Sesame

APPENDIX D
SERIES DESCRIPTIONS



Blue's Clues is preschool television show airing on the Nickelodeon family of channels. The program employs a narrative format in the presentation of material and includes a live-action host (Steve and, later, Joe) who interacts with animated characters using blue-screen technology. Steve calls on preschool viewers at home to help him as he tries to solve Blue's Clues. The method encourages preschoolers to call out answers and actively get engaged as they view the show.

Caillou is an animated, preschool television series airing on PBS. Produced in Canada, the series is based on books by Christine L'Heureuz and illustrator Helene Desputeaux. The series centers on the adventures of Caillou, a four-year-old boy, and his family and friends. Each 30-minute episode, divided into three seven-minute stories, depicts a slice of Caillou's life, In each adventure, Caillou engages in imaginary play and make-believe, while discovering and experiencing new things.

Charlie and Lola is an animated preschool series produced by CBeebies in the UK and available on the Disney family of channels. The 11-minute long episodes are based on the *Charlie and Lola* books by Lauren Child. In order to capture the style of the original books, the series employs a collage-style animation. The show focuses on the relationship between seven-year-old Charlie and his four-year-old sister, Lola. Episodes explore how Charlie and Lola handle typical issues children experience on a daily basis. Other characters include their friends, their pets, and Soren Lorensen, Lola's imaginary friend.

Curious George is an animated series based on the popular books by Margret and H.A. Rey. It airs daily on PBS KIDS. Aimed at preschool viewers, the series encourages children to explore science, engineering, and math in their immediate surroundings. George, a curious monkey, continually finds new things to investigate, discover, and touch, often resulting in unintended consequences. Each 22-minute episode is composed of two 11-minute animated stories, followed by 2-minute, short live-action segments in which real kids investigate the ideas that George introduces in the stories.

Handy Manny is an animated children's television program airing on the Disney family of channels. The show features the adventures of Manny Garcia, a bilingual Hispanic handyman, and his anthropomorphic, talking tools. It seeks to teach young children beginning Spanish and the importance of cultural diversity. Most 22-minute episodes contain two 11-minute stories.

Max and Ruby is a Canadian animated series that is aimed at a preschool audience and currently airs on Nickelodeon. Created by children's book author and illustrator Rosemary Wells, the series is based on the world of her *Max and Ruby* books. The episodes present stories about Max, a mischievous and persistent three-year-old bunny, and his big sister, Ruby, an attentive, focused, sometimes bossy seven-year-old bunny. Each 24-minute episode consists of three self-contained vignettes.

My Friend's Tigger and Pooh is a CGI-computer animated television series inspired by A. A. Milne's classic, *Winnie-the-Pooh*. It airs on the Disney family of channels. The television series features Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends, including two new characters: a 6-year-old red-haired girl named Darby and her dog, Buster. Each 24-minute episode is divided into two stories in which the characters work together to solve mysteries.

Sesame Street airs on PBS and combines Muppets, animation, and live action. Originally produced using a magazine-style format, episodes now employ a more narrative-style supplemented by short films and animations. The series seeks to improve literacy and math skills, while also encouraging positive social and emotional development. In production for more than 40 years, numerous studies have examined the positive impact Sesame Street has had on the development of children.

Sid the Science Kid is a preschool series airing on PBS. The computer generated show is produced using motion capture, a process that allows puppeteers to perform and voice digitally animated characters in real time. With the help of his classmates, teacher, and family, Sid, a curious and inquisitive child, tries to answer questions and solve problems. The conceptual content of the series is based on national science learning standards and on the preschool science curriculum, Preschool Pathways to Science.

The Wonder Pets is an animated, mixed-media preschool series airing on Nickelodeon. In addition to animated backgrounds and objects, the show employs the use of photo-puppetry, a technique created for the series that allow animators to manipulate photographs of real animals. With an emphasis on teamwork, the show's main characters are three elementary school classroom pets that work together to rescue baby animals. A 10-member live orchestra performs each 11-minute episode, and much of the dialog is sung.

APPENDIX E
Episode Summaries

Blues Clues
Episode Title: "What's Blue Afraid Of?"
At the beginning of this episode, Blue hides and shakes under a blanket in the living room. Steve says that Blue has been acting differently lately and proceeds to lead young viewers on a quest for Blue's clues to figure out what she is afraid of. As they search for clues, they investigate shadows and figure out what objects are making them. They also decipher extreme close-up photos taken by Mr. Salt and Mrs. Pepper and demonstrate how one object may be perceived in more than one way and how things that we might initially consider to be scary are often times just normal, everyday objects. Later in the episode, Steve and Blue enter a haunted house to help a ghost figure out the sources of scary sounds. In the end, Steve and the viewers discover that Blue is afraid of an owl's shadow. Steve introduces Blue to the owl as a friend, and after seeing that the owl is harmless and nice, she is no longer afraid.

Caillou
Episode Title: "After Dark"
Two relevant short stories were selected from this episode. In the first story, a bad dream about a scary monster leaves Caillou awake and restless. After trying to find a place for himself in his parents' bed, his mom and dad proceed to comfort him in a variety of ways. In the end, his mother turns his pillow over to the "good dreams side," and Caillou falls asleep. In the second story, Caillou is unable to fall asleep because he believes he hears "scratchy monster" noises and thinks there's a monster in his room. His dad shows him that a tree branch brushing against the window is making the noises and that the family cat is making the other strange sounds. Hearing these words, Caillou finally falls asleep comforted by his teddy bear, which happens to be strategically placed over his ears in order to prevent him from hearing any other noises.

Charlie and Lola
Episode Title: "Could you maybe put the light on?"
In this episode, Charlie helps Lola overcome her fear of an ogre so that she can get to sleep. At the beginning of the episode, Lola asks Charlie to read her a bedtime story about an ogre. When it's time to turn of the lights to go to sleep, Lola is afraid of a shadow in the corner of their room. She asks Charlie to turn the light on and sees that she is only afraid of the shadow of a pile of clothes. When Charlie turns the light off again, Lola is afraid of noises she hears. She admits that the dark makes her imagine things. In an attempt to comfort her, Charlie tells her that many of her favorite things come out in the dark. He reminds her of certain animals she enjoys and explains that they are nocturnal. He also tickles her and gets her to laugh and joke in the dark and reminds her that the dark can't hurt her. She agrees to try to go back to bed but is still frightened.

She asks Charlie to turn the night light on, to open the window shades a bit, and to open the bedroom door a little. He does, but she is still afraid. Charlie than reminds Lola that ogres are not real, but she still asks him to check every spot in the room where she thinks one may try to hide. She says that while ogres may not be real, they are absolutely real in the dark. Charlie then agrees to entertain her belief in ogres and says that, despite being ugly and hairy, they are actually really friendly. He then describes how the ogre in the story was not chasing to be mean but was playing with the night-time animals. However, later the ogre has hard time falling asleep because the nocturnal animals keep him awake. Charlie describes a sad, frustrated ogre who longs for someone to sing him a lullaby but is unable to find someone who will do so because he is so ugly. His story makes Lola feel sympathetic, causing her to sing the ogre a lullaby. The episode ends with Lola falling asleep in her bed right after asking Charlie to turn the light off so that she and her ogre can get some sleep.

Curious George
Episode Title: "Curious George In the Dark"
Rather than taking place in their apartment in New York City, this story is situated in the rural countryside where George and the Man with the Yellow Hat have a second home. While outside playing, George loses his ball after it rolls into a cave and becomes frightened by the dark inside it. He quickly runs home to retrieve a flashlight in order to return to the cave and find his ball. Inside the cave, he uses the flashlight to play with shadows but suddenly becomes startled when he finds himself in the dark after tripping and dropping the light. Franticly, George rushes to his room and curls up in his bed for safety. However, during the middle of the night, noise from a thunderstorm wakes him and, frightened by shadows in his room, he proceeds to turn on every light in the house. The Man with the Yellow Hat assures George that nothing scary is in his room and shows him the real source of each shadow. He turns on a nightlight and leaves the room for George to go back to sleep. Unfortunately, the power goes out, rendering George's nightlight useless. The Man with the Yellow Hat tries to comfort George by pretending to camp with him in the living room. However, George is too frightened to fall asleep. When morning breaks, George returns to the cave to find the flashlight. He is worried that the power may be out for a few days and wants the flashlight back. Too scared to enter the dark cave alone, he convinces Jumpy Squirrel to keep him company. Together they maneuver inside the cave until George can find the flashlight. Once again frightened by the shadows in the cave, George uses the flashlight to confirm that each scary shadow is actually just a rock formation. He decides that he is no longer afraid and goes on to explore the cave further. Later that night, the power has returned, but George chooses to eat dinner by candlelight in the dark.

Handy Manny
Episode Title: "The Haunted Clock Tower"
In this story, Mayor Rosa asks Handy Manny and the tools figure out what might be making the strange noises that can be heard coming from the clock tower.

While some of the tools initially speculate that it might be haunted, Manny insists that there is a logical explanation for the sounds. Although some of the tools are scared, they work with Handy Manny to seek out answers to what might be causing the noise. In the end, they discover that the noise is actually wind coming from a broken window, hidden by a wooden board, confirming Manny's repeated statements that there is a logical explanation for the noise.

Max and Ruby
Episode Title: "The Blue Tarantula"
At bedtime, Max asks Ruby to read the "The Blue Tarantula. " She suggests a different story in order to avoid frightening him. She finally agrees to read "The Blue Tarantula" after his persistent requests but urges him to stop her if he gets too scared. As she reads him the story, he begins to shake with fear and hide under his covers. After finishing the story, she tells Max not to worry about the Blue Tarantula because he only "squishes bad bunnies." Ruby then proceeds to tuck him in, handing him his red rubber elephant, and leaves the room to go sleep in her own bed. To her surprise, she discovers that Max has snuck into her bed because he is too afraid to be alone in his room. Ruby leads him back to bed and explains that monsters are not real. She opens his closet to show him that the Blue Tarantula is not hiding inside. A similar scene occurs with Max returning to Ruby's room and Ruby leading him back to his own room once more. In an attempt to comfort him, she assures him that there is no Blue Tarantula in his closet, outside his window, or under his bed. Suddenly, they both hear a noise under Max's bed, and they run to the corner of the room. Ruby positions Max behind her and looks under the bed to figure out what is causing the noise. She discovers a jack-in-the-box and laughs, reassuring Max that he will be okay. After Ruby leaves to go back to her own bed, Max has an idea and winds up his walking lobster toy, which he sends in the direction of Ruby's room. Ruby hears the mysterious sound in her room and, frightened, rushes into bed with Max, where she proceeds to hide and shake in the covers as he falls asleep beside her and satisfied.

My Friends Tigger and Pooh
Episode Title: "Piglet's Monster Under the Bed"
As this episode begins, Piglet is out running errands just before dark. Rabbit says goodbye to him and adds, "Don't let the nighty night bugs bite." He assures Piglet that there is no such thing as monsters, but Piglet returns home and is notably afraid. He becomes so frightened by a shadow that he runs out of him home and calls all of his friends to help. Together the group decides to create a monster trap in order to get the monster out from under Piglet's bed. They dress like monsters, hoping to entice the monster to join them for a party. When this attempt fails, Darby decides to shine a flashlight under the bed because she suspects the monster would only want to stay there if it was dark. Darby and the other characters discover that the monster under the bed is actually just the shadow of a pile of art supplies. A recap at the end of the episode reminds viewers that there are no such things as monsters.

Sesame Workshop
Episode: "Bedtime with Elmo"
This DVD is a compilation of various *Sesame Street* stories and segments that discuss bedtime routines and nighttime fears. A 19-minute portion of the DVD comprised of various segments was selected for its relevance to the topic of this study. In the first story, Abby is afraid of the dark and has come to seek comfort from Elmo. Elmo leads her in a song about thinking happy thoughts. Later, Elmo's dad, Mr. Louie, explains that there is nothing in the dark that isn't already there in the light. In another story, Ernie is too scared to sleep and wakes up Bert. Bert leads Ernie in a song about imagining happy things. Ernie imagines that their room is filled with balloons and then falls asleep in his bed. In a third segment, Telly sings a song about how much fun he could have with aliens if they came to visit him. In the final segment, Baby Bear seeks to comfort Cousin Bear who is frightened by the shadow of a tree on the wall. Baby Bear assures him that there is no monster and closes the curtains in order to prevent the shadow from appearing on the wall.

Sid the Science Kid
Episode: "Discovering Darkness"
Early one morning, before sunrise, Sid's mother wakes him so that he can say goodbye to his dad who is preparing to leave for work. Sid expresses some concern about how dark it is and mentions that he is afraid. His parents assure him that everything stays the same in the dark and that there is nothing in the dark that should cause him to worry. When he arrives at preschool, he interviews his classmates about their feelings toward the dark. Gerald and Gabriela both describe feeling frightened in the dark because they aren't able to see. However, May tells them that, while she used to be afraid when she was younger, she no longer is now. Teacher Susie then leads the class in an activity in which they close their eyes and feel familiar things in the room. She explains that things we see in the light are the same in the dark. She then proceeds to lead them in an activity where they use chairs and blankets to create a "cave of darkness." May volunteers to sit inside the cave and describes her experience to her peers, who sit at a table and draw pictures of her descriptions. When Teacher Susie tells May that she can come out and join the group, May asks to stay inside the cave because she's having such a good time. Intrigued, Gerald decides that he wants a turn inside the cave and initiates a game in which his friends place items inside the cave so that he can guess what each item is. At the end of their game, Teacher Susie sings them a song about the beauty that can be found in darkness. Later, Sid's grandmother drives him home from school and tells him about a town in Alaska where kids go to school and play outside in the dark. When they arrive at home, Sid announces that he is no longer afraid of the dark. He demonstrates his newly found courage to his parents by changing into his pajamas inside his dark closet.

The Wonder Pets
Episode: "The Wonder Pets Save the Black Kitten!"
On Halloween, The Wonder Pets get a call to save a black kitten that is hiding in a doghouse. When they arrive to help, they discover a "ghost" running around the yard, barking. Tuck and Ming Ming hide in the doghouse with the kitten as Linny points out that the ghost has four legs and a tail and is barking. With Linny's encouragement and appeals for bravery, the Wonder Pets approach the ghost and discover that it is a puppy hiding underneath a white sheet. The kitten and the puppy immediately become friends, and the kitten's mother arrives to thank the Wonder Pets for helping her baby.

APPENDIX F
Qualitative Content Analysis Code Book
Fear of the Dark and Monsters in Preschool Television

Unit of Analysis: Show
Please begin coding after the theme song and end coding when the credits begin. For each show, please code the following:

1. Series Name:
2. Channel:
3. Medium: Please note whether the show uses animation, live action, puppetry, mixed media, or a combination of such mediums.
4. Show Title: Please note the title of the show as noted on the title page.
5. Show length: Please determine the show length by calculating the amount of time between the title page and the final credits.

- -

6. Setting:

7. Brief description of the principle characters:

8. What items or subjects are portrayed as eliciting fear? For example, fear of the dark, a monster, a closet, and so on. Please provide a descriptive account of fear-inducing stimuli in the program. Particularly note *how* these are portrayed. For example, are monsters depicted visually in some way? If so, how?

9. List and describe the various ways characters seek to manage fear. For example, in "The Blue Tarantula," Ruby tells Max he shouldn't read a scary book and that he should select a book that is more appropriate for his age. While neither character is afraid at this point in the show, the strategy suggested by Ruby is one that seeks to prevent fear from occurring and may be considered a coping strategy. Another example from this same episode is the visual portrayal of Max hiding under the covers.

10. How is fear of the dark/monsters finally resolved?

11. What role (if any) do parents play in the show? If parents are not present, are other figures of authority? If so, please describe their roles.

12. In what ways does the show suggest the use of imagination in coping with fear?

13. Please describe ways in which the program imagery, structure, or content (rather than the behaviors of the characters) may provide a sense of comfort or reassurance in an effort to ease fears. For example, in the

"superheroes" episode of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, Mr. Rogers watches the actor transform into the Incredible Hulk as his makeup is applied. In this situation, there isn't a character onscreen that is experiencing fear. Similarly, nobody onscreen is suggesting or modeling ways in which one can manage fear. However, watching the makeup application of the Hulk may reinforce the fact that the Hulk is not real and may have helped alleviate fear of the Hulk among young audience members. Also, Mr. Rogers modeling a calm, pleasant demeanor in the presence of the Hulk may have served to alleviate children's responses to the Hulk. Another example may be found in the *Charlie and Lola* episode, "Can You Maybe Turn the Light On?" Lola stands beside the ogre and summons him to pick her up. This juxtaposition of tiny, comfortable Lola beside a large, ugly ogre may make the ogre appear less scary to child viewers. Lola is not modeling or suggesting a ways to be less afraid of the ogre…she simply no longer *is* afraid of the ogre.

14. Additional notes/observations:

APPENDIX G
Quantitative Content Analysis Code Book
Coping Strategies in Preschool Television Programs

Unit of Analysis: Show
Please begin coding after the theme song and end coding when the credits begin. For each show, please code the following:

1. Series Name:
2. Channel:
3. Show Title: Please note the title of the show as noted on the title page.
4. Show length: Please determine the show length by calculating the amount of time between the title page and the final credits.

- -

Unit of Analysis: Scene

Sample Coding Chart

Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	1:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Behavioral	1							
Cognitive	0							
Reality affirming	1							
Imagination	1							
Distraction	1							
Pretense	0							

5. **Scene Number**: Please record the number of the scene being coded.

6. **Scene Start Time**: Please refer to the timer on the DVD player or viewing menu on the computer to code the approximate time code at the beginning of each scene. For the purpose of this study, a scene shift consists of four possible components: 1) a shift from one visual setting to a completely new setting; 2) a shift in time; 3) an obvious change in train of thought or storyline; and/or 4) introduction of a new character (defined as those who are central to the scene's plot). An example of a shift in scene is found in *My Friends Tigger and Pooh* when Darby and the other characters are singing a song, and suddenly a loud crashing noise

interrupts them. The song ends abruptly, and the characters discover Piglet is caught in the monster trap. This is an example of a change in scene due to a shift in the train of thought (component 3) and introduction of a new character (component 4). However, simply because one of these components occurs does not necessarily signify a change in scene. For instance, in a scene in *Bedtime with Elmo* when Bert and Ernie sing a song about using one's imagination to picture happy thoughts, there are multiple shifts from one visual setting to several completely new visual settings (component 1). New characters are also introduced at several points in this scene (component 4). However, these components do not signify a change in scene because the train of thought or storyline stays the same throughout.

7. **Coping strategies**: Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conceptualized coping efforts or strategies as cognitive and behavioral actions in a specific stressful situation which are intended to manage affective arousal or improve the problematic situation. Coping efforts continue over time and may change in response to the changing demands of the situation. The term "emotion regulation" has been defined in a variety of ways, but a current and representative example is that of Kopp (1989): "Emotion regulation is a term used to characterize the process and characteristics involved in coping with heightened levels of positive and negative emotions including joy, pleasure, distress, anger, fear, and other emotions" (p. 343). For the purpose of this study, coping and emotion regulation are considered synonymous (Brenner & Salovey, 1997). Specifically, coping strategies are actions, dialogue, and behaviors that are modeled or suggested by characters to manage fear of the dark and imaginary creatures.

   For coding purposes, two specific dimensions of coping are considered. In each scene, we will be coding for the presence or absence of mental coping strategies and behavioral coping strategies.

   a. **Behavioral Coping Strategies**:

      These include *actions* characters might take when they are afraid, such as running away from or approaching the fear-stimulus, seeking comfort or protection from other people, and other such ways in which children seek to alleviate fear by disengaging from the frightening stimulus. Does a character leave the area or hide? Does the character play with a favorite toy to avoid thinking of the scary thing? Does the character look under the bed to see if anything is hiding there? Does the character grab a grown-up for help?

      When behavioral coping strategies are present in a scene, please code the scene with a 1.

      When behavioral coping strategies are absent from a scene, please code the scene with a 0.

b. **Cognitive Coping Strategies**:
These include strategies that focus on *thinking* and using one's *mind* as a way to manage fear. Do characters insist that monsters are not real? Are they reminded by another character that they are safe? Do they focus on what the dark shadow really is (for example, "Think, it's just a lamp!")? Do they think about something more pleasant to keep their mind from thinking of scary things? Do they tell themselves that the scratchy sound at the window is just a tree branch? Do they tell themselves (or are they told) that it's just in their imagination? Do they reappraise their fear by thinking about the positive aspects of the dark? Do they change the way they might perceive a monster? For example, do they think the monster might be friendly?
When mental coping strategies are present in a scene, please code the scene with a 1.
When mental coping strategies are absent from a scene, please code the scene with a 0.

8. **Affirming Reality**: An additional coding variable is the presence or absence of the use of strategies that affirm reality in order to alleviate fear. Examples of this type of strategy include comments like, "Monsters aren't real;" The dark can't hurt you;" "You are safe." "It's just in your imagination." *Behaviors* that seek to demonstrate or reinforce this idea include: opening the closet or looking under the bed to make sure that a monster is not there. NOTE: Turning on a light to investigate a shadow *may* or *may not* be considered a behavior that seeks to affirm reality. In this case, the viewer will *need to consider the context*. If dialogue in the scene suggests that a shadow is nothing to be afraid of and then a character turns on a light to *reinforce* this notion, than the behavior would be considered an act of *affirming reality*. However, if a character is afraid and turns on the light to *escape the dark*, the character is seeking to avoid the dark rather than affirm the fact that there is nothing to be afraid of. They are *not* affirming reality.
Please code the presence of strategies that affirm reality with a 1.
Please code the absence of strategies that affirm reality in a scene with a 0.

9. **Encouraging Imagination**: An additional coding variable is the presence or absence of strategies that call on the use of imagination in an effort to alleviate fear. Do characters try to "think happy thoughts" to distract themselves? Do characters imagine themselves in a different place? Do characters imagine or pretend that the monster is just a baby monster or a nice monster? Do characters imagine themselves with superpowers that can be used to fight monsters? Note: This does not include when characters are told that their imagination is causing their fears because that would suggest discouraging a child's imagination.
Please code the presence of imagination-related strategies with a 1.
Please code the absence of imagination-related strategies with a 0.

10. **Imagination for Distraction or Pretense**: Scenes that include imagination-related strategies will be coded more deeply. Two variables will be used to determine whether imagination was encouraged as a means of *distraction*, or whether imagination was encouraged for the purposes of *pretense*.
    a. **Distraction**: Includes using imagination for the purpose of thinking of something else that is *not* scary in order to suppress scary thoughts. Do characters mention thinking "happy thoughts"? When characters are afraid, do they describe thinking of something they are really looking forward to? Are they trying to distract themselves by thinking of something else?
    Please code the presence of distraction-related imagination strategies in each scene with a 1.
    Please code the absence of distraction-related imagination strategies in each scene with a 0.
    b. **Pretense**: Includes actions or ideas that are grounded in the imaginary world and are very unlikely or impossible according to real-world logic. In essence, they may embrace the idea that the monster is real and may use pretend to manage their fears. Do characters seek to change the attributes of the monster in order to regard it as positive or harmless? For example, do they think of the monster as being funny or friendly or lonely? Do they imagine themselves as having special protective powers? Do they try to trick the monster?
    Please code the presence of pretense-related imagination strategies in each scene with a 1.
    Please code the absence of pretense-related imagination strategies in each scene with a 0.

APPENDIX H
Quantitative Content Analysis Coding Results

Table 1: Quantitative Coding Results for *Bedtime With Elmo*

Bedtime With Elmo								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	
Scene Start Time	17:54	20:58	22:40	24:04	25:51	29:55	30:08	
Behavioral	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Cognitive	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	
Reality affirming	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Imagination	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	
Distraction	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	
Pretense	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	

Table 2: Quantitative Coding Results for *Blue's Clues*

***Blue's Clues*: What is Blue Afraid of?**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	0:33	2:12	3:28	3:48	4:58	6:44	8:35	12:23
Behavioral	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cognitive	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Reality affirming	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***Blue's Clues* continued**								
Scene #	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**
Scene Start Time	13:23	13:55	14:56	18:04	19:32	21:30	21:50	23:13
Behavioral	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
Cognitive	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Reality affirming	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3: Quantitative Coding Results for *Caillou*

***Caillou*: After Dark**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	4:13	5:02	5:39	6:10	7:29	7:44	8:32	8:45
Behavioral	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Cognitive	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Reality affirming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imagination	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pretense	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0

***Caillou* continued**								
Scene #	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**			
Scene Start Time	9:49	11:13	11:32	12:28	13:19			
Behavioral	1	0	1	1	1			
Cognitive	1	0	1	1	1			
Reality affirming	0	0	1	1	1			
Imagination	1	0	0	0	0			
Distraction	1	0	0	0	0			
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0			

Table 4: Quantitative Coding Results for *Charlie and Lola*

***Charlie and Lola*: Can you maybe turn the light on?**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	0:35	1:04	2:51	3:17	6:42	6:55	7:43	10:06
Behavioral	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Cognitive	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Reality affirming	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0			
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

Table 5: Quantitative Coding Results for *Curious George*

***Curious George*: In the Dark?**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	12:05	12:31	13:02	13:21	13:47	15:28	15:44	15:55
Behavioral	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Cognitive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reality affirming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***Curious George*: continued**								
Scene #	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**
Scene Start Time	16:15	17:15	17:48	18:45	19:25	19:38	20:23	22:28
Behavioral	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Cognitive	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Reality affirming	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Table 6: Quantitative Coding Results for *Handy Manny*

***Handy Manny*: The Haunted Clock Tower**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	1:05	1:50	3:54	4:25	4:54	6:01	6:49	7:41
Behavioral	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Cognitive	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Reality affirming	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***Handy Manny*: Continued**								
Scene #	**9**	**10**						
Scene Start Time	10:33	11:39						
Behavioral	0	0						
Cognitive	0	1						
Reality affirming	0	1						
Imagination	0	0						
Distraction	0	0						
Pretense	0	0						

Table 7: Quantitative Coding Results for *Max and Ruby*

***Max and Ruby*: The Blue Tarantula**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	15:40	17:47	18:00	18:14	18:22	19:02	19:17	19:40
Behavioral	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Cognitive	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Reality affirming	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Imagination	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***Max and Ruby*: Continued**								
Scene #	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	
Scene Start Time	19:45	19:54	21:31	21:42	21:54	22:05	22:30	
Behavioral	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	
Cognitive	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Reality affirming	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 8: Quantitative Coding Results for *My Friends Tigger and Pooh*

***My Friends Tigger and Pooh*: Piglet's Monster Under the Bed**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	12:30	12:57	13:17	13:23	13:47	14:28	14:41	16:06
Behavioral	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Cognitive	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Reality affirming	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***My Friends Tigger and Pooh*: Continued**								
Scene #	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	
Scene Start Time	16:54	17:24	18:51	20:00	20:54	21:12	21:53	
Behavioral	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	
Cognitive	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	
Reality affirming	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Imagination	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Pretense	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	

Table 9: Quantitative Coding Results for *Sid the Science Kid*

***Sid the Science Kid*: Discovering Darkness**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Scene Start Time	25:22	24:10	24:05	22:18	20:39	19:04	16:04	14:51
Behavioral	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Cognitive	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
Reality affirming	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***Sid the Science Kid*: Continued**								
Scene #	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**
Scene Start Time	13:22	12:11	10:33	7:49	5:34	5:15	4:05	3:43
Behavioral	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cognitive	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Reality affirming	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***Sid the Science Kid*: Continued**								
Scene #	**17**	**18**						
Scene Start Time	3:17	1:52						
Behavioral	1	0						
Cognitive	1	1						
Reality affirming	1	1						
Imagination	0	0						
Distraction	0	0						
Pretense	0	0						

Table 10: Quantitative Coding Results for *The Wonder Pets Save the Black Kitten*

***The Wonder Pets* Save the Black Kitten**								
Scene #	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**			
Scene Start Time	0:48	4:40	5:35	10:33	11:11			
Behavioral	1	0	1	0	0			
Cognitive	0	0	1	0	0			
Reality affirming	0	0	1	0	0			
Imagination	0	0	0	0	0			
Distraction	0	0	0	0	0			
Pretense	0	0	0	0	0			

APPENDIX I
Fear-Related Coping Strategies Noted in Each Episode of the Sample

Bedtime With Elmo

- Think happy thoughts. Elmo says his dad taught him to do so because he says: "If you fill your head with happy thoughts, then there's no room in your had for scary thoughts." Elmo: "All the things you think are up to you."
    - Social support, imagination as distraction

- Abby and Elmo sing a song about thinking happy thoughts.
    - Social support, imagination as distraction

- Ernie wakes Bert up because he can't sleep because he's afraid of "dark shadows, spooky things, and monsters."
    - Social support

- Bert reminds him of monsters that are his friends.
    - Social support, reframing how Ernie perceives monsters

- Bert: "You are imagining all those scary things in your mind. But you can imagine other things too."
    - Social support, reality affirmation, imagination as distraction

- Ultimately, Ernie imagines balloons and other fun things and then he is no longer afraid.
    - Imagination as distraction

- Telly pretends that aliens are his friends.
    - Imagination as pretense, reframing how aliens are perceived

- Abby asks to turn the lights on. "The dark is so dark…and well, I don't know what might be in the dark that I can't see."
    - Changing the environment, social support

- Elmo's dad holds Abby, comforts her, asking if she's all right.
    - Social Support

- Dad: "It's alright. Lots of kids feel scared in the dark sometimes. But you know, Abby, the dark is really nothing to be afraid of…because there's nothing in the dark that isn't there in the light…look around this room. Is there anything in here to be afraid of?" Abby replies "no." He has Elmo turn off the light. "See, it's dark, but nothing's changed. Everything is right where it was when the light was on and there's still nothing to be

afraid of in here." He has Elmo turn the light back on. Abby reiterates, "Hey, everything's the same."
    - Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how the dark is perceived

- Elmo says that it's really not totally dark when the light is off. Mr. Louie reminds Abby that it doesn't feel that dark once her eyes adjust. They all note all the light sources—the nightlight, the hallway light, and the moon. Abby: "I guess the dark isn't as dark as I thought."
    - Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how the dark is perceived

- Cousin Bear wakes up Baby Bear when he sees a shadow that he thinks is the Boogie Bear. Baby Bear turns on the light.
    - Social support, changing the environment

- Baby Bear: "There's no such thing as the Boogie Bear…that's just an old bear legend…look, there's nobody here but us. Don't worry. Momma and Papa Bear are right in the living room. You're perfectly safe."
    - Social support, reality affirmation

- Cousin Bear wakes him up again and he turns on the light.
    - Social support, changing the environment

- Baby Bear turns off the light to see the shadow. He shows cousin bear that the thing he is afraid of is just a shadow of a tree outside. "There's no such thing as a Boogie Bear. It's just a shadow…Nothing to be afraid of…a shadow can't hurt you."
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation

- Baby Bear closes the window and the curtains so that the shadow is gone. He tells him that the shadow won't come back if they keep the curtains closed.
    - Social support, changing the environment

Blues Clues

- Blue hides under a blanket and covers her eyes.
    - Avoidance

- Steve and the characters see what shadows are really coming from two separate times (once it is a tree and once it is a birdbath).
    - Approach, reality affirmation, social support

- Steven and the characters look at "scary" pictures to figure out what the items really are three separate times (graham cracker, raisin, and celery).

- Approach, reality affirmation, social support

- Blue covers her eyes twelve times during the show.
  - Avoidance

- Steve hears a spooky sound so he approaches it alone to see where it is coming from and discovers a ghost inside a picture. The ghost needs help.
  - Approach

- Steve encourages Blue to jump into the scary picture "together" so that she is less afraid.
  - Social support, approach

- Three different times, Steve, Blue, and the ghost approach the scary sounds to see what they're coming from (kitten, thunder, his dad cooking in the kitchen).
  - Approach, reality affirmation, social support

- Blue hides behind the thinking chair.
  - Avoidance

- Steve: "Blue, we figured out what you're afraid of. It's an owl. That's all it is." They go to Blue's room, open the curtains, and look at the owl. The owl "probably wants to say hi." Steve introduces them. The owl has a sweet, friendly voice: "hello, Blue." The other characters enter the room to "see the owl shadow." Steve: "Did we all meet Blue's new friend? The owl? Look, Blue's not afraid anymore! Good job!"
  - Reality affirmation, social support, approach, reframing how Blue perceives the owl

Caillou

- Cries and calls his mom and dad to come in to help him in bed
  - Social support

- Dad: "Bad dreams can feel really scary sometimes. But it's alright when they're over. Do you feel better now?
  - Social support, reality affirmation

- Caillou hides under his blanket.
  - Avoidance

- Caillou goes to his parents' room.
  - Social support

- Caillou avoids going to sleep by asking his mom to get him water, by asking her to read to him, by playing with his toys, by going to the bathroom.
    - Avoidance, social support

- Mom: "All of your animals are sleepy too"
    - Social support, imagination (pretense)

- Caillou goes to his parents' room again to sleep in their bed.
    - Social support

- Dad: "What about Teddy and Gilbert sleeping all alone in your room? They'll be lonely." "Gilbert and Teddy sure are glad to have you back. Now you can all get some sleep."
    - Social support, imagination (pretense)

- Dad: "Everybody's lights are out because they're all fast asleep in their beds. Even the sun has gone to sleep." He mentions that he used to have bad dreams when he was a kid, and his grandma taught him to think about good things when he was falling asleep at night. "Like rainbows and jumping in big piles of leaves." "Good night, Caillou. And remember: think of good things." (Caillou does…he thinks about his fire truck and then gets so excited that he gets up to play.)
    - Social support, imagination (distraction)

- Mom turns his pillow over—to the "good dream side." "Now you're sure to have good dreams. Now teddy is asleep. No Gilbert is asleep."
    - Social support, imagination (pretense)

- Bed bug shadows: Caillou calls for his mom to come to his room and help.
    - Social support

- Mom: "They were just shadows" she says after she shuts the blinds to block the outside lights.
    - Social support, reality affirmation, changing the environment

- Addressing his mention of a scratchy monster, mom says: "I don't hear a scratchy monster." Caillou: "There is a scratchy monster here. He's making scratchy sounds." Mom: "I'm sure you think you heard something, but there's no need to be afraid of monsters. DO you know why? Because monster's aren't real. They're just make-believe." She opens his closet to show that it is monster-free.
    - Reality affirmation, social support, approach

- After she leaves, Caillou chants to himself: "I'm not afraid of monsters" a few times.

    - Cognitive strategy where Caillou is trying to change what he thinks/believes

- He grabs a flashlight to look around his room and figure out what a strange noise is coming from.
    - Approach

- He calls his dad.
    - Social support

- His dad shows him that he's just afraid of his stuffed animal. "You probably just imagined something Caillou. I can't find anything." He looks around the room and opens his toy box.
    - Social support, reality affirmation, approach

- His dad suggests Caillou listen to his music box to hear some happy sounds.
    - Social support, behavioral distraction (not avoidance...not imagination)

- Caillou call his parents again when he hears the sound.
    - Social support

- His dad opens the blinds and shows Caillou that the wind was moving a branch against the window—that was the source of the scary noise.
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation

- Mom: "See, Caillou. Sometimes ordinary things can seem scary."
    - Social support, reality affirmation

- They give him teddy to help him sleep. Dad: "I know how teddy can make sure there won't be anymore scary sounds." Next clip shows a smiling Caillou, with teddy wrapped around his head, covering his ears.
    - Social support (stuffed animal)

Charlie and Lola

- Lola asks, "Charlie, can you maybe turn the light on?" He does.
    - Social support, changing the environment

- Lola hides under her covers.
    - Avoidance

- Charlie tries to reframe how Lola thinks of the dark: "Actually, Lola, some of your favorite things come out in the dark. Like animals…"
    - Social support, reframing how the dark is perceived

- Throughout the scene, Lola holds a stuffed animal. She holds it more tightly when she is afraid. She also talks to it.
    - Social support

- Lola turns on the light and says, "I don't like the dark."
    - Changing the environment

- Charlie: "It won't hurt you, and you need the dark to get to sleep."
    - Cognitive reframing, social support, reality affirmation

- Lola: "Can we have the nightlight on?" She holds up the nightlight.
    - Changing the environment, social support

- Lola: "Can you put the blind up a bit?" Charlie opens them.
    - Changing the environment, social support

- Lola: "Door open a bit?" Close-up on door as Charlie opens it.
    - Changing the environment, social support

- Charlie: "But he's (the ogre) not here, Lola. He's in the book….there are no ogres for real. Only in big storybooks."
    - Social support, reality affirmation

- Charlie looks under her bed…in her closet…behind the door…toy box..desk..and shelf to reassure her that there are no ogres.
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation

- Charlie: "Lola, are you sure he's chasing you? Because I've read a lot about ogres. They might be big and they might be hairy, but they're really friendly."
    - Social support, imagination (pretense) to reframe how ogres are perceived

- Charlie gets the book to read the end of it for her. He tells the story of an ogre who is clumsy and tired and sad. The ogre cries because nobody will sing him a lullaby because he is ugly. Charlie portrays the ogre as harmless and in need of sympathy and help. Lola approaches the monster to get to know him a bit.
    - Social support, imagination (pretense) to reframe how monsters are perceived, approach

Curious George

- Jumpy Squirrel avoids going into the dark cave with George.
    - Avoidance

- George runs out of the cave and hides in his bed, clutching his stuffed animal.
    - Social support (stuffed animal), avoidance

- George runs out of his room into the hallway.
    - Avoidance

- George turns on the lights in the house (all of them).
    - Behavioral coping (altering the environment)

- "There's nothing scary in there. Come on. Let me show you." The man in the yellow hat leads George in the room. George points to scary items. The man turns on the light to show him what each shadow really is.
    - Social support, reality affirmation, approach

- Man: "They're the same things in the dark as they are in the light. Your imagination got the best of you. But you know what? I have something to make you feel better. Your own personal nightlight. Now you'll never be afraid in the dark."
    - Social support, reality affirmation, changing the environment, cognitive reappraisal

- Power goes out, George runs out of his room to get help.
    - Social support

- Man in the yellow hat tries to make the dark "fun" by camping out in the living room.
    - Social support, imagination (pretense) to reframe thoughts of the dark

- George approaches his fear of the cave in order to retrieve the flashlight so that he doesn't have to endure additional nights of darkness in his home. Too scared to go in the cave alone, George convinces Jumpy Squirrel to join him.
    - Approach, social support

- George runs away from shadows (and happens to find his flashlight)
    - Avoidance

- George uses the flashlight to see that the scary rocks and cave are not monsters
    - Approach, reality affirmation

- Narrator: "The only scary things in the dark were in George's imagination."

- Reality affirmation

- Jumpy Squirrel is afraid—hugs George's leg for support and comfort.
  - Social support

- Narrator: No such things as monsters.
  - Reality affirmation

Handy Manny

- Turner says to other tools who are nervous: "No such thing as ghosts"
  - Reality affirmation, social support

- Manny: "I think there must be a logical reason for the strange noises." Pat: "Of course it's logical….what's logical?" Manny: "Logical is when something makes sense. That means there's probably a good reason for the strange noises….something we can see and fix."
  - Reality affirmation, social support

- Kelley: "I wouldn't worry about that. I'm sure there's a logical explanation for the noises."
  - Reality affirmation, social support

- Rusty: "Maybe we should leave then?"
  - Avoidance

- The tools approach the stairs to go upstairs and see the noise…pause… Manny again says "logical explanation" and leads them upstairs.
  - Social support, approach, reality affirmation

- They look for clues or something unusual.
  - Approach, social support

- Turner: "No ghosts."
  - Reality affirmation, social support

- Saw approached the moaning and found Pat stuck in a spring.
  - Approach, social support

- One of the tools hid after a sound.
  - Avoidance

- Manny approaches the sound and figures out that it's a broken window with wind blowing through it.
  - Approach, reality affirmation, social support

- Tool: “No such thing as g….” interrupted.
    - Reality affirmation, social support

- Rusty wants to follow Manny to the car for the window. He’s “not taking any chances.”
    - Social support, avoidance

Max and Ruby

- Ruby tells Max he shouldn’t read a scary book and that he should select a book that is more appropriate for his age. While neither character is afraid at this point in the show, the strategy suggested by Ruby is one that seeks to prevent fear from occurring and may be considered a coping strategy.
    - Avoidance, social support

- Ruby tells Max to stop her from reading if he gets too scared.
    - Avoidance, social support

- Max hides under the covers.
    - Avoidance

- Ruby: “Don’t worry, Max. The Blue Tarantula only squishes bad bunnies. Here’s your red rubber elephant so you can sleep, Max.”
    - Social support, imagination (pretense) to reframe monster

- Max goes to his sister’s room for comfort and help. He clutches his rubber elephant and sits in her bed.
    - Social support

- Ruby: “There’s no Blue Tarantula in your cupboard. He’s just in the story. [she shows him the inside of the closet]…Now go to sleep.”
    - Social support, reality affirmation, approach

- Max clutches his rubber elephant more.
    - Social support from a toy

- Max returns to his sister’s room for help.
    - Social support

- Ruby: “It’s just a story, Max. There is no Blue Tarantula. There’s no Blue Tarantula in your cupboard…outside your window…under your [bed].”
    - Social support, reality affirmation, approach

- “Stand back, Max. Looking under beds is a big sister’s job.”
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation

- He hides behind Ruby while Ruby approaches the bed to see what is making the strange noise. After discovering that it is a jack-in-the-box: "I told you, the Blue Tarantula is all in your imagination. We can all sleep safe in our beds."
    - Avoidance, social support, approach, reality affirmation

- When Ruby is afraid of the strange noise in her room (the lobster Max sends in), she runs across the hall and climbs into Max's bed.
    - Social support

- Ruby hides under the covers.
    - Avoidance

My Friends Tigger and Pooh

- Rabbit: "No need to be afraid…There are no such things as monsters."
    - Social support, reality affirmation

- Piglet verbally repeats over and over: "No such things as monsters."
    - Reality affirmation

- Runs away from his room and calls for help
    - Avoidance and seeking social support

- Piglet hides outside in the bushes, shaking and covering his eyes
    - Avoidance

- Dog hides behind Darby.
    - Avoidance, social support

- Darby: "Rabbit didn't mean a real nighty-night monster. It's just a funny thing people say, like see ya later."
    - Reality affirmation, social support

- Darby tells Piglet: "No such thing as a nighty night monster."
    - Reality affirmation, social support

- Pooh to Piglet: "We will take a look for you just in case."
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation

- Darby looks under his bed---Pooh looks around, Tigger looks around.
    - Social support, reality affirmation, approach

- Piglet hides behind tiger. The whole gang runs outside of the room, yelling for help.
    - Avoidance, social support

- Pooh: “Don’t worry, Piglet. You’re friends are here. And we aren’t going to let anything happen to you.”
    - Social support, comfort

- The friends decide to get rid of the monster—Tigger suggests a monster trap.
    - Approach, social support

- They decide to be monsters to trick the monster and make it come out from under the bed.
    - Social support, approach, imagination (pretense)

- Piglet runs and hides again.
    - Avoidance

- The friends approach the trapped monster—but find Piglet in the trap.
    - Approach, social support

- Piglet decides he won’t go in his house anymore.
    - Avoidance

- Darby suggests they ask why the monster’s under piglets bed in the first place. She decides that he likes the dark---and if they make it “not dark under the bed” the monster might decide to leave. She holds up her “trusty flashlight.”
    - Approach, social support

- The group approaches the monster under the bed with Darby (and her flashlight) in the lead. Piglet hides behind everyone. Darby shines the light under the bed and sees that the shadows are really just art supplies.
    - Social support, approach

- Piglet hides again.
    - Avoidance

- Darby approaches again to see what is making the noise under the bed and her flashlight reveals a broken spring.
    - Approach, reality affirmation, social support

- “Now that we all know there’s no such thing as monsters…it’s time for all of us to go to bed too.” Darby
    - Reality affirmation

- Rabbit: “There are no such things as monsters.”
    - Reality affirmation, social support

Sid the Science Kid

- Sid turns on the light in his room when he gets nervous in the dark.
    - Changing the environment

- Dad: "It's just dark. Nothing to worry about."
    - Social support, reality affirmation

- Mom: "Is it scary when I kiss you goodnight when I turn out the light?…I'm always mom. I don't change just because you can't see me." Sid says he wonders if that means other things stay the same in the dark too. He decides to investigate the idea at school.
    - Social support, reality affirmation

- Gabriela mentioned she saw something scary…turned on a light, and discovered it was a tree looked scarier in the dark.
    - Changing the environment, reality affirmation

- Gerald: describes a time when he was scared in the dark and turned on the light. He said it looked the same as always.
    - Changing the environment, reality affirmation

- Teacher Susie: "It can be scary. But when you think like a scientist and understand what darkness is, it isn't scary….Darkness means there isn't any light. I promise you the world's exactly the same in the dark as in the light."
    - Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how the dark is perceived

- Teacher Susie leads them in an activity to show them that things are the same in the light and dark. She has them touch objects in the room and then has them close their eyes and touch the same objects in the room.
    - Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how the dark is perceived

- Sid: "Everything is the same in the dark."
    - Reality affirmation

- Teacher Susie: "Remember, darkness just means there isn't enough light for us to see."
    - Social support, reality affirmation

- Cave of darkness activity: Teacher Susie leads the group in making a cave out of blankets and a table. May sits inside and describes how fun it is to be in there. The other classmates will not go in the cave.

- Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how the dark is perceived, avoidance

- Teacher Susie: Nothing changes in the dark. There is beauty in the dark.
  - Social support, reality affirmation, reframing how the dark is perceived

- The class watches May enjoy the dark fearlessly—she makes the dark seem fun.
  - Social support, reframing the dark (perceiving the dark as fun and harmless), approach

- May describes a time when she was afraid of a noise in the dark and turned on a light and saw that it was her cat.
  - Changing the environment, reality affirmation

- Gerald approaches the dark fearlessly and makes a game out of it with his classmates.
  - Approach, social support, cognitively reframing the dark

- Teacher Susie sings that darkness can be beautiful. Numerous beautiful images of caves and underwater marine life.
  - Cognitively reframing the dark, social support

- Sid pauses and says, "I won't be afraid," as he goes into his closet to change into his pajamas while his parents wait outside the closet door.
  - Talks to himself to cognitively prepare himself for the dark, social support, approach, social support

The Wonder Pets

- Kitten hides in a doghouse.
  - Avoidance

- Ming Ming jumps into the turtle's arms when she hears a spooky sound.
  - Social support

- Ming Ming covers her eyes.
  - Avoidance

- Linny to others: "There are no such things as…ghosts?
  - Reality affirmation, social support

- Tuck and Ming Ming hide and cuddle close in the doghouse.
  - Avoidance, social support

- Linny convinces them to come out of hiding to finish the job
    - Social support

- Linny: approaches the "ghost" to find out what it is.
    - Approach, reality affirmation, social support

- MingMing and Tuck try to run away to the flyboat
    - Avoidance, social support

- Linny: "Do ghosts bark? Do ghosts have tails? Do you see what I'm saying? There's something strange about that ghost." Linny relies on clues about reality…."To find out, let's look underneath."
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation, reframing perception of "ghost"

- Linny: "Be brave, Wonder Pets. Let's look underneath."
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation

- They all chase the "ghost" and take the sheet off to discover it is a puppy.
    - Social support, approach, reality affirmation