

### CHAPTER III: DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Two hundred seven eligible caregivers completed the initial interview. One hundred fifty-three (73.9%) of these caregivers completed interviews at all four waves: initial interview, six-month follow-up, 12-month follow-up, and 18-month follow-up. Twenty caregivers (9.7%) completed three interviews, 19 (9.2%) completed two, and 15 (7.2%) completed only the initial interview. We are pleased with the retention rate in this study. As the income data reveals, a high percentage of the families in this study are economically disadvantaged. A sizable number lived in public housing and relocated during the study because their housing developments were being demolished. Others moved from homes or apartments that they rented when their landlords decided to sell their buildings. So it was very important to stay in touch with the caregivers and to find them when they relocated. While some caregivers did contact us to provide updated contact information when they moved or changed phone numbers, we tracked others through returned letters with forwarding addresses, or by using contact information for friends or relatives of the caregiver, which the caregiver provided to us at previous interviews. It was an accomplishment to complete interviews with caregivers who did not change residences as well, since many caregivers reported that they were not available to participate in interviews because of stressful times in their families, multiple responsibilities and lack of available time, etc. Research assistants were flexible and persistent and negotiated times that worked for caregivers, which means that interviews were approximately but not exactly six months apart. It is a tribute to the caregivers for their willingness to work us into their busy schedules and to the research assistants who respected the caregivers and earned their respect and trust.

## **Reasons Participants Missed Interviews**

Research assistants documented various reasons participants missed interviews. These reasons included telephones being disconnected, changes of residence and our inability to locate the caregiver, and other issues (e.g. illness, death of a family member, out of town on vacation, etc.). If caregivers missed an interview we attempted to complete subsequent interviews with them and were often successful. Three participants who completed only one interview informed research assistants that they were no longer interested in participating in the study and they withdrew. One caregiver completed only two interviews because after the second interview the caregiver moved due to an apartment fire and we were unable to locate her. Two caregivers died prior to completion of the study. One of these caregivers was murdered in a robbery. The other caregiver died of natural causes.

## **Description of Caregivers and Their Households**

The characteristics of the caregivers who participated in this study are summarized in table 6. The characteristics of the caregivers who completed the initial interview are summarized in the “1<sup>st</sup> wave” column. Characteristics of caregivers who participated in interviews at each subsequent wave are presented as well. We provide this information to determine whether the characteristics of caregivers and families at each subsequent wave are statistically different from the characteristics of caregivers and families at wave 1.

As displayed in table 6, the overwhelming majority of primary kinship caregivers who completed the initial interview were female (96%) and African American (89%). Twelve of the caregivers were Caucasian (6%); two identified themselves as Mexican or Mexican-American (.5%), four as Hispanic (2%), one Puerto Rican (.5%), one biracial African American/Hispanic (.5%), one Native American (.5%), and one Asian (.5%). Twenty-five percent of the caregivers

were married and the remainder described their status as widowed, single or separated. They ranged in age from 22 to 72 years of age.

Caregivers' levels of formal education ranged from some grade school to college graduation and completion of some graduate or professional school classes. The largest category of caregivers (41%) had completed high school and some college or trade school classes. Over 62% reported that they were not employed; 27% were employed full time and 11% part time. Self-reported family income ranged from less than \$5,000 per year to more than \$50,000, with nearly 71% reporting incomes under \$20,000 per year. Income is a variable that displayed statistically significant differences between wave 1 and wave 4; there were considerably fewer caregivers reporting incomes lower than \$5,000 per year at wave 4 compared to wave 1. This is the only variable that displayed statistically significant differences between wave 1 and later waves. Also, at the time of the initial interview 18% of caregivers reported that they received Social Security retirement benefits, 37% indicated that they received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF – at least the child only benefit for the related child), and 31% reported receiving Social Security Disability benefits for themselves or another family member.

The mean number of children in the home ranged from 2.85 at waves 1 and to 2.66 at wave 4. This included the caregiver's own children and relatives' children. The number of children ranged from 1 to 10 at wave 1. We did interview caregivers if the related child who was the focus of the Child Behavior Checklist and Parenting Stress Index had left the home recently (since the last interview). At wave 2 one of the caregivers reported that there were no children living in the home; the related child had recently left the home. At waves 3 and 4 the number of children ranged from 0 to 13. The number of birth children in the caregiver's home (under 18 years of age) ranged from none to 7 and the mean was less than one at each wave (.53 to .54).

**Table 6: Demographic Characteristics of Caregivers**

Characteristics	Responses	Waves			
		1 <sup>st</sup> wave	2 <sup>nd</sup> wave	3 <sup>rd</sup> wave	4 <sup>th</sup> wave
Gender	Male	8(3.9)	5(2.8)	7(4.1)	6(3.5)
	Female	199(96.1)	172(97.2)	163(95.9)	165(96.5)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.315[0.779]	0.016[1.000]	0.033[1.000]
Race	African American	185(89.4)	157(88.7)	151(88.8)	151(88.3)
	Other	22(10.6)	20(11.3)	19(11.2)	20(11.7)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.044[0.871]	0.029[0.870]	0.108[0.745]
Marital Status	Married	52(25.1)	43(24.3)	39(22.9)	41(24.0)
	Divorced	40(19.3)	31(17.5)	29(17.1)	32(18.7)
	Widowed	25(12.1)	17(9.6)	20(11.8)	19(11.1)
	Single	73(35.3)	69(39.0)	67(39.4)	65(38.0)
	Separated	17(8.2)	17(9.6)	15(8.8)	14(8.2)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		1.294[0.862]	0.926[0.921]	0.337[0.987]
Education	Some grade school	7(3.4)	4(2.3)	4(2.4)	3(1.8)
	Some high school	51(24.9)	43(24.6)	45(26.8)	45(26.7)
	High school graduate	37(18.0)	32(18.3)	30(17.9)	32(18.9)
	Some college/trade schl	84(41.0)	74(42.3)	70(41.7)	69(40.8)
	College graduate	19(9.3)	17(9.7)	13(7.7)	13(7.7)
	Graduate/prof. school	7(3.4)	5(2.9)	6(3.6)	7(4.1)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.574[9.898]	0.736[0.981]	1.481[0.915]
Employment	No	129(62.3)	105(59.3)	96(56.5)	96(56.1)
	Yes, part-time	23(11.1)	23(13.0)	24(14.1)	22(12.9)
	Yes, full-time	55(26.6)	49(27.7)	50(29.4)	53(31.0)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.467[0.792]	1.482[0.477]	1.484[0.476]
Income	\$4,999 or less	55(29.3)	41(24.8)	26(16.0)	24(14.5)
	\$5,000-\$9,999	36(19.1)	26(15.8)	29(17.8)	27(16.4)
	\$10,000-\$14,999	20(10.6)	25(15.2)	28(17.2)	29(17.6)
	\$15,000-\$19,999	22(11.7)	18(10.9)	21(12.9)	21(12.7)
	\$20,000-\$24,999	15(8.0)	15(9.1)	17(10.4)	16(9.7)
	\$25,000-\$29,999	5(2.7)	6(3.6)	11(6.7)	8(4.8)
	\$30,000-\$34,999	5(2.7)	7(4.2)	9(5.5)	11(6.7)
	\$35,000-\$39,999	4(2.1)	7(4.2)	1(0.6)	7(4.2)
	\$40,000-\$44,999	6(3.2)	4(2.4)	4(2.5)	0
	\$45,000-\$49,999	3(1.6)	1(0.6)	3(1.8)	6(3.6)
	\$50,000 or more	17(9.0)	15(9.1)	14(8.6)	16(9.7)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		5.904[0.823]	16.806[0.079]	24.555[0.006]**
Caregiver Age	Mean (SD)	47.51(11.17)	47.55(10.72)	48.84(10.74)	49.42(10.52)
	Maximum	72	71	72	71
	Minimum	22	22	23	23
	Total (N)	203	175	170	171
	t-value [df] (p-value)		-0.036[376] (0.971)	-1.169[371] (0.243)	-1.689[372] (0.092)
Number of Children	Mean (SD)	2.85(1.90)	2.85(2.02)	2.83(2.14)	2.66(2.02)
	Maximum	10	10	12	13
	Minimum	1	0	0	0
	Total (N)	207	177	170	171
	t-value [df] (p-value)		0.014[382] (0.989)	0.100[375] (0.920)	0.938[376] (0.349)

**Table 6: Demographic Characteristics of Caregivers**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Waves</i>			
		<i>1<sup>st</sup> wave</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> wave</i>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> wave</i>	<i>4<sup>th</sup> wave</i>
Number of Birth Children	Mean (SD)	0.54(1.12)	0.54(1.08)	0.53(1.08)	0.53(1.07)
	Maximum	7	7	7	7
	Minimum	0	0	0	0
	Total (N)	207	177	170	169
	t-value [df] (p-value)		0.038[382] (0.969)	0.102[375] (0.919)	0.127[374] (0.899)

Note: For gender, race, marital status, education, employment, and income, the number in parentheses represents the column percent. For caregiver age and number of children, the parentheses contain the standard deviation or the p-value (as indicated). There is some missing data; therefore the N varies for some variables.

We also asked caregivers about the number of adults living in their homes. Approximately 65% of caregivers reported that at least one other adult resided in their home at the time of the initial interview (Mean = 1.0; Median = 1.0; Range = 0 to 4 adults other than the caregiver). In some families these adults were the caregiver's grown children. In 16% of these families, at least one birth parent of a child in the home also resided in the home.

### **Description of Focus Children**

Characteristics of children who were the focus of the CBCL and PSI are summarized in table 7. The same child was the focus of these measures at each wave; however, we list the characteristics of children at each wave to determine whether the characteristics of children remaining in the sample at waves 2, 3 and 4 were statistically different from the characteristics of the children at wave 1. Children ranged in age from 18 months to barely 11 years of age at wave 1, consistent with the sampling criteria. At the time of the initial caregiver interview, the length of time that the children had lived in the kinship caregiver's home ranged from one month to 11 years. The sample was nearly evenly split between male and female children. The racial/ethnic characteristics of the children closely reflected those of the caregivers.

Over two-thirds of the children were living with their grandparent or great-grandparent; 27% with an aunt, uncle, great-aunt or great-uncle; five with a sibling (2.4%), six with a cousin (2.9%) and two with other relatives (1%), one with a second cousin and another with a step

grandfather. There was an additional child listed as living with an “other” relative at waves 2, 3, and 4. The caregiver adopted this child between the wave 1 and wave 2 interviews so the relationship was changed to “adoptive parent” for these waves.

**Table 7: Characteristics of Children Assessed in CBCL & PSI & Relationship to Caregiver**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Waves</i>			
		<i>1<sup>st</sup> wave</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> wave</i>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> wave</i>	<i>4<sup>th</sup> wave</i>
Gender	Male	105(50.7)	88(50.3)	86(51.2)	88(51.8)
	Female	102(49.3)	87(49.7)	82 (48.8)	82(48.2)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.007[1.000]	0.008[1.000]	0.040[0.918]
Race	African American	188(90.8)	158(90.3)	151(89.9)	152(89.4)
	Other	19(9.2)	17(9.7)	17(10.1)	18(10.6)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.032[0.863]	0.094[0.860]	0.210[0.729]
Caregiver relationship to child	Grandparent	135(65.2)	114(65.1)	113(67.3)	114(67.5)
	Great grandparent	3(1.4)	1(0.6)	2(1.2)	2(1.2)
	Aunt or uncle	44(21.3)	37(21.1)	33(19.6)	32(18.9)
	Great aunt or uncle	12(5.8)	10(5.7)	8(4.8)	9(5.3)
	Brother or sister	5(2.4)	5(2.9)	5(3.0)	5(3.0)
	Cousin	6(2.9)	5(2.9)	4(2.4)	4(2.4)
	Other	2(1.0)	3(1.7)	3(1.8)	3(1.8)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		1.176[0.978]	1.079[0.982]	1.065[0.983]
Caregiver related to child's mother or father	Mother	158(76.3)	134(77.0)	130(77.4)	133(78.2)
	Father	49(23.7)	40(23.0)	38(22.6)	37(21.8)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.025[0.904]	0.058[0.902]	0.193[0.712]
Caregiver legal guardian of child	No	105(50.7)	75(44.1)	61(37.7)	59(34.9)
	Yes	102(49.3)	95(55.9)	101(62.3)	110(65.1)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		1.633[0.215]	6.273[0.015]*	9.461[0.002]**
Disability (mental and physical)	No	150(72.5)	125(71.4)	121(72.9)	123(73.7)
	Yes	57(27.5)	50(28.6)	45(27.1)	44(26.3)
	Chi-Square [p-value]		0.050[0.909]	0.008 [1.000]	0.066[0.816]
Age	Mean (SD)	82.30(31.26)	90.11(31.67)	95.39(31.78)	100.45(31.74)
	Maximum	134	142	155	154
	Minimum	18	24	29	37
	Total (N)	207	175	168	170
	t-value [df] (p-value)		-2.417[380] (0.016)*	-4.002[373] (0.000)***	-5.570[375] (0.000)***
Number of months lived with caregiver	Mean (SD)	48.25(34.34)	55.97(34.53)	63.11(34.12)	67.30(34.74)
	Maximum	132	136	146	144
	Minimum	1	1	8	5
	Total (N)	207	174	168	169
	t-value [df] (p-value)		-2.181[379] (0.030)*	-4.180[373] (0.000)***	-5.323[374] (0.000)***

Note: For the variables gender, race, caregiver relationship to child, caregiver related to child's mother or father, caregiver legal guardian of child, and disability the number in parentheses represents the column percent. For age and number of months lived with caregiver, the number in parentheses is the standard deviation or the p-value (as indicated). There is some missing data; therefore the N varies for some variables.

Nearly 50% of the caregivers reported that they were legal guardians of the focus child at wave 1, 56%, 62% and 65% at waves 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The wave 3 and 4 percentages are statistically significantly greater than observed at wave 1. The absolute number of kinship caregivers who became legal guardians of focus children in this study also increased from 102 at wave 1 to 110 at wave 4, even though 38 fewer caregivers completed interviews at wave 4 compared to wave 1. The only other statistically significant differences were those observed for child age and length of time that children had lived in the kinship caregiver's home; both of these differences are attributable to the passage of time.

Caregivers reported that nearly 28% of the focus children had some type of mental or physical disability. This was not necessarily a diagnosis by a medical professional. Caregivers who indicated the child had a disability were asked to describe this disability. No list of disabling conditions was provided. Types of disabilities reported by caregivers were wide ranging. The most common was asthma (20 children) or asthma in combination with some other disability (8 children). Two children reportedly have cerebral palsy and one was reportedly "previously diagnosed as autistic." One caregiver reported that the child was born with part of the brain outside of the head and another with a serious heart abnormality. Four children were identified as having ADHD. One child had juvenile diabetes and took insulin three times a day. Another child had sickle cell anemia. Four children were identified as having hearing loss and two with vision problems. A range of other "disabilities" were also identified ranging from skin conditions to learning problems, speech problems, PTSD, behavioral problems, and frequent colds.