**Regarding Relevance**

Suggestion: I suggest that the relevance of this paper to Social Welfare/Social Work needs to be made clear in the introduction, especially the relevance to child welfare. Although the introduction should be brief, this introduction is too brief. It should start by introducing and making a brief pitch for why a biologiciallyand economically informed model of behaviors associated with child maltreatment is significant for Social Work/Social Welfare, followed by key concepts and terms, and end by describing the scope and organization of the literature review. "While child maltreatment may be undesirable, in most cases it it not pathological. Recognition of this basic distinction has important implications for child welfare policy and practice." Why is it important for child welfare practitioners and child wwelfare policy makers to recognize this basic distinction? Add a compelling reason to your introduction. You want to capture the attention of the child welfare audience early rather than later in your paper. A good way to end this paragraph is to lay out the scope of your literature review by describing both the literature you will cover and the sequence the reader can expect to follow.

Response: I agree with the points made in these suggestions. I will work to expand the introduction of the manuscript accordingly.

**Regarding Background**

Suggestion: I suggest the addition of a final summary of the literature review prior to the section entitled "Proposed Theoretical Model." Use this section as a logical precursor to your proposed theoretical model and weave together the threads you have been developing throughout your review.

Response: I agree with the points made in these suggestions. I will work to better summarize the literature reviewed in the background section before the more technical portions of the paper.

Suggestion: Maltreatment and child welfare system involvement are conflated in the literature review. While there is obvious overlap, not all maltreating caregivers are child welfare involved.

Response: A previous version of this manuscript contained the following language which drew this connection more clearly. If the committee is amenable, I could return a revised version of the following text to a revised manuscript:

*Additional support for the theoretical context described above can be seen in descriptive statistics of maltreated children. The theory reviewed in previous sections suggests that the vast majority of human parenting activity is focused on caring for children as opposed to harming them. It is possible then, that many of the parents who are involved with the child welfare system have been trying to effectively parent their children and have failed to do so. A review of evidence concerning serious injuries in Western child welfare systems suggests that this may be the case. For example, the results from the most recent National Incidence Study demonstrate that the majority of maltreatment in the US does not result in serious injury\footnote{While the studies cited here vary in what they consider to be ``serious'' maltreatment, the definitions are similar and generally indicate an instance of maltreatment in which medical attention was required.} \citep{Sedlak2010}. This finding is consistent across prior NIS studies and earlier surveys of child maltreatment in the US \citep[e.g.][]{Gil1970}. Within the Canadian child welfare system, \citet{TrocmeEtAl2007} finds that just 3\% of the substantiated maltreatment reports were severe enough to warrant any medical intervention\footnote{There are, of course, differences between the Canadian and US child protection systems. However, there are inherent cultural similarities between the two countries as well as a common lineage in Elizabethan Poor Law and progressive era children's societies. Furthermore, the overall incidence of child maltreatment in Canada is similar to that of the US. For instance, the 2008 incidence of child maltreatment in the US was 10.3 per 1,000 children in the population \citep{HHS2013} compared with a rate of 14.19 in Canada \citep{TrocmeEtAl2010}. While a difference of 4.6 incidents of maltreatment per 1,000 children is not inconsequential, we can reasonably expect the proportion of serious incidents of child maltreatment in the US to be similar to that of Canada.}. Setting aside problems with reporting and erroneous substantiation practices, one of two possibilities exist for less severe cases: 1) that parents in these cases intend to harm their children and fail to do so (and are thus reported to the child protection authorities), or 2) that parents in these cases try to effectively parent their children and fail to do so (and are thus reported to child protection authorities for some other reason (e.g. inappropriate discipline, failure to provide proper clothing, etc.)). The theory reviewed above is suggestive of the latter.*

Suggestion: The argument regarding the connection between evolutionary principles and child maltreatment could be strengthened by a more nuanced discussion. For instance, the characterization of Victorian England as a "carnival of slaughter" with evidence of "large scale infanticide" ignores a countervailing literature that provides evidence of parents' attempts to remain connected and involved with their children. Lydia Murdoch, in Imagined Orphans, calls the popular depiction of these parents simplfied and melodramatic. Since this is a core element of the theoretical framework, it could be enhanced by the inclusion of a broader literature.

Response: I do reference critics of the evolutionary view of maltreatment in this section, but I could stand to add others. I can, and will, add a reference to Murdoch’s work in this section. To be clear, however, evidence of parents attempts to remain connected and involved in spite of resource constraints does not contradict the argument made here. All that is being stated in this model is that such efforts will always be more difficult for parents operating under resource constraints. This point will also be made more clearly in the revised manuscript.

**Regarding Methods**

Suggestion: The primary concern is the maltreatment measure. Three items were summed - yelling, spanking and explaining why a behavior is inappropriate. The first two items could reasonably be associated with abuse potential, however if "explaining" is potentially abusive, I would need to see the supporting literature.

Response: This paper categorizes behaviors into Type I and Type II strategies. The questions as presented in the available data are, admittedly, not ideally suited to such categorization. Nonetheless, from a strictly behavioral perspective, “explaining” strategies would be considered to be a form of positive discipline (i.e. a Type I) strategy similar to yelling and spanking; the parent is giving instead of taking. Two points are important for this paper: 1) That, across decades of animal and human studies, Type I strategies are categorically less likely to promote child wellbeing that Type II strategies, and 2) Type II strategies are assumed to be more resource intensive than Type I strategies. Practically speaking (in cross validations of the model presented here) including explaining as a Type I strategy or excluding the behavior altogether make no substantive difference to the results (although effect sizes are weaker). Since the approach presented here is grounded in an established theoretical base and produces stronger results, I have opted to keep Type I strategies included as defined. I can, and will, add this point as a footnote in the revised manuscript.

Suggestion: Race may be a predictor of spanking, particularly among African American families. The race measure (white/non-white) does not allow you to test the relationship of specific non-white groups to discipline practices. This could be discussed in a section on limitations.

Response: The BMA approach utilized in this specific paper excluded Race as a factor in the final model. This does not, however, mean that race may not be a factor a larger causal model contributing to levels of altruism. I can, and will, make this point more clearly in the discussion and limitations section.

**Regarding Findings**

Suggestion: Point out how this study adds to the literature. What did it do that no one else did? How did this study improve on past investigations? And what did this improvement yield in terms of findings?

Response: This study is the first attempt (that I am aware of) which specifically attempts to link a formal theoretical model of child maltreatment to emperical observations of poverty. While other studies have examined correlational links between poverty and child maltreatment and others have even attempted to exploit natural experiments to establish a “causal” effect of poverty – these studies tend to lack a basic framework about *why* we would expect a link between poverty and child maltreatment. This study and the emperical analysis presented here attempt to provide such a basis.

**Regarding Conclusions**

Suggestion : The discussion makes claims that go beyond the data. The study does not refute nor confirm the value of psychotherapeutic interventions. The model does not account for parents who maltreat their children related to problems of addiction or mental illness. The extreme case of pedephilic sadism does not represent the majority of parents.

Response: These are both fair points. The study does not refute the value of psychotherapeutic interventions. It does, however, suggest that other forms of intervention may work better in certain families. Although the BMA does exclude maternal frustration as a covariate in the final selected model, the analysis does not imply that such factors (including forms of psychopathology) could play a causal role in a parent’s level of altruism. These points will be made more clearly in the revised manuscript.

Suggestion: Your discussion sections needs to be stonger, especially when presenting implications for child welfare practice. For example, discuss in detail specific interventions as well as theories that are consistent with your findings that would result in positive outcomes for these parents and their children. Provide a more in-depth discussion of the alternative approach to child maltreatment presented in your paper and how this approach can be utilized in child welfare practice. Finally, child welfare practitioners and child welfare policy makers will greatly benefit from some sspecificity regrading the "dynamic nature of households and the variety of potential intervention points" that are eluded to in your discussion section.

Response: In a previous version of the manuscript, I had presented hypothetical scenarios in which the model presented here could be applied to a child welfare client population. If my committee members are amenable, I could return this discussion to a revised manuscript.

**Regarding Presentation and Substance**

Suggestion: I strongly suggest that you reorganize this paper and make it shorter in length prior to submission to Children and Youth Services Review. You need to start by writing a shorter abstract and shoter paper. Start by stating points clearly and directly in all sections of your paper (Introduciton, Review of Literature, Methdology, Findings, Discussion which will include implications for practice and research). Confine the discussion to the specific model tested in the study, deleting or combining data displays, eliminating repetition and writing in the active voice.

Response: The headings that I am currently utilizing roughly conform to the specific heading suggestions suggested by CYSR: http://www.elsevier.com/journals/children-and-youth-services-review/0190-7409/guide-for-authors#25000

Suggestion: Consider the relevance of the wealth of material that you have in the appendix section. How significant is all of this material to your paper?

Response: This information was deemed important for a certain subset of my readership, but not relevant to the overall paper. I am hesitant to drop it completely, although I could exclude it from the manuscript proper and make it available on the web to interested readers.

Suggestion: You also need to attend to details. You need to follow APA publication requirements meticiously. For example, when a citation is part of a sentence always use and; do not use the ampersand. Also, always provide a page number for any citation that is a direct quotation ( see direct quotation that is part of last sentence in last paragrpah on page #8). When a direct quotation is at the end of a sentence always enclose punctuation mark inside quotation marks i.e. "carnival of slaughter." see last paragraph on page #6). Do not include author's first and middle initials when writing citations. There are numerous APA errors in your list of references. For example, page numbers for several journal articles are missing, the city and state for several publishing companies are missing, Retrieved from should be included when writing references for material that is retrived from a website on the internet, capitalization errors, etc. I am calling your attention to APA errors because reviewers pay attention to this type of detail when reviewing papers for journals; some peruse your paper before reading the content resulting in a reviewer deciding that your paper is sloppy; a sloppy paper will lead many reviewers to question how carefully you conducted your research.

Response: The current word document was automatically generated on the basis of an R “no-web” document written in the LaTeX markup language. Some of the unfortunate formatting nuances are the result of conversion to Word (for ease of review) and are not present in the manuscript that will ultimately be submitted to CYSR. While unusual in social welfare scholarship, LaTeX has been used for decades in other parts of the academy. One of the major benefits of writing manuscripts in this way is my ability to seemelessly link by analysis with my manuscript in a single compilable script. In this way, any individual examining the source code of my manuscript will no the precise manner in which I calculated each value in the manuscript. Given my commitment to replicable research, I have a strong preference toward formatting my manuscripts in this manner when journals allow for it as formatting in more manual ways breaks the link between our analysis and the presentation of our findings. CYSR (and all Elsevier Journals) allow for such formatting and my committee chair and I have recently published manuscripts in this manner with no issue. Details of the LaTeX submission guidelines are available here: <http://www.elsevier.com/author-schemas/latex-instructions>

Suggestion: Include a section on limitations. Although there is some discussion of limitations under future directions, it could be expanded in a separate section.

Response: I agree that a separate section on limitations would be appropriate and will be included in the revised manuscript.