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LET GO AND LET GROW: AN ASSESSMENT OF A SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE IN CHILDREN

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LET GO AND LET GROW: AN ASSESSMENT OF A SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE IN CHILDREN

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Table of Contents

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Abstract

Overinvolved parenting is on the rise, despite its association with negative outcomes for children **(**Twenge, 2017; American Psychological Association (APA), 2019; Segrin et al., 2013). Its emerging counterpart, free-range parenting, urges parents to offer their children more independence and less supervision (Skenazy, 2009). However, no quantitative, peer-reviewed research has been conducted on the effects of independent task engagement on children's independence and resilience. The present study evaluated the effects of *The Let Grow Project* (Skenazy, 2018), a school-based intervention aimed at increasing resilience and independence in children by assigning homework to engage in tasks independently. Children completed measures of independence, resilience, helicopter parenting, and anxiety at pre-intervention, post-intervention and after a one-month follow up. Parents of participants completed measures of parent stress, child's independence, child anxiety, child resilience, and overparenting. The current study found that independent task completion has significant, if inconsistent effects on children's independence and resilience, and significant effects on child anxiety and helicopter parenting behaviors. The results could have theoretical implications relating to our understanding of free-range parenting practices and their impacts on children's independence and resilience.

Let Go and Let Grow: An Assessment of a School and Community-Based Intervention Encouraging Independence and Resilience in Children

Parents' involvement with their children has steadily increased since the 1960's. On average, mothers in 1965 spent 10 hours a week caring for their children, compared to 15 hours a week in 2015 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Father's time spent caring for children more than doubled during the same time period, from on average, 4 hours weekly in 1965, to 9 hours a week in 2015 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Parental involvement with their young adult children in higher education has also been steadily increasing over the last 15 years (Carney-Hall, 2008; Merriman, 2007; Wartman & Savage, 2008). Between 2008 and 2011, nearly 68% of institutions surveyed cited increases in the frequency of parental involvement (Levine & Dean, 2012).

Parents have also increased the amount of money they spend on their children (Kornrich & Furstenberg, 2013; Department of Agriculture, 2017; Lino et al., 2017). The average cost of raising a child increased about 22%, adjusted for inflation, between 1960 and 2015 (Department of Agriculture, 2017). Financial assistance from parents now routinely continues past the age of 18. It is estimated that 45% of adults ages 18 to 29 receive financial support from their parents (Pew Research Center, 2019). Compared to 32% of young adults in 1980, only 24% of young adults were financially independent by age 22 in 2018. Although research has noted class divides in money spent on children, with parents in the top two income deciles showing the largest dollar amount increase in spending, lower-income parents show the largest increase in the percentage of income they spend on their children (Schneider et al., 2018).

At the same time that the amount of time parents spend with their children increased, the types of interactions between parents and children also changed. For example, American children spend only half as much time playing outside freely than their parents did (Larson, et al., 2011).

Unsupervised or independent play among children has also declined (Gray, 2011; O'Brien & Smith, 2002). Children have become more reliant on their parents to get to and from school – a time that would typically involve free play and unsupervised socialization. There has been a 30% decrease in the percentage of children who walk or bike-ride to school from 1969-2017 (National Household Travel Survey, 2017). Participation in outdoor activity fell by up to 50% between 1997 and 2003 (Tandy, 1999; Mackett et al., 2007).

There may be some positive effects of increased parental involvement. Parental involvement is positively associated with academic success (Fan & Chen, 2001; Klein & Ballantine, 1999) and social skills and it is negatively associated with behavior problems (El Nokali et al., 2010), and alcohol use in children and teens (Miller-Day & Kam, 2010). Some studies indicate that adolescents and young adults experience greater life satisfaction if their parents are emotionally involved (Segrin et al., 2015). Results from a recent meta-analysis summarizing the findings on the effectiveness of parental involvement programs suggested that parental involvement interventions have a positive and moderate effect on children's overall performance, as well as on academic and nonacademic outcomes when considered separately (Cosso & Yoshikawa, 2022). Another recent meta-analysis examined the parental expectations component of parental involvement, with refence to urban youth specifically (Jeynes, 2022). Of note, "high parental expectations" was defined as whether a child was expected to graduate at a certain level, obtain a given grade (or GPA), or reach a certain occupational status" (Jeynes, 2022, para. 2). Results from this analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between high, but reasonable, parental expectations and student academic achievement (i.e., GPA, standardized test scores, and teacher ratings) (Jeynes, 2022). Another more recent meta-analysis examined the effect of parental involvement on students' academic achievement at pre-school, elementary, and secondary levels (Erdem & Kaya, 2020). Results

revealed that the effect of parental involvement on academic achievement was positive but small, with parental expectations having the biggest effect on academic achievement and parental control having a negative and small effect (Erdem & Kaya, 2020).

While parental involvement appears to be a positive factor in children's development, overinvolved parenting is associated with negative outcomes in children. Overinvolved parenting, sometimes referred to in the literature as overparenting, involves the use of developmentally inappropriate levels of parental participation, hands-on assistance, problem-solving, monitoring and involvement in children's lives (Segrin et al., 2013). Overparenting has been shown to be positively associated with anxiety and depression in children (Segrin et al., 2013). In adolescents and emerging adults, overparenting is related to higher levels of narcissism and entitlement (Segrin et al., 2012). Overparenting is associated with lower academic success and engagement in young adults (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). In adult children, this style of parenting has also been negatively associated with coping abilities, independence and resilience (Segrin et al., 2013). Overparenting is also associated with higher levels of alcohol use and lower levels of autonomy, competence, relatedness and self-control (Cui et al., 2018).

Helicopter parenting, a more recent term, refers to overly involved and protective parents who frequently communicate with their children, intervene in their children's affairs, make decisions on behalf of their children and remove obstacles their children face (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). The developmentally inappropriate tactics seen in helicopter parenting are utilized in an effort to protect children from adverse experiences (Segrin et al., 2012). Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) describe helicopter parenting as the unique combination of common parenting styles including parenting that is high on warmth and support, and also high on control and low on granting autonomy to the child. Helicopter parents often perform tasks on their child's behalf rather than allowing the child to carry out the task

independently (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). This intensive parenting style is utilized even with children who are able to manage adult responsibilities and autonomy (Segrin et al., 2012). Helicopter parents often provide substantial support even to their emerging adult children and are typically highly involved in their children's affairs and decision making (Odenweller et al., 2014; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

Advancements in technology enable helicopter parenting, as parents are now able to access their children at any time with the use of cell phones and online platforms. Thirty percent of college students are in contact with their parents several times a day and 35% are in contact with their parents several times a week (Segrin et al., 2015). Advancements in electronics have provided parents with a faster and easier way to monitor their children (Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Randall, 2007; Schweitzer & Staff, 2005). Social media and cell phones, sometimes referred to as the "electronic umbilical cord", allow parents to remain aware of where their children are and what they are doing (Kantrowitz & Tyre, 2006; Randall, 2007; Schweitzer & Staff, 2005). Parents can access their children's online lives and may use this as a way to monitor their children's activities without actually communicating with them (Somers & Settle, 2010).

Helicopter parenting is associated with negative outcomes in children, including fewer empathic and prosocial outcomes (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013), fewer self-regulatory behaviors (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012), greater levels of narcissistic tendencies (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013), reduced self-efficacy, and greater levels of separation anxiety in children (Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz and Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014). Some millennials (demographic cohort involving those born between the early 1980's to the early 2000's) with helicopter parents report interpersonal dependency, neurotic tendencies, a lack of effective coping skills, and a tendency to reply on others for

support and validation (Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, & Weber, 2014). Overparenting can hinder the development of coping mechanisms, leading college students to believe they have little control over their lives, resulting in a lack of volition (Schiffrin et al., 2014). On average, children with helicopter parents report more anxiety and less satisfaction with life than children with less involved parents (Schiffrin et al., 2013; Bitsko, Holbrook, Ghandour, Blumberg, Visser, & Walkup, 2018; Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz and Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014).

Helicopter parenting may also have negative effects on parents themselves. Research on helicopter parenting has often highlighted a parent's difficulty accepting their child's failures (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). Wall (2010) discussed the potential negative implications for mothers who attempt to increase their children's intelligence and achievement through intensive effort and increased time spent with their children, including risk of exhaustion, stress, anxiety, and guilt. Helicopter parenting can even have legal implications relating to privacy rights (Vinson, 2012). The expectation may be that as women work longer hours, motherhood becomes less time-consuming. However, research indicates that in two-parent families, children are spending substantially more time with their parents than in 1981, despite the increase of female participation in work (Gauthier et al., 2004). Hays (1996) was one of the first observers of the changes in parenting culture and highlighted the change in what mothers provide and do for their children, including devoting copious amounts of time, and protection to their children. In doing so, however, Hays (1996) highlights that this "child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor intensive and financially expansive" (Hays, p. 8) approach became thought of as the normative standard and often leaves women feeling tired and overstretched.

Helicopter parenting may continue throughout college and into adult childrens' employment (Carroll, 2007; Graves, 2007)**.** Work by Gardner (2007) indicates that

approximately 55% of companies report parental involvement in the recruiting process and early career stages of college students, ranging from “once in a while” to “very often.” Of these companies, 23% reported seeing parents “sometimes” or “very often” (Gardner, 2007). The type of parental involvement witnessed, provided by sample of 725 employers, included parents of adults applying for jobs gathering information on the company (40%), submitting resumes on behalf of their child during on-campus job recruitment (31%), promoting their child for a position (26%), making interview arrangements (12%), negotiating salary and benefits (9%), and attending their student’s job interview (4%). According to Howe and Strauss (2008), “over one quarter of employers have had parents promote their children for a position, and 15% have had parents contact the company that did not hire their son or daughter” (Howe & Strauss, 2008, p. 5).

Research has identified factors associated with helicopter parenting (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013). Helicopter parenting is positively associated with behavioral and psychological control, and negatively associated with parental autonomy granting (Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Segrin et al., 2012; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Literature also indicates a strong association between parental anxiety and parental control (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013), which is an integral component of helicopter parenting. Research has indicated that parental risk aversion contributes to the declines in independence in children (Hofferth & Koblinsky, 2006). Parental perception of their child’s vulnerability to the world heightens parental anxiety (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013), contributing to the intense concern and immoderately overprotective behaviors that characterize helicopter parenting**.** Increased parent safety concerns and anxiety have contributed to these increases in parental supervision and “increasingly restricted freedom of movement” (Rutherford, 2011, p.337; Newman, 2015). Parents’ increased fear that their children may make wrong choices

academically, financially, or career wise may contribute to the increase in helicopter parenting behaviors. Rejection anxiety and parents' perceptions of extreme competition in college admissions are significant contributors to parents' helicopter-type behaviors throughout the application process (Somers & Settle, 2010). Additionally, parents are having fewer children, potentially allowing them to hyper-focus on their children, micromanaging their lives and over-chaperoning their activities (Somers & Settle, 2010).

Parental risk perception plays a role in determining children's independence (Hofferth & Koblinsky, 2006). Parental risk aversion contributes to the declines in independence in children (Hofferth & Koblinsky, 2006). Research has shown that children with helicopter parents have more anxiety and less satisfaction with life than children with less involved parents (Schiffrin et al., 2013; Bitsko, Holbrook, Ghandour, Blumberg, Visser, & Walkup, 2018; Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz and Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014). Research has also highlighted the importance of fostering independence, self-reliance and grit in children (Sasse, 2017). Despite this, the tendency to overparent is on the rise, in large part due to parents' perceptions of an unsafe world (Thomson, 2009). Children are seen as more vulnerable to threats impacting on physical and emotional development than ever before (Faircloth, 2014). Consistently, parents report that their most pressing concerns related to giving their children more independence include abduction, sexual assault and traffic accidents (Godfrey et al., 2008). These concerns, and the over-estimation of their likelihood, are consistent across English speaking nations (Godfrey et al., 2008). However, analysis of the FBI Uniform Crime Report indicates crime rate has dropped significantly since the early 1990's (FBI Uniform Crime Report (1990-2008). Violent crime rates dropped by almost 30% in cities. Although nearly every measure of crime is shockingly lower compared to years ago (New York City Police Department, 2019, Suffolk County Police Department, 2015), parental anxiety and resistance to

allow children to complete tasks independently remain high (Parenting Styles Across Generations, 2015; Rutherford, 2011; Wall, 2010).

Declines in child mental health outcomes have covaried with the increased involvement of parents in their childrens' lives. In youth ages 12 to 17, the prevalence of past-year Major Depressive Episodes increased from 8.66% to 13.01% from 2012 to 2017. During this time period, youth suicide rates have also increased significantly. Death from suicide for children ages 10 to 14 increased 178% from 2007 to 2017, while adolescents aged 15 to 19 experienced a 76% increase (National Center for Health Statistics & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (NCHS & CDC), 2019). In 2017, suicide became the second leading cause of death among young Americans aged 15 to 24 (NHCS & CDC, 2019). Generation Z youth, which includes people born between 1995 and 2012, are 27% more likely than previous generations to report their mental health as fair or poor (Twenge, 2017). Generation Z adults report the highest average stress level, followed by Generation X (born: 1965-1980) and Millennial (born: 1981-1996) members (American Psychological Association (APA), 2019). Generation Z members also report more stress than other adults about issues in the news (APA, 2018).

Despite evidence that helicopter parenting may be associated with negative outcomes for children, it remains a common parenting style. Research has indicated that 10% of first-year college students and 7% of seniors report having helicopter parents (Shoup, Gonyea & Kuh, 2009). While few studies have reported on the prevalence of helicopter parenting directly, developmental literature has examined controlling parental behaviors across several parenting styles (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Schiffrin et al., 2013). Research examining parental control with school-age children indicates that about 60% of parents reveal that they can engage in over-protective behaviors (Pew Research Center, 2015). About half of parents believe they can never be too involved in their children's education (Pew Research Center, 2015). Fingerman and

colleagues (2012) state that 30% (115 of 399) of parents report “providing intense support to at least one grown child” (p. 887). Results of a nationally representative study conducted with more than 3600 parents indicated that regardless of level of education, acting directly and decisively in a child's life is considered good parenting (Ishizuka, 2019). Findings from this recent experiment further indicate that parents express similar support for intensive parenting across a range of situations and social class, suggesting that this parenting style is pervasive (Ishizuka, 2019).

As helicopter parenting in young adults’ lives has increased, their entry into adulthood has delayed (Darlow, Norvilitis, & Schuetze, 2017). College-aged students engage in longer periods of emerging adulthood than in the past, further delaying responsibility taking (Somers & Settle, 2010), personal competency (Johnson, 2013), financial independence, and independence (Nelson & Padilla-Walker, 2014). Related to these longer periods of emerging adulthood, generation Z college students are more likely than preceding generations to postpone sex, decline obtaining driver’s licenses, and spend time with their parents (Twenge, 2017). Research revealed that emerging adults view necessary criteria for adulthood as including independence, self-reliance, financial independence, increasing one’s ability to develop mature relationships, complying with societal norms and being capable of caring for a family or children (Nelson and Padilla-Walker, 2014). A study revealed that when 18–27-year-olds were asked if they feel they have reached adulthood, 13% responded “no,” and 72% answered “in some ways yes, in some ways no” (Nelson et al., 2007). In previous decades, marriage, child-rearing, and beginning careers tended to, on average, occur in the late teens or early twenties (Schlegel & Barry, 1991). However, the average age of marriage in the United States has risen to 27.9 years for women and 29.7 years for men in 2014-2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

Although previous research has demonstrated associations between helicopter parenting and negative outcomes for children (Schiffrin et al., 2013; Randall (2007; Segrin, Woszidlo,

Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013; Arnett, 2014; Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz and Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014), there has been little attempt to determine the mechanisms by which helicopter parenting may be exerting its negative effects on children. Some mechanisms have been explored, including self-control (Baumeister et al., 2007), reduced autonomy and competence (Schiffrin et al., 2014) and self-efficacy (Reed et al., 2016). Self-control, the act of regulating one's behavior, thoughts, and emotions in a socially acceptable way (de Riddler, et al., 2012) has been linked to parenting behavior (Finkenauer et al. 2005). As clarified by the strength model of self-control (Baumeister et al., 2007), individuals may improve their self-control skills through practice. However, the act of helicoptering leads to the interruption of opportunities for the development of self-control (i.e., making decisions on behalf of their children). Further, the model of self-control also suggests that lower levels of self-control may be linked to a lack of academic achievement, lower levels of persistence, and failure to perform tasks (Baumeister et al. 2007).

In contrast to helicopter parenting, autonomy support is parenting behavior in which parents encourage developmentally appropriate independence in their child (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). This parenting style emphasizes independent problem-solving and participation in decision making (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Research has established advantages of autonomy support behaviors in parenting, including its relation to overall better adjustment in college students, specifically higher levels in their self-esteem and lower levels of depressive symptoms cross-culturally (Cullaty, 2011; Jackson, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2005; La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000; Lekes, Gingras, Philippe, Koestner & Fang, 2010) and longitudinally (Van der Giessen, Branje & Meeus, 2014). Contrary to autonomy supportive parenting, helicopter parents tend to restrict their children's behavior by using inappropriate levels of

behavioral control, thus limiting their children's autonomy (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2021). This excessive restriction can create a cycle of dependence, increasing children's tendency to rely on parents and further decreasing their beliefs that they are able to function independently (Liss & Shiffrin, 2014; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012).

There is little research on what has been identified as helicopter parenting's emerging counterpart, free-range parenting (Skenazy, 2009). Free-range parenting is a movement that suggests that children can function independently, with limited parental supervision (Skenazy, 2009). It is similar to autonomy support parenting in that this parenting style provides children with greater autonomy (Spock, 1946). Free-range parenting is a reaction to the present day increase in concerns related to child-safety. This parenting style encourages parents to allow their children to have the freedom to act independently (Letgrow.org). There are substantial gaps in the current literature on free-range parenting outcomes and its influence on children's independence and resilience. How helicopter parenting may lead to poor mental health outcomes in older children and young adults may involve different mechanisms. Past research and theorizing on helicopter parenting and emerging adult's adjustment have offered potential explanations as to why helicopter parenting affects adjustment among 18–25-year-olds, including an undermining of student's basic psychological needs and perceived stress related to feeling a lack of control (Cook, 2020). Helicopter parenting has been linked to problematic development in emerging adulthood due to parental tendency to limit opportunities for their emerging adult children to practice and develop important skills necessary for becoming independent adults **(**Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012)**.** Self-determination theory may be a useful framework for understanding why helicopter parenting leads to negative outcomes for college students (Cook, 2020). The theory suggests that three basic needs, including competence, autonomy and relatedness, need to be met in order to be successful in life. Research has shown

that the possession of these three aspects is associated with lower levels of depression (Wei et al., 2005) and greater life satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2007), whereas individuals who do not have these needs met may develop indicators of psychopathology (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In this framework, young adults with helicopter parents may be at a disadvantage when compared to other adults, considering that helicopter parents often to not offer their children the opportunity to be autonomous (Segrin et al., 2012), and that helicopter parenting is associated with lower levels of self-regulation and goal setting in children (Hong et al., 2015). This lack of control and regulation may pose difficulties with student's social adjustment and connectedness. Studies indicate that students of helicopter parents experience more difficulty relating to their roommates (Klein & Pierce, 2009), lack the confidence to engage with others and alienate more compared to peers (Van Ingen et al., 2015).

Children benefit from the capacity to overcome obstacles and deal with disappointments throughout life and across settings (e.g., school, interpersonal) **(**Brooks & Goldestein, 2001). Resiliency is understood as, "the capacity of a child to deal effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to rebound from disappointments, mistakes, trauma, and adversity, to develop clear and realistic goals, to solve problems, to interact comfortably with others, and to treat oneself and others with respect and dignity" (Brooks & Goldstein, 2001, p. 329). Large-scale longitudinal resiliency research has demonstrated that children who coped successfully with adversity were those with affectional ties that encouraged trust, autonomy and initiative (Werner, 2006). For instance, research has demonstrated that resilient children are able to not only identify and articulate problems but are also able to identify solutions and attempt the most appropriate one, ultimately learning from the outcome (Shure & Aberson, 2005). The researcher contends that helicopter parenting limits a child's opportunity to build resiliency, as helicopter parents often problem-solve for their children (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011).

Although free-range parenting emphasizes the importance of fostering independence and resilience in children, only a small body of literature has explored free-range parenting directly.

While research on the effects of free-range parenting is scarce, several hypothesized mechanisms for how this parenting style may promote healthy development in children have been examined. One such mechanism is children's independent mobility (IM). IM describes the of children to travel and play in public spaces without adult supervision (Riazi & Faulkner, 2018). Some research suggests that while there is a positive correlation between children's well-being and children's degree of freedom to travel and play unsupervised, significant restrictions are placed on children's IM (Shaw et al., 2015). Other studies have found that children with low IM experience physical health consequences (Caset et al., 2014; Wolch et al., 2011). IM has also been shown to provide children with a variety of mental health and developmental benefits including improved risk assessment, higher self-confidence and better navigating skills (Riazi & Faulkner, 2018). Mobility restrictions including parental supervision while walking, or other overparenting behaviors, limit children's physical activity (Marzi & Reimers, 2018). Research indicates that his lack of physical activity could elevate the risk of depression (Mammen & Faulkner, 2013). Evidence for causal relationships is limited due to the lack of longitudinal studies focusing on IM and related mental health outcomes. However, research examining the short-term effects of IM has noted its association with reduced feelings of loneliness in adolescence (Prezza & Pacilli, 2007), and increased socialization (Prezza et al., 2001).

Although there are conflicting findings on the effects of controlling parents, a majority of findings continue to support the idea that children of controlling parents lack independence when compared to children with parents of other styles (Baumrind, 1971). Research has defined independence in early childhood to include a child's ability to adapt to developmental tasks, such as learning to eat alone or interact with others (Yamin & Sanan, 2013). A recent quantitative

study exploring the effects of an early education program on independence of pre-school children found a significant and positive difference in children's independence level based on parenting style, supporting the theory that higher levels of helicopter parenting are associated with lower levels of independence in children (Yuliani, Awayla, & Suminar, 2019). Given that free-range parenting encourages parents to allow their children to act independently (letgrow.org), this style may provide more opportunities for children to build independence, compared to other styles of parenting.

Study Purpose and Rationale

While research on the effects of helicopter parenting and its counterpart, free range parenting, has grown in recent years, several important questions remain. First, it is unclear if free-range parenting young children increases children's independence, thus impacting their mental health. It is also unclear if free-range parenting impacts children's resilience, or their ability to cope with every-day challenges and deal with disappointments. There is limited research on what has been identified as helicopter parenting's emerging counterpart, free-range parenting. Almost no evaluations of interventions aimed at reducing helicopter parenting have been conducted. It is evident that there are substantial gaps in the current literature on free-range parenting outcomes and its influence on children's independence and resilience. Given that parenting style is an important aspect in fostering independence (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Barber, 1996; Barber & Harman, 2002) and resilience (Zakeri, Jowkar & Razmojee, 2010) in children, there is importance in investigating the effects of independent task engagement, with minimal adult supervision, on children's independence and resilience.

The focus of the present study is to examine the benefits of independent task engagement on children's independence, resilience, and anxiety via the Let Grow Project. Therefore, the current study had four aims. The first aim was to examine the effects of independent task

completion on children's independence, resilience, and anxiety. It was hypothesized that children's independence and resilience scores would increase from pretest to posttest, and increase or remain the same from posttest to followup. It was hypothesized that children's anxiety scores would decrease from pretest to posttest and remain the same or decrease from posttest to followup. The second aim of the study was to examine the effects of children's independent task completion on both children's and parent's perceptions of children's level of independence, as well as parents' perceptions on the importance of their child's independence. It was hypothesized that both parent's and children's perceptions of the child's level of independence would increase from pretest to posttest, and increase or remain the same from posttest to followup. It was hypothesized that parents' perceptions on the importance of their child's independence would increase from pretest to posttest, and increase or remain the same from posttest to followup.

The third aim was to examine the effects of children's independent task completion on parental stress. It was hypothesized that parental stress would decrease from pretest to posttest, and decrease or remain the same from posttest to followup. The fourth aim of the study was to examine the effects of children's independent task completion on parent's helicopter parenting behaviors. It was hypothesized that helicopter parenting behaviors would decrease from pretest to posttest, and decrease or remain the same from posttest to followup. The current study was the first to examine the effects of independent task completion in a school via the Let Grow Project.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited for this study via school and community outreach. Of 34 parents who consented to the study and received intervention instructions and material, 30 completed the demographic questionnaire and baseline survey. There were 13 parent-child dyads

who did not complete either any measures, or any measures beyond baseline, and were considered non-completers. Participants included in the final analyses were the remaining 21 parent-child dyads. Six parent-child dyads were recruited from a school in Bay Shore, NY, and 15 dyads were recruited from community centers and word of mouth. All participants resided in New York. Sixteen parents of children participated in the study, three of whom had two children, and one of whom had three children who participated in the study. Of the 16 parents who participated in the study, two identified as male and 14 identified as female. Nine parents identified as white, one as Black or African American, three as North African or Middle Eastern, two as Asian, one as "Other." Five parents identified as Hispanic/Latino. Two parents reported high school as the highest level of education completed, four reported Bachelor's degrees, and 10 reported Graduate level degrees. Of the 12 parents who reported family incomes, one earned less than $25,000, one earned $75,000-99,999, six earned $100,000-150,000; three earned $200,000-300,000, and one earned $300,000+/year.

A total of 21 children, including 10 boys and 11 girls, between the ages of eight and 12 participated in the study, with a mean age of 10.88 (*SD* = 1.6). Eleven children were white, one was Black or African American, six were Middle Eastern or North African, one was Asian, and two were listed as "other." Six children were Hispanic. Table 1 provides additional provides additional demographic characteristics of the sample.

Figure 1

Consort Flowchart of Participants

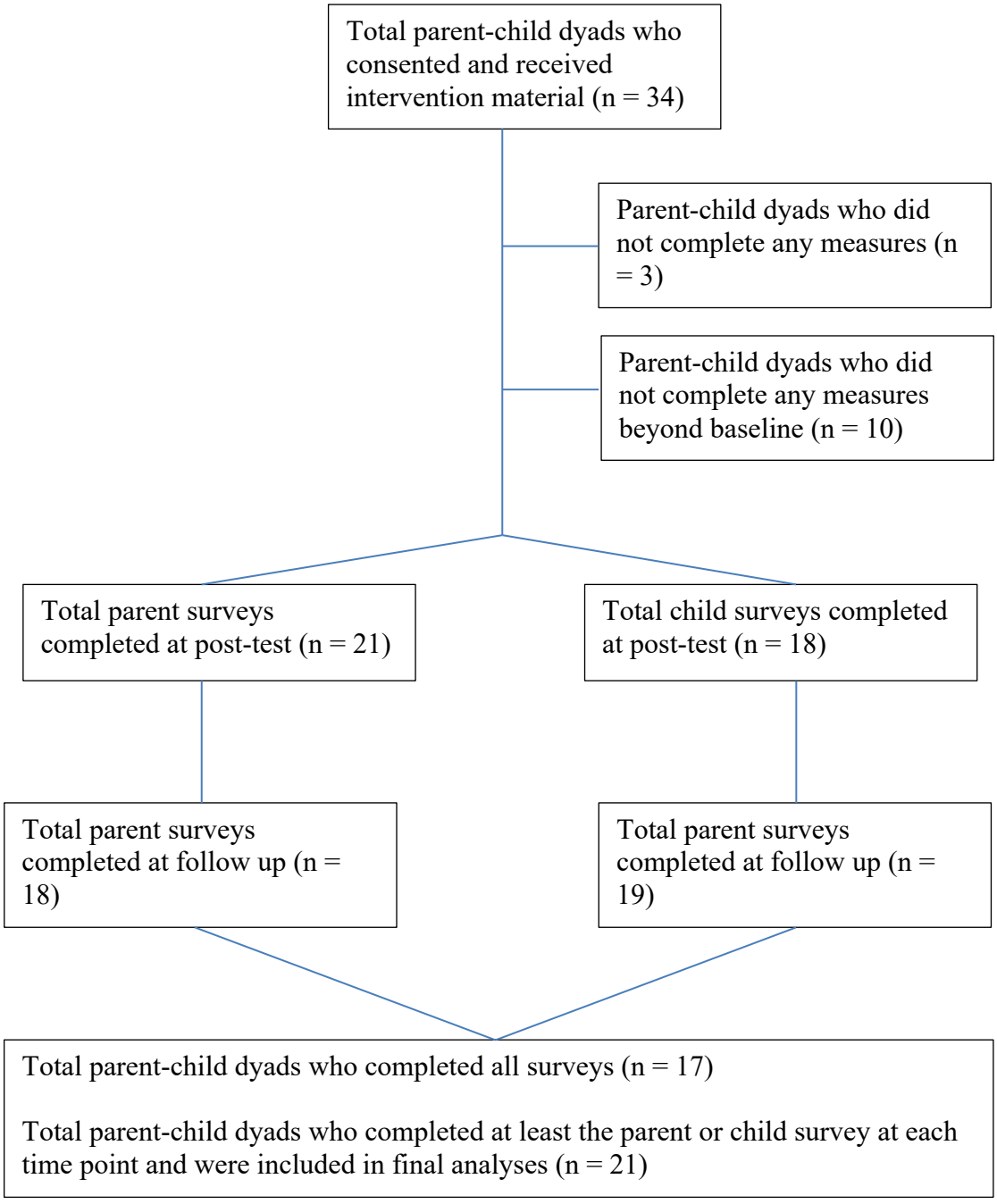

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic	*M*	*SD*
Age	10.05	1.17
Grade	4.48	2.02
	Frequency	*Percentage*
Child Gender		
Male	10	47.6%
Female	11	52.4%
Relation to Child		
Father	2	12.5%
Mother	14	87.5%
Child Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	6	28.6%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	15	71.4%
Child Race		
White	11	52.4%
Black/African American	1	4.8%
North African/Middle Eastern	6	28.6%
Asian	1	4.8%
Other	2	9.5%
Parent Level of Education		
High School	2	12.5%
Bachelor's Degree	4	25.0%
Graduate Level Degree	10	62.5%
Annual Household Income		
Less than $25,000	1	6.3%
$75,000 to $99,999	1	6.3%
$100,000 to $150,000	6	37.5%
$200,000 to $300,000	3	18.8%
$300,000+	1	6.3%
Prefer not to say	4	25.0%
Location of Recruitment		
Community	15	71.4%
School	6	28.6%

Measures

Family Demographic Questionnaire

Parents completed a demographic information questionnaire developed for this study which included questions about their gender, race/ethnicity, educational level, and income, as well as their child's age, grade, gender, and race/ethnicity (Appendix A). The participating parent was asked to complete this questionnaire to obtain accurate responses to questions that the child may not know how to answer (e.g., family income).

Overparenting Scale – Short Form (OP-SF) - Adapted

Parents completed the overparenting scale-short form (OP-SF) (Jiao & Segrin, 2021), in order to assess for overparenting behaviors of parents (Appendix B). This 12-item scale was adapted from the 34-item over-parenting scale to provide a brief and valid measure of overparenting from the parent's perspective. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The scale includes four subscales: anticipatory problem solving (e.g., "If I can see that my child is about to have some difficulty, I will intervene to take care of the situation before things get difficult for him/her."), advice/affect management (e.g., "When my child gets anxious, I will say things to try to calm him/her down."), tangible assistance (e.g., "I help my child out with his/her transportation needs."), and risk aversion (seven items; e.g., "I urge my child to be careful and not to take too many risks in life"). For the purposes of this study, the "tangible assistance" subscale was adapted, including the removal of one prompt, to represent the age range of the current study sample. For instance, instead of "I help my child out with his/her transportation needs.," parents were given the prompt, "Regardless of distance, I drive my child to and from all appointments, play dates, extracurricular activities, etc., or ensure my child is transported by a trusted adult." Participants indicated the extent of their (dis)agreement with the items on a 5-point scale from strongly

disagree to strongly agree. Total scores range from 11 to 55, with higher scores reflecting greater engagement in overparenting/ helicopter parenting tendencies. The OP-SF has good internal consistency (Cronbach α = 0.79, with an average of Cronbach α = 0.81 across six samples), and good convergent validity that is comparable to that of the Overparenting-Long Form (OP-LF) (Jiao & Segrin, 2021).

The Parental Stress Scale (PSS)

Parents completed the 18-item self-report Parent Parental Stress Scale (Berry & Jones, 1995), which assesses parent's feelings about their parenting role, exploring both positive aspects (e.g., emotional benefits, personal development) and negative aspects of parenthood (e.g., demand on resources, restrictions) (Appendix C). Each statement is evaluated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) and item numbers 1,2, 5, 6, 7, 8. 17, and 18 are reverse scored. The sum of these items reflects the parental stress score, and total scores range from 18 to 90, with higher scores suggesting greater levels of parental stress. An example of an item on the PPS is, "Having child(ren) leaves little time and flexibility in my life." Good internal consistency of the PSS was found across a range of samples. The scale showed good reliability (a = .83) (Berry & Jones, 1995).

Person Most Knowledgeable - Child & Youth Resilience Measure - Revised (PMK-CYRM-R)

Parents completed the Person Most Knowledgeable - Child & Youth Resilience Measure - Revised **(**PMK-CYRM-R) (Jefferies, McGarrigle, & Ungar, 2018). The PMK-CYRM-R is a 17-item parent-report measure developed for caregivers of children ages 5-23 (Appendix D). The CYRM-R is a measure of social-ecological resilience and was created using a number of interviews with youth and their caregivers in various areas around the world. The PMK-CYRM-R intends to measure the child's ability to tackle difficulties relative to his/her development from the caregivers' perspective. Respondents are asked to indicate to what extent each item applies to

their child by choosing from the following responses for each item: “not at all,” “a little,” “somewhat,” “quite a bit,” and “a lot.” Their responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a lot), where the minimum score is 17 and the maximum score is 85. Higher scores indicate characteristics associated with resilience. An example item from the PMK-CYRM-R is “They are fun to be with, or that others like to play with them.” The PMK-CYRM-R demonstrates good reliability ($\alpha = .82$) and validity was established (Jefferies, McGarrigle, & Ungar, 2018).

Parental Perception on Child’s Independence Questionnaire

The investigator developed a questionnaire that asked parents to rate how strongly they agree with the statement, “My child is independent.” on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Appendix E).

Parental Perception on the Importance of Child’s Independence Questionnaire

The investigator developed a questionnaire that asked parents to rate how strongly they agree with the statement, “I think it’s important that my child is independent.” on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Appendix F).

Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale - Parent Version (RCADS-P) - Generalized Anxiety Subscale

The Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale – Parent Version - Generalized Anxiety Subscale (RCADS-P) (Chorpita, Yim, Moffitt, Umemoto, & Francis, 2000) is a 5-item questionnaire that assesses parent report of youth’s symptoms of anxiety (Appendix G). For the purposes of the current study, only the Generalized Anxiety subscale of the RCADS-P was utilized, as the current study did not assess for depressive symptoms. Therefore, parents were asked only about perceived anxiety levels in their children. Each statement is evaluated on a four-point Likert scale (0 = Never, 1 = Sometimes, 2 = Often, 3 = Always). The sum of these

items reflects the anxiety score, and total scores range from zero to 18, with higher scores reflecting greater anxiety. An example item on the RCADS-P Generalized Anxiety Subscale is "My child worries about things." The RCADS-P (Chorpita, Yim, Moffitt, Umemoto, & Francis, 2000) demonstrates good reliability (α = .87), good internal consistency, and high convergent and discriminant validity for the Generalized Anxiety subscale (Chorpita, Yim, Moffitt, Umemoto, & Francis, 2000).

The Child & Youth Resilience Measure - Revised (CYRM-R)

Children completed The Child & Youth Resilience Measure - Revised (CYRM-R) (Jefferies, McGarrigle, & Ungar, 2018). The CRYM-R is a 17-item self-report measure developed for children ages 5-23 (Appendix H). The CYRM-R is a measure of social-ecological resilience and was created using a number of interviews with youth and their caregivers in various areas around the world. The CYRM-R intends to measure the child's ability to tackle difficulties relative to his/her development. Each statement is evaluated on a three-point Likert scale (1 = No, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Yes). Total scores range from 17 to 51, with higher scores indicating characteristics associated with resilience. An example item from the CYRM-R is "Do you feel you fit in with other children?" The CYRM-R demonstrates good reliability (α = .82) and validity was established.

Children's Independence Questionnaire

The investigator created a questionnaire that will ask children to rate the statement, "I am independent." on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Appendix I).

Helicopter Parenting Questionnaire for Children

The investigator developed a 10-item measure assessing children's perceptions of their parents' helicopter parenting tendencies (Appendix J), which included items adapted from the

Helicopter Parenting Instrument (Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, & Weber, 2014). This questionnaire was created to be used within this study given that to the investigator's knowledge, there are no helicopter parenting measures that assess childrens' perceptions of their parents' behavior for the age range of the current study sample. Children were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements on a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Higher scores reflect higher levels of helicopter parenting. A sample item from the Helicopter Parenting Questionnaire is, "My parent tries to make all my big decisions."

Penn State Worry Questionnaire for Children (PSWQ-C)

The PSWQ-C (Chorpita et al., 1997) is a 14-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess worry in children and adolescents aged seven to seventeen (Appendix K). The questionnaire was designed to be comprehensible to children at the second grade reading level and above. Respondents are asked to indicate how often each item applies to them by choosing from the following responses for each item: "never," "sometimes," "often," and "always." Their responses are scored on a 4-point Likert scale from 0 (never) to 3 (always). Items 2, 7, and 9 are reverse-scored from 0 (always) to 3 (never), with greater scores indicating less worry rather than greater worry. Subsequently, item scores are summed to yield a total score (Chorpita et al., 1997). Total scores range from zero to 42, with higher scores indicating greater tendency to worry. The PSWQ-C has been found to have high convergent validity and good internal reliability ($\alpha = .89$) (Chorpita et al., 1997) A sample item from the PSWQ-C is "I am always worrying about something."

Let Grow Project Intervention

The *Let Grow Project* is a school-based program for children in grades K to 8, and is implemented in several schools across the country. The Let Grow Project emphasizes the importance of letting children learn to solve their own problems, build resilience, and develop

self-control by encouraging them, via homework assignments, to engage in independent tasks, some which may require negotiating some small risks. In schools that implement Let Grow, teachers assign homework to students to first receive permission from their parents, and then engage in a task that they feel ready to handle and is something new for them to engage in independently (Letgrow.org, 2008). Some examples of Let Grow Project tasks include walking the dog, making dinner, running an errand, going outside, playing with friends, and getting themselves to school.

To aid parents to land their helicopters and let their children live, play, and explore while building confidence and independence, the Let Grow Project is a school-based program that aims to promote resilience in children by encouraging them to be more independent, though has not been studied at all to date (Letgrow.org, 2008). The Let Grow Project highlights the idea that "treating children as physically and emotionally fragile is bad" and aims to "counter the culture of overprotection" (Letgrow.org, 2008). Let Grow is designed around the idea of future-proofing children, meaning preparing them to always land on their feet by providing them the opportunity to remain flexible, resourceful, and resilient (Letgrow.org, 2008). Let Grow stresses the importance of letting children practice dealing with disappointment, risk, and frustration in order to aid in the process of increasing their self-reliance through successful problem solving, despite inevitable mistakes that will occur (Letgrow.org, 2008).

Procedure

This was a pre-experimental design, with pretest, posttest, and followup measures. After approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Long Island University Post, the investigator contacted a variety of local community centers, and elementary and middle schools in New York via flyers, social media, email, and phone calls. The study utilized convenience sampling. Teachers that agreed to implement the Let Grow Project Study in their classroom

underwent a 1-hour informational session about the Let Grow Project Study procedures provided by the investigator, to ensure that the Let Grow Project was implemented consistently across classrooms. Additionally, teachers were provided with a teacher implementation guide that outlined the structure of the project, including the agenda for each day, necessary documents, and suggested scripts (Appendix L).

After parents provided consent and permission, and children provided assent, parents were contacted utilizing provided cell phone numbers. This was the main form of communication between parents and research assistants (RAs). RAs then assigned each parent-child dyad a 3-digit identification code. Parents and children input this code at the start of any survey they initiated. RAs were provided with a manual that outlined the structure of the project, including the agenda for each day, a schedule for reaching out, and scripts for messages to parents (Appendix M). The investigator remained available to and in contact with RAs throughout the duration of data collection to let RAs know when adjustments were needed (e.g., extending the deadline to respond to a survey).

Teachers were instructed to announce to students that they will be giving them a homework assignment that is different from other assignments they have had before. Teachers were provided folders labeled with children's names to provide to their students who participated in the project. This folder contained a list of Let Grow Project task ideas, instructions for completing tasks independently, a parent calendar, and a parent notification form (Appendix N). Children were instructed to bring these folders home to share and review with their parent and have their parent sign and return the parent notification form to their classroom teacher. Any parent-child dyads from the community that participated in the study were provided the same materials via a google drive folder. The study was initially designed to be fully conducted in a school setting. However, due to difficulties related to COVID restrictions and recruitment

difficulties, much of the procedural plan was altered. For example, the investigator was required to open recruitment further to include participants from various community centers. As such, the Let Grow Project, which is typically held in a classroom setting and assigned to students by their teachers, was altered for some participants. Parents of community participants were asked to take on the role that teachers engaging in the Let Grow project typically have, including introducing the project to their children and aiding their children with deciding on tasks, should they require it.

Prior to beginning the study, all parents were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. They then completed the PSS and questions about their perception of their child's independence and the importance of their child's independence. This was followed by the RCADS-P, PMK-CYRM-R, and an adapted version of the OP-SF. They were then instructed to have their child/ren complete their survey. Children were asked to respond to a question about the perception of their own independence. Additionally, children were asked to complete the CYRM-R, the adapted Helicopter Parenting Questionnaire for Children, and PSWQ-C. Parents and children were then asked to engage in the Let Grow Project. Parents were asked to complete a weekly parent calendar, tracking the tasks their child completed independently, and sharing this at the end of each week with the RAs. Children were asked to engage in independent activities five days out of each week for four weeks, for a total of at least 20 independent tasks. Children were encouraged, either by their classroom teacher, parent or both, to try to engage in activities that were new, exciting, or challenging. After four weeks of participating in the Let Grow Project Study, parents were asked to complete the PSS, questions about their perception of their child's independence and the importance of their child's independence, RCADS-P, PMK-CYRM-R, and the adapted version of the OP-SF at posttest. Children were asked to respond to a question about perceptions of their own independence, the CYRM-R, the adapted Helicopter Parenting

Questionnaire for Children, and PSWQ-C at posttest. Four weeks after this, parents and children were asked to complete the same measures at followup. Participants who completed the study in its entirety were enrolled in a raffle to win a $100 Amazon gift card for completing the study.

Results

Data Analysis

IBM® SPSS Statistics, Version 28 was used for all analyses. Prior to analyses, the data were inspected for missing values and the Expectation Maximization (EM) method was used to impute missing values. The total percentage of values missing and imputed was 6.03%. All measures were completed at baseline. At post-test, 3 children did not complete measures (14.3%). At follow up, 2 children and 3 parents did not complete measures (9.5%, 14.3%).

Intervention effects were analyzed using a series of Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVA), with pre-intervention levels of outcome measures as dependent variables and demographic characteristics as covariates. Demographic characteristics as covariates were examined to determine if results were improved. When results improved with the addition of a covariate, they were added. Therefore, covariates appear in some analyses, and not others (Table 2).

Assumptions of ANCOVA include the assumptions of ANOVA, such that there is homogeneity of variance and the dependent variable is normally distributed. It also includes assumptions that the covariate is a continuous variable, there is linearity between covariates and the dependent variable, and there is homogeneity of variance. All assumptions are tenable given the dataset.

Child Anxiety

One-way repeated-measures ANOVA results revealed that there was a significant main effect of Time on children's ratings of their own anxiety, $F(2, 40) = 3.85$, $p = .03$. The effect size

of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .16$). Within-subjects contrasts analysis revealed that post-intervention anxiety scores ($M = 21.14$, $SD = 6.58$) were significantly lower than baseline anxiety scores ($M = 27.81$, $SD = 9.70$), $F(1, 20) = 9.34$, $p = .006$.

The results of an ANCOVA showed that there was a significant effect of Time on parent's ratings of children's anxiety, when controlling for child gender, $F(2, 38) = 3.40$, $p = .04$. The effect size of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .15$). Within-Subjects contrasts analysis revealed that follow-up anxiety scores ($M = 9.33$, $SD = 2.01$) were significantly lower than baseline anxiety scores ($M = 11.00$, $SD = 3.67$), when controlling for child gender, $F(1, 19) = 5.67$, $p = .009$.

Helicopter Parenting

The results of an ANCOVA showed that there was a significant effect of Time on child's ratings of their parents' helicopter parenting behaviors when controlling for child gender, $F(2, 38) = 4.54$, $p = .017$. The effect size of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .19$). Within-Subjects contrasts analysis revealed that post-intervention helicopter parenting scores ($M = 44.57$, $SD = 11.72$) were significantly lower than baseline helicopter parenting scores ($M = 49.81$, $SD = 9.66$), when controlling for child gender, $F(1, 19) = 7.17$, $p = .015$. Follow-up helicopter parenting scores ($M = 48.75$, $SD = 10.06$) were also significantly lower than baseline helicopter parenting scores, $F(1, 19) = 4.99$, $p = .038$.

The results of an ANCOVA showed that there was a significant effect of Time on parent's ratings of overparenting when controlling for child gender, $F(2, 38) = 5.26$, $p = .01$. The effect size of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .22$). Within-Subjects contrasts analysis revealed that post-intervention overparenting scores ($M = 23.67$, $SD = 3.69$) were significantly lower, $F(1, 19) = 7.31$, $p = 014$, than baseline overparenting scores ($M = 24.71$, $SD = 3.82$), when controlling for

child gender. Follow-up overparenting scores (M = 23.29, SD = 2.94) were also significantly lower, $F(1, 19) = 9.13$, $p = .007$, than baseline overparenting scores when controlling for child gender.

Child Independence

One-way repeated-measures ANOVA results revealed that there was a significant main effect of Time on children's ratings of their own independence, $F(2, 40) = 5.05$, $p = .01$. The effect size of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .20$). Within-Subjects contrasts analysis revealed that post-intervention independence scores (M = 5.95, SD = .59) were significantly higher than baseline independence scores (M = 5.24, SD = 1.09), $F(1, 20) = 6.25$, $p = .021$. Follow-up child independence scores (M = 5.86, SD = .85) were significantly higher than baseline independence scores), $F(1, 20) = 5.20$, $p = .034$.

The results of an ANCOVA showed that there was a significant effect of Time on parent's ratings of children's independence, when controlling for child gender, $F(2, 38) = 4.06$, $p = .03$. The effect size of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .18$). Within-Subjects contrasts analysis revealed that post-intervention independence scores (M = 5.95, SD = 0.74) were significantly higher than baseline independence scores (M = 4.95, SD = 1.36) , $F(1, 19) = 4.72$, $p = .043$, when controlling for gender. Follow-up independence scores (M = 5.90, SD = 1.36) were also significantly higher than baseline independence scores when controlling for child gender, $F(1, 19) = 4.68$, $p = .043$.

Child Resilience

The results of an ANCOVA showed that there was not a significant main effect of Time on children's ratings of their own resilience when controlling for gender, $F(2, 38) = 1.09$, $p = .346$. The effect size of the difference was medium ($\eta^2 = .05$).

One-way repeated-measures ANOVA results revealed that there was significant main effect of Time on parent's ratings of children's resilience, $F(2, 40) = 48.48$, $p < .001$. The effect size of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .70$). Within-Subjects contrasts analysis revealed that post-intervention resilience scores ($M = 27.62$, $SD = 2.22$) were significantly higher than their baseline resilience scores ($M = 27.10$, $SD = 2.17$) $F(1, 20) = 4.96$, $p = .038$. Follow-up resilience scores ($M = 24.05$, $SD = 1.63$) were significantly lower than both baseline, $F(1, 20) = 53.47$, $p < .001$, and post-intervention resilience scores, $F(1, 20) = 55.15$, $p < .001$.

Parent Perception of Importance of Independence

The results of an ANCOVA showed that there was not a significant main effect of Time on importance of independence when controlling for gender, $F(2, 38) = 1.72$, $p = .192$. The effect size of the difference was small ($\eta^2 = .08$).

Parent Stress

One-way repeated-measures ANOVA results revealed that there was no significant main effect of Time on parent stress, $F(2, 40) = 2.60$, $p = .09$). The effect size of the difference was large ($\eta^2 = .12$). While there was no significant main effect of Time, within-subjects contrasts revealed that follow-up parent stress scores ($M = 34.90$, $SD = 5.39$) were significantly lower than post-intervention parent stress scores ($M = 37.38$, $SD = 7.55$), $F(1, 20) = 5.61$, $p = .03$.

Table 2

Comparison of Means at Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-Up with and without Covariates

		Pre		Post		Follow-up			
Variable	Source	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Child Anxiety									
Child Report	Time	27.81_a	9.70	21.14_b	6.58	25.33	10.36	3.85	.030*
Parent Report	Time	11.00_a	3.67	10.95	3.26	9.33_b	2.01	5.19	.010**
	Time * Gender							3.40	.044*
Helicopter Parenting									
Child Report	Time	49.81_a	9.66	44.57_b	11.72	48.76_b	10.06	6.78	.003**
	Time * Gender							4.54	.017*
Parent Report	Time	24.71_a	3.82	23.67_b	3.69	23.19_b	2.94	7.91	.001**
	Time * Gender							5.26	.010**
Independence									
Child Report	Time	5.24_b	1.09	5.95_a	.59	5.86_a	.85	5.05	.011*
Parent Report	Time	4.95_b	1.36	5.95_a	.74	5.90_a	.77	9.81	<.001***
	Time * Gender							4.06	.025*
Importance of Independence									
Parent Report	Time	6.48	.51	6.48	.60	6.33	.66	1.20	.313
	Time * Gender							1.72	.192
Child Resilience									
Child Report	Time	47.52	4.23	48.14	3.58	48.24	4.66	1.45	.246
	Time * Gender							1.09	.346
Parent Report	Time	27.10_a	2.17	27.62_a	2.22	24.05_b	1.63	48.48	<.001***
Parent Stress									
Parent Report	Time	37.67	8.96	37.38	7.55	34.90	5.39	2.59	.087

$_a$ significantly higher mean; $_b$ significantly lower mean

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to quantitatively examine the benefits of independent task engagement on children's independence, resilience, and anxiety. Additionally, the current study sought to examine the impact children's independent task engagement has on parent's levels of stress, parental perception of the importance of their child/ren's independence, and helicopter parenting behaviors. Several studies have highlighted the importance of parental involvement, while simultaneously reporting the negative impacts that overparenting has on children (Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014). While there is a breadth of research about the negative impacts of helicopter parenting (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013; Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014), there is limited literature assessing the benefits of free-range parenting directly (Davis & Cashden, 2020; Skenazy, 2009). Research has highlighted the importance of children's independence (Sasse, 2017; Yuliani, Awayla, & Suminar, 2019) and resilience (Brooks & Goldestein, 2001; Werner, 2006; Shure & Aberson, 2005). Although free-range parenting emphasizes the importance of fostering independence and resilience in children (letgrow.org), only one study directly assessed free-range parenting, focusing on children's independent mobility in the Bolivian Amazon (Davis & Cashden, 2020). This was the first study to examine the effects of independent task engagement on children's independence, resilience and anxiety. Given the proposed benefits of independent task engagement with minimal adult supervision, a crucial component of free-range parenting, the current study sought to examine the benefits of independent task engagement on children's independence, resilience, and anxiety via the Let Grow Project.

We found some evidence that independent task engagement has positive effects on children's independence and resilience. This is consistent with the literature that indicates that higher levels of helicopter parenting are associated with lower levels of independence in children (Yuliani, Awayla, & Suminar, 2019). Given the contrast in supervision practices and freedom allotted to children between helicopter parenting and free-range parenting styles, this finding provided additional evidence that allowing children to complete tasks without adult supervision increases independence. While the current study found a positive effect of independent task completion on children's resilience, it is important to note that this change was only significant in parent's reports of children's resilience, and not in children's reports of their own significance. Existing literature indicates that overparenting has been negatively associated with resilience (Segrin et al., 2013). Although children's reports of their own resilience did not change to a statistically significant degree, average means of resilience increased from baseline to post-intervention. It is possible that the lack of significance in children's reports of their own resilience is due to the short length of the intervention. Participation in Let Grow for a longer duration of time (e.g., a full trimester at school) may have yielded significant results. There may have also been a lack of understanding on children's parts about the concept of resilience. Spending more time with children, in a classroom setting for example, discussing resilience, what it means, and how to notice it changing may have yielded more significant results.

We found evidence that independent task completion has significant effects on child anxiety and helicopter parenting behaviors. This is in line with research has shown that children with helicopter parents have more anxiety and less satisfaction with life than children with less involved parents (Schiffrin et al., 2013; Bitsko, Holbrook, Ghandour, Blumberg, Visser, & Walkup, 2018; Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz and Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014). This is also consistent with research that indicates that

overparenting has been shown to be positively associated with anxiety in children (Segrin et al., 2013). While existing literature indicates that helicopter parenting has negative effects on parents themselves, namely the increased risk of exhaustion, stress, anxiety, and guilt (Wall, 2010), the current study did not find significant main effects of independent task completion on parent's perceptions of independence on parent stress. Of note, the average mean of parent stress remained the same directly after the intervention, and slightly decreased at followup. Again, participation in Let Grow for a longer duration of time may have yielded significant results. Therefore, it is encouraging that with only four weeks of having their children engage in the Let Grow Project, parents still reported a decrease in stress at followup, although it was not a significant decrease. It is also possible that parents experienced stress in ensuring children completed the Let Grow Project Study, on top of other demanding parenting duties.

There are some important limitations to this study. The sample size of the current study was small, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Data collection for this study was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given this, much of the procedural plan for the study was altered to adhere to CDC guidelines. For example, the investigator was unable to recruit for the study in person, meet with principals, teachers, and parents so that they could learn more about the Let Grow Project and have any questions answered in real time. Additionally, running the study in schools presented an additional layer of difficulty, as depending on the location of the school, additional approval was required. For example, the study was limited in its ability to conduct research within any New York City Department of Education (DOE) school, as additional approval would have been required from the DOE, and obtaining such an approval was not possible, given the pandemic. Additionally, the Let Grow Project was created to be implemented in schools. However, given the small participant sample received from the school initially, the investigator was required to open recruitment further to include participants

from various community centers. Therefore, the structure of the Let Grow Project was changed, as community participants were not given the Let Grow Project as a homework assignment by their classroom teacher. Rather, they were given very similar instructions by their parent or caregiver.

Given that the current study was nonrandomized and noncontrolled, there are several threats to external validity. In general, nonrandomized studies are more prone to systematic and confounding biases than are randomized controlled Trials. Therefore, there are limitations to the extent that the results of this study are generalizable. Nonrandomized studies also vary in their ability to estimate a causal effect (Reeves et. al., 2019). A randomized controlled trial on the impacts of independent task completion would provide more reliable results on the interventions effectiveness, as the risk of confounding factors influencing the results would be minimized.

Some directions for future research are worth noting. The present study examined the effects of independent task completion on children's independence, resilience, and anxiety, by encouraging children to pick from a list of activities, or come up with their own to engage in. Children could opt to play in nature, cook something, care for a younger sibling, walk to the neighborhood park, or put groceries away. Therefore, it would be useful to examine more specific components of free-range parenting. For example, characteristics of free-range parenting typically include the allowance of unscheduled activity and playing in nature (letgrow.org). Research focusing solely on the impact of either unscheduled activity or playing in nature has on children may increase understanding of how and in what way specific characteristics of free-range parenting impacts children.

There has been controversy over the free-range parenting movement, as it has received backlash indicating that it is dangerous, and comparing free-range parenting to child neglect (Pimental, 2012). Despite the research that helicopter parenting has negative impacts on children

(Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013; Wood, 2006; Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014; Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Odenweller et al., 2014), it remains a fairly common parenting style (Ishizuka, 2019). Despite all this, research has not yet quantitatively examined acceptability ratings of free-range parenting practices. Research has highlighted the positive role of psychoeducation on parent knowledge and stress, as well as acceptability of and adherence to various treatments (Rothschild, et al., 2022; Bai, et al., 2015; Montoya et al., 2011; Nussey et al., 2013). Therefore, it may be useful to examine if acceptability ratings change after parents are provided with psychoeducation about the impacts of helicopter parenting, as parental education may improve acceptability and adherence. Future research should also assess the feasibility of the Let Grow Project, since it is one of the only school-based interventions aimed at increasing independence and resilience in the context of free-range parenting. Understanding the feasibility of the Let Grow Project can address questions about whether and how the project can be further evaluated and implemented. Results of a feasibility study of the Let Grow Project can inform recruitment capability, data collection procedures, social validity, practicality, generalizability and integration into school systems. Another question with important theoretical implications that can be addressed by future studies is the causal direction of several of the variables related to helicopter parenting. Additional information is required to understand if children of helicopter parents are more dependent on their parents and therefore more anxious, or if anxious children elicit helicopter parenting behaviors from their caregivers.

Future research should examine the impact of independent task completion in a therapeutic context. Research has suggested that differences exist between treatment outcomes in research and outpatient settings (Gibbons et. al., 2021). Research comparing the effects of teacher versus psychologist-led school-based intervention programs has highlighted better

outcomes of psychologist-led interventions (Wahl., et al, 2014). Other research assessing a school-based intervention found similar positive changes in both teacher-led and psychologist-led conditions (Barrett & Turner, 2001). Understanding how various factors (e.g., such as who is delivering the intervention, where the intervention is being delivered) influence the effectiveness of the Let Grow Project, or other school-based interventions, can contribute to training practices for educators, and education and mental health integration. Therefore, observing changes in the effects of independent task completion in the context of various settings may inform intervention delivery.

Overall, the current study found that independent task completion has positive effects on children's independence, resilience, and anxiety, and helicopter parenting behaviors. With the decline in children's mental health in recent years (NHCS & CDC, 2019; Twenge, 2017), there is an urgency to seek and create long-term solutions. Research has highlighted the negative impacts of helicopter parenting, despite well intentioned parents. The current study highlighted the positive impacts of allowing children to act independently, with minimal adult supervision. Now more than ever, children would benefit from the ability to adapt to the world around them and overcome obstacles. The current study suggests that increasing children's independence and resilience can start with parenting. Results from this study highlight the need to teach parents to let their children try and fail independently, in order to instill in their children the confidence that they can deal with disappointment and even bounce back from failure. Further, the results from this study can prompt educators to consider increasing the inclusion of independent task completion into their curriculums.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

1. Relation to child: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Do you identify as Hispanic/ Latinx: _____
5. Race:
    1. White
    2. Black/African American
    3. Asian
    4. American Indian or Alaska Native
    5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    6. Middle Eastern or North African
    7. f. Other: _____
6. Highest Degree:
    1. Non-High School
    2. High School
    3. Associate Degree
    4. Bachelor's Degree
    5. Graduate Level Degree
7. Annual Household Income:
    1. Less than $25,000
    2. $25,000 to $34,999
    3. $35,000 to $49,999
    4. $50,000 to $74,999
    5. $75,000 to $99,999
    6. $100,000+

Please answer the following questions about your child:

1. Gender: _____
2. Age (years and months): _____
3. Grade: _____
4. Please indicate your child's age in years and months: _____

5. Is your child Hispanic/ Latinx: _____

6. Race:
7. White
8. Black/African American
9. Asian
10. American Indian or Alaska Native
11. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
12. Middle Eastern or North African
13. f. Other: _____

Appendix B

Overparenting Scale – Short Form (OP-SF) - Adapted

To what extent do the following statements apply to you.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

1. If I can see that my child is about to have some difficulty, I will intervene to take care of the situation before things get difficult for him/her.

2. I try to anticipate things that will prevent my child from reaching his/her goals and act to eliminate them before they become a problem.

3. I try to stay one step ahead of what my child is doing so that I can help him/her minimize any obstacles that could be encountered.

4. If I see that my child is feeling badly, I try to cheer him/her up.

5. When my child gets anxious, I will say things to calm him/her down.

6. When times get tough for my child, I talk to him/her about trying to look on the bright side of things.

7. Regardless of distance, I drive my child to and from all appointments, play dates, extracurricular activities, etc., or ensure my child is transported by a trusted adult.

8. I see to it that I am able to provide any financial assistance to my child, beyond my child's basic necessities.

9. I urge my child to be careful and not take too many risks in life.

10. I do what I can to protect my child from risky situations.

11. I do what I can to keep my child out of difficult situations.

Appendix C

The Parental Stress Scale (PSS)

The following statements describe feelings and perceptions about the experience of being a parent. Think of each of the items in terms of how your relationship with your child or children typically is. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following items by placing the appropriate number in the space provided.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

1. I am happy in my role as a parent.
2. There is little or nothing I wouldn't do for my child(ren) if it was necessary.
3. Caring for my child(ren) sometimes takes more time and energy than I have to give.
4. I sometimes worry whether I am doing enough for my child(ren).
5. I feel close to my child(ren).
6. I enjoy spending time with my child(ren).
7. My child(ren) is an important source of affection for me.
8. Having child(ren) gives me a more certain and optimistic view for the future.
9. The major source of stress in my life is my child(ren).
10. Having child(ren) leaves little time and flexibility in my life.
11. Having child(ren) has been a financial burden.
12. It is difficult to balance different responsibilities because of my child(ren).
13. The behaviour of my child(ren) is often embarrassing or stressful to me.
14. If I had it to do over again, I might decide not to have child(ren).
15. I feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of being a parent.
16. Having child(ren) has meant having too few choices and too little control over my life.
17. I am satisfied as a parent.
18. I find my child(ren) enjoyable.

Appendix D

Person Most Knowledgeable - Child & Youth Resilience Measure - Revised (PMK-CYRM-R)

The questions below are designed to help us better understand how the child copes with daily life and what role the people around them play in dealing with daily challenges. To what extent do the following statements apply to the child? There are no right or wrong answers.

1 = Not at all 2 = A little 3 = Somewhat 4 = Quite a bit 5 = A lot

1. They cooperate/share with people around them.
2. They believe getting an education or doing well in school is important to them.
3. They know how to behave/act in different situations (like school, home, church or mosque).
4. They have a parent(s)/caregiver(s) who knows where they are and what they are doing most of the time.
5. They have a parent(s)/caregiver(s) who knows a lot about them (for example what makes them happy, scared, sad).
6. They have enough to eat at their home when they are hungry.
7. They are fun to be with or that others like to play with them.
8. They talk to their family/caregiver(s) about how they feel.
9. They feel supported by their friends.
10. They feel they fit in at their school.
11. They have a family/caregiver who cares about them when times are hard (for example if they are sick or have done something wrong).
12. They have friends who care about them when times are hard (for example if they are sick or have done something wrong).
13. They are treated fairly.
14. They are given chances to show others that they are growing up and can do things by themselves.
15. They feel safe when they are with their family/caregiver(s).
16. They have chances to learn things that will be useful when they are older (like cooking, working, and helping others).
17. They like the way their family/caregiver(s) celebrates things (like holidays or learning about their culture).

Appendix E

Parental Perception on Child's Independence Questionnaire

Please read the statement below and rate how much you agree with it.

My child is independent.

1 - Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 - Somewhat Disagree
4 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
5 - Somewhat Agree
6 - Agree
7 - Strongly Agree

Appendix F

Parental Perception on the Importance of Child's Independence Questionnaire

Please read the statement below and rate how much you agree with it.

I think it's important that my child is independent.

1 - Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 - Somewhat Disagree
4 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
5 - Somewhat Agree
6 - Agree
7 - Strongly Agree

Appendix G

Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale - Parent Version (RCADS-P) - Generalized Anxiety Subscale

Please indicate the word that describes how often each of these things happen to your child. There are no right or wrong answers.

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Often 3 = Always

1. My child worries about things.
2. My child worries that something awful will happen to someone in the family.
3. My child worries that bad things will happen to him/her.
4. My child worries that something bad will happen to him/her.
5. My child worries about what is going to happen.
6. My child thinks about death.

Appendix H

The Child & Youth Resilience Measure - Revised (CYRM-R)

How much do you believe the following sentences apply to you? There are no right or wrong answers.

1 = No 2 = Sometimes 3 = Yes

1. I get along with people around me.
2. Getting an education is important to me.
3. I know how to behave/act in different situations (such as at school, home, and church).
4. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) really look out for me.
5. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me (for example, who my friends are, what I like to do).
6. If I am hungry, there is enough to eat.
7. People like to spend time with me.
8. I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel (for example, when I am hurt or sad).
9. I feel supported by my friends.
10. I feel that I belong/ belonged at my school.
11. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) care about me when times are hard (for example, if I am sick or have done something wrong).
12. My friends care about me when times are hard (for example, if I am sick or have done something wrong)
13. I am treated fairly in my community.
14. I have chances to show others that I am growing up and can do things by myself.
15. I feel safe when I am with my family/ caregiver(s).
16. I have chances to learn things that will be useful when I am older (like cooking, working, and helping others).
17. I like the way my family/caregiver(s) celebrates things (like holidays or learning about my culture).

Appendix I

Children's Independence Questionnaire

Read the sentence below and pick the answer that best tells how true the sentence is about you. Think about how much you agree with sentence below. The word independent means "not needing the help or support of others; being able to do things by yourself."

I am independent.

1 - Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 - Somewhat Disagree
4 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
5 - Somewhat Agree
6 - Agree
7 - Strongly Agree

Appendix J

Helicopter Parenting Questionnaire for Children

Read each of the following statements thinking about your parent.

1 - Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 – Slightly disagree
4 - Neither agree nor disagree
5 – Slightly agree
6 - Agree
7 - Strongly agree

My parent...

1. …Tries to make all my big decisions.
2. …Overreacts when I deal with a tough or negative experience.
3. …Sometimes spends more time and energy on my projects than I do.
4. …Thinks they are a bad parent when they do not step in and save me from a tough or negative experience.
5. …Feels like a bad parent when I make poor choices.
6. …Tells me their opinions about my friendships and other relationships.
7. …Thinks they are a good parent when they solve problems for me.
8. …always needs to know about my day-to-day activities like where I am and who I am with.
9. …always tries to fix it when I am dealing with a tough or difficult situation or problem.
10. …Thinks it's their job to protect me from any problems, difficulties or tough situations.

Appendix K

Penn State Worry Questionnaire for Children (PSWQ-C)

The next few questions are about worrying. Worrying happens when you are scared about something and you think about it a lot. People sometimes worry about school, their family, their health, things coming up in the future, or other kinds of things. For each sentence you read, pick the answer that best tells how true that sentence is about you.

0 = Never true. 1 = Sometimes true 2 = Most times true 3 = Always true

1. My worries really bother me.
2. I don't really worry about things.
3. Many things make me worry.
4. I know I shouldn't worry about things, but I just can't help it.
5. When I am under pressure, I worry a lot.
6. I am always worrying about something.
7. I find it easy to stop worrying when I want.
8. When I finish one thing, I start to worry about everything else.
9. I never worry about anything.
10. I've been a worrier all my life.
11. I notice that I have been worrying about things.
12. Once I start worrying, I can't stop.
13. I worry all the time.
14. I worry about things until they are all done.

Appendix L

Teacher Implementation Guide

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY POST
Teacher Implementation Guide

Title of Research Study: *Let Go and LetGrow: An assessment of a School-Based Intervention Encouraging Independence and Resilience in Children*

Principal Investigator: Mary Elsharouny, MS

Supervising Investigator: Camilo Ortiz, PhD

Dear Teacher,

I'd like to start by saying thank you so much for taking the time to implement this study in your classroom, to help us better understand the Let Grow Program. Teachers have the incredible capacity to transform children. I am still grateful to the teachers who shaped, influenced, and believed in me. I am hopeful that this study will provide us with meaningful evidence-based data about children's independence and resilience. Of course, this study would not be possible without your help, and for that I am sincerely thankful.

Below, you will find a detailed implementation guide. Think of the scripts in this guide as suggestions. What is most important in this guide is the first day the Let Grow Project is introduced to your class by you, and the subsequent check-in timeline. Of course, if you have any questions, you can reach out to me, the principal investigator, at mary.elsharouny@my.liu.edu or at my cell, 646-752-0596. Throughout the course of this study, you will also hear from research assistants, who will let you know which kids within your class are participating in the study, based on who consents to participate.

We (the principal investigator & the research assistants) would like to keep in touch with you briefly to see how things are going throughout the study. We will do this through text to make it as easy as possible. We'll also send reminders as we go, just to make sure were all on the same page. One of those check-in/reminder text messages might say something like, "Hi. This is one of the research assistants for the Let Grow Project Study. This is a reminder that tomorrow is week 1, day 3 and the 2nd check in with your class."

I am incredibly eager to be working with St. Patrick School and its incredible staff. Although I wish I could show my appreciation in much larger ways, I am limited, as I am, as you all know, a graduate student. Teachers who participate in the study will be given as $10 gift card as a small token of my immense appreciation. I know it is not the money that motivates you all, but I think being able to treat oneself to a cup of coffee here and there can go a long way.

All my best,
Mary Elsharouny, M.S., principal investigator

Note: While you know which of your kids are assigned to which group, the kids will not. Naturally, kids talk, and it is certainly likely that they will figure it out themselves. However, I ask that you try your best to avoid discussing the parent component of the study, keeping conversations more about the experience of completing the tasks, and less about who the tasks were completed with.

WEEK 1

DAY 1 – INTRODUCING THE LET GROW PROJECT

Agenda (between 10-20 minutes):

1. Introducing the Let Grow Project to your class. This should be more in depth so that the kids really understand the goal of the project. The goal is to really highlight for your students the importance of picking things that might be new, challenging and/or hard. It is important to try and get the kids excited about this project. The goal today is to encourage the kids to do an activity 5 days a week, and try new, hard and exciting things.
2. Ensure that the kids get their correct envelope to take home to review and show their parents. Explain that kids should bring in the "parent notification form" signed by their parent the following day.
3. Discuss potential first day activities with the kids.
4. Discuss expectations of this assignment as you would any other homework assignment. Remind the kids that they should get their parents' permission before doing any activity and that you'll be checking in with them tomorrow to see how their first activity went.

Materials:

1) Teacher Let Grow Ideas Sheet
    a. This is for you to keep. This is the same list of activity suggestions children and parents will be provided with.
2) Folder with child's name. These will be provided to you by the research assistants.
    a. These folders will have specific instructions for the child based on which group they were randomly assigned to. You will also be made aware of which child is in which group. As a reminder, I (principal investigator) will not know which child is in which group to remain "blind" to the study.
    b. The folder will also contain materials for the child's parents, including a printed calendar that the parent will be filling out.
    c. The folder will also include a "parent notification form." This form should be signed by the parent and returned to you the next day by the student. This is only so that we know that parents received the folders from their kids.

Suggested Script:

"Now that you're a little older, it is time for you to do something new. You will be given a folder for you to give your parents with the homework directions on it. You will be doing some things like making food, going for a walk or walking the dog. Your parents will help you decide what to do each week. I can also help you decide if you're having a hard time.

You should try to challenge yourself to do new, exciting, or even hard things. This is your chance to do things you have always wanted to try but were maybe a little nervous or worried. Your parents also know about this study. Make sure to ask your parents for permission and do your best to try different things. This is something you should be doing [every school day, 5 days out of the week, etc.]. You should try to pick different things to do every day. For example, just because walking the dog is on there, doesn't mean that because you walk the dog every day, that will count for your homework. Remember, try to challenge yourself!

Inside your folder you'll find a few things. One of the things in there, is called a parent notification form. It's on the left side on the folder. When you show this folder to your parents when you get home, ask them to sign that form. After they sign it, make sure you bring that back in with you tomorrow to give to me. You will keep the other pages and the folder, but that one page should come back to me signed by your parent tomorrow.

There is a list inside the folder I gave you all with examples of some of the different stuff you can try to do. Take a look at it. What do you guys think you'll be trying out today for your first day of the week?"

DAY 2 – FIRST CHECK-IN

Agenda (about 5 minutes):

1. Ask kids if they gave the parents their envelopes and collect parent notification forms
    a. If any child is missing this form, ask them to bring it in the next day.
    b. If a child continues to forget the form, please inform the principal investigator at mary.elsharouny@my.liu.edu so that a research assistant may reach out and follow up
2. Conduct a check-in with the kids to see how their first activity went.
3. Discuss activities the kids plan on doing today.
    a. Some kids may require additional support with planning out or deciding on activities. You know your students really well and can help them make this decision if needed. It's okay if planned activities change, so long as the kids are still doing *something* (either with or without their parent, based on which group they are assigned to) each day.

Suggested Script

"I am so excited to hear how the first activity went. Who would like to share?

…

It sounds like there were some fun and hard activities that you tried. What are some plans for activities for today? Let's keep up the fantastic work with trying some new, fun exciting or hard things each day."

DAY 3 – SECOND CHECK-IN

Agenda (about 5 minutes):

1. Collect any remaining "parent notification forms" from kids
    a. If a child continues to forget the form, please inform the principal investigator at mary.elsharouny@my.liu.edu so that a research assistant may reach out and follow up
2. Conduct a check-in with the kids to see how their activity went.
3. Discuss activities the kids plan on doing today.

Suggested Script:

"Who would like to share how their activities went yesterday?

...

Keep up the great work. Remember to keep trying different activities every day if you can. Just as a reminder, you should be doing this 5 days out of the week. You can choose to do it every school day, if you want. Or you can do some activities on the weekends too. I'll be checking in occasionally, over the next 4 weeks to see how you're all doing with the activities. Just because I won't be checking in every day, doesn't mean you shouldn't be working on it every day! Remember to try to challenge yourselves."

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 5– THIRD CHECK IN

Agenda (about 5 minutes):

1. Conduct a check-in with the kids to see how their activities are going.
    a. If a child seems to be disengaged or does not appear to be completing the assignment, please inform the principal investigator at mary.elsharouny@my.liu.edu so that a research assistant may reach out and follow up

Suggested Script:

"Who would like to share how their activities went yesterday?

...

Keep up the great work. Remember to keep trying different activities every day if you can. Just as a reminder, you should be doing this 5 days out of the week. You can choose to do it every school day, if you want. Or you can do some activities on the weekends too. I'll be checking in occasionally, over the next 4 weeks to see how you're doing with the activities. Just because I won't be checking in every day, doesn't mean you shouldn't be working on it every day! Remember to try to challenge yourselves."

WEEK 2

DAY 1 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 2 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 3 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 5 – FOURTH CHECK-IN

Agenda (about 5 minutes):

1. Conduct a check-in with the kids to see how their activities are going.
    a. If a child seems to be disengaged or does not appear to be completing the assignment, please inform the principal investigator at mary.elsharouny@my.liu.edu so that a research assistant may reach out and follow up
2. Teachers can offer ideas on how to make activities that a child has completed more challenging (for example, if a child made themselves a sandwich for lunch yesterday, a teacher might suggest that they try to bake something as a more challenging task)

Suggested Script:

"Who would like to share how their activities are going?

...

"Wow, that sounds like a (great/fun/challenging/exciting/hard) thing that you tried! Maybe tomorrow you can try…(a slightly more challenging activity). What do you think?

...

Keep up the great work. Remember to keep trying different activities every day if you can. Just as a reminder, you should be doing this 5 days out of the week. You can choose to do it every school day, if you want. Or you can do some activities on the weekends too. I'll keep checking in over the next 2 weeks to see how you're doing with the activities. Just because I won't be checking in every day, doesn't mean you shouldn't be working on it every day! Remember to try to challenge yourselves."

WEEK 3

DAY 1 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 2 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 3 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 5 – FIFTH CHECK-IN

Agenda (about 5 minutes):

1. Conduct a check-in with the kids to see how their activities are going.
    a. If a child seems to be disengaged or does not appear to be completing the assignment, please inform the principal investigator at mary.elsharouny@my.liu.edu so that a research assistant may reach out and follow up
2. Teachers can offer ideas on how to make activities that a child has completed more challenging (for example, if a child made themselves a sandwich for lunch yesterday, a teacher might suggest that they try to bake something as a more challenging task)

Suggested Script:

"Who would like to share how their activities are going?

...

"Wow, that sounds like a (great/fun/challenging/exciting/hard) thing that you tried! Maybe tomorrow you can try…(a slightly more challenging activity). What do you think?

...

Keep up the great work. Remember to keep trying different activities every day if you can. Just as a reminder, you should be doing this 5 days out of the week. You can choose to do it every school day, if you want. Or you can do some activities on the weekends too. I'll keep checking in over the next week to see how you're doing with the activities. Just because I won't be checking in every day, doesn't mean you shouldn't be working on it every day! Remember to try to challenge yourselves. One week left!"

WEEK 4

DAY 1 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 2 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 3 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 5 – FIFTH AND FINAL CHECK-IN

Agenda (about 5 minutes):

1. Conduct a check-in with the kids to see how their activities are going.
    a. If a child seems to be disengaged or does not appear to be completing the assignment, please inform the principal investigator at mary.elsharouny@my.liu.edu so that a research assistant may reach out and follow up

Suggested Script:

"WOW!! You reached the fourth and final week. Who would like to share how their activities are going?

...

"Wow, that sounds like a (great/fun/challenging/exciting/hard) thing that you tried!

...

I am so impressed and proud of you for getting through 4 weeks of this assignment! You all worked hard and did some new and exciting things."

Appendix M

Research Assistant Manual

Research Assistant Manual

LET GO AND LET GROW: AN ASSESSMENT OF A SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTION ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE AND RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN

Mary Elsharouny, M.S.

STUDY OVERVIEW

Purpose of Present Study

The goal of the current study is to quantitively examine the benefits of independent task engagement on children's independence, resilience, and anxiety via the Let Grow Project. While research on the effects of helicopter parenting and its counterpart, free range parenting, has grown in recent years, several important questions remain. First, it is unclear if helicopter parenting young children decreases children's independence, thus impacting their mental health. It is also unclear if helicopter parenting hinders children's resilience, or their ability to cope with every-day challenges and deal with disappointments. There is limited research on what has been identified as helicopter parenting's emerging counterpart, free-range parenting (Skenazy, 2009). Almost no evaluations of interventions aimed at reducing helicopter parenting have been conducted. It is evident that there are substantial gaps in the current literature on free-range parenting outcomes and its influence on children's independence and resilience. Given that parenting style is an important aspect in fostering independence (**G**rolnick & Ryan, 1989; Barber, 1996; Barber & Harman, 2002) and resilience (Zakeri, Jowkar & Razmojee, 2010) in children, there is importance in investigating the effects of independent task engagement, with minimal adult supervision, on children's independence and resilience. In addition to examining changes in children's independence, resilience and anxiety scores, we examined parental stress and parental perception on the importance of their child/ren's independence.

THE LET GROW PROJECT

The Let Grow Project is a school-based intervention aimed at promoting resilience in children by encouraging them to be more independent, and has not been studied at all to date. Given the role of parents as the gatekeepers of independence, the current research aims at investigating the effect of unsupervised independent task completion via the Let Grow Project on children's independence, resilience and anxiety.

To aid parents to land their helicopters and let their children live, play, and explore while building confidence and independence, Skenazy created the LetGrow Project. The Let Grow Project highlights the idea that “treating children as physically and emotionally fragile is bad” and aims to “counter the culture of overprotection” (Letgrow.org, 2008). Let Grow is designed around the idea of future-proofing children, meaning preparing them to always land on their feet by providing them the opportunity to remain flexible, resourceful, and resilient (Letgrow.org, 2008).

The Let Grow Project is implemented in several schools across the country and emphasizes the importance of letting children learn to solve their own problems, build resilience and develop self-control by encouraging them, via homework assignments, to engage in independent tasks, some which may require negotiating some small risks. In schools that implement Let Grow, teachers assign homework to students to first receive permission from their parents, and then engage in a task that they feel ready to handle and is something new for them to engage in independently (Letgrow.org, 2008). Some examples of Let Grow Project tasks include walking the dog, making dinner, running an errand, going outside, playing with friends, and getting themselves to school. Skenazy seeks to fight against the fearful culture that exists today and develop the project as a way to offer parents a sense of bravery to help give their children the crucial independence needed to succeed in life. Let Grow stresses the importance of letting children practice dealing with disappointment, risk and frustration in order to aid in the process of increasing their self-reliance through successful problem solving, despite inevitable mistakes that will occur (Letgrow.org, 2008).

TRAININGS

CITI Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The IRB course teaches the ethical principles, professional standards, good clinical practice, policies and procedures, federal regulations, and other applicable laws for human subjects research. The training must be completed prior to conducting human subject research. Begin by creating an account at https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/. Because you will have communication with participants (parents) throughout the study, it is required that you complete.

As per the LIU IRB website:
All Individuals involved in human subjects research are required to complete the appropriate Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Human Subjects Research (HSR) course and the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR):

- Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) Researchers and Students Working with Human Subjects
- All Learner Groups - Responsible Conduct of Research OR Biomedical Researchers and Students Working with Human Subjects AND

HSR training is provided at no cost and must be renewed every three years.

View this link for more information regarding required trainings:
https://liu.edu/about/administrative-departments/academic-affairs/Office-of-Sponsored-Projects/Research-Training

Trainings required for research assistants involved in this study:

1. Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) Researchers and Students Working with Human Subjects

2. All Learner Groups - Responsible Conduct of Research

RA RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Label participant folders with child's name and place in blank folder to return to principal investigator

2. Reach out to parents, via call or email, depending on what contact information is provided to us via the school, if necessary for follow-up regarding:
    a. initial consent/ parental permission/ assent surveys [will only need the school to provide us with parents contact information before these are completed; once completed, we will have parent cell numbers for contact moving forward]
    b. Baseline survey
    c. Post Intervention Survey
    d. 1-month follow-up survey
    e. Weekly calendar picture

3. Reach out to teachers to ensure teacher implementation guide is being followed across teachers and classrooms.
    a. Send teachers reminder texts the night before each “check in” as noted in the teacher implementation guide

Participant Assignment Tracking Sheet

Parent/Child Dyad Family Name	3-digit code	Parent Cell Phone Number	Parent Name	Child Name
E.g., *FREUD*	*000*	*000-000-0000*	*SIGMUND FREUD*	*ANNA FREUD*

Label Folders

The principal investigator will provide RAs with folders that contain various materials. Children will be taking these home to their parents regarding their assignments and the study.

RAs will also write down the assigned 3-digit code for each child on the inside of the folder.

Each class involved in the study should have a separate overall folder, so that teachers can be given the folder for their specific grade and class.

The investigator will take these labeled folders to St. Patrick School so that teachers may distribute the folders at the start of the Let Grow Project, as indicated by instructions under "Day 1 Week 1" within the Teacher intervention guide.

What each child instruction folder contains:

1. Instruction sheet
2. Daily Tracking Calendar
3. Parent Notification Form
4. Copy of Consent/ Assent forms for parents to keep (they have already signed the digital consent forms)

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

After the consent/ permission/ assent survey has been distributed by the school, RAs will call parents of children ages 8-12 who attend St. Patrick School. THIS STEP DEPENDENT UPON RECEIVING CONTACT INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOL AND MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE IF PERMISSION NOT GRANTED. If permission is not granted, please ignore the scripts below and proceed to text message scripts.

If the parent answers, RAs will utilize the script below.

"*Hello, my name is X. I am a clinical psychology doctoral candidate from LIU and a research assistant for a study that is being held at your child's school. How are you today?*

...

I don't want to take up too much of your time. I got your phone number from the principal, Mrs. Petruccio. You should have received an email from Mrs. Petruccio with some information about the study. In short, the study is looking to see what letting kids do things independently does for their independence, resilience and mental health. Mrs. Petruccio is really excited about running this study at St. Patrick School and we think we could find out some really useful information. All of you and your child's information will be kept confidential. Please take a few minutes to read the email from Mrs. Petruccio and complete the electronic survey linked in the email. ...Do you have any questions?

Thank you so much for your time, and we look forward to receiving your completed survey. If you have any questions, you can call this number back. Feel free to save this number in your phone under "Name X, study questions" if that is helpful."

If the parent does not answer and is able to leave a message, RAs will utilize the script below.

"*Hello, my name is X. I am a clinical psychology doctoral candidate from LIU and a research assistant for a study that is being held at your child's school. How are you today?*

...

I got your phone number from the principal, Mrs. Petruccio. You should have received an email from Mrs. Petruccio with some information about the study. In short, the study is looking to see what letting kids do things independently does for their independence, resilience and mental health. Mrs. Petruccio is really excited about running this study at St. Patrick School and we think we could find out some really useful information. All of you and your child's information will be kept confidential. Please take a few minutes to read the email from Mrs. Petruccio and complete the electronic survey linked in the email. ...Do you have any questions?

Thank you so much for your time, and we look forward to receiving your completed survey. If you have any questions, you can call this number back. Feel free to save this number in your phone under "Name X, study questions" if that is helpful."

If the parent asks for further information that you are not able to answer based on the available information in this document, please let them know that the principal investigator will give them a call shortly. Provide the parents name, phone number and question to the principal investigator as soon as you are able to, so that I can call them as soon as possible.

Assigning a Code and Sending Baseline Survey Text Script

SEND THIS MESSAGE FIRST:

Hello. My name is X. I am a clinical psychology doctoral candidate from LIU and a research assistant for the Let Grow Project study at St. Patrick Catholic School. You can text me with any issues you may have related to the surveys or your code.

Your 3-digit code is XXX.

You will be asked to input this code at the start of any survey you or child responds to.

SEPARATE TEXT AT THE SAME TIME:

This survey link is for YOU. Please click it and respond by March 20th.

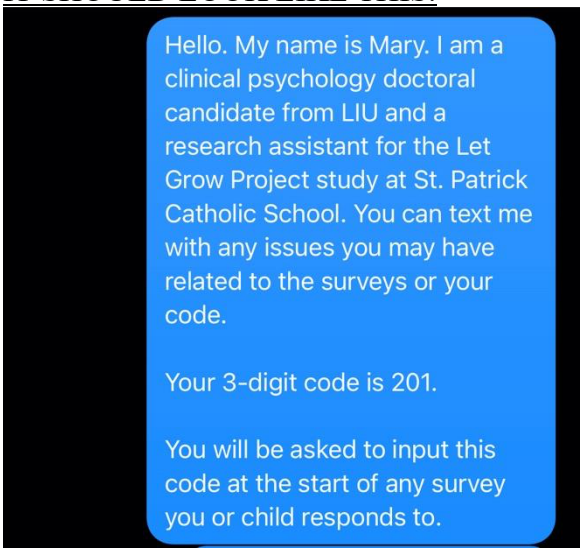
https://corexmsdt33tdwf8nzpq.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5j27ysEn1izaePQ

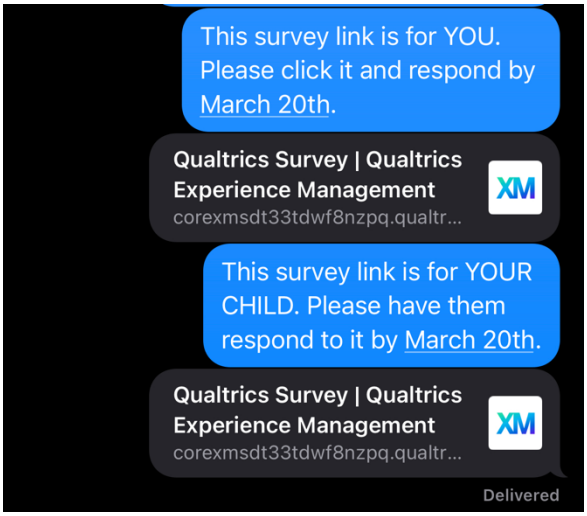
SEPARATE TEXT AT THE SAME TIME:

This survey link is for YOUR CHILD. Please have them respond to it by March 20th.

https://corexmsdt33tdwf8nzpq.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bOgFCzqqiclSIAu

IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE THIS:





Calendar Reminder Texts to Parents

RA's will send a text to parents to remind them to complete the "parent task calendar."

The reminder text should say,

"Hello. This is X, the Research Assistant for The Let Grow Project/Study. I am texting you as a reminder to complete the task calendar. Please write the task your child completed in each box, each day, along with the date. Please also write whether the task your child completed was with you or without you. Thank you so much."

The schedule for sending out the Calendar Reminder Text to parents is as follows:

WEEK 1

DAY 1 – Intro. of who you are, and what you'll be texting them about

"Hello, this is X, the Research Assistant for the Let Grow Project/Study. I will be texting you occasionally throughout the next 4 weeks to offer reminders about completing the daily tracking calendar and sending the calendar at the end of each week."

DAY 2 – FIRST CHECK-IN

"This is a reminder to complete the first day of the daily tracking calendar. Please write the date, and the task your child completed, as well as if it was completed independently or with you/ your supervision."

DAY 3 – SECOND CHECK-IN

"This is a reminder to complete the daily tracking calendar. Please write the date, and the task your child completed, as well as if it was completed independently or with you/ your supervision."

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 5– THIRD CHECK IN AND CALENDAR COLLECTION

"This is a reminder to complete the daily tracking calendar. Please text me a picture of the completed week. Thank you!

WEEK 2

DAY 1 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 2 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 3 – FOURTH CHECK-IN

"Hello, this is X, the Research Assistant for the Let Grow Project. This is a reminder to complete the daily tracking calendar each day. Please write the date, and the task your child completed, as well as if it was completed independently or with you/ your supervision."

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 5 – FIFTH CHECK-IN AND CALENDAR COLLECTION

"This is a reminder to complete the daily tracking calendar. Please text me a picture of the completed week. Thank you!

WEEK 3

DAY 1 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 2 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 3 – SIXTH CHECK-IN

"Hello, this is X, the Research Assistant for the Let Grow Project. This is a reminder to complete the daily tracking calendar each day. Please write the date, and the task your child completed, as well as if it was completed independently or with you/ your supervision."

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 5 – SEVENTH CHECK-IN

"This is a reminder to complete the daily tracking calendar. Please text me a picture of the completed week. Thank you!

WEEK 4

DAY 1 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 2 – NOTHING REQUIRED

DAY 3 – EIGHTH CHECK-IN

"Hello, this is X, the Research Assistant for the Let Grow Project/Study. Given that Easter is coming up, I will not be reaching out again until Monday. Please do your best to continue completing the project and calendar. I will reach out Monday to remind you to share your final calendar with me. You are welcome to share it with me any time before then as well.

I hope you have a wonderful Easter!"

DAY 4 – NOTHING REQUIRED – RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY

Do not contact the parents unless they reach out to you.

DAY 5 – NOTHING REQUIRED – RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY

Do not contact the parents unless they reach out to you.

WEEK 5

DAY 1 – NINTH AND FINAL CHECK-IN

"Hello, this is X, the Research Assistant for the Let Grow Project/Study. This is a reminder to text me a picture of last week's completed calendar. Thank you!

RIGHT AFTER YOU RECEIVED THE FINAL TRACKING CALENDAR TEXT:

"Thank you so much for completing the Let Grow assignments throughout the last 4 weeks!

As a reminder, your 3-digit code is XXX."

SEPARATE TEXT AT THE SAME TIME:

"This survey link is for YOU. Please click it and respond by April 24th."

https://corexmsdt33tdwf8nzpq.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6hP3cQ2kfHDWHem

SEPARATE TEXT AT THE SAME TIME:

This survey link is for YOUR CHILD. Please have them respond to it by April 24th."

https://corexmsdt33tdwf8nzpq.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4OBhT9Z095IWSfs

WEEK 8

DAY 1 – FOLLOW-UP FOR POST-TEST MEASURES

SEND THIS MESSAGE FIRST:
"Hello. This is X. I am the research assistant for the Let Grow Project study at St. Patrick Catholic School. Please complete the survey. This is the final time that you and your child will be asked to complete the survey.

As a reminder, your 3-digit code is XXX.

After you have completed the survey, you will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a $100 gift card to Amazon.

SEPARATE TEXT AT THE SAME TIME:
"This survey link is for YOU. Please click it and respond by May 19th."

https://corexmsdt33tdwf8nzpq.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9AEFeFl41eS2M2q

SEPARATE TEXT AT THE SAME TIME:
"This survey link is for YOUR CHILD. Please have them respond to it by May 19th."

https://corexmsdt33tdwf8nzpq.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0fFhOnZLiKxu4js

PROJECTED STUDY TIMELINE

March 4 – March 10
- Consent forms are being completed by parents.

March 5 – March 11
- Assigning codes and texting parents code and survey links, creating child folders.

March 20
- Parents and children have until today to complete baseline surveys.

March 21 – March 25
- Week 1 of study begins.

March 25
- Collect Week 1 calendar.

March 28 – April 1
- Week 2 of study begins.

April 1
- Collect Week 2 calendar.

April 4 – April 8
- Week 3 of study begins.

April 8
- Collect Week 3 calendar.

April 11 – April 15
- Week 4 of study begins (4/14-4/15 religious holidays).

April 18
- Collect Week 4 final calendar and send out post intervention survey.

April 24
- Post intervention survey should be completed no later than today.

May 13
- Follow-up survey goes out.

May 19
- Last day to respond to follow-up survey. Project complete, data to be organized.

Appendix N
Let Grow Project Study Materials

DIRECTIONS

1) Pick from this list of activities or do something like these that you pick yourself. You should be doing at least 1 activity EVERY DAY FOR 5 DAYS OUT OF THE WEEK. You should be doing this for 4 WEEKS IN A ROW.

2) After you get your parents permission, MAKE SURE YOU DO THESE THESE ACTIVITIES WITHOUT YOUR PARENTS.

3) Your parent can help you pick an activity if you are having a hard time. It is important that you do these activities without your parents help.

4) Try your best and have fun!

SPEND TIME WITH ANIMALS
Walk the dog.
Pet sit for a neighbor or friend.
Feed the birds.

GO OUTSIDE
Climb a tree.
Ride your bike.
Play in your backyard.
Explore the woods.

GET GROWING
Plant flowers good for butterflies.
Grow something you can eat.
Create a container or fairy garden.

HELP OUT AROUND THE HOUSE
Take out the trash.
Do your laundry.
Get yourself ready for school.
Fix something that is broken.

HEAD TO THE KITCHEN
Bake cookies or a cake.
Make dinner for your family.
Pack your own lunch.

EXPLORE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
Walk to a friend's house.
Visit a neighbor.
Go to a store near you.

LOVE YOUR PLANET
Pick up garbage outside.
Donate something you don't use.
Make a piece of "trash art".

HELP OTHERS
Babysit a sibling.
Help a neighbor with a chore.
Teach someone younger how to do something.

HAVE FUN WITH FRIENDS
Host a sleepover.
Put on a play or show.
Start your own club.

BUILD & CREATE
Build something you can use.
Make art outside.
Sew something.

INCREASE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY
Make a haircut or dentist appointment.
Create a budget.
Mow the lawn.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF
Paint a room.
Build a fort.
Camp out in the backyard.
Volunteer.

Directions for Parents: Please write the task your child completed in each box, each day. As a reminder, your child should be completing a different task each day, 5 days of the week, for a total of 4 weeks. You will be asked to send a picture of this calendar completed at the end of each week via text.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
WEEK 1	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:
WEEK 2	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:
WEEK 3	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:
WEEK 4	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:	Date: Task Completed:

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY POST
Parent Notification Sheet

Title of Research Study: *An Assessment of a School and Community-Based Intervention Encouraging Independence and Resilience in Children*

Principal Investigator: Mary Elsharouny, MS

Supervising Investigator: Camilo Ortiz, PhD

Dear Parent,

Please sign this form and return it with your child back to their classroom teacher. You and your child should keep the folder and all other documents. This sheet is the only one that should return to school, so that your child may give it to their teacher. This is so that the teacher is aware that your child has shown you the folder. You should now be aware if your child is expected to engage in tasks independently. Children are expected to ask and receive your permission before engaging in any activity.

Please sign below to indicate that you have received the study & project folder.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent Participant Date

PLEASE RETURN TO CLASSROOM TEACHER.