



Researchers watch the interaction of the Finegood family in the "waiting room"...



... then punch coded behavior patterns into computers.

## On view: Tracing sibling behavior

Story: RITU SEHGAL

Photos: DAVID FRANK  
The sign on the door reads Interpersonal Behavior Laboratory. Inside is a small room, designed to resemble a waiting area.

As his mother leaves to keep her "doctor's appointment," 14-month old Patrick Paquette bursts into tears. His 3-year-old brother Kevin is momentarily distracted from the array of toys that litter the floor. He puts his arms around Patrick, and attempts to soothe him, eventually quieting his wails.

Researchers observing this scene through a one-way mirror in the adjacent room couldn't resist smiles.

"Oh, that's great, that's perfect," one exclaimed.

The experiment was part of a summer-long research study now under way at Oakland University. The project's aim is to study various aspects of sibling behavior. It explores such issues as sibling rivalry, sibling interaction, and use of older siblings as caregivers for younger children.

Past research says that older children do not look after their younger brothers or sisters. Dr. Robert Stewart, project director for the OU study, won't agree or disagree. But he says that initial observations indicate that "an older child will often mimic his mother when he is left alone with a younger brother or sister."

An OU psychology professor and an eight-year veteran of studies on father-child and mother-child relations, Stewart does not portray himself as a revolutionary in the field of psychology.

"We are not breaking new ground here," he said, referring to his study.

But he will test a number of new theories in an effort to explain differences in sibling relations from family to family. He will consider such factors as marital status of parents, mother's age and job status, her sensitivity to her children's behavior, and the sex of sibling pairs.

Stewart and his 12 research assistants, all undergraduate honors students in psychology, already have observed

18 families since the study began in early May. So far there seems to be no consistent pattern emerging.

"Some (children) are very good at looking after their younger brothers and sisters. Others won't lift a finger," Stewart said.

Stewart still is short of the 60 families needed to complete his study. It covers parents having two or more children, one between the ages of 11 and 17 months and the other child between three and four years of age.

Parents interested in donating their time for the 45-minute observation sessions can contact Stewart at 377-2306 or call the OU Department of Psychology at 377-2300.

A fringe benefit for any parent participating in the project is the opportunity to observe his or her children.

Patricia Paquette, Kevin and Patrick's mother, found the experience rewarding. Watching her two sons through the one-way mirror, she said, "It gives more reassurance that they are doing well."



Nancy Finegood plays with sons Bradley (left), 4½, and Gregory, 1½, in the "waiting room."

## INSIDE ANGLES

BY LOUISE OKRUTSKY

**THE MICHIGAN STATE FAIR** and the state Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) want you. If you're a senior citizen who has made a significant contribution to your community in the areas of leadership and service, you may be eligible for the Senior Citizen of the Year Award. Awards for leadership and service will be presented on Aug. 23, Senior Citizens Day at the State Fair. The deadline for submitting an application is July 15. If you know of a senior who'd qualify for the award, contact the nearest area agency on aging or write the OSA, P.O. Box 30026, Lansing, Mich., 48909. Applications have been distributed to senior organizations around the state. Nominees will be judged on their activities over the past year. Work on community projects over a number of years will receive consideration. Anyone older than 60 is eligible. A person can't be nominated for their work or service which is performed as part of a paid job. Only organizations may nominate individuals.

**ON THE BOWWOW CIRCUIT:** The playgrounds of the Farmington area will go to the dogs this summer when the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department and Ken-L. Ration sponsor a series of Kids Dog Shows between June 23 and Aug. 1. The activity is open to all dogs, from hoity-toity pedigreed types to plain old mutts. Merit ribbons will be awarded to each entrant and recognition will be given to such special categories as best behaved dog, the funniest dog, the best trick dog, smallest, largest and best looking. Youngsters will take home a free dog care booklet. Each playground will conduct their show at different times of the summer.

**SUMMER'S ALSO THE** time for high school juniors and seniors to apply for the September pre-college architecture program at Lawrence Institute of Technology. Students attending the program are given a chance to explore and advance their interest in art and architecture before entering a full program of study. The nature of professional training and the amount of aptitude necessary to undergo such study will be discussed. The fall term meets on Saturdays from Sept. 27-Jan. 31. Student may choose one or any combination of courses offered in the program including visual communications, basic design and interior architecture / interior design. An art and architecture seminar and fields are offered. Tuition for each course is \$7. The seminar is \$25. Materials will cost up to an additional \$100. Students who wish to visit the campus during the summer to talk to an advisor

about the program can call the LIT School of Architecture at 356-0200.

**GO TAKE A HIKE** can be an invitation as well as a brushoff. In this case, it's a invitation to go off into the brush as part of an "Evening Hike with the Parks Naturalist" at 7:30 p.m. June 27 at Independence Oaks County Park. The program starts at the Twin Chimneys Shelter in the park, 9501 Sashabaw in Clarkston. There is a \$2 entrance fee for Oakland County residents and a \$3 charge for non-residents. Participants can expect to view wildlife and summer vegetation in its natural environment. An expert on natural history will answer questions and hikers will see birds, butterflies and flowers indigenous to southeast Michigan. To register, call 625-9877. Participants are advised to wear protective clothing and bring insect repellent. Maps and directions are available at the park entrance.

**IF TROMPING THROUGH** the woods isn't your idea of a great time, the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department offers tickets at a discount for such area parks and events as: Detroit Zoo, Cedar Point, Sandusky Ohio; Geauga Lake, Aurora, Ohio; Greater America, North Chicago, Ill.; Sea World, Aurora, Ohio and the Michigan State Fair. Tickets, with the exception of Sea World, are available for times up to Sept. 1. Sea World tickets will be sold until Sept. 7. Tickets are available at the parks and recreation department and the city of Farmington Finance Department.

**YOUNG ACTORS**, producers and directors can learn the basics of play and variety arts production at the Youth Theatre Camp sponsored by the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department from 9 a.m.-noon, Monday-Friday, June 23-Aug. 1 at Shiawassee Recreation Center, 30415 Shiawassee Road. Youngsters from 5-12 years-old will have the opportunity to put on the camps' summer-end production, "Creative Visions." For more information and registration visit the parks and rec department, 31555 11 Mile or call 474-6115.

**RUN, RUN, PUFF, PUFF** women interested in running or jogging with a small group during the week should bring their running shoes and jogging outfit to the Women's Running Circle. The groups meet at 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and at 8:30 a.m. Sundays at the Harrison High School track, 12 Mile east of Orchard Lake Road. There's no charge.

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