

II

Designing Research and Applying Measures and Methods

The second section of the volume considers critical issues in designing research in pediatric and clinical child psychology. Among the many issues that could be considered, one of the most common is determining which sampling procedures can significantly limit the generalizability of research findings. Consequently, investigators who conduct research with children and families with a wide range of populations need to understand the methodological implications of their sampling procedures and consider them in designing their studies and in analyzing and interpreting their findings. Careful consideration of potential sampling issues prior to conducting their studies should enhance investigators' abilities to make more informed decisions concerning the selection and recruitment of children in their studies. To address these issues, in Chapter 4, Drotar and Riekert describe concepts and strategies for sampling in research in pediatric and clinical psychology, sources of variation in samples, sample selection problems and strategies including recommendations for future research to help investigators reduce the impact of sampling problems on the integrity of their data.

As is true of other areas of psychology, measurement presents critical issues and problems for researchers who gather data from pediatric and clinical populations. Researchers in these fields are often in the position of developing new measures to address specific research questions as well as applying standardized measures to populations for which they have not been standardized. Consequently, investigators need to be conversant with a range of measurement issues to help them develop informed measurement strategies in their research programs. In Chapter 5, Overholser, Spirito, and DiFilippo present information concerning a wide range of measurement issues and problems that are commonly encountered in research in pediatric and clinical child psychology. Using liberal examples from their own research with pediatric and clinical populations, these authors describe strategies for measurement development in applied settings. These authors consider several methodological strategies that are relevant to such common research problems as applying established measures to new populations, modifying existing measures,

and developing new ones for specific research populations and issues in integrating data from multiple informants. Specific recommendations for training research assistants and managing research data are also considered by these authors.

One of the important needs in the fields of clinical child and pediatric psychology is to develop innovative methods of measurement that facilitate the development of new scientific knowledge. In Chapter 6, Quittner discusses the limitations of current approaches to assessment in the fields of pediatric and clinical child psychology, especially global assessment approaches and problematic measurement designs. Based on her own programmatic research with children with a range of chronic health conditions, Quittner presents an alternative model of assessment that involves a contextual approach to assess stressors and coping strategies. She takes readers through applications of the behavior analytic model, including situational analysis, item development, response enumeration, and response evaluation. One of the most useful features of this chapter is the detailed illustrations of measures that illustrate the application of the contextual approach to assessment including the Role-Play Inventory of Situations and Coping Strategies and the Daily Phone Diary Procedure. Quittner also gives valuable suggestions concerning training students in measurement issues and future research directions in measurement.

The next two chapters in this section concern measurement issues that are important to the development of the fields of clinical child and pediatric psychology but have been relatively neglected. These include application of qualitative methods and the consideration of cultural and ethnic influences. In Chapter 7, Krahn and Eisert present an interesting historical overview and rationale for the use of qualitative methods in the fields of pediatric and clinical child psychology. They consider relevant issues in using qualitative methods such as data collection methods, sampling analyses, and generalizability. Various alternatives for qualitative methods, for example, ethnography and ecological methods, are described along with criteria for using them in specific studies. One instructive feature of this chapter is the illustration of the application of qualitative methods in clinical child and pediatric psychology in several studies and populations, including the experiences and perceptions of parents who are raising a child with a conduct disorder, experiences of children whose lives had been disrupted by adoptions, social support in diabetes, and the author's work in qualitative assessment of parent satisfaction with clinical services. Finally, useful suggestions are given to expand research applications of qualitative research methods and training in the fields of child clinical and pediatric psychology.

In the final chapter in Section II (Chapter 8), Walders and Drotar describe the challenges that need to be met in order to enhance the inclusion of ethnic minority populations in research in pediatric and child clinical psychology, such as conceptual issues in the definition of race, design issues, such as the choice of between group and within group designs, and so forth. Concrete recommendations for sampling and accessing diverse populations and recruiting subjects from ethnic and minority populations are provided. Using examples from specific research programs in the United States and in other countries, this chapter also considers special issues in measurement that arise in conducting research with children from diverse cultures and their families. Finally, Walders and Drotar consider recommendations to enhance research training concerning cultural and ethnic issues for pediatric and clinical child psychologists.