Liang Li
Gloria Quiñones
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Studying Babies and Toddlers

Relationships in Cultural Contexts

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Early childhood education in many countries has been built upon a strong tradition of a materially rich and active play-based pedagogy and environment. Yet what has become visible within the profession, is, essentially a Western view of childhood, preschool education and school education. It is timely that a series of books be published which present a broader view of early childhood education. This series seeks to provide an international perspective on early childhood education. In particular, the books published in this series will:

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- Critique assessment practices and consider a broader set of ways of measuring children's learning
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Chapter 1
A Wholeness Approach to Babies' and Toddlers' Learning and Development

Liang Li, Gloria Quiñones, and Avis Ridgway

Abstract In this chapter the three co-authors and editors, from varied cultural backgrounds, choose a 'wholeness approach' to bring coherence to the work of contributing scholars who offer local and international research in their studies of babies and toddlers. Through these collaborations, a new model for thinking about studying babies and toddlers was generated. The potentialities of an adapted wholeness approach for uniting the diverse ideas into a meaningful whole are an exciting challenge for researchers studying babies and toddlers in the field of early childhood.

Keywords Wholeness approach • Babies and toddlers • Relationships • Cultural contexts • Theoretical model

1.1 Introduction: Wholeness Approach for Creating Coherence

Current research is brought together to create new understandings of the affective, cognitive and cultural dynamics present in babies and toddlers' learning and development. We draw on a wholeness approach (see Sect. 1.5 in this chapter). Initially, this approach was conceptualised by Mariane Hedegaard (2008) and adapted here, to highlight the relational complexity and uncertainty involved when studying babies and toddlers across their lived experiences in family, community and childcare (institutional) settings. In taking a wholeness approach to babies' learning and development, the study of their relationships in cultural contexts may be united through considering the joint efforts of researchers investigating young children across different societies such as Australia, Bangladesh, the USA, China, New Zealand, Finland and Sweden.

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The varied research studies are all related in one way or another, to babies' and toddlers' relationships and cultural contexts. This may be viewed as an unparalleled opportunity to conceptualise the use of a wholeness approach for studying our youngest citizens. The wholeness approach provides one way of creating coherence within the breadth of the research studies presented in the chapters that follow.

1.2   Valuing Relationships

When studying babies and toddlers, giving value to relationships in cultural contexts has been seen as an important and respectful way to approach deeper understanding of their learning and development through interactions. Emde in the Foreword to Bambini (2001, p. vii) writes:

> There is an atmosphere of respect in which everyone is involved in continuous learning and reflection. Relationships are not taken for granted or considered static.

In any relational space, babies' and toddlers' perspectives, motives, emotions, thinking, sensibilities, well-being and interests may become evident to researchers in that lived experience of shaping and being shaped by the 'dialectic between person and practice or culture' (Edwards 2015, p.1). Experienced researcher and observer of toddlers, Gunvor Lokken (2011) reminds us to be researchers who are 'perceptively attentive on all levels of interpretative analysis throughout the research process' (p. 162). The immediacy of any relationship with a very young child is wholly lived through the sights, sounds, feelings, actions and imaginative energy that babies and toddlers bring to those studying them. Reflecting on what babies and toddlers' responsive actions might mean for their cultural learning and development is at the heart of much research presented in this book. For example, Eva Johansson's work (Chap. 2) gives perspective on the entangled relationships that babies and toddlers share and notes the intrinsic nature of taken-for-granted, value-laden, ambiguous and ever-changing lifeworlds being inhabited. Using a wholeness approach brings into a clear view those entangled relationships involving needs, values, feelings and concerns for both objects and persons in the lives of very young children. All these are present in different institutions such as family, community and centre, with their own values, traditions, moral dimensions and situations that today form part of the very young child's cultural life experience (Hedegaard 2012).

The very young child's development occurs from social to individual functions in their particular world, and in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of this development, a knowledge of the relations with and within their cultural world is required. When theorising cultural development, Vygotsky (1981, p.163), suggests: 'Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then, on the psychological plane; First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of

volition'. Therefore, the importance of focusing on the everyday activities that babies and toddlers and adult/carers experience is of primary importance when studying babies and toddlers.

In order to explore the babies' and toddlers' world as a whole, researchers in this volume have examined home, childcare centres, family day care and the various community and care situations in which families, educators and babies may participate and relate to in their daily life activity. Taking a holistic view, and oriented by Hedegaard's (2008) model of children's learning and development through participation across institutional practices, brings together the rich ontological concepts needed for generating new appreciation, awareness, practice ideas and curiosity about babies' and toddlers' learning and development.

Vygotskian scholars bring the idea that the development of the child is a complex dialectical process that initially begins as a social form of interaction and later is transferred to internal, intra-psychological functions which constitute the dynamic process of change (from intermental to intramental function). In this change process, young babies develop through their engagement in collective activities as they are being involved in active relationships with peers and adults with varying levels of skill, knowledge and ability (Holzman 2009). The Vygotskian (Vygotsky 1987) perspective that young children's development is in essence a social process, rather than an individual phenomenon, helps explain why the chapters co-written by editors of this book investigate, in particular, babies' and toddlers' worlds and their relationships to the cultural world using a wholeness approach. The research on babies and toddlers within recent decades has focused on important areas including infant health, movement, attachment and intersubjectivity with additional perspectives emerging from brain research, neuroscience and psychobiology (Trevarthen 2001, 2011; Selby and Bradley 2003; Bigelow et al. 2010). However, there is little research on babies and toddlers that pays full attention to social interactions in their play and in particular relationships in their cultural contexts which form an important role in development as argued by Vygotsky (1997), further discussed by Ridgway et al. (2015) and in the three chapters (3, 10, 12) by the editors of this book.

1.3 Dynamic Dialectics

From a wholeness perspective, the wide variations of research studies shared across the chapters lead to the development of a dynamic, dialectical dialogue that can open readers to considering their own theoretical approaches for making sense of the many concepts and ideas worked through by researchers who have authored chapters. For example, Johansson (Chap. 2) conceptualised the concept of shared worlds using philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of intersubjectivity 'where the body is central for communication and understanding of others'. A cultural-historical approach to studying babies and toddlers is used by Li et al. (Chap. 3), Quiñones et al. (Chap. 12), Ridgway et al. (Chap. 10) and Sikder

(Chap. 13). Li et al. build ways to understand babies' creative acts with the concept of perezhivanie foregrounded through analysis of how adults emotionally support babies in their musical creative acts. Two chapters that use a cultural-historical approach and conceptualise significant moments are provided by Quiñones et al. and Sikder. Affective moments of action (Quiñones et al.; Vygotsky 1966) are theorised through visual and textual analysis of an example of toddler's peer play as they welcome and acknowledge each other's play. The concept of small science is used by Sikder to examine toddler's understandings of everyday science in a Bangladeshi family. The cultural dynamics of affective fatherhood and the notion of conceptual reciprocity are also brought into the cultural-historical research mix (Ridgway et al.). These are just some examples of the theoretical work researchers are undertaking when studying relationships of babies and toddlers in cultural contexts.

New ways to understand the complex cultural worlds in which babies and toddlers live have been researched across the chapters of this book.

1.4   Complex Cultural Worlds

As part of using a wholeness approach, researchers' contributions have come from baby and toddler studies undertaken in many countries. Their enormously varied and fascinating research into babies' and toddlers' relations to their different worlds provide opportunity for building deeper insight across national and cultural boundaries.

Authors work with their own theories and perspectives, and in taking a wholeness approach to encompass this body of research, it makes sense, as it can be understood that there is simply no one way to adequately study babies and toddlers.

The following examples exemplify the rich dynamic complexity that a wholeness approach to writing and conceptualising can bring to broaden the research on babies and toddlers and their cultural worlds. Studies come from Dutch childcare centres (Chap. 14), US family childcare/day care homes (Chap. 7), a Finnish day care group setting (Chap. 4), Chinese family baby raising practices (Chap. 8), New Zealand researching babies using visual methodology (Chap. 9), Australian cultural contexts and visual methods (Chaps. 3, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12) and Bangladeshi family science concepts in play (Chap.13).

The potentialities of an adapted wholeness approach for studying babies and toddlers and to unite the chapters into a meaningful whole are an exciting challenge.

1.5   A Wholeness Approach to Study Young Children's Cultural Worlds and Transitions

> A wholeness approach to studying children should encompass daily life across different institutional settings and arenas from all three perspectives [societal, institutional and individual]. (Hedegaard 2009, p.11).

A wholeness approach to babies' and toddlers' learning and development means taking a broader view by looking at their participation across the several institutional settings and contexts in their everyday life. According to Hedegaard and Chaiklin (2005), an institutional practice that young babies experience everyday has at least three perspectives which contribute to the conditions for production, reproduction and development. The *societal perspective* is reflected in historically evolved traditions and interests in a society, with children developing by experiencing the activities in their social institutions. The societal perspective is informed by the different institutional practices that children enter. *The institutional perspective* focuses on the general settings such as the home, family day care setting, early childhood centres, etc. Questions such as How do babies participate in those different institutions?, What do they learn through the different experiences, and how do they make sense and build awareness of their institutional activities? and What kind of conditions do the different institutions offer to motivate babies' activities? all belong to the institutional perspective. *The individual (personal) perspective* characterises the shared activities of persons in particular institutions. The three perspectives (societal/social, institutional and individual) as a whole contribute to understanding babies' and toddlers' learning and development, with each perspective being interconnected and interrelated, thereby influencing the others. Without including any single perspective, it is not possible to see babies' and toddlers' learning and development clearly, as each is considered conditional for the others (Hedegaard and Chaiklin 2005). Drawing upon this view of babies' and toddlers' learning and development, this book provides a holistic view of the infant's world.

1.5.1   Societal Perspective

Considering cultural values and social structure in *the societal situation*, Pan and her colleagues in Chap. 8 explore how two generations (parents and grandparents) in current Chinese family contexts resolve their intergenerational conflicts and transmit their values in baby-raising practices. The chapter provides a fascinating social view on the differences and conflicts of values in baby-raising practices which further impact on babies' learning and development.

The societal perspective is also the subject of analysis by Dillon Wallace (Chap. 6) from Australia. Here a consideration of the well-being of mothers and young children in contexts of special heath care is made. Dillon Wallace explores child and family characteristics to make an argument that the cultural context of the mother

and child relationship can improve their well-being, especially in the case of mothers and their young babies with special healthcare needs. She proposes that policymakers, service providers and educators should take into account the impact that young special needs children have on maternal functioning.

1.5.1.1 Institutional Perspective

We can see the importance of the *institutional practices* in Tonyan and Paredes' work (Chap. 7). They draw upon the concept of ecological-cultural theory to explain how the providers in family childcare in the USA evaluate and construct their work with babies and toddlers through the lenses of 'cultural models (Love, Fun and Affection; School readiness)'. They conclude that babies are able to reproduce what matters to the providers and extend their own reproduction of cultural models into the future. Tonyan and Paredes' research exemplifies how values in the institutional practices become demands on babies' and toddler's engagement with the practices (Hedegaard 2012). This differs from traditional understanding of babies' development of their values often seen as a result of directly changing through biological needs.

Also recognised and acknowledged in the work of Johansson (Chap. 2) are the influences of babies' dynamic social situations in institutional settings (Swedish toddler group setting). Johansson claims that the child's commitment to shared worlds with peers emerges very early in life. Here it is proposed that the collective life is important and highly valued at a very early age.

The social situation in the early childhood institutional setting creates the conditions for babies' learning and development. One of the key elements of the social situation, the educators' engagement, has been examined by Singer (Chap. 14). Singer investigates the 2–3-year-old toddlers' joint play in Dutch child centres and concludes that toddlers' emotional security relies on educators' skills to manage the group in play. Toddlers need the time and space to be actively involved in their play. According to Singer, educators need to make a pedagogical shift from their focus on individual children to the dynamics of the whole group which has considerable impact on the individual child. The values of the institution need to be highlighted.

Within the institutional practice perspective, another important factor to be taken into account is babies' experience across different transitions such as transition to childcare from home (Monk and Hall, Chap. 5), transitions between different activities during everyday life (Rutanen, Chap. 4) and the transitory moments within one activity (Quiñones et al. Chap. 12).

For instance, Rutanen's work (Chap. 4) highlights the importance of transition periods while working with very young children. She draws upon Lefebvre's three moments of conceived, perceived and lived space and explores two horizontal, small-scale transitions (circle time and lunch time) that occur daily in the infant-toddler's care group in a Finnish day care centre. She finds young children are active agents in interpreting the symbolic space and spatial practices during their transitions. Rutanen emphasises that educators need to take young children's perspectives

to see their diverse needs and intentions and acknowledge that babies and toddlers experience transitions in many different ways.

1.5.1.2 Individual Perspective

To understand the young child's *individual perspective* through the wholeness approach, we can consider their motives and experiences in institutional practices as a relation between them and their world. The key for researchers who aim to understand babies and toddlers is to carefully consider how the world and relations are seen from the *babies' perspective*. We take the babies' and toddlers' perspective to investigate how they build awareness of their relational environment and why and how they respond to their world (see Li, Ridgway and Quiñones, Chap. 3; Sikder, Chap. 13; Quiñones, Li and Ridgway, Chap. 12; White, Chap. 9 and Rutanen, Chap. 4).

We can see an example of taking babies' perspective in the writings of Li, Ridgway and Quiñones (Chap. 3) where the babies' awareness of their world is conceptualised. Through the exploration of three babies from different cultural family contexts, they propose that having the parents' emotional reciprocal support in three babies' creative acts explains family values and demands for their babies' learning and development. They *take three babies' perspectives* to explain babies' emotional expression in their engagement in creative acts. The importance of babies' awareness of and curiosity about their world is highlighted, by showing three babies' emotional expression and responses with their parents' reciprocal support. They discuss the concept of perezhivanie (emotional experience) and explore how babies are capable of expressing reciprocal awareness of their world. The babies' competence in transformation of their cultural worlds has not been theorised in these ways before. Research on infants has more frequently noted the quality of interactions between the mother and baby that may affect their well-being and development (Bigelow and Power 2012; Creighton 2011; Nakata and Trehub 2004).

1.6 The Babies' Relations to the World

Hedegard (Hedegaard 2012) has argued that 'Experience should be understood as a relation between the person and the world and not only as something in the person' (p. 21). This confirms Vygotsky's conclusion that:

> Environment cannot be regarded as a static entity and one which is peripheral in relation to development, but must be seen as changeable and dynamic … the child, his development, keeps changing, becomes different. It is not just the child who changes, for the relationship between him and his environment also changes, and the same environment now begins to have a different influence on the child. (Vygotsky 1994, p. 344)

One interpretation is that babies' relationship with their environment is dynamic and changeable. This changing relationship can happen because of both the changeable environment and the development of babies. For instance, when babies start walking around, their view of the world is dramatically changed. Therefore, their relations with the world are changed and their awareness of the world is changed accordingly.

When a new mother goes back to work after maternity leave, new relationships are formed between the baby and people surrounding him/her. Importantly, the first key impact on babies' health and well-being is the issue of continued breastfeeding. Monk and Hall in Chap. 5 explore infant feeding practices during mother's transition to employment or return to study. They provide a cultural model of the transition relationship in a cultural context. They conceptualise the mother and infant dyad and argue that the expectations, tensions and choices are interlaced facets of the everyday lives of the mother/infant dyad as the mother transitions back to work or study and the infants' transition into nonparent care.

In the work of Quiñones, Li and Ridgway (Chap. 12), they conceptualise the affective moments of action in two toddlers' play. They illustrate how and why toddlers experience their relationship differently in a new social situation and how affective awareness of one another is created in the toddlers' play relationship. Their work proposes that young toddlers can perform affective moments of action when they make their own choices through both self-will and collective choice in play. Toddlers' relations to their world in the social situation promote their affective moments of action.

Babies' and toddlers' relations to the world are also captured in the chapter by Sikder (Chap. 13) where the concept of motives from a cultural-historical perspective is used to study infant-toddlers' development of science concept formation in a Bangladeshi family context. Sikder demonstrates this through a case study of a young child's play moments to explain and theorise the dynamic aspects of the child's relation to the world. In studying infants and toddlers' science concept formation in play, Sikder argues the relationships between persons motivate the child's learning in play. It is very important to take into account the curiosity, intentions, experience and engagement of the babies and toddlers in the activity within the pedagogical play context. The relationships with infant-toddlers are built through intentional experiences that use interactive enrichment in metacommunicative exchange and show how they can be presented with sustained and accumulative opportunities that accrue for conceptual learning (Branco 2009; Fleer 2010; Nelson 2007).

1.7 Researching the Babies' World

We have explained the importance of understanding the babies' relationship with their cultural world and taking babies' perspective to explain a wholeness approach to babies' learning and development. This brings us a challenge in researching the

babies' world. How could we give a comprehensive understanding of the babies' world in research? We have to keep in mind that babies have limited verbal expression of their thoughts and words. Part of this book gives insight into methods of research with young babies and how to make a critical analysis of babies' relations to their world.

Digital visual methodology, for example, is explained to show how current research processes involved in studying babies can now be expanded upon. Expansion becomes possible because digital visual technology offers new tools for researchers around the world. In order to demonstrate how researchers can analyse small events and relate to using babies' perspectives in their work, the new technology enables researchers to readily document small transitions in daily life and thereby intimately reveal the ways babies first relate to their cultural worlds and communicate with what surrounds them as they accumulate experience over time. Ridgway, Quiñones and Li in Chap. 10 make a case for using visual narrative methodology with dialogue commentary to apply a relational ontology to studying babies. They analyse three babies' playful events with their fathers and argue how *conceptual reciprocity* forms in relationships in the lives of the three babies and their families. Visual narrative methodology demonstrates how each playful reciprocal experience is located in culturally meaningful and emotionally complex interactions. Through demonstrated use of digital visual methods with inter-observer reliability, they show how, when, where and why lived transitory moments of vivid social learning occur and most importantly discuss, through the use of collaborative dialogue commentary, the vital role of transitory moments in infant development of experience and learning.

How visual methodology can elevate educational research on babies is discussed in White's work (Chap. 9). White explains the 'work of eye' that involves a rich, dialogic and polyphonic complexity for seeing and listening. All parties in the event are studied. The method of providing multiple interpretive eyes for seeing is complementary and provides a holistic view of engagement with complexity in early childhood education for infants.

In order to further consider the pedagogical meaning of understanding babies and toddlers' emotional communication, Harrison and her colleagues in Chap. 11 use a method of close observation called the Tavistock Infant Observation, and Young Child Observation Method (TOM), to provide a training programme and opportunities for collective reflection. This research illustrates TOM training and the shared reflections that can develop educator capacities through collective support in centre-based childcare. Such support can guide educators' positive and active roles in their engagement with infants' learning and development.

While many researchers have offered evidence of how to use and conceptualise digital visual tools in early childhood education research (Fleer and Ridgway 2014), very few have considered the importance of digital visual tools in teaching and learning with babies. The methodological work of White, Harrison et al. and Ridgway et al. has given further insight into affective pedagogical use of digital visual methods for better understanding the lived moments of babies and toddlers in

order to better support parents, educators and carers whose aim is to offer meaning-ful upbringing, education and care of infants.

1.8   Conclusion

In using a wholeness approach, we can study different institutions across different nations and also focus on the educator's and young child's perspective rather than working in a singular way as we undertake research.

The young children, who are the subjects of research discussed in the chapters of this book, present us all with a new way of looking at babies and toddlers and new ways of being with them. They have shown us how they fully acknowledge our adult world and why they want to be close to it.

The young children portrayed in these chapters show their playful engagements, moving bodies and imaginative ideas, as Rutanen says in Chap. 4: *they are a group of children equipped with diverse needs and intentions*. We adults and educators, with the ability to understand young children's meanings and intentions, are also under close scrutiny in this book.

As Johansson reminds us in Chap. 2, educators and researchers are part of babies' and toddlers' lifeworlds, and it is this ethical and caring work we are required to continue to do, so that others such as policymakers understand the important work we are collectively engaged in as we advocate for rights to give value to the learning and development of babies and toddlers.

Establishing productive dialogue between societal/social, institutional and indi-vidual lives of babies and toddlers in their wholly lived experiences challenges us to think further about conceptualising a wholeness approach for the well-being, learn-ing and development of very young children and those who share their world. Hedegaard and Chaiklin's (2005) experiment in Radical-Local Teaching and Learning in New York City was aimed at building a new perspective on working with school-age children's lifeworlds so they were connected conceptually to school knowledge. In a similar way, building a wholeness approach relevant for babies and toddlers by bringing together researchers who have written about the essence of what is in babies' and toddlers' lives, their relations and the wholeness they have with their world leads us finally to the development of a new theoretical tool (Fig. 1.1).

This new theoretical tool promotes a wholeness approach to babies and toddlers' learning and development from societal, institutional and individual perspectives, which shows the importance and significance of babies and toddlers' lives. Taken from babies and toddlers' perspective, as discussed in the book, their intentions, demands, affective expression, needs and curiosity are key elements in their rela-tions to the world. Within the institutional practices, the adults and educators' val-ues are very important to the babies' world. In particular, transitions are prominent cultural events in babies and toddler's experiences within their world. Throughout this book, chapter authors give consideration to the societal perspective, illustrating
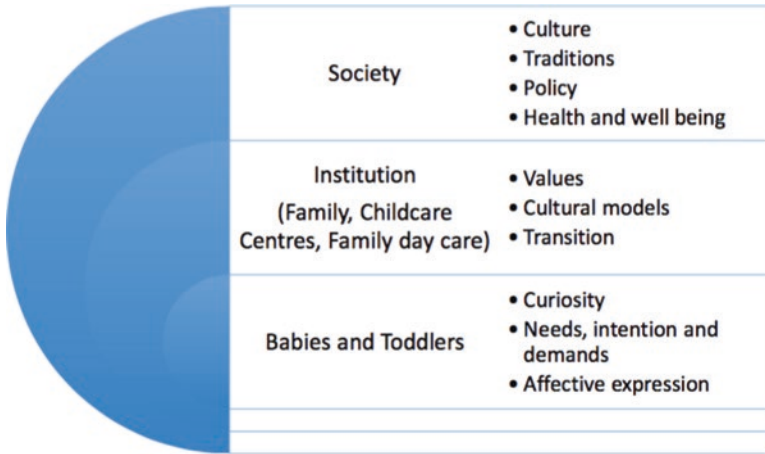
Fig. 1.1 A wholeness approach to babies and toddlers' learning and development (Adapted from Hedegaard 2009, p. 73)

how and why babies' learning and development are within the context of their cultural world and its traditions. Understanding that these three perspectives are interrelated in any conceptualisation of the whole life of babies and toddlers becomes evident in the research undertaken and presented in chapters throughout this book.

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Chapter 2
Toddler's Relationships: A Matter of Sharing Worlds

Eva Johansson

Abstract How do young children experience, express and value their relationships? This chapter is about the emergence of young children's concern for their relationships and the value of sharing worlds with others. The interaction between (1–3 years) children in preschool, drawn from different studies of morality, constitutes the empirical basis. In the discussion, it is claimed that the children's commitment to share worlds with peers emerges early in life. The sense of belonging is not a question of a reflected concern for others; rather, it is a matter of the children's very existence and part of the everyday life in preschool.

Keywords Children • Relationships • Values • Preschool • Belonging • Shared life-worlds

2.1   Introduction

How do young children experience, express and value their relationships? This chapter is about the emergence of young children's concern for their relationships and the value of sharing worlds with others. This is also about children's emerging concern for moral values. Moral values are socially constructed. They are positive or negative qualities (good and bad, right and wrong) that children express and experience in their own and in other children's behaviour, acts and attitudes (Johansson 1999). Such values concern, for example, the value of well-being and the value of rights. Questions on what such values can signify, how they become visible to children and how they are communicated in the children's bodily interaction will be posed. The theoretical frame for the study is based on the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962, 1964) theory of intersubjectivity

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where the body is central for communication and understanding of others. Morality is understood with reference to the Danish philosopher Knud Løgstrup (1994, pp. 41–55, 83–84,) who describes our relationship with others as given and built on trust. This given relationship imposes a demand, a moral responsibility for the other. The interaction between (1–3 years) children in preschool, drawn from different studies of morality (Johansson 1999, 2001, 2007a, 2011a, b), constitutes the empirical basis. In the discussion, it is claimed that the children's commitment to share worlds with peers emerges early in life. The sense of belonging is not a question of a reflected concern for others; rather, it is a matter of the children's very existence and part of the everyday life in preschool. The life-world in preschool is based on community and characterised by common play and other collective activities created by the children (Johansson 2007a; Greve 2009; Løkken 2011). Everyday when children arrive in preschool they encounter the existential question whether or not they will be included in community with others. Being included in collective activities with peers seems to facilitate a value of importance for the children: the value of sharing worlds with others (Johansson 1999, 2007a, 2011a, b). Children express a taken for granted right to share worlds with others, a right which they protect and defend in different ways. In this chapter the emergence of young children's concern for community, in sharing worlds with others and expressing solidarity with peers, will be outlined. Initially the theoretical point of departure will be outlined: the life-world theory.

2.2   The Life-World

The theory of the life-world developed by Maurice Merlau-Ponty (1962) serves as ontology for how to understand the value of sharing worlds and belonging communicated in interplay between young children in preschool. What then is the life-world?

From the theory by Merleau-Ponty (1962, pp. 327–334) we learn that the life-world is related to the child as a perceiving body subject (Løkken 2011) who is inseparable from, and in interaction with, the world. The life-world is the world where we live our life and the world that we take for granted. The life-world is both subjective and objective. It is the world we are directed towards, and at the same time, it is the world that resides inside us. The pedagogue and philosopher Jan Bengtsson formulates the ambiguity of the life-world like this:

> … the life-world is neither an objective world in itself, nor a subjective world, but something in between. Ambiguity is a necessary feature of intertwinement. World and life are interdependent in the sense that life is always worldly and the world is always what it is for a human being. Thus the world is open and uncompleted to the same extent as life. (Bengtsson 2013, p. 6)

This also means that human life is intersubjective, and we are always entangled in relations with other people, with culture, history and society (Merleau-Ponty 1962). As human beings we are (inter)related and (inter)dependent on each other and the

world. According to the theory of ethics described by Knud Løgstrup (1994), we are given to each other. Power is always present in human relations. We are enmeshed in a relation of dependence and responsibility for the other. Our life is always in the hands of the other. This relationship is, however, not based on rationality and logic. Instead it is a concrete lived and intersubjective relationship out of which values and norms for the common life emerge.

How then can we understand the young child's expressions for values and more specific the value of sharing worlds with others? And how can children interpret and give meaning to each other's intersubjective and bodily actions?

There is an intertwined relationship of subject and body, says Merleau-Ponty (1962, pp. 77–92, 136–147). The body is central for our existence in the world, for our communication and for our understandings of others. Our body is present in everything we experience and do. It is impossible for us to leave the body and pick it up later, as we can do with a bicycle, writes Bengtsson (2013, p. 6). The body is always with us and, as such, is our access to the world. "Instead of saying that I have a body it could be said that I am my body." (Bengtsson 2013, p. 6). It is through the body we are able to perceive and understand each other.

> Body and mind constitute an undivided unity in which the body is subject and the mind is embodied. Mental life is expressed in the body and bodily movements are mental. (Bengtsson 2013, p. 8)

The other's actions embrace a particular meaning for us and allow us to understand something about his/her life. This meaning is not something hidden behind the actions; it is experienced in the other person's bodily movements, his/her posture, emotional expressions, gestures and words. It constitutes a particular world of meaning which is intertwined with the meanings of the specific surrounding of particular things and other people, place, time and history (Merleau-Ponty 1962, pp. 77–89; Bengtsson 2013; Johansson and Løkken 2013).

Learning from this theory allows us to understand the child as an embodied subject in constant communication with other people and with the world. The child's body forms a union of meaning through senses, thoughts, emotions, language and motor actions. The child is able to understand and communicate with others through his/her bodily existence in the world. There are, however, always limitations for our understandings, since we cannot be the other, writes Merleau-Ponty (1962). There is both familiarity and strangeness when trying to understand the other (Bengtsson 2013), and there are at all times parts of the other (and ourselves) that we cannot reach nor understand. This means that even the very young child has the ability to experience and express values for community and solidarity through his or her body, through gestures, words, emotions and posture. At the same time, such values are conveyed to the child; things and people make references to the use and purpose of various phenomena in the world. As researchers we can understand the worlds of meaning expressed and created by the children in interactions with things and peers in the context of preschool. This is not an easy process, and there are many ambiguities and difficulties in gaining access to children's life-worlds. We see a further example of this in the work of White (Chap. 9, this volume) where she discusses the

'work of the eye' in infant research to uncover the mystery of intersubjectivity in infants' world. Yet observing children's interactions can lead us to new interpretations taking into account previous and present as well as following events and understandings. We are already situated in an interpreted world, and both the children and researcher are embedded in their different life-worlds. Thus it can be said that the value of sharing worlds with peers grows out of inseparable relationships between children rather than being the result of an autonomous subject's evolving logical reasoning (Johansson 1999, 2001, 2007b). As researchers and pedagogues, we are always part of these worlds. In Chap. 3, Li et al. have explored how three babies from different family cultures make sense of their social given situation through family events which further emphasises that young babies are able to offer their emotional expression through the creative acts with their parents.

Let us now look at the youngest children's initial discovery and defence of their right to share worlds with others. The base for the discussion is two investigations of morality among children (aged 1–3 years) in different day care contexts in Sweden and Australia (Johansson 1999, 2009). The aim was to create knowledge about the children's lived experiences of values and norms concerning treatment of, and behaviour towards, each other in their everyday life-world of day care. The Swedish toddler group comprises 16 children and four teachers, and the Australian toddler group comprises 12 children and three teachers. The Swedish children's interplay was video recorded for a period of 6 months during two semesters, and the Australian children's interplay was video recorded for 3 months during one semester. In total approximately 40 h of video observations were sampled. The results from these studies showed that children defend and value their own and others' rights and care for others' well-being (Johansson 1999, 2009, 2011a, manuscript).

In this analyses we will study how the value of others' well-being and sharing worlds with others manifests itself in the children's interactions. The samples for this analysis have been selected from the two studies of children's morality referred to above (Johansson 1999, Johansson, manuscript). The choice of video observations of children's interplay was based on a quest for variation in order to identify and illuminate various dimensions of children's relationships. In this study we have also a certain interest in following the life-worlds of the youngest children between 1 and 2 years. The interactions presented in this text serve as illustrative examples of how the children relate to the value of sharing worlds with each other.

Let us first shortly look at the process of transcription and analyses. Initially the video observations were transcribed to text. This is a hermeneutic interpreting process (Ricoeur 1988), aiming to respectfully reconstruct and describe the life-worlds of the children, in terms of their meanings and intentions for interactions in the context of preschool (Johansson 2011b; van Manen 1990). This means for the researcher to encounter "children's life-worlds with your own, trying to understand the on-going communication *and* to uphold a certain necessary distance as a researcher" (Johansson 2011b, p. 47). The analyses of the described interactions intersected between questions like: How is a shared world constituted between children? How can the value of shared worlds become visible for the children? What kind of meanings and actions characterises their shared worlds?

The children's interactions are understood as their voices. These voices are intertwined in a given context and interconnected with preschool as a cultural and social world. Thereby the researcher is able to say something about intersubjective moral worlds created by the children, worlds that also encompass a meaning beyond the children's intentions with their interplay (Ricoeur 1988, pp. 29–77). The researcher is trying to recreate what children's actions can inform about moral values and, in this case, the value of sharing worlds with others.

Let us now study how sharing worlds with others manifests itself in the children's interplay. Initially a short introduction of the children's desire to create and share worlds with peers is outlined.

2.3 Shared Life-Worlds: Worthy to Be Defended

The children in both the toddler groups showed in many ways their desire to take part together with peers in everything that happened in preschool (Johansson 2011b, 2009; Johansson and Berthelsen 2014). They were eager both to create and share worlds with peers. This could mean to create a play together, to read a book side by side, hiding together under a table, standing side by side in front of the washtub, having a bath together, waiting together to go out, etc. Of importance is that the children experienced that they were *together*, that they created or shared something with each other. Often a child showed interest for an ongoing play or an activity between peers. The child could stop and look, ask for permission to join or could just jump into the play. The children involved in the play at hand were absorbed in creating something together which they regarded remarkable, valuable and indeed important, well worthy to defend. They showed that their interplay and the worlds they created together belonged to them and had a value. They defended their shared worlds, through physical and psychological means and arguments hindering others to join (Johansson 1999, 2011b, 2009).

2.3.1 Creating Shared Life-Worlds

The first example is chosen from the Australian study. The children are playing outside. Two of the girls create a world together, playing around a tree:

> Lisette (2:1) and Ayla (1:8) are playing around some trees in the preschool yard. Some small bells are hanging on a branch in one of the trees. The branches are many, they are wide and tightly woven together. "My", says Lisette and pushes herself between the branches close beside the bells. She touches the bells and they ring. Her voice sounds playful. "My", says Ayla while forcing her self between the branches and touching the bells. The bells ring. The girls continue walking between the branches touching the bell saying "My". They sound delighted. Their voices are light. They smile. They continue their play, pushing each other through the tight branches and ringing the bells. They seem both absorbed by the play.

This situation illustrates how a world of shared meaning is constituted between the two girls through their play. They "sign" a shared and wordless agreement for playing together. Both girls seem to agree upon how to play, and they seem to immediately be in their specific world of play. Together they create a moral agreement based on a common tone, expressing light voices and bodily movements, and they intersect rhythmically with each other. It is likely that the children experience and value a shared world and that this world is important to them.

2.3.2   Shared Life-Worlds: Defence and Threats

Now we will turn to the Swedish toddler group and two of the youngest children creating a shared lived room together. In a similar way like the girls above, they take turns, and they follow each other in an intersubjective play, tuning in to each other's bodily expressions like in a dance (Rasmussen 1996; Schütz 1972; Stern 2004). Similar to the children above, they "sign" a taken for granted agreement about reciprocity, about playing together. In this common world created by these children, the right to the things and the play becomes shared.

> Olle (1:6) and Anna (1:5) are playing with a horse made of foam and covered by cloth. The horse is soft and big enough to sit comfortable on, and the children in the toddler group often sit and jump with the horse. Now Anna is sitting still on the horse. Olle stands in front of the horse, and he starts slowly leaning aside looking at Anna on the horse. Anna sees his face turn up beside her, and she leans aside towards Olle. She looks at him. They smile at each other. The children's faces are close and they start leaning to and fro in a rhythmic peekaboo play, slowly following each other's movements. They smile and laugh. They appear excited. This bodily to-and-fro play continues for a while, both children following each others movements, looking close at each other while smiling and laughing. There is joy and laugher around them in the big room, where all the children from the toddler group have been gathered for play. But Anna and Olle are absorbed in their intimate play.

> After a while Anna climbs down from the horse. Olle moves, probably with the intention to climb on the horse, but he is hindered by Tobias (1:8) who has been watching the children's play while sitting on a chair behind them. Now Tobias climbs down. He quickly runs to the horse, climbs up and jumps away. Olle stands still a few seconds but then he runs after Tobias. He tries to catch the horse from Tobias, while protesting loudly. Anna goes to the chair and climbs up.

This intersubjective world of play created by the children in this interaction flows and emerges without words. The children seem to know how to play and how to follow each other's bodily movements. Each child's movement becomes part of the other's movement, and the emotions expressed by the children create a unity of cheerfulness (Merleau-Ponty 1964). The content of the play world seems shared, and the joy experienced by the children is evident in laughter and smiling. Closeness is constituted between the children both literally and emotionally. But the shared world of play created by the children is suddenly interrupted and concealed. The play between Olle and Anna on the horse probably inspires Tobias, and he captures

the horse. Olle expresses his disagreement loudly and tries to stop Tobias, while Anna climbs on the chair.

How can this be interpreted? It can be difficult to decide whether it is the right to a shared world that is in the forefront for the children. Perhaps the right to play with the horse is most important from Olle's point of view? And how can we understand the fact that Anna chooses to leave? Perhaps she is finished playing with the horse? My interpretation is that she leaves because Tobias interferes. Anna is new in the group, and her strategy is often to avoid acting in similar situations. I have observed her waiving her rights when other children make claims to toys she is playing with. Instead she looks for alternatives, goes away, finds another toy to play with, etc. Anna can also look at the adults, complaining with a low tone of voice or pointing at the person who has taken the toy from her. Perhaps its because she is new in the group. Perhaps Anna does not regard herself as someone with possibilities to interfere. Rather she seems to trust in the teachers to help.[1]

Still a reasonable interpretation is that the two children playing together experience that their play is valuable and joyful and something important. Situations like this can be significant in children's early experiences of moral values because of their shared interplay. We can imagine how the value of creating shared worlds emerges in these collective experiences. The shared play, the common joy and the reciprocal bodily movements altogether create a valuable whole for the children, a world of shared meanings. Yet sharing this world also implies a moral agreement between the children on how to interact. The children show respect for each other, give each other room in the play and they take turns. They seem to show concern for each others' well-being. There is no need (or possibility) for them to verbalise how and what to do; their sense of how to interplay is imbued in their lived bodies and the context of play.

Implied is also a moral expectation towards the other peers, to respect their shared world. But the situation turns out differently. Both Olle and Anna appeared to be deeply involved in this world, jointly and happily focussing on each other and the horse. We can imagine how the children experience themselves being interrupted and hindered by Tobias, in creating this attractive shared world. This specific experience of losing their shared world and being victims of someone else's aspirations of their world may be as important for the value of shared worlds to emerge and that it is worthy for them to defend.

Even if the children in the next situation appear to prioritise their personal part of the play, one of the children expresses an emerging idea of the value of shared worlds. This interaction appears 4 months later. We can follow how Björn defends his play with Olle when Sebastian makes claims to join:

> Olle (1.10) is kneeling in front of a small table playing with some wooden blocks. Björn (2.1) is close watching. He touches the blocks. "Look theeere" he says eagerly. Olle looks at him. He places the blocks that Björn points at on the block-board. The blocks roll down on the floor. Olle tries to capture them but fails. He looks up smiling. Björn looks at the

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[1] This can also be interpreted in terms of gender but is outside the scope of this chapter.

blocks on the floor and starts to pick them up. Olle continues to play with blocks on the table. Björn continues to give Olle blocks. Both boys are concentrated.

Sebastian (1.9) comes along. He looks a while at the boys playing. Then he takes a block from the table and offers it to Olle, stretching it out towards him. Björn is looking for blocks crawling four feet on the floor behind Sebastian. Now he takes hold of Sebastian's sweater and pulls. Sebastian turns around looking at Björn, seemingly surprised. Björn forces himself past Sebastian (Björn is bigger than Sebastian). Björn hands out two blocks to Olle. But Olle complains with an angry tone of voice and a frowning face. He shakes his head and slaps Björn's hand. But Björn insists, again he reaches out his hand offering Olle the blocks. This time Olle takes one block and puts it in the box. Then he takes another. Every time Olle takes a block Björn says with a light and friendly tone of voice: "Taaah". Sebastian remains behind Björn, looking and still holding the block in his hand. He leaves. Olle and Björn continue their play. Sebastian returns. Again he reaches out for the bock, but Olle makes no effort to take it. He continues to play with the blocks. Sebastian leaves.

From this interaction we can follow how Olle and Björn create an agreement on a shared play. They seem to agree on their different roles and how to proceed: Olle builds and Björn picks the blocks from the floor and hands it over to Olle. The light tone of voice and the thank you from Björn when he delivers the blocks to Olle signify a moral agreement built on respect and concern for the rules of the play they have agreed upon, with gestures, tone of voice and posture. The boys seem both focused and serious. They smile. This is before Sebastian arrives.

Sebastian is inspired by the other children's play and shows with his being that he is concerned to join. But Björn holds another idea. He distinctly expresses that he possesses priority to and thereby the right to the play with Olle. Björn hinders Sebastian when he tries to commute. He is determined and continues himself to hand out blocks to Olle, showing clearly with his whole existence that *he* is the one to do this. Olle appears to switch between his interest for the play together with Björn and his wish to play himself. Yet Olle accepts Björn's intentions to take turns and he becomes involved in the play. Sebastian does not insist in joining even if he remains interested. His strategy is to wait; he leaves and he returns. When he finally offers the block to Olle, he is ignored. Now Sebastian refrains from his aspirations to participate.

Perhaps the activity is in the forefront for both Olle and Björn. Nevertheless it is clear that Sebastian is not allowed to participate in their play. Björn is more distinct and active than Olle in defending their shared play.

This situation illustrates young children's initial experience and defence of the value of sharing worlds with peers. One important condition for this value to become visible is the children's common activity. Their sharing and creating of meaning and that they actually do construct something together makes the value visible and worthy to defend. The fact that Björn defends his play with Olle is clear. More difficult thing is to state that the world he shares with Olle is in the priority and in forefront for him. Yet it is likely to believe that children's experiences of similar situations create the very basis for the discovery of sharing worlds with others. We can also follow how moral agreements and disagreements can come to live in the different interactions. Inside their shared world, children seem to build their interplay on a

concern for the other and their community, but outside (towards Sebastian) this shared world, such agreements seem inapplicable.

2.4 Shared Life-Worlds: Sympathy

The children also make personal choices or preferences when sharing worlds with peers. They hold high the right to share worlds, but prefer to choose with whom they want to share the world and being together with someone the children appreciate is important. In the next situation we can follow how Tobias rejects Sebastian, but accepts Anna to be together with him on the slide.

> Tobias (2.1) climbs up on the slide. Sebastian (1.7) looks at him, seemingly interested. But Tobias stretches his arm out in an avoiding gesture. "Bang" (bang) he says, shakes his head and objects firmly: "No". But Sebastian continues climbing the stairs. Now Tobias tries to stop him through pushing his foot towards Sebastian's chest and face. Sebastian holds back, stops and looks at Tobias. Tobias watches Sebastian. Sebastian leaves.

> Now Anna (1.5) comes up to the slide. She leans and puts her arms on the top of the stairs. Her face is close to Tobias'. He shakes his head. She watches him intensively and climbs up. He looks at her. Both are quiet. Tobias slides down and runs to and fro. Anna sits down on the top of the slide. She gazes at him. When Tobias climbs up again, she moves aside a little. Tobias sits down beside her. He looks at her for a while. Then he gently pats her cheek several times. Tobias hand rests steady but softly on Anna's cheek. He looks out in the room. Anna is still and quiet. Again Tobias looks at Anna and again he pats her cheek. For a short while both children are still, sitting on the top of the slide side by side. Tobias' hand remains on Anna's cheek. Then she takes off and slides down. Tobias follows her. They both leave.

Tobias defends the right to the slide. He rejects Sebastian and shows in many ways that he is determined to resist Sebastian on the slide. He "bangs" at him, shakes his head and hinders Sebastian with his foot to climb the slide. Sebastian understands the message and gives in. Anna on the other hand seems not to care about the fact that Tobias initially rejects her through shaking his head. She climbs up to him and Tobias accepts. Also in this interplay we can follow how the children create a silent moral agreement on how to interact. When Tobias has gone down on the slide and is on his way up again Anna gives room for him to sit beside her. And he both understands and accepts her wordless invitation. Tobias shows care for Anna; he caresses her. They remain still together. Their interplay is silent but the intersubjectivity and shared meanings between the children seem taken for granted. Tobias prefers Anna to play with him. Perhaps Tobias in this situation experiences that Anna chooses him? In their short interplay, it seems that they have developed a silent understanding on shared sympathy. Rather than playing they seem to exist together, remaining still and side by side on the slide. Their bodies form a whole and intimate shared world where verbal communications seem unneeded.

Children's creations of shared worlds are not always full of joy; power and exclusion processes are part of these lived encounters as we will notice in the next example.

2.5   Shared Life-Worlds: Difference and Similarity

The value of shared worlds can also be defended and confirmed through psychological strategies. Children can exclude others from their communities through on the one hand ascribing differences to the other *and* on the other hand indicating similarity with each other. In this way the value of shared worlds becomes confirmed and manifested; the child outside the shared world is (made) different than the children inside the shared world. Closeness and intimacy as well as power are involved in these processes. In the next situation, we will turn to the older children in the Swedish toddler group:

> Emma (2.10) and Karin (2.10) are playing with the swings outside. They twist the swings, let loose and run away. "Help", they shout enthusiastically. They laugh. When Per (3.3) arrives outside the fence, Emma clarifies the girls' shared world: "It's us now!" she says. Per stops. He leans over the fence and watches the girls' play. Eventually the girls turn around gazing at Per and say something. Per laughs. Now and then he comments.

> After a while Emma invites Per to the play: "Can you twist me", she asks. "Yes", Per agrees. He steps forward and starts swinging Emma. Karin swings much higher and she invites the others: "Look, do as me!" she says invitingly. The play continues. Per and Emma talk together. "I am big", says Emma. "I am also big", adds Per. Emma turns to Karin. "You are small", she says. Karin stops and objects resolutely: "No I am big!" She shows pointing across her body. "Karin not big", says Emma to Per. "But I am also big!" says Karin, more determined now. "No, I am big", insists Emma. "And I am big", continues Per. The discussion continues: Emma and Per argue that Karin is small and Karin resists indignant. Now Karin stands on the swing. "You cannot stand swinging", she says with a challenging tone of voice. "Yes I can" protests Per. Leaning close to Emma Per says confidentially with a low tone of voice: "She is small." But Karin objects again: "No I am big!" But Per shouts: "No I am toooo!" His voice is strong. "I am not small. I am this tall and big", Per draws his hand across his body.

> Now Emma and Per talk together with low voices. Standing close. Karin stands on her swing. The other two children continue their play. Per suggests they shift and Emma climbs down and swings Per. They do not talk with Karin.

The children's interest in sharing worlds can change quickly and can include different persons. Initially Emma defends the girls' right to their shared world. "It's us now", she informs Per. With these words she marks that he is not involved and that the girls share something together. Later Emma expands their play world, first of all to herself: She invites Per to swing her. Karin seems to accept to share their world with Per. She turns to the others inviting them to stand on the swing like her: "Do as me", she says.

Gradually we can follow how Per and Emma create a shared world in which Karin is not included. Rather she is being excluded through a subtle psychological process. Per and Emma establish and signify their community by using similarity and difference as arguments both to include themselves and to exclude Karin. Per and Emma share their similarity together, they are big. Karin is different from them because she is small. Yet they share a moral agreement. All the children show that

they experience it humiliating to be held as small. They appear to sense how they can affect the others' emotional experiences, and they use this knowledge. They use the word small to upset each other's feelings, and they become offended for the same reason. When Karin rejects the others' argumentation, Emma and Per start a whispering dialogue standing close together. They strengthen their community with closeness and confidentiality and the fact that Karin is excluded. In this subtle way, they confirm their shared world.

2.6 Shared Life-Worlds: Part of Young Children's Very Existence

This chapter has analysed how young children can experience, express and value their relationships and shared life-worlds. These worlds often emerge in play, in a situation of "here and now", but can also stretch over time beyond persons and other activities outside the play. We have seen how shared worlds may be visible for the youngest children from their initial play and meaning making together. We can follow how a world of shared meaning is constituted between Lisette and Ayla through their play around some trees on the preschool yard. The girls create a shared and wordless agreement for playing together. We have also seen how the value of shared worlds is confirmed and strengthened by the challenges from children outside. Children can become both indignant and upset when their worlds are challenged. The children outside are expected to respect the shared worlds of others. This is exemplified in the interaction between Olle and Anna where they create a shared world while playing together on the horse and gets interrupted by a peer.

Children's shared worlds have two indispensable dimensions: *The created*; what they do and the *intersubjective encounter*: the doing together. Of significance when creating worlds is that the children *do* and *share* something together. These dimensions are intertwined parts of the same value. The created is about the activity, the projects, the things, but also ideas and meanings shared with others. The intersubjective encounter is about the other and the taken for granted or explicit agreements about the world they share. They experience meaning together. We have seen how the children are absorbed in common activities and how, without words, they seem to tune into each other's embodied and emotional expressions and movements. They seem to be captured in flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1997) experiencing common joy, seriousness and sometimes indignation when their worlds are threatened. They appear to align silent agreements for their interplay while knowing through their bodies how to interact about their common goals and their intersubjective promises. We can also see that children choose whom they want to share worlds with, and they create a certain "we" of togetherness and commitment (Greve 2009). In the interplay on the slide, Tobias seems to prefer to create a world together with Anna, whereas he distinctly rejects Sebastian. Yet the shared worlds are not free from conflicts or power and the persons involved can change from being inside a world to

be excluded. This is illustrated in the interaction between Emma, Per and Karin. Initially Emma and Karin share worlds, but after inviting Per in the play Emma and Per create a world where Karin gradually becomes excluded.

The children's worlds are characterised by the specific tenor they create together. This supports the sociologist Alfred Schütz's (1972, pp. 228–234) idea about worlds as spaces for meaning characterised by a specific tone or style. Meanings and nuances, experiences of self and others, of time and space, are interpreted in a particular way deeply connected with this specific world. Children's play world is such a world, writes Schütz (1972). But the children's worlds are not only restricted to play even if play is the main source for sharing worlds with others. The philosopher Hans Gadamer (1996, pp. 285–307, 1997, pp. 147–155) thought about fusing of horizons which appear when our own perspectives encounter others and fuse to something new and can serve as a metaphor. Together the children create a lived world of their specific meaning and their moral commitments. This does not mean that the children's worlds are always characterised by fusion of horizons or that they are free from power. Intersubjectivity is fragile and the communication can easily break down (Merleau-Ponty 1962, pp. 346–365), as is often shown by the children in these studies. The examples presented in this study illustrate in different ways how the communication between the children can flow even without words, for example, between Lisette and Ayla. The examples also illuminate how easily the communication erodes, for example, when children's worlds are threatened, like in the interplay between Olle and Anna playing with the horse.

Out of the value of shared worlds emerge norms, demands and moral responsibilities. The point of departure for the children is that those who initiate, create and investigate something together have a right to their common project. The children themselves decide the borders of this world. The children take for granted that their shared worlds should be respected. They assume they have a right to define the content, the goals and who will take part. The children outside can get permission to join but can also be excluded. In the interplay between Bjön, Olle and Sebastian, for example, we can follow how Sebastian tries to get permission to join the others' shared world but the others reject. He is not let in. Quietly Sebastian remains with his desire to partake, but in the end he appears to give in. He leaves. The importance is that the decision of who to join is in the hands of the children who "own" the community. The right to share worlds with others both motivates and justifies the children's approaches towards the persons who they experience as threatening or make claims on their worlds. The children protect their worlds using different strategies. They argue for their right; they hinder (literally) the other to join or just push her/him away. They can ignore the other, ask the teachers[2] for help or just leave the area. They bring their common world to another place. They can use subtle and powerful strategies to exclude and include friends in their communities. Age, gender and sympathy are aspects involved in children's defence and creation of their

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[2] In this presentation the adults are not involved. Extended analyses discussing the role of adults in children's moral learning are to be found in Johansson 2002, 2007a, Johansson et al. 2015 and Emilson and Johansson 2009, for example.

shared worlds. Power is also important: having power can assure entrance into others worlds. Power is also effective when defending shared worlds. In the interaction between Per, Anna and Malin, we can learn how the children use subtle and powerful ways to include and exclude each other. They seem to be aware of how they can affect each other's emotional experiences. In their enmeshing life-worlds, they have probably encapsulated cultural meanings of language, in which "being small" is loaded with negative connotations, while being strong is loaded with positive meanings. The children use this relational and cultural knowledge for both good and bad. Shared power is an experience that may come out as a result of shared worlds. We see another example of this in the work of Quiñones et al. (Chap. 12, this volume). They propose that children learn how to affectively relate to their own wilful intentions while they play with others. It seems that children develop a sense of "together we are strong" when they collectively act resolute to defend their shared worlds. Being strong appears to be an important value for the children.

In the literature, children's defence of common space has been described in different ways, often in terms of power positions, physical or interactive spaces, as children's specific arenas, and their resistances and negotiations (Alvestad 2010; Björk-Willén 2012; Corsaro 2009; Eriksen Ødegaard 2007; Löfdahl and Hägglund 2006; Tullgren 2003). Even if these positions are relevant, the presented studies call for a wider and deeper description to give justice to the children's defence of the worlds they share with others. These studies are based upon an ontological life-world theory perspective where children are regarded as body subjects able to experience and understand each other through their bodily existence in the world (Merleau-Ponty 1962). The philosophical perspective behind a study always steers the investigation, the possible questions and the possible results. In this case the ontology opens for understanding and interpreting the child's bodily being in the world together with others as an existential question. The suggestion here is to interpret children's shared worlds as an existential quality, a physical and psychological field of lived meaning defined by the children themselves. The existential quality refers to a whole; the world's children create with others which are indeed a specific focus in young children's life. The sense of indignation that the children convey when others climb into their worlds also indicate that others intrude into their life, in their life-world. Even if it is likely that the children can be offended by being interrupted by others, the sense of right to their shared world appears significant in their expressions. Children's explicit frustration but also their subtle change of posture from joy to silence when not being allowed into others' worlds illuminates that this is an existential question for them, both for the children owning the world and for the children outside this world.

In sum to create worlds with others is a way of being for children and therefore part of their existence. This way to view children's shared worlds complete previous research decisively. Children's everyday life in their toddler groups is really about finding others to be together with. The message children meet in preschool is that the collective life is important and highly valued. Activities in the main are collective. Play belongs both to everyone and to no one. Everyone should have a right and

opportunity to play with peers. When children have discovered the value of right, they defend and hold on to this value.

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Chapter 3
The Babies' Perspective: Emotional Experience of Their Creative Acts

Liang Li, Avis Ridgway, and Gloria Quiñones

Abstract How do adults take babies' perspective to support their learning during transitory cultural events such as family routines in daily life? Explorations in the research site of three babies' daily lives are used to investigate this question. In this study, Vygotsky's (The problem of the environment. In: van der Veer R, Valsiner J (eds) The Vygotsky reader. Blackwell, Oxford, 338–354, 1994) cultural-historical concept of perezhivanie (emotional experience) informs the research. This chapter focuses in particular on exploring babies' perezhivanie (emotional experience) of spontaneous creative acts in family life events which inform how parents/adults can take babies' perspective and reciprocally engage in such transitory moments. Visual methodology is applied in the research to frame the analysis of babies' everyday experiences with families. The chapter analyses expressive daily life events of three babies (with cultural heritages from Australia, China and Mexico) and unpacks the various dimensions of parent-baby shared daily practices. Babies' emotional experience of their creative acts with parents are discussed, in order to uncover the pedagogical strategies parents/adults use to engage with babies.

Keywords Perezhivanie • Emotional expression • Babies' perspective • Creative acts

3.1 Introduction

> Experience must be understood as the external relation of the child as a person to one factor
> or another of reality. (Vygotsky 1987, p. 294)

How do young babies interpret their daily events and moments? This question drives us to explore the babies' world. Their relationships and emotional experience must be explored to answer this question. The research question in this chapter is how do adults take babies' perspective to reciprocally engage in babies and toddlers'

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everyday activities? Taken from a cultural-historical perspective, the concept of emotion has been interpreted as 'perezhivanie'. How children's perezhivanie can be expressed and understood is totally 'dependent upon the cultural community in which the child(ren) live' (Fleer and Hammer 2013, p. 132). In this chapter, we explore young babies' emotional experience in their creative acts by drawing upon the concept of 'perezhivanie' to examine their interactions with parents in family cultural contexts.

Chen (2015) suggests little research has focused on perezhivanie in the education of babies and toddlers. Of those studies published, it is noted that the focus is on preschoolers or older children's emotions in their learning and development. For example, some studies explore preschooler's emotion regulation in children's play worlds (Fleer and Hammer 2013; Ferholt 2015; Ewing 2015). Another study by Adams (2014) investigated young children's individual and collective emotions present in home and school settings during an international transition. There are also a few studies exploring perezhivanie in children's science learning such as those of Adams and March (2015), Fleer (2013), and Fleer and Quiñones (2013). In all these reviewed studies, the main focus is on preschoolers or older children's perezhivanie in their educational settings. Little attention has been directed to young babies and toddlers' emotional experience within settings of their expression of creative acts. Therefore, this chapter aims to explore how babies and toddlers emotionally perceive their expressive everyday experiences and how adults can create reciprocal emotional support for their learning and development.

This chapter starts with theoretical views of perezhivanie, followed by discussion of the research methodology. The analysis and discussions of three babies' case examples are then presented. It concludes with the implications for parents/adults who interact with young babies through everyday life practices.

3.2   Perezhivanie: The Babies' Emotional Experience

According to Vygotsky (1994), perezhivanie means 'an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics', (p. 342). Vygotsky (1994) has also made a strong argument for emotional experience (perezhivanie).

> An emotional experience (perezhivanie) is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced – an emotional experience (perezhivanie) is always related to something which is found outside the person – and on the other hand, what is represented is how I,myself, am experiencing this, i.e., all the personal characteristics and all the environment characteristics are represented in an emotional experience,(perezhivanie). (p. 343)

This means perezhivanie is always related to something outside the person and also to how the individual person affectively experiences this. Vygotsky (1994) has further explained the definition of perezhivanie: 'in an emotional experience (perezhivanie) we are always dealing with an indivisible unity of personal characteristics

and situational characteristics which are represented in the emotional experience (perezhivanie)' (Vygotsky 1994, p. 343). Perezhivanie represents how a child emotionally experiences their environment and how they contribute to that environment. Each child has their own emotional attitude to the situation. The relations between child and environment are highlighted by Vygotsky (1994) and explain how environment influences the developing child and how these influences are determined by the child's emotional experience (perezhivanie).

From Vygotsky's perspective, we understand not only the environment the child experiences but also their emotional experience and to what extent the child can contribute to the environment and achieve their development. We need to explore how the child experiences, interprets and makes self-awareness of and perceives the environment through generalisation, which is the affective nature of their relationship to the environment. The emotions play an important role during the process of generalisation of the environment. It means 'perezhivanie implies that the context is not an external function, but an internal changing phenomenon that is constantly reorganized through the lens of each person's affective experience' (Gonzalez Rey 2011, cited in Brennan 2014, p. 285). In this chapter, we draw upon the concept of perezhivanie to show relationships which exist between three young babies and their environments. We do this to explore how they interpret, perceive, become aware of and emotionally relate to creative acts expressed with their parent's support.

This requires us to develop an in-depth internal analysis of babies' 'perezhivanie' where we aim to identify their emotional experiences with the environment. To do this we analyse three video clips and examine three babies and toddlers' emotional experience in spontaneous transitory moments of shared musical expression. As Fleer and Hammer (2013) argue: 'Emotions can only be understood in the context of social others who shape and are shaped by the social situation of children's development' (p. 127). In addition, we explore how the parents/adults involved create responsive conditions to support learning and development and enrich their babies and toddler's everyday emotional experience of creative acts in their family environments.

We take the babies' perspective to explore how they emotionally experience the collective environment. This means that we examine how a young child makes sense of their everyday experiences and transforms these into new knowledge (Ridgway et al. 2015). As Adams (2014) argues, 'significant contributors to the child's social situation inform the child's perspective and include the perspective of adults and peers to obtain a picture of what the child is emotionally experiencing individually and with others' (p. 135). The combination of taking the babies' perspective and using the concept of perezhivanie allows us to make sense of the babies' unexpected behaviour and feelings during the transitory moments and helps us to explain the whole process of their musical expression through creative acts.

3.3   A Dialogue Commentary: Visual Narrative Methodology to Explain Babies' Emotional Experience

In this study a cultural-historical visual (video) methodology is applied (Hedegaard et al. 2008; Li 2014), and data are generated using two research approaches: video observations and dialogue-based interview. Video observation is a very important method in cultural-historical research. Theoretically, cultural-historical research focuses on studying children in everyday settings and examining different perspectives in order to identify the conflicts within the practices or activities and the opportunities for children's development (Fleer 2008). Video records allow the cultural-historical researcher to discuss data effectively with participants, within the team of three researchers and capture babies and toddlers' perspectives. This is done in order to discover different perspectives regarding the practices, perezhivanie of participants and other influences within the recorded social situation.

While many researchers have offered evidence of how to use and conceptualise digital visual tools in early childhood education research (Fleer and Ridgway 2014), very few have considered the importance of digital visual tools in researching, teaching and learning with babies and toddlers. This chapter gives insight into the effective pedagogical use of digital visual methods (Ridgway, Quiñones and Li Chap.10, this volume) for better understanding the perezhivanie of babies and toddlers, in order to better support efforts of parents, educators and carers whose aim is to offer meaningful upbringing, education and care of infants and toddlers. Furthermore, visual methodology brings a powerful tool to capture babies' perspective to see what they like and what they dislike. The visual data provides a clear clue of their affective movements and creative acts such as their facial expression, sign language, eye contact, etc. The images in this chapter has clearly explained babies' perspective. We collectively review videos, provide interpretative comments and begin theoretical discussion. In this chapter, three video clips from three babies Luci (26 months old), Elvin (14 months old) and Silvana (21 months old) have been given a written interpretation, reviewed by three researchers through dialogue commentary (Ridgway et al. 2016; Ridgway, Quiñones and Li Chap. 10, this volume), with theoretical discussion of babies/toddlers' perezhivanie (emotional experience) in their environment during the recorded daily events (Li et al. 2015). In this way we aim to explore how young infants and toddlers perceive their musical expression and how they experience their 'affective moments' when adults/parents show interest and encouragement in musical expression.

3.4   Analysis of Case Examples

3.4.1   Case Example 1: Luci's Moon Up High

Luci (26 months old) holds ukelele with both hands and then left hand, with right hand strumming movements, and looks up at her daddy using his iPhone filming at start.

She sings three tones up – *Moon up high* (strumming ukelele) *moon up high, moon up high, moon up high, moon up high* (voice tone descends on word high, a little) (Fig. 3.1).

Then she descends three tones to finish. She concentrates with whole body, synchronising voice and strum (Fig. 3.2).

Fig. 3.1 Moon up high

Fig. 3.2 Finger strum

Fig. 3.3 Card strum

In- the- sky… and she holds that pitch, which leads to her choosing to start a new
   song. The word *sky* is sung on a low and sustained note, the same note that Luci
   then begins to sing the new song (a transformative moment).

Luci: *Twinkle twinkle little star…* on [The deeper note is a cue for this familiar
   song.], starts singing and tries finger strumming (Fig. 3.3).

Father: *Very good, hey do you want to do some strumming as well?*

Why don't you use that as a strummer?

Luci: *Strummer.*

Father *strummer* card handed to Luci is quickly accepted with shared intention
   understood, and she starts moving the card across tuned strings of ukelele like a
   plectrum or pick, but wide enough to give satisfying sound. She sings while lean-
   ing over her ukelele on the floor (Fig. 3.3).

Luci: *Moon up high…* [strumming right handed with uke resting on the floor].

[Other words are sung. At least eight bars of strums are done in bunches of four,
   including word sounding like daddys. She looks up to her father who responds.]

Father: *That was beautiful, that was really great.*

Luci: *Dummy.*

Father: *Okay.*

3.4.2   *Luci's Social Dynamic Music Environment Setting*

The dynamics of creativity are expressed reciprocally when father uses iPhone to
record Luci's song. A quote from the Salvadore Allende school identity booklet
from Reggio Emilia (1996) encapsulates Luci's experience: 'When ideas meet with

hands, extraordinary things happen. Thoughts give shape to the material and the material remodels the thoughts and then the things that we do grow along with our growing'. (p. 10). Luci interprets the sense and meaning of what is present in her environmental setting. 'The situation will influence the child in different ways depending on how well the child understands its sense and meaning' (Leontiev 2005 p. 16). She is open to her situation. She is spontaneous and part of it. She lives with making music in her daily life.

In the social dynamic, father's affective engagement is reciprocated by Luci who responds and performs as he films. There is a feeling of affective attunement within this environment, where Luci enjoys creating a performance with her father who provides pedagogically sensitive support for her interest and activity.

3.4.3   Affective Moments and Relations in 'Moon Up High'

In this case example, we see that an affective relation is formed in relation to moments of Luci's world: the musical world she is in and part of. This reminds us of discussion by Demuth et al. (2012) on turn taking and rhythmic features of communication.

> In terms of musical aspects, the repetitions in this interaction result in a rhythmic pattern that creates ensemble. The importance here seems to lie not primarily in the content of what is being said, but on establishing and maintaining a connection through a synchronous rhythmic pattern. The meta message on the relational level conveyed here is close intimacy through the construction of mutual rapport and experience. (p. 7)

Her emotional rapport with the musical world she experiences is being formed. Luci clearly plays with *affects* in this performance. It can be shown that she concentrates with whole body by synchronising voice and strum and also looks up at her Dad who films her. Here, three worlds are dialectically interwoven: Luci, her performance and her audience, which forms a moment of wholeness, characteristic of a perezhivanie. A *perezhivanie* here is interpreted as the kind of unforgettable experience which contributes to the development of a person's personality. In this example the social dynamic forms a *perezhivanie* that essentially includes a *catharsis*, or 'working over' of Luci's singing experience of 'Moon up high', through which the song she knows as her own is relived and further integrated into her personality.

3.4.4   The Music Reciprocity

Charlotte Hojholt's (2008) notion that we *structure each other's possibilities* – where people act together and the social structure of participation brings the shared and active connections to our attention – those involved may not have the same intentions; however, when the child's perspective is understood, connections can

form. In Luci's 'Moon up high' example, her father has guided, deeply encouraged with a soft voice, and offered choice of new creative combinations such as the card as strummer. Luci has indicated her real active engagement through her concentrated singing efforts with lips, mouth and hands on instrument, when affective engagement and conceptual reciprocity is felt, achieved and lived together. Conceptual reciprocity means that the reciprocators have an awareness of the perspective of one another and actively respond to others in the situated environment (Ridgway et al. 2015). In this case, Luci and her father are aware of each other's perspectives and actively engage in this shared music play.

3.4.5   Case Example 2: Elvin's 'If You Are Happy…'

After lunch, Elvin (14 months old) starts pushing his walker around the living room and kitchen. Elvin is trying to follow his Dad around by walking. He is tired after a while and then starts walking again with his walker. He goes to the kitchen where his mum is washing the dishes. He stops to start playing his music piano on the walker. He presses the blue button to listen to the music and make his movements. His dad films this experience on an iPhone.

Elvin nods his head, slightly moves his body and smiles at his father. His father is giving the telephone toy (which is part of the walker) back to Elvin and asks him to make a phone call to Dad. His father said, 'Hello, Elvin!'. Elvin is screaming which shows he is not happy to make a phone call as father suggested. He tries to put the phone back to the walker. At this moment, the song has finished and music stopped, so Elvin squats down and presses the blue button again to play the same song 'If you are happy and you know it'. When he presses the blue button, the walker is moved and his hand accidently presses the red button and plays another song 'Where is thumbkin?'. He stands up and listens to the song, feels that this is not the right one, and then presses the blue button again and listens to the song 'If you are happy and you know it'. He stands up and smiles at his father and mother (Fig. 3.4).

His mother stops washing dishes to join his performance. He stands and moves his arms, nods his head continually. Then, he starts pressing the button as he found the song was almost finished (Figs. 3.5 and 3.6). Then he starts moving his body again and smiles at his mum again. Mum also starts singing the song and following the music rhythms.

After a while, mum and dad both suggest he plays another song. He does not listen and still presses the blue button to play the same song, 'If you are happy and you know it'. He keeps moving his body and nodding his head to follow the rhythm, and he also sometimes looks at his dad or mum (Fig. 3.7) as they are actively engaged in singing and making body movements. The same song has now been repeated and played a couple of times already.

Fig. 3.4 Elvin smiles

Fig. 3.5 Pressing the *blue* button

Fig. 3.6 Carefully choosing the favourite song

Fig. 3.7 Looking at his parents

3.4.6   The Social Environment and Situation of Elvin's Awareness of the Song

Elvin's case can be seen as part of his everyday life. He always initiates his activity and experiments and explores the surroundings. His creative act is beyond a performance or creation but can be understood in relation to the social situation he lives in, which is learning across different settings. According to his mother, he has also experienced the song 'If you are happy and you know it' at his childcare centre. Elvin is confident, active and in tune with the familiar song. The adults provide objects and objects have a purpose. However, the objects have specific purposes and children are able to deconstruct them, re-create them and work with them to suit their purpose in what relates to their everydayness. That is the beauty of everyday life. The environmental factors present for the child are 'refracted through the prism of the child's emotional experience' (Vygotsky 1994, p. 339). Elvin's happiness and joyfulness explain his emotional experience to his parents' engagement and the toy he plays with.

3.4.7   Affective Movements to the Favourite Song

Elvin is making sounds happen by pressing buttons. His own personal music making only begins when he responds physically to the rhythm of the song coming from the toy walker. He moves his upright body very gently, especially his head nods and keeps to the rhythm of the songs which are all different tunes but in the same even tempo. His movements are gentle and in time with the beats. The tune is physically embodied here in Elvin's creative act.

The song becomes 'his favourite' so he is motivated to find the button on the toy walker that activates the special tune. Why Elvin learns to choose the special button to play and respond to a favourite tune seems to be linked to the fact that his mother is singing the words. Through this reciprocal emotional support, Elvin shows he is feeling the music himself, interpreting it and becoming affectively engaged with the meaning of the song. The *perezhivanie emotional experience* of his favourite song is carefully shown through him interpreting the music bodily and looking and exchanging gazes with his parents.

'All children possess musical intelligence and the capacity for developing musicianship, not just as consumers, but also as performers and creators of music' (Woodward 2005, p. 249, cited in Hollingsworth and Ridgway 2014, p. 314). Through having this high-tech toy, Elvin is able to experience and wilfully create the music and intently perform to it. The emotional expression of his favourite song has been created and developed.

3.4.8 The Art of Reciprocity

The social situation with both parents nearby means Elvin has an audience. They each play a role; mother is the voice and Elvin is the mover. It is a brief transitory moment: a cultural act and a joyful part of these affective movements. There is full sensory involvement with his surroundings at that time. In a shared set of cultural and personal experiences, spontaneous social transactions occur: 'one's actions have an emotional content from which cognition cannot be disassociated' (Smagorinsky 2011, p. 337).

Elvin keeps listening and looking at his audience and his facial gestures show he keeps responding to his parents in a concentrated way. Especially there is deep concentration and some wonderful quick smiles when mother sings. There is power in the connectedness of music as a communication tool for family life activity and Elvin certainly perseveres with finding how to activate the button for his personal choice of song to move to.

The conceptual reciprocity between Elvin and his mother may have enhanced Elvin's musical experience. The shared awareness of the favourite song has been developed through the family music playful event. 'This social interaction is an act of intimate communication characterised by affective attunement and conceptual reciprocity and foundational to learning in and through pedagogical play' (Ridgway et al. 2015, p. 51).

3.4.9 Case Example 3: Silvana's Drum Dance

The following example takes place in the family living room space. After having dinner, father and Silvana began to dance. Silvana's father plays piano and in his teenage years he played the drums. Silvana's mother is filming a very spontaneous event. Her father began drumming using the table, making music for Silvana to dance to. She has been walking backwards for some time and the living room is dark. This is a joyful event where parents show genuine interest in Silvana's musical initiation and creative expressions. While dancing, Silvana doesn't stop looking at her parents while embodying the sounds and rhythms of the drumming. She begins with moving her head and then her hips and then walking backwards without looking at her parents (Figs. 3.8, 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11).

3.4.10 Silvana's Music and Dance in Daily Life Moments

This is part of Silvana's everyday life moments: dancing with the drum music. After dinner, family have relaxation time together for her to enjoy being a family member and to show her own musical expressions and engagement with her father's

Fig. 3.8 Drum dance
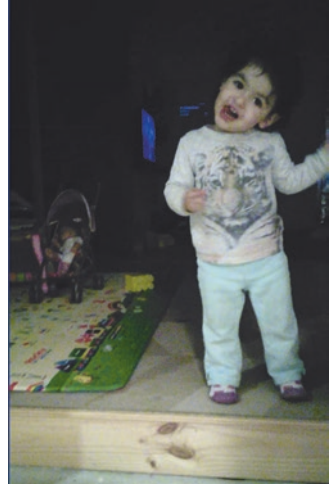
Fig. 3.9 Facial wonderment
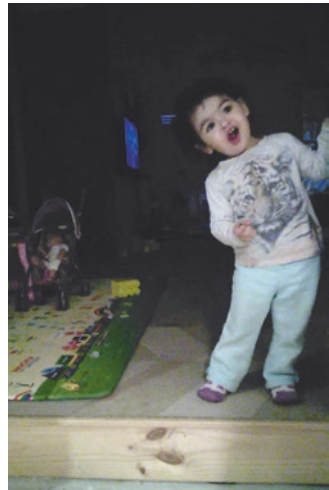
drumming. In this example, her father is playing a rhythmic beat. The table is used as a drum and her mother films the dramatic effect of being in the living room with lights off. Silvana not only has a sense of awareness but a sense of belonging to the family unit.

Fig. 3.10 Synchronicity
with drum beats
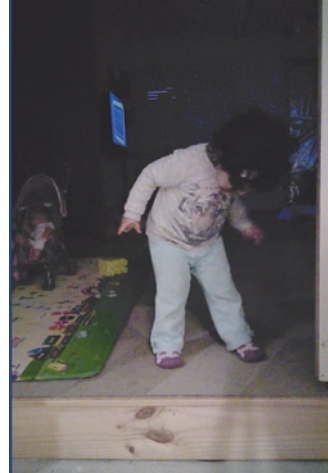
Fig. 3.11 Moving
backwards
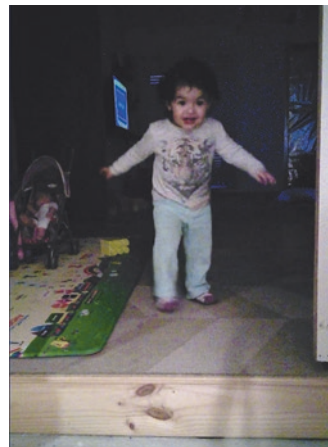
3.4.11   Affective Engagement with the Drum Dance

We notice the power of the rhythmic drumming fully engages Silvana's interest and
feelings. Her face lights up smiling with shining eyes open wide and feeling
excited – attuning to the drumming sound with head moving from side to side in
time to the rhythms (Fig. 3.8). Eyes are first on recording camera then Silvana shifts
to position herself in a state of concentrated embodiment, with head down standing
in one place with her whole body engaged in the creative act of dancing. She is tak-
ing in and responding to the experience as shown in the movement of hips, arms and
legs and looks of facial wonderment (Fig. 3.9). She moves backwards (Fig. 3.11)
into the dark room in synchronicity with drum beats (Fig. 3.10) and her feelings are

alive and intensely focused. The situation echoes Ferholt's (2010) statement about a child who said 'Why am I walking backwards? I don't have to look. I know where I'm going' (p. 178).

Silvana keeps her gaze on observer and moves backwards without hesitation keeping dynamic movement and maintaining flow of the drumming inside her – a moment of catharsis. Silvana is a performer and interpreter of the drumming music and has a dramatic relationship with it. The joyfulness, excitement and creative interpretation is in Silvana's improvised response. There are no words in this event, but the body movement and music show how Silvana affectively engages in her dancing performance. This is highly valued by her mum and dad.

Silvana confidently moves her body and makes new meaning of body movement in the dance. Her self-identity of beauty and confidence is shown through her dance.

3.4.12   The Reciprocity of Dance

Family affectiveness in dance and music can be highlighted. Father is the co-player/performer with Silvana's dance. Silvana tried to invite her mum to join the performance which shows her initiation and fascination with dance during family leisure time. The collective shared affective moments are important to her performance. The conceptual reciprocity is present with all family members in her creative act.

3.5   Discussion

3.5.1   Babies' Creative Acts Are Culturally Constructed

We have a question to ask about how young babies perceive their music learning experience through these transitory moments and how they make meanings through creative acts. Three Australian babies Luci, Elvin and Silvana are, respectively, from Australian, Chinese and Mexican heritage families. Their case examples clearly indicate the power of the social situation in their learning and cultural development. We discuss the three babies' musical experiences to investigate how everyday cultural life is drawn upon to enhance their creativity through musical expression. Luci's 'Moon up high' creative act illustrates her musical experience is joyfully affective as she sings and plays the ukelele. Elvin's affective attitudes to the song – 'If you are happy...' – arise from his everyday cultural experience across the institutional contexts of childcare and family. Affective engagement is seen in Silvana's drum dance which forms part of her family's cultural expression. These creative acts are all initiated by the young babies and constructed by their interactions with the environment. As Bozhovich (2009) argues, children's perezhivanie (emotional experience) reflects on and orients their behaviours, making them act in

a way that shows their affective relationships with their surroundings. Three babies' perezhivanie determines how they see their musical learning experiences in home contexts. It is just like Luci's case, where she intentionally plays a familiar song introduced to her 6 months earlier. She explores the ukelele and makes meaning of how it is amazing to play it while she is singing. Luci carefully uses her fingers and watches how the ukelele works by strumming the strings.

Franks (2015) proposed Vygotsky's cultural contexts for learning show that 'learning is entwined with a sense of the "whole context", his interest in the active and physicalized techniques of actor training – demonstrates that he recognised the implication and affect of material environment on learning…' (p. 230). In this chapter, three babies have all made sense of musical experiments through their family cultural contexts. Their creative acts are extended by their parents, who actively support them to make sense of what is valued in their family.

Therefore, what emotional energies are needed for development of the babies' creative worlds they act upon? We suggest it is their cultural practice within their surroundings and active support from others. Vygotsky (1994) argues that 'The emotional experience [perezhivanie] arising from any situation or from any aspect of his environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child' (pp. 338–339). The social and cultural essence of the creative acts is very important for babies' learning and exploration.

3.5.2   Babies' Perezhivanie in the Creative Acts

Has each of the babies' perezhivanie been enriched in their cultural experiences? The three case examples show how young babies interpret their lived emotional experience in creative acts. In Elvin's music play, he has expressed his feelings with the song of 'If you are happy and you know it…'. He makes his own choice of the movement, through moving his body and nodding his head to follow the rhythm. Similarly, in Silvana's drum dance, she has spontaneously expressed her happiness and confidence by moving backwards in synchronicity. Silvana's perezhivanie in her dance has been deeply expressed by her attunement to the drumming sound with head moving side to side in time to the rhythms. Also, in Luci's 'Moon up high', the perezhivanie as a process has been perceived, appropriated and represented through her singing of three tones up and three tones down while playing the ukelele. It is suggested that babies' affective attitudes to their creative acts can be explained by their emotional experience [perezhivanie] of the given situation. This reminds us of Vygotsky's (1994) concept 'perezhivanie' meaning 'how a child becomes aware of, interprets, and emotionally relates to a certain event' (p. 341).

Furthermore, we notice that the three babies' perezhivanie is also provided and enriched by their parents' active interaction in the home context. This shows how parents can take babies' perspective to achieve conceptual reciprocity in creative acts.

3.5.3   Taking Babies' Perspective to Provide Reciprocal Emotional Support During the Transitory Moments of Creative Acts

The babies encourage adults to participate with them in their creative acts, while the adults are engaged in supporting their babies to join in the music play. Conceptual reciprocity has been formed through taking babies' perspectives. In her playing 'Moon up high', Luci has shown her interest in playing this familiar song using the ukelele. Her father's engagement as her audience, suggests he would like to listen to the song again by using a strummer. Luci is a really good singer, and to try to meet audience's needs she agrees, 'Strummer!' She agrees it is fun to play and experiment with a strummer as she sings. As an educator, her father extends her exploration of singing with ukelele by offering her a new choice. Their conceptual reciprocity has been enriched. When we look at the social dynamic in this creative experience, father's affective engagement is reciprocated by Luci who responds and performs as he films. In Elvin's case, he has made his own choice of listening to his favourite song which he is familiar with, although his parents suggest to him that he changes to another song. His parents do not force him to make changes, instead, his mother sings the song along with his movements. This creates the moments of reciprocity through their shared engagement with the music. His parents create the transitory moments for him through their active reciprocal emotional support such as singing the song with him and making body movements. Elvin's perspective has been acknowledged within this process. Without his parents' active support, his affective attitudes of the creative acts and engagement with his favourite song would not be transformed. Learner emotional experience can be enhanced through the collective performance (Bundy et al. 2015). When Silvana starts her body movement, it is because of her father's rhythmic drum play on the table. Her interests and motives in dance have been addressed. The collective performance between Silvana and her father enhances her affective attunement in the dance and music. This also echoes Vygotsky's (1994) argument that 'The child's higher psychological functions, her higher attributes which are specific to humans, originally manifest themselves as forms of child's collective behaviour, as a form of co-operation with other people, and it is only afterwards that they become the internal individual functions of the child himself' (p. 353).

According to Bundy et al. (2015), 'a key component of interpersonal relationships in any communicative context is how embodiment influences perezhivanie as felt experience. Embodiment involves gesture and speech' (p. 159). Therefore, the interrelationships among the three babies and their parents have made a strong impact on the babies' perezhivanie as the lived experience in their creative cultural worlds. Taking children's perspective, adults need to consider the lived experience of children during the various transition moments (Rutanen, Chap. 4, this volume). Through their different ways of interaction and communication, parents naturally

create meaningful transitory moments for the babies' affective engagement through taking their perspectives to further their learning.

These transitory moments represent three babies' affective moments of their musical experience and expression in creative acts.

3.6 Conclusion

We drew upon Vygotsky's concept of 'perezhivanie' to illustrate how young babies emotionally perceive and make meaning of their worlds of creative experience. Vygotsky (1994) made the point that 'one should always approach environment from the point of view of the relationship which exits between the child and its environment at a given stage of his development' (p. 338). The relationships between three babies and their family environments have been explored in this chapter and illustrate how young babies are capable of building greater awareness of their situation and giving cultural expression through different creative acts.

We find that the situational characteristics 'have played a decisive role in determining the child's relationship to a given situation' (Vygotsky 1994, p. 342). The parents from three different cultural families provided the reciprocal emotional support for their babies' emotional expression. Apart from that, one element of the situational characteristics that cannot be ignored is that the parents all filmed their babies' creative acts. This reflects and explains deep interest in their babies' emotional expression, which further enhanced the babies' awareness of the reciprocal nature of their situation.

This chapter has explored how the adults created meaningful contexts with their babies to build on the transitory moments expressed in creative acts. By offering support to confidently communicate in ways that are not normally available to them through other pedagogies, the babies all respond creatively and expressively. The parents' active engagements are not planned or structured, but naturally occurring. By taking their babies' perspective, parents actively provided reciprocal emotional support, thus achieving conceptual reciprocity and being wholly present in the expression of their babies' creative acts.

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Chapter 4
Spatial Perspective on Everyday Transitions Within a Toddler Group Care Setting

Niina Rutanen

Abstract This chapter builds on spatial approaches to study everyday life, and in particular to consider Henri Lefebvre's (1901–1991) theory on the social production of space. Lefebvre's ideas on the social production of space are based on a dynamic "spatial triad" of *conceived* (representations of space), *perceived* (socio-spatial practices), *and lived space* (representational space). The aim of this chapter is to discuss, by building on Lefebvre's approach, the spatial dynamics involved within the small-scale (horizontal) transitions for children in toddler group care. The discussion is based on a study where one Finnish day care group for 1- to 3-year-olds was investigated by applying a spatial, relational perspective to toddlers' everyday lives. Various data, such as video-elicited interviews and audio recordings from the practitioners' meetings and observations and video recordings about practices, will be used to bring empirical evidence on how these three moments, or layers, of conceived, perceived, and lived space in social production of space are interlinked within the transitory events.

Keywords Transitions • Space • Lefebvre • Ethnography • Toddler group care

4.1   Introduction

This chapter builds on spatial approaches to study everyday life, and particularly, on French philosopher, sociologist, and Marxist intellectual Henri Lefebvre's (1901–1991) theory on the social production of space. I will argue that Lefebvre's ideas are particularly applicable to investigate the various layers of everyday life and social action in early childhood education. The layers are addressed with Lefebvre's concept of *social production of space* that is based on a dynamic "spatial triad" of conceived ("representations of space"), perceived ("socio-spatial practices"), and lived space ("representational space") (Lefebvre 1991, 2004).

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The aim of this chapter is to discuss the spatial dynamics involved within small-scale (horizontal) transitions for children in toddler group care. Elsewhere in developmental and educational literature, transitions have been widely discussed from various perspectives. In their review of literature on early years transitions, Vogler et al. (2008, pp. 1–2) provide a generic definition of transitions as "key events and/ or processes occurring at specific periods or turning points during the life course." Transitions relate to a person's experiences and well-being in everyday life, as they are linked "to changes in a person's appearance, activity, status, roles and relationships, as well as associated changes in use of physical and social space, and/or changing contact with cultural beliefs, discourses and practices, especially where these are linked to changes of setting and in some cases dominant language" (*ibid, pp. 1–2*). Vogler et al. (2008, p. 1–2) underline that transitions often involve significant psychosocial and cultural adjustments for the person.

Studies have mostly addressed children's vertical, formal transitions in educational institutions such as the challenges children face in transition from nonparental care to out-of-home care or in transition from early childhood education to primary school (Vogler et al. 2008, p. 2). During the last decades, most of the developmentally oriented studies addressing the transition from home to nonparental care have focused on children's individual social and emotional adjustment to the new environment (e.g., McCutcheon and Calhoun 1976), showing how difficult and stressful the adaptation to nonparental care can be for young children (Ahnert et al. 2004; Datler et al. 2012). However, parallel to the discussion of the challenges children face, there is evidence about children's successful adjustment to care. This evidence shows that with increased time in nonparental care, children become more sociable and more engaged with peers (e.g., Fein et al. 1993; see also Lam and Pollard 2006).

Parallel to vertical transitions children experience daily various horizontal transitions (see, e.g., Kagan and Neuman 1998; Vogler et al. 2008). Horizontal transitions refer to movements that occur on a weekly or daily basis between various spheres or domains of children's lives (Vogler et al. 2008, p. 2), such as spatial transitions from different educational environments to others during the day. They can also refer to daily transitions from home to care and, for example, changes that occur when different educators take care of the child during the day. In comparison to vertical transitions, horizontal daily and weekly transitions might be more hidden and remain invisible to the adults' view. Horizontal transitions can also be more unpredictable, individualized, and specific for each child.

In this chapter, I will use the concept of transitions to refer to small-scale transitions that are co-constructed among the practitioners and children during everyday events in early childhood education institutions. These transitions don't necessarily require a spatial transition from one location or institution to another nor a long time span or developmental period to occur. Instead, here, *transitions refer to the symbolic transformation of one setting into something new, into different symbolic space and to related changes that are lived through by children and also constructed actively by the practitioners and children themselves.* From the participants' perspective, the interest is on children's experiences when acting in this newly defined

symbolic space. These small-scale events and processes are also, following Vogler et al.'s definition (2008, pp. 1–2), closely linked to the person's status, roles, and relationships, as well as to associated changes in their use of physical and social space.

This analysis is based on a study where one Finnish day care group for 1–3-year-olds was investigated by applying a spatial, relational perspective to toddlers' everyday lives. Data collection included video-elicited interviews and audio recordings from the practitioners' meetings and observations and video recordings about practices. This chapter will first identify some horizontal transitions constructed and occurring and, second, analyze and discuss how Lefebvre's (1991, 2004) three moments of conceived, perceived, and lived space in social production of space are interlinked within the identified horizontal transitions. The examples that will be discussed here are lunch hour and circle time. Both of these are routine events that occur daily at the center. They also include a clear transition from previous activities to a newly structured symbolic space.

4.2 Henri Lefebvre's Spatial Approach

French philosopher, sociologist, and Marxist intellectual Henri Lefebvre's (1901–1991) theory on the social production of space has evolved as a fusion of idealist and materialist notions, together with critiques of structuralism, phenomenology, and existentialism (Lefebvre 1991, 2004; also Elden 2004). Lefebvre develops a historical analysis of the production of space and illustrates different modes of production ranging from natural space to the abstract space of capitalism and related spatialities, whose significance is socially produced. His central thesis is that space is a set of relations—it implies and contains social relationships and embodies particular social relations (1991, p. 83). Lefebvre (1991) is critical toward the idea of space as a purely mental construct; as for him, space is not isolated from the physical or social realities of lived experience. For him, "the act of producing space is recognized as fundamental to our experiences of the world" (Watkins 2005, p. 211).

Lefebvre (1991) discusses three dialectically interconnected dimensions, i.e., moments, of the production of space: conceived space (representations of space), perceived space (spatial practices), and lived space (representational space). Conceived space is space as a "mental construct, imagined space" (Elden 2004, p. 190). It is "tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to frontal relations" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 33). It is "the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers…"; it is conceptualized space, the abstract, the mental, and the geometric (p. 38).

Following Zhang's (2006, p. 221) interpretation of Lefebvre (1991), conceived space is the space represented and planned; it can be manifested, for example, in maps, designs, institutional rules, and symbols (see also Rutanen 2011). Perceived space, however, is the observable, the concrete, and the physical: it "embraces pro-

duction and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each formation" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 33). It is the space appropriated, dominated, generated, and used. It is visible, for example, in the physical movement of people, the flow of material, money, and information (Zhang 2006, p. 221).

The third dimension is the lived space; the "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of inhabitants and users" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 39). Lived space is subjective, bodily lived experience; it is directly experienced social space. It involves "more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs" (p. 38). Li, Ridgway, and Quiñones (Chap. 3, this volume) explored young babies' emotional lived experience in three different family cultural settings and confirmed how important educators (parents) actively respond to young children's everyday family experiences. Lived spaces are the results of the dialectical relation between conceived and perceived spaces; lived space embodies both of them without being reducible to either (Zhang 2006, p. 22).

From Lefebvre's (1991) perspective, space is not investigated as a location, context, physical or material entity, or preexisting given, but the focus is on the processes of production of space. For Lefebvre (1991), the interest lies in scrutinizing the hierarchies and powers in production of space. For him, conceived space is the dominant space: lived space is dominated by the representations of the ones in power (see also Elden 2004, p. 189).

Lefebvre's (1991, 2004) work offers interesting tools to analyze educational practices and settings. His trialectical perspective illuminates various layers of everyday life and social processes in institutions (see also Rutanen 2014). In my interpretation, conceived space addresses, for example, the guiding documents and discursive ideals reflected in practices. Perceived space refers to the socio-spatial practices: the flow of movement of adults and children, of their groupings and spatial locations, and of various rhythms visible in action throughout the day. Lived space underlines the lived experiences of both adults and children and the personal, subjective meanings that emerge in relation to particular physical and social settings. By addressing the interaction of these layers, one is able to interpret the dynamics in the social production of space in educational practices.

4.3   Ethnographic Fieldwork for the Empirical Case

The analysis here is based on an ethnography conducted in one Finnish day care center. One group of 1–3-year-olds was selected for the ethnography. The group included 13 children aged 18 months to 34 months and three practitioners: one preschool teacher and two certified childminders ("carers"). These children were the youngest children in that center. However, for the practitioners, in their vocabulary, the group included both "small" ("young") and "big" ("old") children. The "small ones" were the youngest in the group, approximately 1.5 years to 2 years old. The fieldwork included observational field notes, 130 h of video recordings, and maps of children's movements during a 6-week period. The video recordings covered both

"routine events" (such as lunch time) and "nonroutine events" (such as play) (Brownlee et al. 2004). A selection of video episodes (mealtime, sleeping, outdoors, play, and dressing) was presented to the practitioners in semi-structured interviews. Also, three practitioners' team meetings were audio recorded.

For the purposes of this chapter, the analysis draws on both observations and the interviews. The first step was to identify some transitions occurring. During the ethnography, one of the central observations was that the day was filled with various physical transitions from one physical setting or location to another (see also Rutanen 2012). These physical transitions were closely linked to the daily routine, giving visibility to the routine: transitions from one room to the other for the meals, from indoors to outdoors and back, and from meal tables to bathrooms and beds for naps. In earlier work (Rutanen 2012), I have categorized the observations as (1) "activities with predefined objective and location" (such as meal, nap, and some specific days handicraft and playing with water), (2) "transitions" (such as "circle time," dressing-undressing, and arrival), and (3) "activities with flexible objectives and locations" (such as playtime and outdoors). The practitioners structured the physical and symbolic space differently in each of these groups of activities.

In this chapter, the analysis focuses on transitions that emerge even if the actors remain present in the same physical setting. The setting gains a new symbolic meaning through co-constructions where both adults and children are taking part. The focus is on these transitions and, particularly, on children's experiences when participating in a newly defined and co-constructed symbolic space linked to particular settings, physical place/location, and time of day.

4.4   Circle Time

The first case identified as small-scale, horizontal transition is the "circle time" event. During circle time, chairs and benches in a certain corner of the room, a mundane physical setting, become a stage for particular symbolic co-constructions. During circle time, children gather around one or two practitioners to sing, recite rhymes, and discuss. In addition, the practitioner/s sometimes pose questions about everyday events and/or continue the topic of discussions children have initiated. The topics can cover, for example, weekend activities or weather. Circle time is a routine that has its particular place in the daily schedule: it occurs during most of the mornings and/or before lunch in this day care group.

The following is an example of a "circle time," summarized from field notes.

A practitioner sits on a chair. Children sit around her on benches and chairs. The practitioner sings a song and addresses each child individually as part of the song (e.g.'dear Olivia'). Then she asks children to give suggestions for songs. One child suggests a song. During the song, some children move away from their seats and the practitioner moves them back. She takes one child to sit on her lap. After the song, the practitioner asks if someone has a song in mind. As children remain silent, she starts a counting-out rhyme by

taking children one by one on her lap to do the counting with her. One by one children are sent to the other room for lunch.

Using Lefebvre's (1991) lenses, the conceived space of circle time event is produced by various documents that guide the practices. In addition to the national curricular guidelines, the local practices are influenced by the local curriculum, the weekly pedagogical plan for the group, and the individual plans for the children, just to name a few of the documents (e.g., National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland 2004). These documents emphasize children's well-being, child-centered pedagogy, and listening to children. The conceived space of circle time also reflects the general, modern discourses about children, care and education, and practitioners' roles in practices (e.g., Brembeck et al. 2004). In the circle time example, the role of the practitioners is to organize the circle time setting and to guide the discussions and the use of rhymes and songs. The unwritten rule for children is to remain seated and to follow the instructions. However, there is also some room for suggestions and new initiatives from children. This is in line with the child-centered approach that this particular center applies, as made explicit in the plans and local curriculum.

The perceived space of the spatial practice of circle time consists the "observable, concrete, and physical" (e.g., Zhang 2006), in other words, the flow of material objects and physical movement of children and adults (also Rutanen 2014). When circle time begins, the practitioner/s take a leading role in organizing the setting: they arrange the seats and bring material objects such as toys, musical instruments, or/and written rhymes to the setting. Children are called to approach the corner and limit their movements. The practitioner/s control the use of objects available in the setting, even if children were free to use them just before the circle time.

During circle time, cultural heritage is shared through stories and re-narrated with the children in the form of songs and rhymes. Children are invited to coact the gestures that follow the lyrics in the songs. In terms of possibilities for movement, however, there is a dramatic difference in comparison to "play time." Children now have temporarily fixed places: once seated in the place she/he chooses, the child is to remain seated—or at least to stay close to the seat.

Why would circle time be a horizontal transition for children? Circle time event brings forth a transition from "free play" occurring just before circle time following the daily schedule. The practitioners are central in assisting children's transition from free play with diverse objects to circle time routine in that particular corner of the room. When practitioners begin to set the chairs and benches in a circle shape, it is a strong indication that the routine will begin soon ("perceived space," Lefebvre 1991, 2004). The same objects that were present in free play gain a new symbolic meaning: they carry hints about the songs and rhymes that will soon occur. Children are not supposed to manipulate the toys anymore but to await the practitioners' initiatives and instructions. In addition, the circular shape of the chairs and benches suggests that children should gather together instead of solitary play or activities in smaller groups around the room.

Children who have been present in the center for a longer time are quick to observe the setting and gather around the practitioner. The same chairs and benches continue to be present, but the symbolic message of the setting indicates that now children are to remain seated in their "own places." However, for the younger ones, or the ones who have just started to attend the day care, the restructured physical setting doesn't send such a strong message. For these children, the practitioner plays a central role in directing them to be seated—she either directs them to particular seats or takes the youngest ones on her lap. In Hännikäinen's (2015) analysis, the teacher's lap signified a range of things: both consolation and delight, for example, and it also sometimes guaranteed undisturbed play for the others. Here, having a child on the lap had a similar practical value of keeping children gathered together.

This horizontal transition is very different for the younger or new ones than for the older and more experienced children. From the perspective of perceived space, the younger ones act more often as followers of the others' actions or initiate alternative activities and movements. The older ones interpret the symbolic transition of the setting, approach the seats, and understand that the toys are not to be touched during these activities without permission.

In the following quotation, the practitioner justifies to the researcher why some of the children are held on laps (Extract 1, from interview).

Extract 1

Practitioner: And then the adults knows how to, in a way, to evaluate who goes (.) knowing the child, one knows who to calm down (.) and then, slowly, when they learn to sit on the benches they move there (---sentences removed---) the previous ones (children) who have been playing a lot they know already how to be seated and go from there but then these new ones will observe often from the lap (.) better
   (Note: (.) indicates a short pause.)

In spatial terms, such rearrangements and restructuring meant different affordances for action for different children. The space produced is not neutral but hierarchical (Lefebvre 1991); for the newcomers, only restricted possibilities of action were provided, following the practitioners' interpretation of their abilities to follow the established routine. In general, for all, a counting-out rhyme was applied to attract children's attention, to keep them seated, and to underline the aim to learn to wait ones' turn and to move further to the other room for lunch at the end of the routine. To this end, the practitioners were aware of the power in their voices and, particularly, how their tone of voice guided children's actions (Extract 2, from interview).

Extract 2

The researcher asks about the practitioner's voice that sounds more quiet than usual.
   Practitioner: it is possible, with your own voice in a way to guide (.) to create the mood and that (.) that children will focus better. One can influence a lot with voice to that sort of sensitivity and create sort of (.) that they start to all of the sudden observe what is going on. One can, in a way, attract attention.

In other words, voice and, particularly, practitioners' tone of voice participate in the production of space of circle time event as a pedagogical event guided and controlled by the practitioner/s. However, even the pedagogical plan and the movement of children are controlled by the practitioners, the space of circle time is jointly produced. Circle time is by no means a fixed and predefined routine that the practitioner has full control over. The transition from free play to circle time might be guided by the practitioners in terms of timing and suggestions for activity, but it is with children's actions that circle time becomes produced and reproduced. Children, for example, resisted the practitioners' suggestions, they attempted to move from their seats, and they observed each other and co-constructed gestures between themselves. In other words, children were constantly influencing and restructuring the circle time event by their personal experiences and social relations (Extract 3, from field notes).

Extract 3

Children sit on benches and chairs. The practitioner has a small bag with her ('rhyme bag'), and she is giving out turns to children to lift cards from the bag. When a child, who had been given the turn, lifts a card, the practitioner asks about the image on the card: "What is that?" Some children stand up and yell the answers in excitement. The practitioner confirms the answer and reads the poem on the other side of the card.

Extract 3 describes a short episode during circle time when children are engaged actively in the flow of events. Children followed the routine the practitioner had established and waited their turn to lift the card from the bag she was holding. Children also introduced new elements to the situation. Their movements were tied to their verbal communication and vice versa: instead of remaining seated, they got up to yell the answers.

In Lefebvre's terms (1991), this is the "lived space," "a space of pure subjectivity, of human experiences" (Zhang 2006 p. 221, referring to Watkins 2005) that is linked to conceived and perceived space. It reflects the particular meanings enacted in a spatial form as it is directly lived space encountered by the subjects. It is the users, children, and practitioners who appropriate and give meaning to space. The general setting of the circle time ("conceptual space") guided children to remain seated, but their lived space was restructured differently. For children, circle time included movement, both on their chosen seats and close to their seats (Extract 4, from field notes).

Extract 4

One practitioner said: "Come to sit to your own places". Children gathered around two practitioners. One of them started to tell about a squirrel and a bunny, holding stuffed squirrel in her hand. She asked children to give nuts to the squirrel. Children pretended to give nuts. Others remained seated, but some of them were stretching themselves towards the squirrel, their hips barely touching the chairs. Children gazed at the practitioners, and moved back to their seats. Some of them moved to sit on the floor close to their seats, then, back to their seats.

Children managed to introduce movement and initiatives that, from the practitioner's perspective, remained within the acceptable boundaries of the situation. Children remained close enough to their seats even if they did move toward the practitioner and the toys she was showing. In addition, social relations among children were reconstructed: for example, some children selected seats close to each other, they approached their peers during the rhymes and routine, and they expressed their enthusiasm to receive the following turn after their friend had lifted the card from the bag. In other words, the lived space of the circle time is filled with meanings both in relation to the pedagogical routine and in terms of establishing and strengthening peer relations.

Particularly for the younger children in the group, the transition from free play to circle time emerges as a significant learning task. Children are supposed to follow the practitioners' initiatives and direct their attention to the activities the practitioners propose. From the perspective of lived space, however, children continue to be interested in the children around them and the toys they have available. For the children, the sudden requirement to keep silent and wait for ones' turn carries no clear link to their previous play. Children are challenged by the need to reorient themselves in the situation.

4.5   Lunch Time

The second case identified as small-scale, horizontal transition with this group of children occurs at lunch time. One of the rooms this group uses include small chairs and tables and a sink for washing hands. During lunch time, around 11–12 o'clock, small chairs and tables in this particular room become a stage for particular activities related to food and nutrition. All activities that have taken place earlier are now replaced by adult-led activity where food is distributed and children are encouraged to eat their meals. In addition to lunches, children who attend the full day in care have breakfast and a snack in the afternoon.

Lunch time, following Lefebvre's theory (1991, 2004), is a routine that follows cyclical rhythms of the day, and it is an event that is repeated daily. It is also an event where a struggle exists between exterior time and rhythm imposed by the practitioners as time to eat lunch and more endogenous time and biological rhythm of children's individual rhythms and hunger—or lack of hunger. Lunch time is an example of a transition where the official rhythm of the center and daily schedule superimposes on the multiple rhythms of the body. Children's bodies have to adjust to these particular and historically specific rhythms of this social group and community (see Lefebvre 2004, p. 39).

Lunch occurs at the same time each day. This activity is linked to the rhythms of the center, of other groups receiving their meals, and of the kitchen staff preparing the meals. All these rhythms are linked to the specific working hours of the kitchen. Even if the biological rhythms related to hunger and tiredness of individual children are often visible for the practitioners in the group, practitioners have limited possibilities to respond to those particular needs.

Similar to circle time, the conceived space of lunch time is produced by various documents that guide the practices (see Lefebvre 1991). The national curricular guidelines emphasize the well-being of children and the gradual buildup of autonomy that are embedded in the lunch time as pedagogical ideals (National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland 2004). Many of the individual plans of the children address the question of eating: it is not only a biological need, but independent eating is a motor skill to be mastered. Lunch time is constructed as a pedagogical event that has a direct influence on children's social and physical well-being through healthy and sufficient nutrition and through building social relations and culturally specific table manners.

Similar to circle time, the perceived space of this spatial practice of lunch time consists of the "observable, concrete and physical" (e.g., Zhang 2006), in other words, the flow of material objects and physical movement of children and adults (also Rutanen 2014). During lunch time, children are to remain seated, while practitioners move around their tables serving food and milk. After the serving, practitioners sit close to children. They observe children, pay attention to children's behavior and intervene if they find it necessary. They also initiate conversational topics and guide children's interest toward food and eating.

Why would lunch time be a horizontal transition for children? Again, the perceived space includes transitions from children's diverse movements and play toward particular actions while being seated. Children are assigned to their "own seats" that remain the same during all snacks and lunches. In the room, there are two tables for the "older," the "big," ones and two for the "young," the "small," ones.

The flow of movement that existed earlier is now restricted: children are allowed to move their bodies within the constraints of their seats and the table. If they stretch too much toward their peer or reach for the food in front of the other, they are asked to change their behavior. In these cases, their movement is highly regulated by the practitioners. The assumption is that the individual, biological rhythms of hunger and desire to eat could be synchronized to fit with the lunch time routine, and children would engage in the activity in a somewhat similar manner.

Lunch time is an example of an event, where practitioners pay close attention to children and intervene if their objectives are not met. Even social relations and table manners are acknowledged, smooth eating emerges as the main objective, "smooth" in the sense that children have their meals without disturbing others and without playing with their food. If unwanted behavior occurs, practitioners intervene verbally, move their own seat close to the child, or ultimately, change the child's seat elsewhere (Extract 5, from interview).

Extract 5

Practitioner 1: Yes and still here, when we changed the seat of Matias
   Practitioner 2: to a different table
   Practitioner 1: to a different table when they started to have with Ilmari this sort of (.)
It calmed again the situation when Matias was on the other table to eat. They found this sort of situation together.

As the example shows, the socio-spatial practice is orchestrated by the practitioners, starting from the seating arrangement for the children. Even though there are fixed seats, children can lose their seats and be moved to other tables close to a more "calm and silent" child. The previously constructed peer relations and seats next to friends are not a priority for the practitioners if there is a need to maintain the order or support children's independent eating. In addition to actual transition to a new table, the practitioners also remind children about the possibility of transition. Following these comments and the practitioners' physical location in the room, the space has a function in regulating children's behavior (Extract 6, from field notes).

Extract 6

Practitioner, Outi, says to Siru: "Outi comes to sit. I will watch Siru eating."
    The other practitioner, Sanna, is observing the other table, 'the small ones' table. Sanna says to Ilmari who sits alone by the table: "You can eat very well".
    Siru does something (As I looked elsewhere, my observations don't cover this).
    Outi: "Hey, Siru, will you go to the other table to eat alone? (.) There is Ilmari."

The practitioner suggests that if Siru doesn't behave well, she should "eat alone" in the other table. In her eyes, Siru would be eating alone, even though one of youngest ones sat there. Here "alone" refers to the lack of Siru's same-age peers. Here, the lunch setting becomes constructed as a social arena, where the older children are supposed to sit together and show an example for the younger children. The older in the group can lose their status as examples to follow if they do something unwanted. To suggest a transition to the other table is often enough to silence the children who have been too loud.

To summarize, lunch time represents not only a transition from one activity to another within the same room (from play time to lunch time), but there occurs other horizontal, small-scale transitions in terms of physical location. This particular changing physical location (from big ones' table to small ones' table or the other way around) carries strong symbolic meanings related to children's skills and behavior. The transition can emerge as a preventive measure or as a punishment, clearly announced for the whole group of children. From the perspective of children's lived spaces and spatial practices, the lunch setting is diverse and hierarchical in terms of opportunities offered for the children (see Lefebvre 2004). Some children, depending on their age and competences that are often related to their time of attendance in care, are offered more freedom to move, e.g., take their own dishes away to the trolley. Similarly, children's seating arrangements carry various meanings linked to peer relations and hierarchies among children. When children enter the setting, they have to find their "own" previously defined seat, regardless of with whom they have been playing or talking that morning. From the perspective of children's lived spaces, however, lunch time is not a separate or isolated arena from other activities, but it represents a possible continuum for playful activities. As children are arranged to sit together with their same-age peers, they sometimes continue the discussions started earlier and engage in playful activities such as laughing together and making funny faces or sounds. From their perspective, lunch time may

be an opportunity to continue playful activity together, even though they are seated at the table and have no toys available. Within the boundaries of the physical setting, children extend their bodies toward each other, e.g., they move their legs toward the other under the table, they reach to each others' hands or face, and they initiate other playful gestures. For them, the playful space constructed earlier extends and mixes with the routine of lunch time. From the practitioners' perspective, this playfulness is sometimes challenging. If children are able to merge playfulness into an activity that is in line with the routine of eating, the practitioners refrain from intervening. In other cases, particularly if children are moving around a lot even before the actual lunch time, practitioners start to construct the transition earlier: they call children to slow down and remind them that now "it's lunch time." After daily repetitions, the meaning of "lunch time" becomes clearer to children, and they are able to interpret the expectations that this social space sets for them.

4.6 Discussion: Constructed and Lived-Through Transitions

This chapter has identified and discussed two horizontal, small-scale transitions that occur daily in an infant-toddler care group in a Finnish day care center. In addition to these two transitions, circle time and lunch time, various other transitions occur on a daily basis. As these various transitions, such as transition to nap time, are repetitive and small-scale in the heat of the events, their meaning for children can remain unnoticed for the practitioners. When addressed with spatial lenses and ethnographic observations, these transitions can show some of their different layers as discussed here.

Henri Lefebvre's (1991, 2004) theory on space underlines three different moments that occur in social production of space: conceived, perceived, and lived space. In both of the cases discussed, the conceived space refers to the roles, to the order implied, and to the abstractions that guide the relations in the practices (Lefebvre 1991, p. 33). In both cases, the institutional roles of the practitioners are linked to the requirement for the general surveillance of the events and preventive risk management (e.g., Kernan and Devine 2010; Rutanen 2012). In addition, the practitioners are supposed to follow the timetable and routines of the center and also attend to the individual needs of the children. These diverse requirements form a basis for the moment-to-moment constructions of space that take place in the situations. In both cases discussed here, the practitioners are trying to find a somewhat difficult balance between routine and collective activities and individual attention to children's interests (see, e.g., Markström and Halldén 2009; Markström 2010; Rutanen 2012).

Linked to the conceived space of values, guidelines and discourses about childhood, care, and education emerge through the perceived space of the actual practices and children's lived-through experiences. If conceived space includes forces toward homogenization (Lefebvre 1991), lived space serves as resistance to these forces. In both of these cases of transitions, children are active agents in redefining the sym-

bolic space and spatial practices. It is within the boundaries of the physical environment and rules set by the practitioners that children create new initiatives toward each other and the practitioners. Lived space for children is the space of imagination and play that is able to transcend the physical boundaries set by the everyday routines (see also Rutanen 2014).

Early childhood education involves various vertical and horizontal transitions that all contribute to the lived experiences of children. From children's perspectives, the small-scale moment-to-moment transitions present intensive learning opportunities. In horizontal transitions, children are challenged to reorient themselves in a new social situation that is accompanied with changing physical and symbolic setting. It is the role of the practitioners to critically observe and analyze the daily routine and investigate the transitions taking place from the children's perspective. Furthermore, in developing the pedagogy, it is important to acknowledge that even if the "youngest" children from a group in care, they are not a homogeneous group, experiencing the transitions all in a similar way, but they are a group of children equipped with diverse needs and intentions. The notion of space, and the wider perspective on the process of social construction of space, allows us to critically address both these individual differences in lived experiences and the cultural, social, and discursive constraints of those experiences on children's learning.

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Chapter 5
New Mothers Transitioning to Employment: Impact on Infant Feeding Practices

Hilary Monk and Helen Hall

Abstract In many countries, including Australia, new mothers return to employment before their child is 12 months old (Marinelli et al., Breastfeed Med 8(1):137–142. doi:10.1089/bfm.2013.9999, 2013). During this time the woman and her infant undergo multiple transitions. They need to adjust to time away from each other, new significant caregivers and changes associated with infant feeding. Although breastfeeding benefits are well documented (World Health Organization, Health topics: Breastfeeding. Retrieved from: http://www.who.int/topics/breastfeeding/en/, 2012), many women chose to transition to bottle feeding in preparation for returning to work (Bai and Wunderlich, J Midwifery Womens Health 58(6):690–696. doi:10.1111/jmwh.12072, 2013). As infant feeding occurs within social and cultural contexts, these can have significant influence on a mother's decision making (Leeming et al., Psychol Health 28(4):450–468. doi:10.1080/08870446.2012.737465, 2013). Our interdisciplinary study framed within sociocultural theory found three interconnected themes relating to infant feeding: women's choices, interpersonal tensions and institutional expectations. These arose from family, workplace and nonparental childcare contexts. Cultural practices in these multifaceted and complex contexts were experienced together by mother and infant during the transition of mother's return to employment. We provide a model of transition relationships in cultural contexts.

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5.1 Introduction

In many countries women return to paid employment or formal education before their child is 12 months old (Marinelli et al. 2013). During this time both mother and infant undergo multiple transitions. Such transitions are a part of everyday life and encompass changes in relationships, physical environments, expectations and routines. Successful transitions involve more than managing procedures; they also require the formation of trusting, secure and consistent relationships (Dolby et al. 2013). When a mother returns to paid employment, the togetherness of the mother-baby dyad is tested because of the need to adapt to time away from each other, the role of another significant caregiver and changes associated with infant feeding.

Although benefits of breastfeeding are well documented (World Health Organization (WHO) 2012), many infants do not receive breast milk for the recommended time. In this light, there is a growing understanding that decisions regarding feeding are strongly influenced by social and family expectations of motherhood embedded in broader cultural contexts (Fischer and Olson 2014; Leeming et al. 2013). In particular, research revealed many women find it difficult to maintain breastfeeding when transitioning to work or studying outside the home, and some may choose to switch to formulae feeding in preparation for return to employment (Bai and Wunderlich 2013; Monk et al. 2013; Smith et al. 2013).

This chapter draws on examples from a multidisciplinary study. The aim of the study was to investigate the research question; what decisions do new mothers make regarding infant feeding practices as they transition back to employment? We found that, in particular, cultural, societal and institutional expectations could lead to interpersonal tensions related to the mother's choices. Cultural practices are not isolated but instead form a 'constellation' or wider grouping of interrelated practices (Rogoff 2011). We present a conceptual model framed by sociocultural theory so transitions can be explored through personal, interpersonal and institutional lenses linked to various contexts the mother/infant inhabit (family, workplace and childcare).

5.2 Background

5.2.1 Infant/Mother Dyad

We use the concept of infant/mother dyad to identity the 'togetherness' of infant and mother during pregnancy and early infant experience. Appreciating the importance of the mother/infant relationship is familiar in midwifery and first highlighted by Bowlby (1969). Bowlby asserted that children need a secure base to meet their emotional and physical needs. Furthermore, mothers also need the appropriate supports to ensure the relationship is successful. Some international health organisations now promote the importance of the infant/mother dyad and emphasise the influence this

has on short- and long-term health outcomes for both mother and infant (Pincome et al. 2015). More recently, researchers have explored the capacity of the infant to adapt to changing circumstances, and it is now understood that once established, the mother/infant bond remains stable despite the fact that care may be attended to by people other than the mother (Pincome et al. 2015).

5.2.1.1 Infant Feeding Practices

Breastfeeding promotion is an important public health strategy. To achieve optimal infant growth, development and well-being, current guidelines recommend infants receive only breast milk for their first 6 months and then continue with mixed feeding until 2 years of age or beyond (WHO and UNICEF 2014). The significant benefits of breastfeeding extend to both infant and mother. In fact, exclusive breastfeeding is the cornerstone of child well-being and has the greatest potential impact of any health intervention. Yet, despite these well-acknowledged advantages, many women do not follow current recommendations. While obtaining accurate data can be challenging, it is estimated that globally, only 38 % of infants aged 0–6 months are exclusively breastfed (WHO and UNICEF 2014). In some industrialised countries, the rate is significantly lower; for example, only 15 % of infants living in Australia are exclusively breastfed for their first 6 months (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2012).

Reasons for cessation of breastfeeding are complex; in addition to various physiological and psychological reasons, social and cultural expectations are an important influence on women's decision making (Hall et al. 2014; McLelland et al. 2015). For example, a mixed method study exploring attitudes and practices of Australian women found that while most participants had commenced breastfeeding because they believed it made a positive contribution to their baby's health, 48 of 66 respondents (72 %) had ceased within 6 months (Hall et al. 2014). Women reported their access to health professional's support was essential to overcoming breastfeeding difficulties, particularly in the light of suggestions by people to 'give up'. Further, Gilmour et al. (2009) explored experiences of 11 women who planned to breastfeed yet ceased within weeks of birth. Data revealed that social influences had a significant impact on women's choices. Interestingly, while some participants discussed feeling guilty regarding their decision to cease breastfeeding, most reported feeling relieved.

Infant feeding choices are pivotal to the accepted role of the mother and reflect deeply entrenched social expectations (Lagan et al. 2014; Leeming et al. 2013; Striley and Field-Springer 2014). Gender roles and the symbolic meaning of breasts themselves can have a powerful influence on the mother's behaviour (Leeming et al. 2013). Despite broad acknowledgement of the benefits, discourses within Western cultures, such as the sexualisation of breasts, are often inconsistent with breastfeeding (Dowling et al. 2012). Further to this, research has identified that returning to paid work is a common reason why women who plan to continue to breastfeed are sometimes unsuccessful (Smith et al. 2013). In addition to suitability of the physical

environment, the culture of the woman's workplace and support of colleagues have implications for her ability to manage this transition and the success of ongoing breastfeeding (Marinelli et al. 2013).

5.2.2   Mother's Transition to Work

Returning to paid employment or study is a major transition as mother faces the significant challenge of balancing her multiple roles as a mother and employee. Intentions regarding feeding practices are an important consideration during this transition. Mirkovic et al. (2014) found in their study of 2438 American prenatally employed women that 'early return to paid employment and full-time employment are both associated with shorter durations of any and exclusive breastfeeding' (p. 293). Furthermore, the study revealed that flexible return to work policies and schedules may increase the proportion of mothers who plan to exclusively breast-feed (Mirkovic et al. 2014). Similarly, a Scottish study found that choices related to infant feeding were significantly influenced by the length of maternity leave and return to employment (Skafida 2012). Some studies suggest that if a woman wishes to continue to breastfeed, she requires childcare within close proximity, access to a suitable space to feed or express breast milk and workplace flexibility and support (Christopher and Krell 2014; Marinelli et al. 2013; Monk et al. 2013).

5.2.3   Infant's Transition to Childcare

For the infant adapting to nonparental care arrangements, developing a relationship with a new caregiver can be highly stressful (R. Bowlby 2007; Datler et al. 2012; Klein et al. 2010). The caregiver's understanding, sensitivity and ability to respond to the infant's needs are paramount to the well-being of the infant and the mother who entrusted the responsibility (Cumberland 2012). Successful feeding practices are fundamental in transition to childcare arrangements. A Hong Kong study found that mothers who chose their infants to be cared for by family members or domestic helpers were more likely to wean before returning to paid employment than those who chose infant attendance at a childcare centre (Bai et al. 2014). It appeared that infant formula was more convenient for nonparental caregivers; however, positive support from childcare providers encouraged breastfeeding for longer. More than 85 % of the 1738 participants in this study returned to formal employment within 10 weeks postpartum with over 90 % employed full-time; 32 % combined breastfeeding and employment.

Jovanovic (2011) and other Australian academics (Javanparast et al. 2012; Nowak et al. 2013) argue there is an urgent need to better understand the needs of infants, caregivers and parents through educational research, in an effort to improve

models of practice in out-of-home childcare. The current study investigated infant feeding practices with a particular focus on transitions and experiences for the mother/child dyad.

5.3 The Study

5.3.1 Theoretical Framework

Rogoff (2011) argues that 'we can think of culture as communities' ways of living' (p. 18). Cultural practices do not 'stand alone' instead they form part of a wider 'group' or 'constellation' (p. 20) of cultural practices. We argue that breastfeeding can be understood as part of a 'constellation' of practices that include ways of child rearing and childcare; the privacy of the body, beauty, health and well-being; as well as work/study commitments. Each of these practices fit together forming a coherent approach to life that is both enduring and shifting. Over time across generations, people create new constellations of cultural practices that better serve the demands of their changing world. This conceptualisation provides a framework to focus on people's varied participation in the cultural practices of their communities.

The writings of Vygotsky and his colleagues (1987, 1997, 1999) provide a theoretical framework that enables researchers to integrate the cultural, social and historical aspects of a phenomena where 'the efforts of individuals are not separate from the kinds of activities in which they engage and the kinds of institutions of which they are a part' (Rogoff 2003, p. 50). Culture is not static, but rather it is in a constant state of change and transition that involves motion, struggle, modification and adjustment within relational contexts. Rogoff (2003, p. 50) explains that 'individual and cultural processes are *mutually constituting* rather than defined separately from each other [emphasis in the original], and people's roles and responsibilities change and shift in response to community restraints and opportunities. She developed a series of analytical lenses to aid the exploration of the personal, interpersonal and institutional aspects of human activity as 'ongoing, mutually constituted processes' Rogoff (2003, p. 51) which are briefly outlined in the following sections.

5.3.2 The Individual as the Focus of Analysis

The focus of the first analytical lens is the contribution and participation of the individual. In this chapter we consider the mother and child are inextricably linked and interact as a dyad. However, it is important to recognise this as a transitional time, and as the child develops, they become less dependent on each other. The mother/infant is not separated from the interpersonal and cultural-institutional aspects of the

activity, but information about their participation in the activity is of prime interest. For example, the choices the woman makes, her roles and responsibilities related to the transitions and shifts involved in infant feeding and resuming employment or study, become the focus of analysis. The mother/infant dyad is not separated from the interpersonal and cultural-institutional practices but becomes the focus of analysis.

5.3.3   The Interpersonal Focus of Analysis

The second analytical lens involves attending to relations between the mother/infant and other people involved in the activity. Here, attention is focused on what people are doing *together*, their participation and relations with one another. Again the distinction is between what is foregrounded and what is in the background; the interpersonal aspects are foregrounded but personal and cultural-institutional aspects remain in the background. An example related to this study would be the mother/infant's relations with other family members, work colleagues and childcare staff. A general sense of the mother/infant dyad and the cultural-institutional aspects of the activity are important to assist in the framing of the relations but they remain in the background.

5.3.4   The Cultural-Institutional Focus of Analysis

The third analytical lens brings a cultural-institutional focus centring on the processes, practices and activities that occur in particular institutions such as the workplace, early childhood centre and family. Each institution has developed particular practices over time, and with this lens, we are able to view the history, transformation and present-day application. We are also able to glimpse how practices might develop in the future. Again, it is important to remember that the personal and interpersonal aspects of the activity remain in the background as 'no aspect exists or can be studied in isolation from the others' (Rogoff 2003, p. 58).

5.3.5   The Research Method and Design

This interdisciplinary interpretivist case study was undertaken by researchers from the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the Faculty of Education. Collaborations across knowledge domains are recognised as a response to the complex demands of the modern world and as a source for competitive advantage (Seidlok et al. 2015). As researchers share their knowledge and perspectives through various phases of the case study, new richness and depth emerges (Larson et al. 2011). Recognising and

valuing different forms of knowledge can lead to innovative solutions while ensuring research is relevant and valid (Fazey et al. 2014). Increasingly interdisciplinary research is becoming 'standard' within the fields of health care and health policy (Aboelela et al. 2007).

In this study the researchers' theoretical knowledge and practical experience in midwifery and education were found to enrich the research through phases of planning, data generation, analysis and writing for publication. This interweaving of perspectives and skills through the development of a study design and methodology was not limited to any one field, thereby making this study interdisciplinary in nature (Aboelela et al. 2007; Siedlok et al. 2015).

5.3.6   Aim

The study sought to investigate the transitions of mothers and their infants when they returned to work or study in the first 12 months after the birth of their child. Our focus was the decisions mothers' made regarding infant feeding practices, particularly the duration of breastfeeding and the individual, interpersonal and institutional/societal factors that influenced transitional decisions.

5.3.7   Sample

Participants were mothers who had returned to work or study at a multicampus Australian university within the first 12 months of their baby's birth and early childhood educators working in long day-care early childhood centres associated with the university. Our sample was limited to one university and two associated early childhood centres; therefore, it is not possible to generalise our findings to other organisations or industries.

5.3.8   Data Generation

Data were generated using a three phase approach. Data generation methods were not linked in any way and different people participated in different phases of the project. Table 5.1 outlines participants and methods of data generation.

All participants self-selected by responding to advertisements circulated online through university news forums or, in the case of educators, advertisements placed in the early childhood centres, after approval was granted by the centre managers.

Before the study commenced ethical approval was received from the University Human Ethics Committee. To protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms have been used throughout this chapter.

Table 5.1 Participants

Phase	Participants	Method of data generation
One	Five early childhood educators working with children 0–2 years of age from two campus-based centres	Individual 1 h semi-structured interviews that took place on-campus at or near the early childhood facility during staff non-contact hours. Each interview was audio taped and transcribed verbatim
Two	18 mothers who had returned to work within the first 12 months of their child's birth	Mothers participated in one of three 90 min focus group meetings held on two university campuses. Each focus group meeting was audio taped and transcribed verbatim
Three	78 mothers who had returned to work within the first 12 months of their child's birth	Online survey
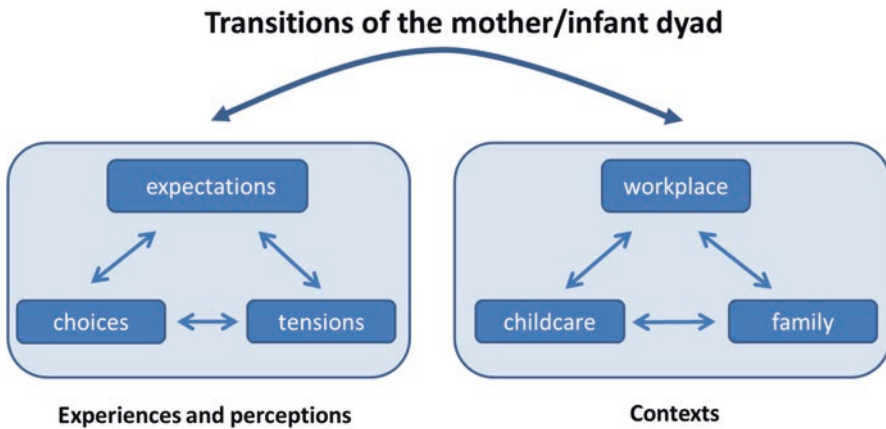
Fig. 5.1 Constellations of cultural practices associated with the mother/infant feeding practices

5.3.9   Data Analysis

Initial analysis was undertaken after data from all three phases were generated and transcribed. Each member of the research team read the transcripts using a 'common sense' approach to analysis (Hedegaard 2008) where they noted initial impressions. Following this the researchers came together to discuss initial findings and undertake a theoretical analysis. The focus here was on the individual, interpersonal and cultural-institutional practices (Rogoff 2003), related to the transitions of mother to work or study and infant to non-parental childcare. It was during this stage of data analysis that the interdisciplinary nature of the study led to rich conversations as the researchers brought together their knowledge and experience of midwifery and education. A number of categories and subcategories emerged and compared across data sets, checking for patterns, similarities and differences; an iterative process that led to the themes discussed in this chapter. During this process Fig. 5.1 was developed.

5.4   Findings

The findings from our study highlighted three interconnected themes or experiences related to the cultural practices found in three interrelated contexts that impacted on infant feeding when mothers transition back to work/study outside the home (see Fig. 5.1): firstly the *expectations* arising from the cultural contexts of family, workplace and childcare that were experienced by the mothers related to their infant feeding practices, secondly the *choices* that the woman perceived were available to them, and thirdly the interpersonal *tensions* that arose when expectations or choices made by the mother conflicted with practices within the three contexts. These constellations of cultural practices are discussed in this section. It is important to note that although each is discussed separately, it is not possible to isolate any one theme or experience as they all interrelate (see Fig. 5.1 left hand box). In addition the three contexts (see Fig. 5.1 right hand box) also interrelate. Together (as indicated by the duel directional arrow) the themes and the contexts can be considered as a complex, holistic and dynamic constellation of cultural practices experienced by the mother/infant dyad when a mother returns to work in the first 12 months after the birth of her baby.

5.4.1   Expectations

Expectations related to infant feeding practices reflect deeply ingrained cultural and institutional understandings. Educators in our study acknowledged there may be different assumptions surrounding infant care between the mothers and the childcare institution. For example, one educator commented on the different cultural practices and expectations explaining that at her centre there were '… lots of different cultures, and in that culture there's a lot of different ways of bringing up your child, and also feeding ways. … So we have to tread very carefully …' (Educator A). Educators tended to be respectful of the different approaches to infant feeding and made an effort to support the women's choices; 'some mums come here to breastfeed their babies and some express milk and leave it in the centre. And some want their child to have formula. So we just respect all... whatever they want, we respect that' (Educator E). Educators welcomed parental influence and involvement within the centres explaining that they wanted '… more families' involvement, in our babies room, … things will come up that we can do differently …. [family] involvement is very important, you know' (Educator B).

Educators in early childhood settings work with families every day; however, to enable a smooth transition into non-parental care, educators must move beyond the casual friendly greeting and basic information sharing to the deeper recognition and appreciation of family values and practices (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009; Dolby et al. 2013; Hood 2012). The mutual support that occurs when mothers and educators discuss values, beliefs, concerns and

expectations leads to building strong relational family-centred partnerships where the 'expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing' (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), (n.d.), National Quality Standard, Element 6.2.1).

In many situations, the educators in our study went to significant efforts to support individual values and beliefs that may be divergent to the established norm within the childcare setting. For example, one participant described how they enlisted a Muslim staff member who wore a headscarf, from another section of the centre, to attend to a distressed child because '… she [baby] found it really difficult to settle into care and her mother only ever wore a headscarf and so she found it quite difficult to bond with me and to bond with some of the other staff in the room' (Educator A). Childcare educators often attempted to align institution activities with home-based care. One participant reported '…she [mother] was starting to introduce a few solids, and obviously we had lots of consultation with her … we were matching with what he had eaten at home' (Educator C). The alignment of centre and home practices, such as educators speaking to the infant in their home language, can provide stability, continuity and a greater sense of security. The infant being fed in familiar ways also adds support to transition from home to non-parental care.

However, in other situations, while there was some flexibility, parents and infants were expected to adapt to institutional practices and activities. 'We do explain to parents that sometimes the routines do tend to change when they come in… what happens at home doesn't necessarily happen here, so what happens is we get the [home] routine and we follow it as much as we can…' (Educator D). Educators recognised that transitioning from home care to a childcare centre takes time for both mother and child. A mutual sharing of expectations and practices can lead to deeper understanding between family and centre (Dolby et al. 2013).

The woman's workplace was another area of significant influence with associated expectations. The prevailing culture and varying attitudes of colleagues towards infant feeding had a powerful effect on mothers' decisions when transitioning back into employment or study. Some participants reported significant flexibility and support within their workplace that enabled them to manage the challenges associated with feeding and caring for their infant. A typical comment was 'I get given work and the flexibility to do it when and where I can … They said that I could bring her in if I wanted to or work from home if I wanted to. Whatever I found easier' (FG 1).

Alternatively, some women felt they had little support, and the onus to balance work and parenting was their responsibility alone. One woman stated 'I just realised I just had to work out my own strategies to deal with it and there was absolutely nothing forthcoming [from the workplace]' (FG 1). Another new mother claimed 'I was doing my PhD at the time… but I basically stopped that when I was pregnant, 'cause I was too exhausted. … but my supervisor said, "Don't take leave. Just get the damn thing finished' (FG 1). From these comments, it was noted that at times expectations placed on the mother led to high levels of stress, yet at other times, workplace flexibility reduced the stress associated with transitioning back into work and/or study.

The strong influence of culturally accepted norms within Australia was also evident. Women's comments reflected the socially accepted assumption that breast-feeding is an intimate practice that should be undertaken in private (see Leeming et al. 2013). One woman's comments were typical; '… they set up a family room in the building where I am … So I just go in there and lock the door when I have to express. It's better than doing it in the toilets, which is the other option' (FG 1). The data revealed the women's attempts to continue breastfeeding may highlight a con-flicting ideological positioning between her and her colleagues regarding appropriate workplace behaviour.

Participants were clearly aware that their infant feeding practices may transgress accepted workplace institutional culture, making such comments as 'I get the occa-sional comment about having breast milk in the fridge or breastfeeding equipment in the kitchen. A couple of people might not be as comfortable with it or a bit taken aback by it' (FG 1). A problem for some new mothers was their uncertainty about institutional expectations; 'as a new employee who was breast feeding an infant it was not clear to me what the rules were' (Survey). Likewise another mother wrote, 'I don't have a clear sense of what is acceptable/reasonable. It is a female dominated department so I assume there is understanding … but that could be a false, simplis-tic assumption' (Survey).

The sociocultural expectations of woman's workplaces were found to be a major influence in mother's decision making regarding infant feeding, particularly breast-feeding (Christopher and Krell 2014; Marinelli et al. 2013; Monk et al. 2013). For example, mothers who took longer maternity leave experienced flexible working conditions (e.g. lactation breaks and suitable rooms for expressing) as well as hav-ing the possibility of part-time or home-based employment, breastfed infants for longer (Bai et al. 2014; Skafida 2012) and found transitions for themselves and their infants were smoother. The work experience and expectations impacting on family activities and decisions have also been discussed in Dillon-Wallance's chapter (Chap. 6, this volume).

5.4.2   Choices

The women in our study described various infant feeding options perceived to be available to them as they transitioned. Decisions were often undertaken well in advance of returning to employment, with a number of mothers anticipating that continuation of breastfeeding would be problematic within the workplace. 'I cer-tainly knew two months prior to coming back to work that it was something I had to start thinking about and would I stop or would I continue? … I made the plan to start switching her [to formula] … so I could get more rest to be a productive employee when I came back' (FG 2). Early childhood educators reported encouraging moth-ers to consider different options and experiment with feeding practices prior to the infant entering day care. Mothers who intended to switch to bottle feeding were often advised to start the transition in preparation for the infant entering childcare.

Those who wanted to continue breastfeeding were offered a variety of options to support their choice within the institutional setting. '... we give opportunity for mothers to come and breastfeed. Like, in the sleeping room, it's quiet and the music is playing and they can sit at a corner and breastfeed quietly, nicely. So we provide that area, and welcome mothers at any time, if they want to come' (Educator E). The genuine support educators provide for mothers and their infant feeding choices has been documented in other research (see Cameron, et al. 2012).

The entrenched social expectations related to the role of 'mother' particularly in relation to infant feeding choices has been highlighted in other work (Lagan et al. 2014; Lemming et al. 2014; Striley and Field-Springer 2014). In our study we found the decision to breastfeed was intrinsic to some women's perception of themselves as mothers. As such, women who believed breastfeeding was in their baby's best interest were prepared to make significant changes in order to continue. One described how she sought different employment in order to succeed; 'I changed jobs to be able to access a quality childcare centre and have the flexibility to continue breast feeding while I worked. … I could not have done this if I was not at [workplace] and my boss was not supportive and the work arrangements flexible' (Survey). However, a number of participants reported unsuccessful attempts to achieve their desired goals. Although some mothers felt they had a variety of possibilities available, the practicalities of breastfeeding meant options were sometimes unsustainable. A common issue reported by survey respondents was 'I planned to continue breast feeding when I returned to work but …childcare was then too far away for me to go and feed the baby so I attempted to express. This was too difficult so I ended up moving to formula' (Survey). Another noted 'often people make it about breastfeeding versus formula. I found that being able to do both was the best option' (Survey).

In some situations, new mothers perceived that they had very limited infant feeding choices. One participant's words highlight the sense that breastfeeding cessation is almost obligatory if she was to return to work; 'the whole time it was in the back of my mind that I'm going back to work, he has to be weaned' (FG 2). Regardless of their decisions, it was evident from the data that choices mothers made could cause them considerable distress. Participants describe a sense of concern and guilt regarding their abilities to fulfil their various roles as mother and employee; '… you feel guilty and feel like you have to come back to work' (FG 1) and likewise '… I kind of had this nervousness about not seeming capable enough. And, it was hard because even myself, I'm a bit of a perfectionist…' (FG 2). Interestingly, several women expressed the belief that regardless of strategies in place to support their mothering role, their decision to have a child, came at a cost to their career; 'and I took full advantage of … maternity leave … But that's been a hiccup up my career' (FG 3).

These comments resonate with earlier work conducted by Williams et al. (2013) who found in their study of 35 Australian mothers that 'guilt' over noncompliance with the norm of breastfeeding, caused stress and feelings of not being a 'good mother'. These feelings did not appear to relate to the 'reasons' for not initiating or ceasing breastfeeding. Williams et al. (2013) argued that woman's accounts of their

infant feeding practices and their related 'identities' of being 'good' or 'bad' led to them developing strategies to manage not feeling guilty 'in order to achieve certain social identities [mother, worker] and influence moral judgement over their [infant feeding] practices' (p. 110). The mothers in our study experienced similar situations and feelings.

5.4.3   Tensions

Interpersonal tensions can arise within the family, childcare setting or workplace, when individual expectations or attitudes conflict. Several educators described the stress that can occur when parental wishes cannot be met when their infant transitions into nonparental care. One participant explained '…, so this child has got 100 % attention [at home] … She comes to care one day a week: she just explodes … And they [parents] can't understand that, "Why can't you do the same in the centre?" And we try to explain to them, we have eight children in the centre…' (Educator A). The infant transitioning from sole care to group care can involve major adjustments that require flexibility, respect and consideration from both parent and educator. Creating a sense of continuity and belonging, for both mother and infant, develops from clear two-way dialogue that is paramount to successful transition.

Likewise, the woman's ability to transition back to work and attend to infant feeding occurs in an environment where competing perspectives may collide. Women described various situations where tensions arose in regard to their desire to fulfil their mothering role. A typical response was 'what my manager says and what she does re my family responsibilities are two different things!' (Survey). Participants commonly discussed the difficulties of negotiating the dual expectations of being mother and worker. One woman's words highlight a common dilemma faced by many new mothers re-entering the workforce; 'I think… I just can't take off the mummy hat very easily' (FG 1). Personal experiences with colleagues could be negative, with several women reporting tensions regarding their ability to keep up with the expected workload; 'there's been a strong pressure to have increased output … there's a lot of demand … And I think that's where the work at home has come into it… to keep up with those counterparts who are here full-time without children' (FG 1).

Family members also had expectations of the woman's availability and commitment. Sometimes competing perspectives were successfully managed; however, new mothers often commented that balancing those demands had significant impact on them. One woman said with regard to juggling roles of mother and employee: '… I try to not let it impact on my kids, but it definitely impacts on me' (FG1). Another woman whose child was in care some distance from her workplace said 'I really have struggled with not having that option of running across if she really needs me. …for me, breastfeeding is more important than being back at work' (FG1).

Sometimes women described the infant's transitions from breast to bottle as relatively easy and having little impact on their relationship; '…he actually took to the bottle better than he was breastfeeding. He loved it, so I didn't have any of those issues swapping him over.' (FG 2). In other instances, it created significant tension for mother and child; 'I really wanted to get her comfortable about bottle feeding before you have that separation … it was a battle to get her onto the bottle. She rejected it for a long time. It was hard' (FG 2).

The relationship between a woman and her family was often perceived to be at risk as a result of returning to work. A number of participants cited significant stress as they struggled to reconcile competing demands; 'I'm mum to 6 month old so am very soon to wrestle with the whole return to work conundrum' (Survey). It was evident from data that in some situations competing perspectives and expectations could be negotiated, while at other times, women struggled to negotiate disparities.

5.5 Discussion

From a sociocultural perspective, transitions can be understood as an interwoven series of personal choices, interpersonal tensions and institutional expectations that are rich and complex characteristics of human activity, which can be explained as a constellation of cultural practices. This contrasts with research perspectives that isolate the individual, the social or the cultural aspects of a phenomena and analyse them as separate unconnected units of analysis. In this study we found expectations, tensions and choices to be interlaced facets of the everyday lives of the mother/infant dyad, as mothers transitioned back to employment or study and infants transitioned into non-parent care. The interrelated experiences of mother and infant cannot be separated.

Figure 5.1 (presented earlier in this chapter) represents a conceptualisation of this rich and complex activity, using Rogoff's three planes of analysis (2003, 1996) with individual, interpersonal and institutional/societal aspects of the phenomena emerging as institutional/societal *expectations*, interpersonal *tensions* and individual *choices* related to infant feeding practices.

Mother's choice to continue to breastfeed her child when she returns to employment or study, for example, is interdependent on the flexibility and policies of her workplace (i.e. hours of work, provision for expressing or leave to facilitate breastfeeding), proximity and availability of childcare (i.e. location, ease of access and facilities) as well as her personal family life (i.e. sleep patterns of child, mother and other family members, needs of siblings, partners' work commitments).

It is also possible to view the infant's transition to non-parent care within this model. Although the *choice* to participate in non-parent care is not made by the

infant, he/she will experience the *expectations* of new caregivers as well as those of the mother (i.e. to settle); the *tensions* that may arise form attachments to unfamiliar caregivers who may or may not remain constant in the new environment (i.e. changing centre staff) and the changing family circumstances at home, because of mother's employment/study commitments. In addition, the infant may be required to adapt to new and different feeding practices, for example, the mother may wean her infant in preparation for returning to employment/study, and the infant may be required to accept a bottle of breast milk rather than mother's breast, in addition to being fed by an unfamiliar caregiver.

Returning to the concept of mother/infant dyad, it is impossible to separate their experiences. If the mother is experiencing tension and stress as she transitions back into employment or study, because a strong bond and relationship exists with her infant, the infant also experiences mother's tension and stress. Similarly, if the infant is experiencing tension and stress transitioning into a non-parental care arrangement, the mother is very likely to be stressed and tense (Cumberland 2012).

5.6   Implications, Challenges and Limitations

A major challenge for places of employment and childcare centres is the need for family-centred policies and practices (Bai et al. 2014; Dolby et al. 2013; Mirkovic et al. 2014; Skafida 2012). Study participants expressed appreciation when institutional policies and practices were in alignment and frustration when not. Maternity leave provisions can alleviate and mediate some negative associations between participation in the workforce/study and duration of breastfeeding; however, maternity leave alone was not sufficient. This study expanded our view beyond the individual mother transitioning back into employment/study, to understanding the deeper sociocultural processes, procedures and interactions between the mother/infant dyad, other persons and the influence of institutional/societal factors on infant feeding practices.

This study has focused on the mother and her views; however, future research that encompasses perspectives of the mother's husband or partner could deepen the understanding of transition processes and infant feeding choices. Further, participants of this study were involved in higher education, either as academics or students, and predominantly of European heritage. Gaining perspectives of women from other socio-economic groups and of different ethnicities would be valuable. Participants also commented briefly on the relations between taking maternity leave and their career aspirations/opportunities. Policies and practices may be in place to limit disruption and increase opportunities, but their effectiveness, particularly for women undertaking the dual roles of new mother and employee, requires further investigation.

5.7   Conclusion

The benefits of breastfeeding for mother and infant well-being are well documented. For many families, mother transitioning back to employment or study significantly impacts infant feeding practices. The current study highlighted the interrelationships of workplace, childcare and family with societal, cultural and institutional *expectations*, interpersonal *tensions* and personal *choices* related to mother/infant transitions. A conceptual model (Fig. 5.1) framed by sociocultural theory highlights how transitions can be explored through a personal, interpersonal and institutional lens using a focus on the 'constellations of cultural practices' that influence these transitions. This model may also be usefully applied when exploring other parent/child transitions, such as a child's transition to school, or a sick child's transition to hospital.

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Chapter 6
Well-Being of Mothers and Young Children in Contexts of Special Health Care

Julie Dillon-Wallace

Abstract This chapter focuses on research into the well-being and employment experiences of mothers who have a child with special health-care needs. The aim of the research is to explore the challenges that mothers face when caring for a child with special health-care needs. Data are used from 13 face-to-face interviews with Australian mothers currently engaged in paid employment outside the home who also care for a young child with chronic health conditions and/or developmental challenges. Child and family characteristics with emphasis on health, well-being, quality of relationships and social supports of mothers are considered. Special focus is given to cultural contexts of families with babies and toddlers with special health-care needs. This perspective is particularly important, so cultural diversity, strengths and individuality within and across all families can be honoured and respected. In addressing such diversity, the research also examines mothers' employment and work experiences, taking into account how duties (alongside employment demands) may affect work/life balance and equitable engagements in social and community contexts. Many mothers reported diminished physical and psychological well-being across a range of outcomes. A high proportion reported significant levels of social and partner support; however, employment experiences reveal difficulties in work/life balance. Findings are discussed in terms of implications for theory, practice and future research in an Australian context. Taking an expanded view of ecological theory in order to understand the well-being of Australian mothers is highlighted, and how this may (or may not) affect the lives of young children with special health-care needs.

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6.1 Introduction

In Australia, nearly 5 % of children aged 0–14 years have a disability (Raising Children Network 2011). There are strong societal expectations for mothers to provide the essential care for these children, placing significant demands on mothers' social and emotional resources. Whilst it is important to recognise that this may provide a new cultural world for both mother and child (which may challenge emotional, social and human capital), it is also important to appreciate that families and children still possess many 'typical' strengths, concerns, emotions and aspirations that extend beyond specialised health-care and support services (Harrison 2010, p 2).

Having a young child with special health-care needs places the mother at risk of experiencing mental health problems (Gupta 2007, p 422). The bidirectional effects of maternal well-being and child health are expected, with mothers' and children's poor health having an adverse impact on one another. A strong correlation exists between severity and duration of children's special health-care needs and mothers experiencing psychological difficulties (Gupta 2007, p 424). Families who have children with various developmental health problems are likely to face different challenges than other families. The typical work of parenting a young child involves a range of tasks, but the boundary between the usual activities of parenting and the added, nonnormative requirements of a caring role for a child with additional needs is often blurred. Identifying the characteristics and factors that affect parents, particularly mothers (since they typically carry the burden of care for children with additional needs), can inform policy and practice for family support. This knowledge may also provide insights into how well many families do cope when considerable demands are placed upon them. To summarise, having a child with special health-care needs may detract from maternal well-being, quality relationships and the ability to cope and, as a result, decrease positive parenting behaviours that support healthy development in their children (Barnett et al. 2003, p 185). Therefore, it is important to examine the challenges mothers face when caring for a child with special health-care needs, in order to improve well-being and outcomes for all family members.

6.2 An Ecological Perspective

Taking an ecological, family-centred perspective allows service providers to consider how outcomes for children and their families are impacted by wider social systems. The ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1986 p 724) (Fig. 6.1) is used to examine how families who have children with special health-care needs may function over time. This model, with its nested spheres, illustrates the reciprocal relationships that families, parents and their children have with other social systems. The first system in this model is the microsystem and represents the activities
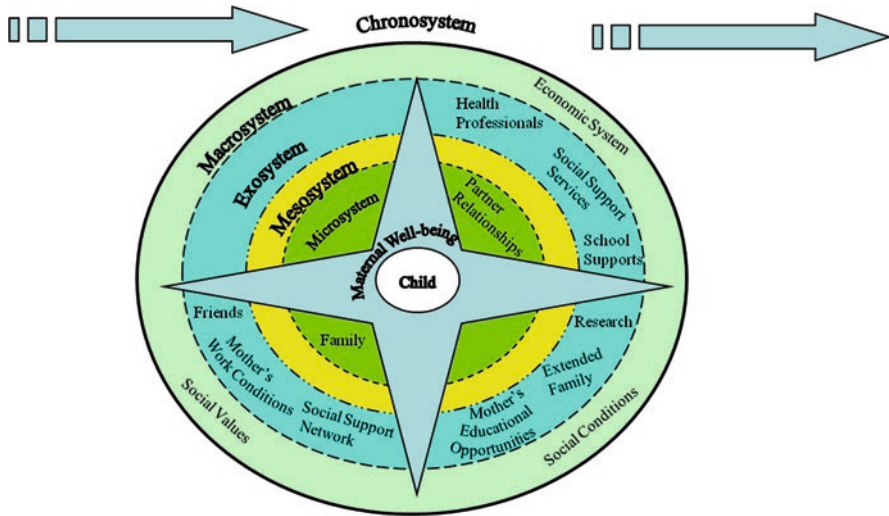
Fig. 6.1 Social ecological model of family functioning (Adapted from Bronfenbrenner 1986)

and interactions that take place in children's immediate cultural contexts (e.g. family, friends and school). These proximal processes have the most direct impact on young children's development. The well-being of the family and parents directly and indirectly influence outcomes for children. This is evident in Monk and Hall's chapter (Chap. 5 of this volume) when new mothers transitioning to employment express how their babies have experienced their own tensions and expectations in varied ways. Therefore, it is paramount to recognise babies and toddlers as 'citizens' within their own culture, providing them with opportunities for their voice to be heard (Davie et al. 2003, p 17). Bronfenbrenner's model is useful because it accounts for the dynamic nature of families and their relationships with other social systems across time.

In Fig. 6.1, the ecological model proposed by Berry and Hardman (1998), adapted by Dillon-Wallace (2012, p 17), illustrates the pivotal role of mothers in families and shows that maternal well-being is important for positive functioning of families and outcomes for children. Reciprocity occurs between these ecological systems, as opposed to the unidirectional nature found in earlier conceptions of care between parent and child. For example, a mother's attachment to her child may differ, based on the child's ability to interact, which, in turn, impacts on growth and development. Families who have children with special needs often require immediate or extensive engagement with services and service providers beyond immediate family. Ideally, hospital, home, community services and support systems for very young children and babies (and their families) should be flexible, accessible and comprehensive when responding to diverse cultural contexts in which children reside (Harrison 2010, p 3). The family is the principal influence on a child's development; therefore, strong interconnections between and across service systems are especially important for families where children do not have typical developmental

pathways (Lotze et al. 2010, p 109). There is a need to evaluate the real and opportunity costs in caring for a child with special health-care needs in the Australian context, where there is limited research about the well-being and employment experiences of their mothers. This study will shed light on important issues for these mothers which may have positive or negative consequences on the social, emotional and economic outcomes for these mothers and their families.

6.3   Research Sample

Thirteen working mothers (primary carers) were recruited through a Brisbane-based carers' support network (July–September 2012). Their young child (birth to eight) had enduring special health-care needs (e.g. chronic physical, developmental, behavioural or emotional conditions) that had lasted, or were expected to last, for at least 12 months and required above routine needs, the use of services and/or prescription medicine, which suggests that the child's condition could place an additional burden of care upon the mothers.

The average age of the 13 mothers was 39 years, ten married, two separated and one divorced. Six mothers held professional positions, four were engaged in administrative jobs, and three held positions in retail: five had permanent full-time capacity, four permanent part-time (up to 20 h a week), three casual part-time and one self-employed. All mothers had completed grade 12, with all but one of the mothers completing post school studies, the highest award being a PhD. The mode gross household income was $124,000 + per annum. The average child age was 4.8 years. Two children were 3 years or less; in case #3 (3.4 years) and case #8 (2.6 years), and it is the reflective experiences of these mothers when their children were in the very early stages of diagnosis (less than 3 years of age) that will be the focus of this study. Ten of the children were males, and three were females.

6.4   Method

One hour, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with taped responses later transcribed. Research questions were developed within three domains: well-being, social supports and employment experiences. These questions were mapped in relation to theoretical underpinnings of Bronfenbrenner's socioecological theory and had in mind how the well-being of the mother influences directly, and indirectly, the outcomes of the child, such as long-term cognitive and social capacities. Questions were based on those used in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), part of the *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy*. Thematic analysis was used to elicit prominent themes within each section.

6.5   Findings and Discussion

6.5.1   Child's Cultural World with Special Health Issues

There is a lack of consensus amongst practitioners and researchers about what constitutes special health-care needs and about how disability, chronic illness or additional needs can be defined (Gronvik 2007, p 1). Definitions based on a single criterion may place children at risk because their special health-care needs are not being fully or holistically identified. In addition, very young children (under 3s) may, or may not, benefit from early intervention, if they have not been formally diagnosed or if their condition has not yet fully presented itself. This makes planning for service delivery by allied health professionals, teachers, schools and parents challenging. Therefore, it is especially important that individual children's cultural contexts such as their ethnic, racial, spiritual, social, economic, education, residential and geographic locations are recognised and taken into account (Harrison 2010, p 2). This study adopted a generalised approach to categorisation. The benefits of using a non-specific approach is that it increases the probability of identifying children with ongoing health or developmental conditions who are not yet clinically diagnosed with specific conditions. However, there are challenges in this approach. There may be a bias towards identifying children with better access to health care because these children are more likely to make frequent use of services. In addition, parent self-report may exclude symptoms that may be indicative of a health or developmental problem.

The child conditions in this study ranged from relatively mild cerebral palsy and mild hearing loss to acquired severe brain injury that required 24 h, specialised care. Most children attended mainstream settings, with a split attendance at a variety of specialised settings, such as special schools and/or developmental units for young children. Mothers described most demand on their time was due to medical conditions (therapies and medical appointments) and attending to nonnormative personal care duties (toileting, feeding and dressing). Most mothers reported they dedicated between 3 and 6 extra hours/day to care duties specific to their child's condition. Typically, one mother stated:

> *...because of his autism I feed him, because he doesn't eat independently yet with a spoon. So I mean there's all the other time I guess as well.... (Case #1)*

This mother discussed how the child's condition had affected her and her family (including an older sibling), since the child's birth, which included lack of sleep and economic costs. However, she stated decisions had to make very early on, in order for her child to benefit from therapeutic interventions as early as possible, due to a rare comorbid condition of cystic fibrosis and autism. This added to feelings of isolation and meeting the challenges of how to best support the child's development. Empirical research shows both disability and chronic illness place similar demands on family functioning, resulting in stress for children and their families, in particular the mother who is most likely to be the primary carer for the child (Dillon-Wallace et al. 2013, p 1216).

6.5.2 Well-Being Between Mothers and Young Children with Special Health-Care Needs

Mothers with children with special health-care needs generally have poorer health, self-reporting feelings of maternal inadequacy, depressive symptoms, higher levels of melancholy and anxiety, compared with mothers of typically developing children (Emerson et al. 2006, p 862). Being a mother of any young child places a woman at risk of experiencing depression or depressive symptoms. In Australia, maternal depression has been found present in 10–20 % of mothers (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2010, p 1) of children with special health-care needs who are particularly vulnerable to parenting stress which may expose them to physical and psychological risk that in turn may result in social and occupational problems (Murphy et al. 2006, p 98).

Child characteristics, such as the presence and relative severity of a special health-care condition, impact on the care environment (Glidden et al. 2010, p 3). Negative feelings often intensify over time, and the family environment in which the child resides is important to their overall social and cognitive development (Lotze et al. 2010, p 281). Therefore, higher levels of maternal well-being (with lower levels of family conflict) are important to both the child's development and overall parental well-being. Specifically, parental depression has been mapped into proximal family processes, and this has shown direct impact on effective parent-child interactions (Sabates and Dex 2012, p 4). Interactions are particularly important during the critical stages of baby's and young children's development for brain, self-regulation and skill development (Bayer et al. 2011, p 865).

Mothers described their emotional and physical well-being as significantly diminished due to excessive care duties, especially when combined with caring for other family members. The mother of the youngest child (2.6 years) in this study (case #8) presented as having the most intense emotional challenges in adapting to a recent diagnosis of 'Fragile X' for her young child, flagging the need for social and emotional supports for mothers in those early stages of diagnosis. All mothers in this study reported long-term poor sleep and/or interrupted sleep, mainly due to worry relating to their child's conditions, which had originated from the time of birth. A mother of a young child with hearing impairment (3.4 years) said:

> …it's just a lack of – by the time you go to bed it's late and you wake up in the morning. So, I would say I generally walk around fairly exhausted most of the time. It's pretty rare, I would think for me to feel like I'm at full credit. (Case #3)

Often, mothers with children who have special health-care needs attribute their less than optimal well-being to the time pressures and caregiving demands, especially when the child is young (Murphy et al. 2006, p 181). This contributes to episodes of anxiety, feeling inadequate in providing effectively to all family members. Typically, one mother states:

> We've got a gym at work which is a great facility and it's free and I should be using that but I don't have time. Because I've got to clock my hours up at work so I can get to the kids to

do what they need to do. So if I take an hour off to go to the gym then I've got to make up that time. (Case #2)

Mothers in this study also stated they felt excessive amounts of personal guilt when trying to meet demands of all family members; this was especially true for the mother of the youngest child in this cohort (case #8). In a general sense, this is due to not having human, financial and social capital available. Of note, Green (2006, p 159) states that many mothers report their parenting experiences of having and caring for a child with special health-care needs made them stronger, better and more capable women, who appreciated the more important things in life, such as forming deeper, more meaningful relationships with family and friends. Mothers of children with special health-care needs often report high levels of parental self-efficacy (Larson 1998, p 873). Mothers in this study all committed to early intervention programmes and therapies and felt very positive in their proactive efforts towards their child's progress. One mother of a very young child (3.4 years) discussed how she felt about parenting and how she had given her child unconditional priority:

…I got to the point where I went, no one is going to thank me for working hard but my child will thank me when he speaks normally and can have a good job… I didn't want to go to my death bed saying I worked hard, but my child doesn't speak. (Case #3)

Research shows that when mothers care for young children with special health-care needs, depression may have a negative effect on parental self-efficacy and feelings of empowerment. However, other studies showed that mothers who care for children with special health-care needs do not show any statistically significant differences in their perceived parenting self-efficacy when compared to other mothers of typically developing children. This may further support the notion that mothers of children with special health-care needs are very committed to the development of their young child and that they may develop greater resilience over time (Dillon-Wallace et al. 2013, p 1217).

In summary, although studies show varied results as to whether or not mothers of children with special health-care needs experience stress and depression, the possibility that there is a relationship between having a child with special needs and mental health issues for mothers who care for children with special health-care needs warrants closer examination.

6.5.3 Quality of Relationships and Social Supports

Marital or relationship happiness, support and security from the mother's partner serve to help moderate any negative effects on maternal well-being, especially for those mothers caring for a child with special health-care needs and/or experiencing social isolation (Voydanoff and Donnelly 1998, p 345). How a child's special health-care needs impact on relationships and marriages varies. Mothers reported they make a more conscious effort to recognise their partner's perspective throughout the lifespan of the young child:

We've learned to sound off against each other for use of a better word, I suppose… I think knowing the statistics of how many marriages end in divorce where critically ill kids or disabled children are involved, it's been something that we have really, really worked hard at to make sure that we talk to each other and don't let things get to you and make sure that we communicate. (Case #10)

Though extra conflict may arise in the raising of children with special health-care needs, some mothers reported that with open communication and sharing of responsibilities, their experiences also strengthened their relationships (Green 2006, p 159). Quality and supportive relationships have been found to be an important predictor of mothers' general and psychological well-being when a young child with special health-care needs is present (McCarthy et al. 2006, p 689):

It's probably brought us close together…you have to rely on each other so much more, you know? It's just not just a matter of him going to the pub every Friday night … which is what I grew up with…It's that sort of relationship there that you do rely on each other for support…. (Case #10)

In Australia, approximately every third marriage ends in divorce (Jain 2007, p 1). The literature on divorce and separation in families of children with special health-care needs reports contradictory findings as to whether these children pose a stress on marital relationships. Risdal and Singer (2004, p 101) noted the probability that a marriage would end in divorce increased by only approximately 6 % for families with a child with special health-care needs when compared to families whose children have typical development. Lundeby and Tossebro (2008 p 21) found the structure of families of children with special health-care needs was generally similar to other families, and the present study supports those findings.

Mothers of children with special health-care needs often require more social support. Mothers who have a support network are likely to be more satisfied with their own level of family functioning and well-being (Armstrong et al. 2005, p 272). Social support can enhance well-being through the simple awareness of the connectedness with friends, family and community. Mothers often report their greatest source of emotional/social support came from other mothers whose children have special health-care needs rather than immediate friends and family (Mackey and Goddard 2006, p 312). One mother explains challenges faced with immediate family:

…Mum and Dad pretend sometimes there's nothing wrong with L* and sometimes acceptance is an issue with them which frustrates me …I think sometimes when you have a child with disabilities, no matter what anyone says, it's not the right thing, because nobody knows what you feel about your child. (Case #8)

A number of mothers reported that support groups were not necessarily helpful as they did not consider the needs of working mothers, were often difficult to attend and were somewhat negative as they felt hopes for their own child were somewhat diminished. Mothers also felt support groups made them more anxious, as they could not commit to the same level of care as stay-at-home mothers; therefore. engagement was somewhat counterproductive. In these instances, mothers tended to seek out support from close networks at work:

…the next day after L* was diagnosed, I went into work and I cried with all the girls. All the girls gave me a cuddle and it was very much united front, crying away all day, all the girls supporting me. (Case #8)

The way in which mothers of children with special health-care needs feel supported, and to what degree, has a major effect on maternal well-being. This was particularly important in this case, where the mother was still struggling to come to terms with family demands due to the young child's (2.6 years) special health-care needs, highlighting the need to give special attention to mothers with children who have precarious and complex health conditions that may have historically been under the care of health-care providers. Whereas social supports and family relationships can be helpful (though at times insufficient), the support may need to be sourced from professional health-care providers (Sen and Yurtsever 2007, p 241).

6.5.4 Maternal Employment, Work Experiences and Financial Well-Being

The work restrictions for mothers and financial impact on families, when caring for a child with special health-care needs, can be substantial. Though the modal income for the families in this study was above the national average of $52,000 at the time of data collection, all mothers reported financial strain due to high medical bills and many opportunity costs of caring for young children such as relocation, specialised equipment, therapy and lost income.

Mothers of children with special health-care needs work fewer hours, prefer part-time work and return to work later. However, studies report inconsistent results when examining the employment status and employment trends of these women, possibly due to differences in definition and categorisation of childhood disability (Dillon-Wallace et al. 2014, p 301). In 2003, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey data showed that fewer primary carers, who are responsible for someone with a health condition or disability, are employed compared with those who do not have a caring role. Only 38 % of primary carers aged 15 and over were employed. Approximately a quarter of employed primary carers (23 %) had reduced their standard working hours after taking on caring responsibilities, whilst others took indeterminate leave. The combined impact of work-related activities may strongly impact on family activities and care responsibilities, particularly when a mother cares for a child with special health-care needs.

In this study, all mothers had reduced and renegotiated their work hours to accommodate the demands associated with being a carer. The three mothers currently studying had deferred their courses indefinitely. Eleven of the thirteen mothers held jobs that were either government positions that were well unionised or were self-employed; therefore, these mothers felt they were well accommodated in terms of benefits such as maternity leave, personal leave, recreational leave and/or sick leave. As a result, all mothers felt that they were well supported in the workplace.

The concept of work-family balance is often poorly defined and under conceptualised despite its common usage when researching work and family life. Understanding the relationship between work and family life is important to understanding the functioning of families (Gordon et al. 2007, p 243). The many chal-

lenges faced by women in this study in balancing work and family life and caring for children with special needs are exemplified by one mother:

> …it's this really complicated, delicate balance of respite workers who can be here between 3:00 and 6:00. Carers need to know how to peg feed. …to lift her. You can't get a babysitter... So after school care and vacation care...I think it's a huge issue. If there is really a government commitment to women in the workforce, to all of those things they pay lip service to about why economically it makes sense to keep women in the workforce, …that's what they have to look at seriously. (Case #13)

Mothers of children who have special health-care needs may experience greater work-family strains but also work-family gains (Spiess and Dunkelberg, 2009, p 134). For example, work may be detrimental to family functioning because of decreased time available for care of the child. However, mothers may experience work-related gains because of increased financial resources that will contribute to family income, personal satisfaction and social networks provided by employment.

> I go to work for therapy. I can have a coffee, I can talk to people, I can talk to other people about the worst thing in the world is that a cushion doesn't match their couch and they've got to find something. I think that is fantastic, because I think if that's all that their drama is; good on them…. (Case #6)

6.6   Limitations

Whilst a generalised approach identifies children who require more medical and health services over an extended period of time as opposed to other children, it does not identify any specific subsamples, for example, of children with disorders such as Down syndrome and autism. These children may require a higher level of care and have a larger impact on mothers' well-being and engagement in employment outside the home. This makes it difficult to provide a differential level of support for mild to severe conditions.

Further, this study is concentrated on mothers who have children with special health-care needs in an Australian context. In addition, the families are representative of higher than average gross household incomes and mother's minimal education attainment. Care should be exercised when extrapolating findings of this study outside this demographic.

6.7   Implications of Findings for Future Research

Within early childhood research and practice, the multiple complex issues and injustices faced by mothers who care for children with special health-care needs remain critically under-explored. It is of utmost importance that this situation be remedied due to the increased roles and responsibilities of mothers as a result of non-institutionalisation and belief that care is best provided in the home and by

mother (Murray 2007, p 215). This, in particular, has important implications for early childhood service delivery and education.

Longitudinal studies are required to plumb the extent that mothers' general and psychological health worsens over time and find out how mothers cope at different stages of their child's development and how existing evidence-based interventions for stress management and depression could be adapted to address specific stresses facing these mothers (Kavanaugh et al. 2006, p 36). Specifically, further study is needed to understand how child stressors affect mothers' physical health through behavioural and biological pathways (Eisenhower et al. 2009, p 1066).

The relationship between maternal well-being and satisfaction with respect to employment choices needs to be explored, especially with regards to the restrictions when accessing employment outside the home. It is important to examine how maternal employment interacts with family functioning, not only when the child is young but also across the family's lifespan (Brennan and Brannan 2005, p 243). An ecological approach to the workplace should be used to find predictive variables in reducing work environments that may cause strain and/or stress for mothers who have children with special health-care needs (Morris and Coley 2004, p 431).

6.8   Conclusion

Mothers of children with special health-care needs often cite their informal care work can be intrinsically rewarding. However, these same mothers are often subjected to difficulties due to their role. This chapter has illuminated that such mothers face many more challenges related to their general and psychological well-being, participation in paid employment and social connections when caring for their child than perhaps mothers of children whose children are typically developing.

For mothers of children who have special health-care needs to enjoy the same opportunities as other members of the community, policymakers, service providers and educators need an understanding of the impact these children have on maternal functioning. An appreciation of ways mothers structure their lives (socially, emotionally, physically and economically) around the needs of the child and family is critical. In order to better understand this impact, policy, practice and future research may address important issues pertaining to the cultural contexts of mother/child relationships that could improve the well-being and opportunities for mothers and their young babies and children as well.

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Chapter 7
Family Child/Day Care Homes as a Cultural Context or World for Babies and Toddlers

Holli Tonyan and Elena Paredes

Abstract Using the concept of "cultural models," this chapter presents a framework for researching daily life in family child care. Photo-stimulated interviews were used to identify cultural models or cognitive schema for how to care for children. These cultural models both guided everyday practice and were the standards against which providers evaluated everyday life. Providers varied in how much they valued, enacted, and assessed/documented (1) ensuring that children experience *love*, *fun*, *and affection* as important *in and of itself*, (2) school readiness, or (3) both. Whereas the first cultural model – love, fun, and togetherness – may afford babies and toddlers more opportunities to construct the close relationships essential for early development, the second, school readiness, model may activate more technical aspects of professionals' work *at the expense of* close relationships. Similarly, the first model frames babies as *being*, whereas the second emphasizes babies as *becoming.* Thus, the process of producing and reproducing these cultural models through daily practices may afford babies and toddlers different opportunities for learning and development. Because these are only two of many possible cultural models relevant to child care, this approach may be important for better understanding the contexts of babies and toddlers.

Keywords Babies and toddlers • Ecocultural theory • Family child care • Mixed-age groupings • Cultural models • Everyday life

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how adults who care for babies and toddlers in home-based settings see them and plan experiences for them. Our ultimate goal is to create environments in which babies and toddlers can thrive. To do so, we argue that we must first understand how babies are seen by the people who organize settings they

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inhabit. Drawing from eco(logical)-cultural theory (ECT; Weisner 2002), we see daily activity as the result of individuals trying to live by explicit and implicit mental, cultural models – ideas about for how children *should* be raised, for example – in the real physical and material conditions of a particular ecological niche. As related to the goals of this book, this chapter explores caregivers' cultural models about babies and toddlers and age-related changes as an important, and overlooked, aspect of the worlds adults create for children.

Cultural models in this chapter are specifically explored in the context of home-based care, because many babies and toddlers experience nonparental care in home-based settings. Preliminary reports from the representative National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) in the USA found that many more children, particularly those under 3 years of age, were cared for in homes than in centers (NSECE Survey Team 2015). The NSECE results also suggest that American parents were less likely to report centers as "excellent" for babies and toddlers than for older children (NSECE Survey Team 2014). We specifically examine family child care – regulated nonparental child care experienced in the providers' home – because it is increasingly recognized as a unique, and potentially valued, part of the early care and education (ECE) system, particularly for babies and toddlers (Bromer et al. 2013; Davis et al. 2012; Statham and Mooney 2003). In this chapter, the setting is called family child care or "FCC," and the people who provide the care in that setting are called "providers," but it is also called family day care, childminding, *Tagesmutter*, and more (Statham and Mooney 2003). FCC, in particular, represents a potentially important setting because regulation can be a tool to ensure an educated and trained workforce in a home environment. Indeed, the workforce in FCC may be better trained and more attached to the ECE profession, including remaining in ECE for many years, than previously believed (NSECE Survey Team 2013).

Babies' and toddlers' experiences in FCC will likely vary widely because the regulatory contexts for FCC vary widely and many FCC providers operate with a higher degree of autonomy than center-based providers (Davis et al. 2012). In California, where this research was conducted, FCC represents a frequently used, relatively affordable, although minimally regulated part of the ECE system. The specific aims of this chapter include presenting two cultural models we have found in previous research, considering the intersection of providers' ideas about children's ages with those two previously identified cultural models, and demonstrating the importance of cultural models in what babies and toddlers experience in the FCC settings adults organize.

7.2   Eco-Cultural Theory

We sought to address these questions through ECT (Weisner 2002) because this is a theory that can address a wide range of home-based settings, from nuclear or extended families to small FCC that function like families and to large FCC that function like small centers to large, complex centers. Within the larger ECT

framework, Gallimore and Lopez (2002) defined cultural models as "the mental schema into which people code their interpretations of the environment and events, what is valued and ideal, which activities should be enacted and which avoided, who should participate, how people should interact, and so forth" (p. 725), and Weisner (2002) highlighted the shared nature of cultural models as "connected, schematized, shared knowledge" (p. 277). Cultural models can only partially be understood through either behavior or statements because they are enacted in behavior but understood and evaluated through mental schemas. The choices people make in how to behave can be more completely understood in relation to explanations of why those choices were made. Researchers' descriptions can highlight taken-for-granted, previously unseen behavior and schemas that should be recognizable to participants (Rogoff et al. 1993; Tobin et al. 2011; Tobin et al. 1989; Weisner 1997).

Our theoretical framework suggests that adults plan and evaluate their daily routine activities based on tacit or explicit models for how children's lives could or should be. We identified two – of many possible – cultural models through an iterative process in previous research (Tonyan April 2013). One cultural model, called "Love, Fun, and Affection," involved wanting children to experience love, fun, affection, togetherness, and relationships as a valued goal in and of itself. A second cultural model, which we called "School Readiness," involved wanting children to be ready for school. Providers varied in how much we saw evidence for a particular cultural model. Some providers *valued* (i.e., talked about throughout the interview), *enacted* (i.e., described activities as part of the daily routine when children could experience it), and *saw* (i.e., could describe specific examples of how children changed as a result of participating in the family child care home). We classified providers according to whether we saw evidence for all three – valuing, enacting, and seeing – only some of these or none of these for each of the two cultural models (i.e., Love, Fun, and Affection and School Readiness). Furthermore, these were not mutually exclusive: a provider could value, enact, and/or see both or neither of these cultural models.

For the purposes of this chapter, these two cultural models afford different possibilities for providers' interactions with babies and toddlers. An emphasis on the former may be particularly important for babies and toddlers, whereas the latter may be important as children approach the age for starting school in their local cultural context. Thus, exploring providers' ideas about these cultural models as related to children's ages is one goal of this chapter.

7.3 The Research Projects

Before describing providers' ideas about children's ages and how providers' ideas about age intersected with their cultural models, we describe two research projects informing this work. This chapter reports on research conducted using the semi-structured Ecocultural Family Interview (EFI; The Ecocultural Scale Project 1997) as adapted for family child care providers (Tonyan et al. 2014) in which researchers

talk with providers about their daily life. Interviewers use a set of show cards listing topics to guide a discussion about daily life, with a focus on daily routine, physical space and materials in and around the home, domestic workload, subsistence, relationships with children's families and providers' own family members, support and information, and services. We also gave providers a digital camera and asked them to take photos of up to ten activities and/or their space.

In the spirit of the EFI, interviewers did not specifically ask providers about their beliefs or cultural models. Because people can only talk about things of which they are aware, direct questions about beliefs can result in misleading responses. Instead, interviewers were carefully trained to elicit the providers' own frames of reference and comparison. For example, a provider who described changes in her daily routine would be probed with a general prompt like "tell me more about that" or "what was it like before you made that change?" and encouraged to describe life before and after the change.

Procedures were approved and reviewed annually by the California State University Northridge Standing Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and all procedures complied with the ethical guidelines of the (US) Society for Research in Child Development and the (US) American Psychological Association. All transcripts were reviewed to remove identifying information, and names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.

This chapter presents preliminary analyses of interviews conducted during two projects that each used the EFI. The first, entitled the Sustainable Routines project, was designed to adapt the EFI for use in FCC. The second, entitled the Are You In project, was funded to examine family child care providers' engagement in local quality improvement initiatives and was begun before analysis of the Sustainable Routines interviews was complete. Each of the two projects will be described below to contextualize the analyses that follow.

For each project, family child care homes were visited twice: for the Sustainable Routines project, both visits took place when children were either not present or not awake, whereas for the Are You In project, researchers made a point to visit the home once when children were present. Providers also completed a brief survey of their characteristics, education and experience, and information about the children in their care. Providers received gift cards for participation (the amount varied slightly across the two studies).

Providers who were at least 18 years of age and had been operating a licensed FCC for at least 1 year were eligible to participate: 30 were recruited into the Sustainable Routines project (1 provider had incomplete data and was dropped from all analyses) and 54 into the Are You In project (several providers were in both studies). These were not representative samples.

Although we did not have systematic information about the ages of children served in the SR project, we did have that information for providers in the Are You In project who reported caring for, on average, between 1 and 2 children under 2 years of age and 2–3 children 24–35 months of age as well as 2–5 children of preschool (roughly 3–5 years) or school age. Most (73 %) providers reported receiving some training focused on babies and toddlers.

We generate data at multiple levels. We are rating each provider using a coding sheet that lists the operational definitions for each model described above (i.e., Love, Fun, and Affection and School Readiness) with space to paste quotes from the transcript, provide an overall classification, and write a justification for the overall "holistic rating." For the Sustainable Routines project, coders are rating providers after reading through all materials (i.e., notes and transcripts). For the Are You In project, interviewers rated providers based on a review of their notes after all procedures were complete. In addition, when transcripts have been completed, we identify excerpts or thematically unified sections of the transcript that discuss children's ages, daily routine activities, and all the main topics of our interview. The full "holistic rating" code sheet and code tree are available from the corresponding author on request.

7.4 Themes: Cultural Models and Ideas About Children's Ages

7.4.1 Cultural Models

Providers' constructions of their work with babies and toddlers reflected varied cultural models, with at least three trends evident. First, the most common pattern in both samples was for providers' descriptions to reflect both cultural models: the most frequent classifications were to be valuing, enacting, *and* seeing both Love, Fun, and Affection and School Readiness or to be valuing, enacting, *or* seeing both. It was less common for providers to talk about and promote one of the cultural models over the other. Second, these cultural models were shared among the providers in these samples: it was rare for providers to be *not* valuing, enacting, or seeing either of these two cultural models. Such a pattern is noteworthy because providers could theoretically have an infinite number of cultural models and could appropriate cultural models in highly individual ways. Indeed, one of the providers in the *Sustainable Routines* project talked more about emergency preparedness than Love, Fun, and Affection or School Readiness. Third, providers were more often low on Love, Fun, and Affection than School Readiness. This latter trend is troubling because of the importance of close relationships for babies and toddlers, but it may be a reflection of the self-selected sample of providers who chose to participate in this research – the current trend in the USA is to focus on early educational settings as valuable because of the preparation they provide for school.

One provider from the Sustainable Routines pilot, Ynez, illustrated a common way providers showed evidence of both cultural models: Ynez described clear examples of each. For example, one photograph she took looked to us like a small group learning activity, but she saw and described more about togetherness than about what children learned:

They were calling her grandma [laugh]. So she was like, she was really excited playing with them, and they … got so much in touch with her, and that's why I took the picture [laugh]. (Ynez, *Sustainable Routines*)

She also described a number of enriching and learning activities, as in the following group activity organized in a school-like way:

This is the area where we do the circle time over here. On top there's the letters and we review the letters everyday, or we talk about colors. Every week we choose like a color, a letter and we talk about it or we do the calendar.

Thus, these cultural models were shared and captured what many of these providers sought to provide for the children in their care.

7.4.2   *Children's Ages and Cultural Models*

We have begun to examine how providers' ideas about the children's age intersected with their cultural models such as creating a sense of fun, togetherness, and belonging that are key properties of the Love, Fun, and Affection cultural model. We noticed two trends. Some providers described changes over time. Here, we explore one provider's descriptions in particular because she talked at length about how children's experience of Love, Fun, and Affection and School Readiness develops as they get older. In the following excerpt, Moira described how she took pride in the sense of togetherness and respect that children learned over time after they had been with her since they were babies:

Because a lot of our **children have been here with us since they were little babies. We taught them the idea of respecting other people's quiet time…** There's a certain time of day when they start waking up. So we'll open that door, and make it so they can walk themselves into the kitchen. And when that happens, … they have to understand and they know that they can't wake up everybody else. They have to quietly get their shoes or go to the restroom, and then they can go into the kitchen, and have snack. (Interviewer: *Why did you choose this photo?*) Well I wanted to show how, you know, even though there are two other children sleeping how we, we really taught a lot of our children that, it's okay if you wake up early, there's nothing wrong with that, but you have to remember to respect your other friends quietly, you know. It's their quiet time as well. (Moira, *Sustainable Routines*)

Thus, Moira provides an example of the changes she has seen in children's behavior that she attributes to their time in her care. In this particular example, she described supports that she provides for children so that they can practice what she strives to promote (i.e., respecting other people's quiet time) in ways she interprets as appropriate to their age and that are aligned with her cultural model. Similarly, Moira described a photo she took of an activity that included younger and older children experiencing the same activity in different ways (emphasis added):

The kids really enjoy this activity. They, it's like a big band, and they have to work together to stretch it out. It's usually the **younger ones** who will sit in the middle and the **older ones** will be stretching that, that big band, so **they have to do it together** as a team, so that's why

I took the picture because I thought that it was really important to show that **even the younger ones will be there trying to understand the whole concept of sharing and working together as a team** to make something … That's really cool.

Here, Moira shows awareness of age-related differences in how children participate in an activity that involves togetherness and practicing skills that will help children be ready for school. Elsewhere, Moira described a photo of one of the older girls engaged in an activity when she arrived for after-school care and noted changes in school-related skills over time:

She really wanted to do it herself, and … she's been with us since she was about six months old so…, I took the picture because it just shows that over time because we encourage those independence skills she's become very independent, and even though we helped her … she wanted to individually, by herself, do all the cut outs.

Thus, this particularly articulate provider saw and described age-related changes over time in what children learn or develop from their time in FCC. The kinds of things she noticed reflect both cultural models.

Moira's descriptions also highlight a second way that cultural models intersected with providers' ideas about age: each of these cultural models emphasize different aspects of development that may be important at different ages. For example, a model of School Readiness highlights babies' future and what they need to be "ready," whereas a model of Love, Fun, and Togetherness highlights their present experiences often in relation to others. Thus, Moira's descriptions show children moving from not able to able with regard to things she valued (e.g., respecting personal space, working independently) perhaps more than valuing children's lived moments.

In the following example, Alma describes how she includes babies in a preliteracy activity that reflects a School Readiness model, but with a focus on the present (emphasis added):

I read to them. But before I do that, everyone reads a book by themselves, even the babies. They get a book, they look at it, they sit **at that moment, you know be themselves**, have some reflection time, they look at pictures. Sometimes two kids sit together looking at the same book, and that's okay. Or I pair up an older child, you can see in the picture, an older child reading to a younger one. And after that, you know, that gives us some time for us to kind of settle down. (Alma, *Are You In*)

The same provider subsequently emphasized the importance of really being with the children and giving them space to express their feelings characteristic of a Love, Fun, and Affection model (emphasis added):

We ask, if it's a Monday you know, 'what did you do over the weekend?' because you know, it's so important that the kids come and share sad stuff that happened over the weekend, [and] happy stuff… And it has been amazing during this time after reading. It is incredible how grown-ups, sometimes we forget about the kids. We don't take the time to listen to them and really let [them] express how hard it is for them. So, we were talking about books, and the book kind of triggered that, and for me was a very, very, very special enlightening moment, and I said I'm gonna be doing this for Mondays where they can have a day of dumping it, of getting out, you know? **I'm gonna be here for you to be safe, a place where**

they can be safe, and they can say whatever they feel. So that happens during that time, and after that of course if I let them talk all day. **But if we really need to extend, if it's something that really needs my time, I don't care how long it will take. I will give them the time to do that**. (Alma, *Are You In*)

Alma sees and values the preliteracy activity (i.e., having babies read a book on their own alongside older children), but also the importance of providing children a space to express and allowing them the time they need to do so ("I will give them the time to do that").

By contrast, Maricruz describes her coordination with her assistant and focuses on the skills and capacities that differ by children's ages in the following excerpt:

…we do different activities. I mean we even switch groups from time to time. Where I'll be working with the babies and she'll be working … with the preschoolers. So we'll allow each other like a couple of months or maybe two months or three months where I'm work-ing with the preschoolers and then we'll switch. And that's just to give us a break in between because it is harder to work with infants and toddlers than it is for preschoolers.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit more about that, like how it's harder?

Provider: I want to say coming up with ideas for them, keeping them busy. Sometimes it's two children that you can entertain with a sensory box full of rice. And then the other three are wandering around because they're not interested. And then you have to draw them back by blowing bubbles or something. … So, it's hard to keep them focused and on task. (Maricruz, *Are You In*)

Later, when probed by the interviewer, the same provider described how she and her assistant each organized different activities for children of different ages. She described toddlers completing "simpler" activities and emphasized the fun (and mess) whereas she emphasized the "complex…critical thinking" when describing the older children's activity:

Provider: She's doing more hands-on activities, where I'm doing more critical thinking activities… Like today we did an activity [with the preschoolers] which required them to do critical thinking. We used a tub of water, and we were asking, "What sinks? What floats? What does 'sink' mean, and what does 'float' mean?" And they actually had fun doing it, throwing different things in the water. As for [the assistant], [the babies and toddlers] were actually singing songs today. I noticed that she was doing something to make a little person. They just precut things and everything they just glued on. So it's kind of simple for them. So it could be things like that. I know that the other day she did an actual edible painting out of whipped cream, and for play. Of course, it was a hit. [Laughs] It was a mess and a hit at the same time. (Maricruz *Are You In*).

Maricruz' comments raise interesting questions about the opportunities infants and toddlers have to expand their thinking when their provider considers complex thinking something reserved for older children. When do providers' ideas about development constrain what they might see as possible for babies' and toddlers? Perhaps in having ideas about babies as sensorimotor beings, providers might miss opportunities for seeing babies' thinking and problem solving.

7.5   Conclusion

These examples show the value of examining providers' talk about their work through a cultural model lens. Our analysis suggests that the two cultural models previously identified (i.e., Love, Fun, and Affection and School Readiness) were useful for understanding these providers' descriptions of their work: most providers were classified as valuing, enacting, and/or seeing one or both. We saw hints that providers' ideas about age-related changes intersect with those previously identified cultural models. Most providers noticed increasing capacities with age. However, providers varied in how they understood those age-related changes: Some framed those increasing capacities as challenging/rewarding, whereas others took pride in increasing capacities as a reflection of what children had learned from being in their FCC. Such differences across providers may constrain (e.g., Maricruz seeing critical thinking as more for older children) or open up possibilities for babies and toddlers (e.g., Alma who encouraged older children and babies to experience books together).

In addition, our analyses point to some implications for practice and future research. Many of the FCC providers in our study were careful observers attuned to how babies and toddlers related to their world. Many were aware of the babies' and toddlers' well-being and exploration. We saw evidence for at least some adults' keen awareness of the babies and toddlers in their care. These providers' reflections illustrate the insights possible from FCC providers who have professional knowledge and watch children grow from babies and toddlers into older stages of development. Whereas parents see development throughout a lifetime for only their own children and center-based providers often see many more children, for a shorter span of development, family child care providers see children from multiple families, over quite a span of ages. Indeed, some providers who have been caring for children 20 years or more have observed generations of children develop from babies and toddlers into school-age children. Thus, researchers and people who work with FCC providers can consider the unique vantage point FCC providers may have for understanding children's experiences.

To link our findings explicitly to the themes of this book: What does it mean for babies and toddlers to have this experience? We cannot know, but we venture to speculate that they may be well served to experience warm, loving relationships with providers and mixed-age peers in a family child care home that are additive (i.e., in a family child care setting *and* a home setting) or compensatory (i.e., if the home setting is less than supportive, a warm, loving relationship in a family child care home may be particularly impactful). I (HT) have seen my own children nurture children younger than themselves and be responsively aware of others around them in ways that I attribute in large part to the warm, nurturing environment and mixed-age interactions they experienced in a FCC home. Furthermore, from a cultural-historical perspective, time in age-segregated settings before 7 years of age is a relatively recent anomaly rather than the norm that many now consider it to be (Rogoff 2003). The combination of professional knowledge that family child care

providers can achieve through training and engagement with a larger professional community (Bromer et al. 2009), with a commitment to the profession of caring for young children often for extended periods of time that seems to be characteristic of home-based care providers (National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team 2013), may create opportunities for babies and toddlers that do not exist in other settings. Research also suggests that family child care providers can support families to also better nurture their babies and toddlers at home (Bromer 2001). Of course, there is likely room for professional growth as well. It seems likely that providers in family child care, like the center-based educators Rutanen (Chap. 4, this volume) studied, can work to better understand moment-to-moment transitions as rich with potential for learning about the physical environment and relationships between educators and young children among other things. For these and many other reasons, we need to continue to understand both the ways that providers construct their work and the ways that babies and toddlers experience the care they receive in family child care homes.

Our analyses also hint at additional insights that may be possible using a cultural model lens. When things that matter to providers are enacted as part of a daily routine that gets repeated over time, the providers produce and reproduce cultural models. When the providers notice changes in children's participation in daily routine activities, like the changes that Moira described, then we also see evidence that the children may be reproducing what matters to the providers. Furthermore, if the children carry forward what they have learned in FCC into other settings, then we also glimpse ways that the children may reproduce and extend those cultural models into their future.

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Chapter 8
Intergenerational Conflicts and Transmission of Values in Raising 0–2-Year-Old Chinese Babies

Yue-Juan Pan, Lina Sun, Sha-Sha Dong, and Yue Tu

Abstract Baby raising is not only related to psychology or pedagogy seeking for the "best" and "evidence-based" practices but it is embedded in particular cultural practices. Family interaction in baby raising is a process of cultural transmission influenced by family members' position in the social structure. The present study focused on how two generations resolve the intergenerational conflicts and transmit their value orientations when grandparents are involved in baby raising. Ten typical families are sampled according to family background and conflict coping style. It was found that in Chinese families, the intergenerational conflict about baby raising is essentially a struggle for family authority to define the boundaries of different role identity, where the generation having a higher position in the social structure has more possibilities to gain authority and therefore the chance to transmit their value orientations in raising young babies.

Keywords Intergeneration • Chinese family • Values • Cultural transmission

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8.1 Introduction

"I used to look forward to the days when my children would go to college and get married, firmly believing that life will go better finally. But I have changed my mind after experiencing all these days…" It feels sad that these words come from a grandmother who has left her job as a doctor in her hometown and had moved to Beijing to look after her grandson. This grandmother is not alone. As a matter of fact, the large number of grandparents from all over the country account for a significant part of the migrant population in Beijing. For the benefits of grandchildren, they seem to be experiencing both happiness and misery. (Gao 2014)

As any kind of child-raising behavior happens in a specific cultural context, baby raising has particular cultural practices guided by cultural values in certain societies and groups. Even survival and health needs, which are universal and mainly determined by biological factors, have social and cultural characteristics because of the way adults treat and fulfill these needs. For example, Li et al. (2013) found that Chinese parents prefer to train babies early to go to the toilet independently, requiring babies to inform adults before pee and poo around 12 months and learning to do these things independently before 18 months. However, American parents disagree with such kind of behavior. Therefore, baby raising is not simply practices to fulfill babies' physiological needs, but also to cultivate them to understand and master the value orientations in their culture and society and then construct their own cultural identity.

With the rapid development of economy and society in Mainland China, more and more mothers return to work soon after the end of 14 weeks of maternity leave, which leaves them no time to take care of their newborn babies. As a result, grandparents' involvement in baby raising has become a common pattern for families in Mainland China.

Family is the first place for young children's socialization. It is in the family that young children confront, understand, and master the values and meanings in the culture they belong to. When caregivers take care of a young baby in a certain way, their baby-raising practices transmit certain value orientations that define what is good. But two generations of adults born and grown up in different times might have cultural values in accordance or in conflict, especially in the context of rapid social transformation in Mainland China. Therefore, interaction and cultural transmission in families become complex after grandparents' involvement.

Most of the previous studies analyze effects of grandparent's raising practice on children's psychological development from the perspective of psychology or pedagogy. Wang (2007) using the Mental Health Checklist for preschoolers found that preschoolers raised by their grandparents had more emotional problems, behavioral disorders, character limitations, communication limitations, and adaptability problems than those raised by their parents only or parents and grandparents together; Goldberg-Glen et al. (1998) pointed out that children raised by grandparents were prone to anxiety, insecurity, developmental delay and behavioral problems, and inattention. However, few studies discussed cultural transmission in baby raising from sociological and cultural perspectives. In families, the intergen-

erational transmission of culture is achieved in social interaction among family members, which is also influenced by social structure. Gecas and Seff (1990) pointed out that one mechanism for the transmission of values involved child-raising practices. This study explored identity theory to analyze the interaction between parents and grandparents. This involved the micro level of family dynamics and the macro level of social structures in the background of social transformation, and then summarizing the character and mechanism of transmission in this case. The concrete questions follow:

(a) In what situation will intergenerational conflicts on baby raising occur?
(b) How do two generations resolve these conflicts?
(c) Whose beliefs and behaviors on baby raising would be accepted?

8.2   Theoretical Framework

Sociologists used to explain the cultural development and reproduction from the macro factors of social structure (Kaufman 2004; Peterson and Anand 2004). More recently, there is a new tendency in the field of cultural sociology and social psychology to study identity as a key mechanism at the micro level to explain how large-scale cultural patterns manifest, reproduce, and transform themselves in interactions in a given setting. For example, Fields (2014) found young women in a knitting group used a range of strategies to reshape the meanings and practices associated with knitting, and these strategies aligned knitting with their self-concept and then changed the culture. Individuals' identity processes influenced by social culture and social structure are related to cultural development and reproduction. Figure 8.1 shows the relationship between identity, social structure, and cultural values.

The concept of identity has different usage in existent literatures. The term identity in this study refers to "parts of a self composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies" (Stryker and Burke 2000). In identity theory (below), persons living in a social network choose particular actions and interactions according to social expectations attached to their positions and roles that they perceived and internalized.

When there is discrepancy between the social expectations and role performance in a given situation, the individual will compare his/her identity with identity standards and seek identity verification (Burke and Stets 1999; Cast and Burke 2002; Burke 2004).

The identity standard is a set of meanings defining who one is in the situation. As Burke and Reitzes (1981) showed, people engage in behavior to create meanings that correspond to the meanings of their identity standard. Meaning is the core of identity standard, but the meanings are culturally shared, individually relevant, and context oriented.

Fig. 8.1 The relationship between identity, social structure, and cultural values
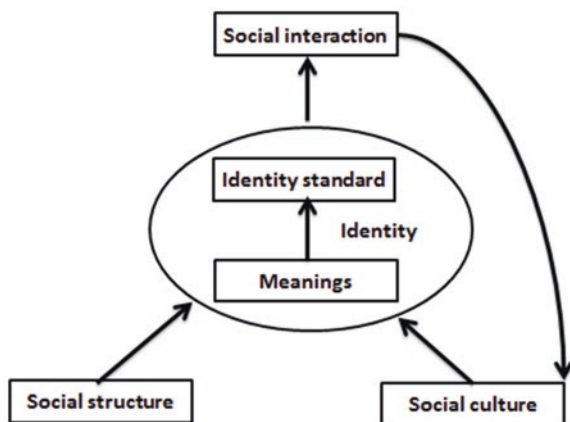
Since the meanings take root in value systems of a particular society, the identity standard is social and cultural in essence. The cultures in different societies of different times anticipate actions, attitudes, and affections from different positions and roles in the social networks.

Identity is also influenced by social structure. Burke (2004) proposed an ecological perspective that social structure was the human organization of resource flows and transformations and was related to the control of resources.

The perceptions and shared understanding of meanings are critical to social interactions and relationships. Since individuals in identity hierarchy take various value orientations, how they negotiate with each other and who will set the identity standard during the social interactions are important questions.

Under this theoretical framework, the present study will explore how grandparents and parents define their roles in baby raising and how the social structures and value orientations influence their definitions about their identities as grandparents and parents by analyzing the conflicts and solutions during the practice of baby raising.

8.3   Research Design

8.3.1   Method

This study used the semi-structured qualitative interview to study typical families in which grandparents and parents look after babies together. Grandparents and parents were interviewed, respectively, to take a holistic view of baby-raising practices.

There were two categories of interview questions. The first category was related to demographic information, and the second one related to intergenerational conflicts and resolution involving baby raising, including the situation when conflicts

occurred; the process and results of conflicts; and the two generations' understanding and perceptions about the conflict events. For example, "On what aspects are grandparents' raising values different from yours?" "What will you do when there are different raising values? Why?" These open-ended questions could help researchers to collect more in-depth data.

8.3.2 Participants

Under the theoretical framework of cultural anchoring and identity theories, the social structure would exert influences on transmission of culture among generations. As Burke defined, social structure is the organization and control of resources (Burke 2004). People in different positions in the social structure have different access to resources. In the context of rapid social transformation in Mainland China, the urban-rural residence, education, and income all affect the resources an individual can mobilize.

Therefore, we first purposefully sampled families with grandparents and parents in different match types in these three dimensions of residence, education, and income among researchers' relatives, colleagues, neighborhoods, and friends. In the dimension of education, "lower level" refers to secondary education or lower, "middle level" refers to high school or tertiary degree, and "higher level" refers to bachelor's degree or upper. In the dimension of finance, "independent" means that this generation can support themselves, and "dependent" means that this generation has to be supported by the other. On the second step of the snowball sampling, the families initially sampled recommended other eligible families they were acquainted with. Twenty families constituted a sample pool after these two steps. In the process of analyzing data, two kinds of conflict resolution strategies emerged. "Compromise" means that individuals put aside their baby-raising opinions and follow the other's, and "insist" means that individuals take strategies to make their baby-raising opinions accepted and practiced by the other. Thus, two intergenerational conflict coping styles between grandparents and parents are formed, namely, "grandparents compromise vs. parents insist" and "grandparents insist vs. parents compromise." On the last step, 10 typical and representative families from 20 sample pools were chosen according to intergenerational conflict coping style. The match types of the final sample are shown in Table 8.1. For ethical consideration, we made the samples' names anonymous and used numbers to represent them in the final research data.

8.3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis is recursive, and the coding work is based on the data itself and the theoretical structure. Firstly, we read through and preliminarily coded every case and then extracted key concepts. We confirmed our understanding and interpretations with the samples to guarantee accordance with their own. Then we read the

Table 8.1 Family background and interaction type (grandparents—parents)

No.	Educational level	Residence	Finance	Coping style
F1	Lower—higher	Town—town	Independent—independent	Compromise—insist
F3	Lower—higher	Town—city	Independent—independent	Insist—compromise
F4	Lower—higher	Country—city	Independent—independent	Compromise—insist
F5	Lower—middle	Town—town	Independent—independent	Insist—compromise
F6	Lower—middle	Town—town	Independent—dependent	Insist—compromise
F7	Middle—higher	Town—city	Independent—independent	Compromise—insist
F8	Middle—higher	City—city	Independent—independent	Insist—compromise
F9	Middle—higher	Town—city	Independent—independent	Compromise—insist
F10	Lower—higher	Town—city	Independent—independent	Insist—compromise
F14	Lower—higher	City—city	Dependent—independent	Compromise—insist

cases again to make continuous comparison and classification of the cases and put forward an analysis framework. Data collection proceeded at the same pace as data analysis in order to supplement any data lacking or inexplicit.

8.4   Findings

As parents and grandparents are from different eras and have different backgrounds of life and education, there must be some differences in their cultural values. Different values on baby raising can lead to intergenerational conflicts in extended families. This raises the questions: how do value differences develop into intergenerational conflicts? In what ways will the two generations cope with these conflicts? How do coping styles and conflict results influence value transmission on baby raising?

We will find answers in the following family cases.

8.4.1   Cooperating with Each Other: Grandparents Respect Parents' Authority

In Chinese families, those who control more resources (finance, education, etc.) usually stand in a higher position in family structure and have the power to dominate family decisions. Other family members will respect his/her power and follow

his/her decisions. This kind of power is called family authority, and there is usually only one authority in one family. As everyone wants to gain this power, fighting for family authority becomes a common phenomenon in every family.

In this kind of family, parents have an independent financial and social status, possessing more financial, social, and cultural capital. Therefore, they stand at the family core, holding family authority and dominating family voice. Parents' advice is often respected and influences the family final decision. Usually, parents make their rules or advice clear to grandparents directly in advance or at present, to make sure that their babies are raised in their way. Meanwhile, grandparents tend to respect parents' authority by putting aside their own ideas which are different from parents. They would like to figure out each other's role boundaries in the process of cooperative raising to be aware of when they need to ask parents for an opinion or when they can decide by themselves. After a period of cooperation, grandparents may have a definite role and identity expectation of both parents and themselves. On the whole, the two generations make baby raising a cooperative and harmonious process, and parents hold the family authority all the time.

In family No.1, parents have bachelor's degree, both work as financial workers in a small town, and earn enough for the whole family. Maternal grandparents graduated from junior middle school and used to be ordinary workers in the same town. Though retired, they both have a pension. Sometimes, grandparents provide financial support to the newborn family, but parents are still the main source of family income. Generally, when the two generations hold different opinions on baby raising, grandmother will choose to take parents' advice and put her opinion aside, because "babies' education is parents' responsibility after all." We can see that the two generations have the same expectation of each other as parents take responsibility for baby's education issues.

> Sometimes we hold different opinions as I tend to spoil the baby. There was one time my granddaughter scrambled for toys with other babies. I taught her to fight back in case of getting hurt, but her mother didn't allow that. She said it was impolite and a child should learn to share with others. Then I followed her advice, as babies' education is parents' responsibility after all. (F1–G1)[1]

In family No.4, both parents have master's degrees and live in the city, but father is the main source of family income. Maternal grandmother graduated from primary school and has retired with a pension. Now, she has moved to the city to help parents raise the baby. When the two generations can't reach an agreement, grandparents usually make a compromise and try to follow parents' opinion. Meanwhile, parents will further establish and strengthen their authority by reasoning things out and taking relevant books home to convince grandparents.

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[1] Number of interviews:F—family,M—mother,G—grandmother,N—nurse. The numbers represent the number of families. For example, F2–M2 represents mother's narration of family NO.2, and F2–G2 represents grandmother's narration of family NO.2. There are some digests that are numbered in only families, as F14, which represents that the data is reported by other interviewees.

> When we've got different ideas, I'll tell mother my opinion directly. She is comfortable to accept new things and she will try her best to do what I tell her. Recently, I discovered an effective way to convince her. I bought a book named 0–3 Development Guide home. She skimmed through the book and found that what I have told her is in accordance with the book. She believes in books. So now it's easier to persuade her to follow my way. (F4–M4)

In family No.7, both of the parents have bachelor's degrees. Maternal grandmother graduated from Junior College and used to be a middle school teacher. Maternal grandfather graduated from Radio and TV University. Both of them have a pension and extra income. In this family, the two generations support and depend on each other because they are clear about each other's role and status. Parents need grandparents to help them with baby raising; in return, grandparents respect parents' advice and get happiness from the involvement.

> Grandma (paternal grandma) may give me some advice when I'm at home, but she respects my advice, too. I feel that everyone respects my opinion and I hold the greatest authority, because I have the highest degree in my family and the concepts of modern methods pass out from me. They think that my concept is scientific and we need to follow it. (F7–M7)

In the characteristics of the above families, it becomes obvious that different members have different responsibilities, and they all have a clear understanding of the roles, identities, and boundaries of each other. After family members figure out their roles, status, and boundaries in interaction, they will act as expected in order to avoid conflicts. In these kinds of families, when there are disagreements on baby raising, parents' opinions are often transmitted and practiced.

8.4.2 Parents Hold the Authority: Parents Stand at the Family Core, While Grandparents Give Up Their Voice

In some cooperative baby-raising families, parents stand at the family core, so they hold family authority, having the final say and making the final decision. However, the reason why this kind of baby-raising pattern exists is that parents are socially independent and grandparents' family voice is deprived. In this pattern, parents play the role of "decision maker," and grandparents play the role of "executor," executing what parents tell them. Grandparents usually hold the principle of "noninterference," believing that parents as baby's biological parents deserve to hold authority and have the final say in baby raising, while they as babies' grandparents should not interfere but execute what they are told. Grandparents are aware of both parents' absolute authority and their own role boundaries. So when there are conflicts of opinion in baby raising, they may evade or obey the "noninterference" principle to deal with such issues, but they'll never overstep the boundaries set by parents. As a consequence, parents' baby-raising values are completely transmitted and practiced.

In family No.14, paternal grandmother divorced from her husband and has lived with her son ever since. Parents built their own family and grandmother lives with them together, on one hand to look after the baby, and on the other hand to be nursed. Therefore, when there are conflicts between grandmother and mother, grandmother will give in eventually, and parents' baby-raising values are upheld.

> The mother often takes the baby to the cinema. Granny insists that it is bad for baby's eyes and rebukes her a few times when father is not present. The mother can bear this once but not always. Finally, they had a bad quarrel and then have been in a cold war. Granny says that the mother still takes the baby out frequently, but she can't change anything because she has to live with the parents to get nursed. (F14)

In another family (F9), grandparents obey the noninterference principle that they will ask parents for advice before they do anything. In this family, father is a middle-class cadre, and mother works in a hospital in the city. Grandfather is a cadre in town, and grandmother is a doctor. During baby raising, grandmother won't make any decision until she gets parents' suggestion in order to avoid disagreement. Nominally, grandparents are helping raise babies, but actually, they are just following parents' advice. Mother dominates the family decisions and family voice, and grandparents are in charge of putting parents' opinion into practice.

> The two-year-old little boy wants to eat the fruit in the basket, but his mother is not around, so he asks granny if he can eat one. However, granny tells him that he can't eat unless mother says yes.(F9)

Parents' holding the authority doesn't mean that the two generations have no disagreements or conflicts on baby raising. When there is a disagreement, parents are often tough and uncompromising, and they will point out what to do or what not to do in a direct way. Grandparents believe that parents hold the family authority and family voice, and it's not good for them to interfere, so they choose not to argue or just evade. Therefore, parents' values are finally transmitted and practiced.

8.4.3   Compete for Raising Authority: Parents Stand at the Family Core and Grandparents Seeking Family Voice

In some cooperative families, though parents stand at the family core, they have to depend on grandparents to help with baby raising as they have to go to work during daytime. The competition for authority between two generations can be about family voice or about emotional attachment of babies. When there are conflicts, grandparents may "threaten" parents by refusing to offer help. Besides, some grandparents also scramble for baby's emotional attachment. In such kinds of families, grandparents are usually tough and uncompromising. There can be two results, one is that parents compromise and lose their authority because they are at a disadvantage of relying on grandparents' help. In this case, grandparents' values are transmitted and practiced. But parents are still at the family core, owning the power to fight against

grandparents. This means that as the power of each generation goes up and down, the same conflict may recur. The other result is that under parents' strong insistence and persuasion, grandparents make a compromise and give authority back to parents again. In this case, parents' baby-raising values are transmitted and practiced. Like the former result, as grandparents are still tough, uncompromising, and necessary in the third generation's upbringing, the same conflict will probably recur.

In family No.3, baby's father works in a state-owned enterprise, while the mother is still master in reading. As both parents have no time to take care of the baby, maternal and paternal grandmothers are invited in turn to help with baby raising. A baby-sitter is also hired by parents to help take care of the baby together with grandmother.

The three caregiver groups have different expectations of the roles of each other in baby raising. Parents expect that grandparents can help in taking care of baby's daily life and housework, while accompanying and educating can be done by themselves or by the baby-sitter instead.

What grandmother expects is that she can take care of the baby alone, and there is no need to hire a baby-sitter. The baby-sitter expects that granny takes responsibility for housework, while she looks after and accompanies the baby, which is generally in accordance with parents' expectation.

> I take care of baby's daily life, as in eating, sleeping, bathing, and keeping the baby company. Granny takes care of the house, washing and cleaning. (F3–N3)

The reality is that the baby is taken care of by parents if they are free at home or by the baby-sitter when they are busy. Maternal granny does housework and occasionally, she takes care of the baby together with baby-sitter. Grandmother's over-expectation may lead to her over-interference and intensive relationship with the baby-sitter.

There are value conflicts on both nursery and educational issues between the two generations. In these circumstances, parents usually tell grandmother what to do or what not to do directly, but the effect is not satisfactory, as grandmother will be perfunctory about what parents say or just ignore it. So sometimes, the value conflicts may escalate into intergenerational conflicts.

> We never feed our baby anything unhealthy such as sausage or anything like that, though she likes it. But grandmother doesn't care. She feeds the baby anything she likes, no matter healthy or not…Sometimes I will tell her that some of her raising practice is not good for the baby's health and development, but she won't listen to me and will still do as she used to do, and this always leads to a quarrel. (F3–M3)

Grandmother's overstepping of role boundary and her strong insistence on this deprive parents of their family voice. Parents can do nothing but compromise, because asking for grandmother's help is their only choice.

In this case, grandparents' baby-raising values are transmitted and practiced. But this is not the end of conflict. Due to parents' conviction of their own value and grandparents' overstepping, the same conflict will still recur, just like "a vicious cycle."

In another family (F8), parents and grandparents are both in a good financial position, and the maternal and paternal family live equivalent lives. In this example, the baby-raising conflicts between paternal grandmother and mother focus on baby's emotional attachment.

> Paternal grandma is not happy when the baby stays with mother alone. When mother comes back home, granny will hold the baby all the time. Mother often complains that this is my baby, but I can't stay with him. How ridiculous! (F8)

As the working mother relies on grandmother to look after her baby, she can't show her dissatisfaction and has to put up with it. Therefore, whether parents give up or are forced to abdicate their authority, grandparents' raising values are transmitted and practiced.

In this family, conflicts between grandparents and parents focus on baby's emotional attachment. Grandparents are financially independent and take good care of the baby, but she wants to compete for baby's emotional attachment. Parents have to endure grandparents' contention of emotion, as they rely on grandparents to raise baby, and the baby gets good raising indeed. So grandparents dominate family authority finally. But we can see that mother's endurance may wreck marriage bonds, and what's worse, this kind of raising pattern is likely to result in outburst of conflicts.

8.4.4 Avoid Baby-Raising Responsibility: Grandparents Live Independently and Refuse to Take Raising Responsibility

There are some active grandparents, who are financially independent and wouldn't like to live with parents or take care of the third generation. They usually refuse the cooperative raising invitation from parents, or hire baby-sitters as compensation. As grandparents stay out of baby raising, the parents' values are eventually transmitted and practiced.

In family No.5, both parents graduated from polytechnic school. When the baby was 8 months, they send her to maternal grandparents' home, asking them to take care of the baby. Grandparents run a decoration shop. They agreed to look after the baby at first, but a week later, they refuse to raise the baby any more for the sake of business, but they offer to hire a baby-sitter as compensation.

There are other grandparents who promised to take care of the babies, but only on work days. In this way, grandparents prove their status and value in family.

> Maternal grandma wants to have a holiday like the baby-sitter does. She thinks that parents should look after the baby when they are free. (F10)

The "new grandparents" usually have their own career or hobbies and pay a lot in their own children's raising in early years. When they get old, they don't want to take responsibility for the third generation any more. They think that raising babies is parents' duty, and what they should do is to enjoy their own life instead of making

sacrifices for families. These grandparents are often ready to offer help by hiring a baby-sitter to make up for their irresponsibility. In this case, the baby-sitters transmit parents' values.

8.4.5   Grandparents Hold the Authority: Grandparents Stand at the Family Core and Parents Live in Grandparents' Home

In some cooperative baby-raising families, grandparents stand at the family core, and parents are usually young and financially dependent. Grandparents own much more financial and social capital than parents, so they have a higher status in family. The inequality of financial capital leads to the inequality of authority and power between the two generations in family and baby raising. Grandparents dominate the family voice and decision making, while parents have to follow grandparents' decision and arrangement. In these kind of families, grandparents are usually tough and uncompromising, while parents are comparatively weak. As a result, grandparents' values are transmitted reasonably.

In family No.6, parents are both 21 years old and live in paternal grandparents' house. Parents and grandparents share the house and car which belongs to the grandparents, and as parents rely on the grandparents to live, they have to comply with them.

> The mother wants to quit the job to raise the baby at home, but grandma doesn't allow it. Grandma holds the family authority, and everyone in family complies with her, even baby's father. The mother never has her own choice…. (F6)

Parents are psychologically or financially dependent, so they need to rely on grandparents to live. As a consequence, they have to follow all the decisions and arrangements that grandparents make. Therefore, parents lose their voice and grandparents gain authority in baby raising to transmit and practice their values.

8.5   Discussion

8.5.1   The Person Holding Authority Has the Power to Define the Boundaries and Identity Standards of Different Role Identities in the Intergenerational Conflicts over Baby-Raising Strategies

The position in family structure has its role expectations and internal standards. When grandparents join in the nuclear families, the two generations in the extended family have more roles and identities. For two generations of harmonious

interactions, it is important to clearly define the expectations and boundaries between parents and grandparents in baby raising. If parents hold the authority in family affairs, then they control the decision making involving baby raising, and grandparents should follow parents' advice. If not, then parents should follow grandparents' advice. In fact, parents and grandparents may have authority in different situations, like grandparents holding the authority in nursery and parents in education. Different family status gives members different role identities, and, accordingly, it gives them different authorities and responsibilities. All in all, those with higher family status usually have higher authority and more responsibilities in baby raising.

Roles and identities have their boundaries which are inviolable. But in reality, family members often have different understanding and expectations of responsibilities and meanings of behaviors related to baby raising in given situations. When family members overstep role boundaries, conflicts will occur with competition for the authority to make each other's role clear in a given situation, namely, to set the identity standard. It is in the process of interactions and conflict solving that the two generations gradually test and shape each other's role boundary and construct and share the meanings of their roles and identities in baby raising. In cooperative raising families, the intergenerational conflicts can be avoided only when the two generations know clearly what their roles are and who has the authority in baby-raising practice and then do what the authoritative person expect them to do, instead of doing what they themselves believe to be right.

In some families, parents who are financially independent and stand at the family core hold the authority in family, and then they could take care of babies as to what they believe right. These parents usually set their authority in direct ways, such as making rules in advance, giving explicit suggestions, expressing attitudes and persuading grandparents, and so on. Some parents just tell grandparents directly to execute their opinions or they only give a small part of raising responsibilities to grandparents. To avoid conflicts, grandparents in these kinds of families often take the strategy of "no arguing," "no interfering in parents' baby-raising practice," "complying with parents' requirements and suggestions" and "asking for advice." Considering family harmony, grandparents may give up their voice and respect parents' authority in baby raising.

In some families, grandparents are authoritative, since parents have to rely on grandparents' help in baby raising. Some grandparents in these families may compete for authority by "orally threatening" parents that they will not offer baby-raising support any more, while others may just directly refuse to offer help and hire a baby-sitter to replace them or ask parents for holidays. As a consequence, parents have no choice but to comply with grandparents' arrangements and decisions, and grandparents get the authority to raise babies in the way that they thought to be good. Otherwise, parents will not give up and will try to seek the authority as custodian to decide how to raise the babies, and then the intergenerational conflicts will recur without end.

8.5.2 Social Structure Influences the Status and Authority of the Two Generations in Family

Hong and Zhao (2014) cited Bourdieu's work and considered that class division originates from economic and external social conditions. In other words, people with different capital have different positions in society. Those who own more capital occupy higher social status than others. Same as the external macro society, the possession and control of resources also influence the individual's status and authority within family. As a basic social unit, internal structure of family is affected by social status of the two generations. Firstly, the two generations own different "political capital," as parents are baby's guardian and have custody because of their blood tie. From this aspect, parents have higher status and authority than grandparents in baby raising. Secondly, parents who live in cities might own more financial, social, and cultural capital than grandparents who live in the county, and in this case, parents have a higher status in the family. Still, there are some parents who have to rely on grandparents to live, especially those who are not financially independent. In these families, grandparents usually hold a higher status and authority. So we can see that members with more capital hold a higher status and authority in the family.

The internal structure of family, however, is more complicated. Besides the social status of members, the dependency relationship will also influence authority of the two generations, as those who are depended on have the advantage in seeking authority within families. In those cooperative baby-raising families, where parents have to work, the need of help makes grandparents more important in family and raises their status and authority, though grandparents have little educational and financial capital. But whether grandparents' authority will exceed parents or not, rests on how they use the advantage and interact with parents. If grandparents are tough and uncompromising, then they may use the advantage to compete for authority. If not, they might choose to give up the advantage and give the authority back to parents. As a result, the family authority can be in either parents' or grandparents' hands. Still, there is another possibility that if neither of the two sides gives in, the fight over authority would never stop.

8.5.3 The Inequality in Transmission of Values

Baby-raising conflicts come from two generations' competition for authority to decide who should do what in a given situation, and only the winner's values on baby raising can be transmitted and practiced. However, the gain of authority is closely related to social capital and individual social structural position. The inequality in value transmission is reflected in every part of baby-raising conflicts.

The inequality of family status arises at the moment grandparents join the nuclear family. Firstly, the two generations have different social status because of their

income, living conditions, and education experience that also influences their status within the family. Secondly, considering the blood relationships, parents have guardianship and custody of their babies, while grandparents' raising responsibilities are divided from parents'. Thirdly, the two generations depend on each other. On one hand, parents rely on grandparents' help to raise their babies, on the other hand, grandparents need to get care from parents. Therefore, the family status is not equal between the two generations, but we can't tell which generation holds the absolute advantage, as different families have different situations. Factors that influence the status of the two generations are complicated, but members will finally find their status by exploring role boundaries in conflicts of baby raising. But as the old saying in China goes, it is impossible to have two tiger kings on one mountain, and there is only one authority in an extended family, so status of the two generations can't be equal.

It can be seen that in cooperative baby raising, the transmission of raising values is not on the basis of equality. It is a competition for authority between grandparents and parents based on capital and dependency relationships. Bourdieu paid much attention to the "power," especially the powerful control over scarce resources which reflects the domination and inequality in social structure. Status, privileges, and other similar social rewards are earned through so-called hard working (Lareau 2003). The two generations use capital and control strategies to compete for authority. Family members with more financial, cultural, and social capital are more competitive and usually act tough and uncompromising in seeking authority. The power of the two sides goes up and down, and the final winner will get the baby-raising authority and transmit their raising values.

8.6   Conclusion

The above analysis reveals that the intergenerational conflicts during the practice of baby raising mainly come from different perspectives on how to raise the young baby. But who has the authority to define who and how to raise baby in what situation depends on the two generations' social structures. It is more likely for the family member with more financial, cultural, and social capital to get authority to define the boundaries and identity standards of different role identities in the baby-raising practice and therefore more chance to transmit their value orientations in raising young babies.

Family is a complex system, and interactions among different generations vary a lot because of individual personality and life history, family context, and the macro historical cultural background. Therefore, the patterns that we found in this study might not cover all kinds of generational interactions. Further research in baby raising that continues and deepens this study is therefore encouraged.

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Chapter 9
The 'Work of the Eye' in Infant Research: A Visual Encounter

E. Jayne White

Abstract

'Give way to the work of the eye that contemplates the need for performance and creativity in a particular place and at a particular time'. (Bakhtin, Speech genres and other late essays (Emerson C, Holquist M, ed, McGee V, Trans.). University of Texas Press, Austin, 1986), p. 38)

This chapter will explore recent trends in infant research where visual encounters are viewed as a source of insight into the world of the very young. The reasons are, perhaps, obvious – the younger the child, the less possible it is to ask their opinion or to 'see' what is typically viewed as an internal and/or social process learning, as opposed to its early origins (or, as Veresov, Refocusing the lens on development: towards genetic research methodology. In: Fleer M, Ridgway A (eds) Visual methodologies and digital tools for researching with young children: Transforming visuality. Springer, Cham, pp 129–149, 2014), describes 'the processes of transformations of "buds" into "fruits"' (p. 220). Notwithstanding the increased prominence of infants in education resulting in various degrees of associated professionalisation, adultification and pedagogicalisation of their experience in early childhood institutions, such trends are located within contemporary visual culture which 'stretches from everyday popular media to the realms of higher education'. In these locations the work of the eye is a central source of inquiry heralding a different kind of subjective encounter with the eye, the associated technologies and the researchers that seek to understand its orientation. Without doubt the advent of the camera has altered the way we see and are able to see young children, but it has also returned us to the dangerous contention that we can capture events – through video or photographs – as indications of a 'reality' (White, J Philos Educ. Retrieved from early view http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9752.12158/pdf, 2015). The way 'seeing' navigates its way through this epistemological terrain lies at the heart of the discussion that will follow. Examining psychological studies of infant eye orientation (e.g. the gaze), including the authors own orientation towards dialogic understanding of the 'work of the eye' as a dialogic event (White et al., Int J Early

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Childhood 47(2):283–299, 2015b), the chapter will conclude with an optimistic, albeit cautionary, proposition for future work in this field.

9.1   Introduction

This chapter explores recent trends in educational research where visual encounters are widely viewed as a source of insight into the world of 'other' and asks why there is so little visual research undertaken with infants in ECE. Since such trends are located within contemporary visual culture which 'stretches from everyday popular media to the realms of higher education' (Heywood and Sandywell 2012, p. 32), it seems peculiar that infants are virtually absent from this agenda, particularly given their contemporary location in education. In these locations the 'work of the eye' is a central source of inquiry heralding a different kind of subjective encounter with the visual, its associated technologies and the researchers that seek to understand its orientation. Bakhtin's (1986) assertion that we should *Give way to the work of the eye that contemplates the need for performance and creativity in a particular place and at a particular time* (p. 38) introduces a revised understanding of visual acts as dialogic encounters in time and space that hold great promise for infant research. Here, the eye is recast as a visual encounter with others. As such, what can be 'seen' is viewed as an authorial gift that draws on the insights of another's visual field because they offer additional opportunities for understanding and because the eye alone (without the 'I' or with the insight of 'other') cannot see to its fuller extent. The way the 'work of the eye' in educational research with under 1-year-old infants navigates its way through this terrain lies at the heart of the discussion that follows. Understanding the 'work of the eye' as a dialogic, hence plural, 'event of otherness' offers an optimistic, albeit cautionary, proposition for future work in the field of visual educational research for infants.

9.2   The Rapid Rise of Visuality

There is little doubt that a visual means of understanding one another, and the wider world, is now central to contemporary culture. The increase of social media, advanced technologies and globalisation has created a new era of virtual, digital communication that has redefined the role of the subject as one not only who is observed by others but also with the capacity to alter the ways they are 'seen' and are able to 'see' in dynamic ways. The transmission of images has granted access to previously ungraspable aspects of humanity itself – ranging from the representation

of complex scientific images, to virtual reconstructions and distortions of reality (Deresiewicz 2011; COST 2015). These new and ever-evolving visual technologies have come to be defined as a new wave in global communication, altering forever the way human beings come to understand themselves and the world in which they live (Sandywell 2012).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this radical change in communication and the opportunities it heralds for understanding one another has had a profound impact in educational practice and pedagogy (Peters 2010). This is also true for the growing field of visual educational research across the life span and in early years research, especially, where it is described by Fleer and Ridgway (2014) as a "digital turn" (p. 3) in methodological trend. One curious exception forms the basis of this chapter – namely, in research that focuses on infants under the age of 1 year in education and care (ECE) settings. Though video has been readily employed to understand infant subjectivity in psychological studies located in the laboratory, very little visual research has been undertaken in ECE settings catering for this age group, as opposed to their older peers in the same locale. There are several reasons for this – some of which I attempt to explore in this chapter. Not least are the considerable challenges posed to researchers in this locale. In their attempts to work ethically with 'unknowable' infants (Cheeseman et al. 2015) as subjects rather than objects of research, researchers must not only take into account infant rights, consent, right to withdraw and various aspects of privacy but also their own subjective stance (White 2011a). These are important aspects for any visual research encounter – yet they are magnified in work with infants who are not always able to communicate their wishes or responses in traditional ways. As Elwick et al. (2014) point out, the researcher gaze has potential to do great harm when claims are made on behalf of infants. Notwithstanding the important moral and ethical imperatives in their caution, it may serve to immobilise visual research within the infant educational research community, creating barriers to the expanded possibilities for understanding. This is unfortunate since, in an unprecedented era of growth for the sector, never before has there been such a need to understand the experience of infants in ECE.

While such cautions are by no means unwarranted, there are important discussions that need to take place before visual research is fully dismissed from the research agenda for this age group. These concern the role of the researcher, his or her subjective stance which calls for increased levels of answerability – perhaps more so than any other contemporary research approach. An ethical attitude to visual data generation is not merely desirable, but, in fact, necessary – implicating the researcher at every stage of the research process. For whatever might be said about an image, even the selection of the image itself, is never separate from the subjectivity of the person who wields the camera (DeBord 1994). It is they who decide what to shoot, what it might mean (in terms of frameworks, theories and ideologies) and what will be done with it (in other words its dissemination). The meanings that are extracted from images are not impartial and, in fact, reveal as much about the researcher as they do the image. Where this 'image' is a human being with their own subjectivity amongst others, there are additional layers to

address, calling for researchers to be publicly accountable for their actions to communities within and well beyond their scholarly peers. Hence the 'work of the eye' in education is not only a means of trying to understand others, but it is also a way of encountering the self – the subjective and ethical 'I'. Without this implication, the work of the eye is one sided, incomplete and illusionary – captured in Plato's writings[1] as a serious limitation to understanding. In this sense there seems no argument – the image alone cannot stand for its meaning. It is this point I hope to examine in the chapter that follows, building a provocation for research that attempts to understand meaning through the complex work of the researcher, participant and subject 'eye(s)' in 'I' relationships with one another.

9.3   The Invisibility of the Visual in Infant Research

In 2011 Eva Johansson and I edited a book that discussed some of the emerging trends in research for infants and toddlers internationally. At that time our intention had not been to privilege visual methods but, instead, to present the latest research in infant education. To our surprise, every chapter had variously employed a visual means of trying to understand aspect of experience for under 3-year-olds in educational settings. In some cases this was to understand specific types of engagement with peers or teachers (Degotardi 2011); in others it was to target a specific aspect of learning (Wallerstedt et al. 2011). Cameras were given to children (Stephenson 2011), shot by the researcher, or, in the case of my work, filmed from a camera worn on the head of 18-month-old toddler (White 2011b). Not only did each approach (and associated methodology) differ, but the reporting of the findings varied too. In some cases the images did not find their way to the pages of the text, while in others they took the form of stills in a series of what Quiñones and Fleer (2011) described as 'Visual Vivencias' (p. 107) which unravelled an analytical story about the emotional-everyday nature of encounter through film. Each researcher had a different rationale for what they did, how they did it and, most importantly, why. In all cases there was a strong sense of ethical accountability and for the researcher – as stranger, colleague or associate – to declare their own subjectivity in the research relationship. Their declared considerations largely determined what was illuminated for consideration and highlight the point that researchers are fully implicated in using visual methodologies to understand the experience of very young children in ECE settings.

Notwithstanding the important contributions of that book, what remains curious is the absence of visual research reported for infants *under the age of one year* (as opposed to 'toddlers' or 'young children') in a publication that was specifically targeted to this age group. That none of the submitted chapters ventured into research with any infant under the age of 1-year-old, despite our specific call for contributions from this field, caused me to ponder on the reasons why. Perhaps, as I specu-

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[1] Particularly in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Republic*.

lated at the time, more specialised methodologies needed to be developed to support this agenda (White 2011b). Or was there something more to contemplate?

Indeed, the situation becomes more complex in consideration of the rich body of infant research using visual methodologies that now exists beyond education. Over this same period a series of infants' studies outside the educational context have utilised the camera extensively. Many of these studies are located in laboratories with advanced equipment allowing for detailed visual insights that promote rich understanding concerning infants as social partners (Murray 2014). The advent of tracking infant eye movement has provided additional means by which researchers can investigate the correlation between a particular look (eye direction, duration of look and/or gaze) leading to a revised understanding of infant consciousness. On this basis it has now been claimed that infants are far more capable of intersubjective communication than previously thought (Reddy 2012).

Given the rapid rise of infants participating in early childhood education now reported in many countries globally (Press and Mitchell 2014), the potentialities of these insights for visual research beyond the laboratory are obvious, if undeniably elusive. While it might be reasonable to assert, on paradigmatic grounds, that educational researchers are generally less comfortable with laboratory experiments, their influence on their understanding of infant experience is undeniable. There is further compulsion in consideration of revised interpretations of infant pedagogy in ECE settings. Much of the contemporary literature informing policy for educational provision with this age group draws intently on the insights from laboratory research (see, for example, Dalli et al. 2011; Mathers et al. 2014) as a key policy lever. As a result of their discoveries, it is now widely argued that infant pedagogy ought to be characterised by a pedagogy of relationships – events that are most easily accessed for investigation through visual means.

The situation becomes even more curious in contemplation of the rapid rise of visual methods in ECE pedagogical documentation in many Western educational ECE contexts[2]. It is now common to see images presented alongside subjective accounts of learning in public as well as private forums in early childhood centres catering for under-1-year-olds and their older peers, affirming the work of the eye as an important source of pedagogical provocation. In light of this shared visual emphasis on the nature of pedagogy, in tandem with attention to the subjectivity of those who are looking, it seems there is much to be gained from the implementation of visual research that illuminates the work of the eye in its broadest sense. Taking into account the rich legacy of visual research outside the ECE context and the important ethical challenges to researchers who enter the ECE space, this work has the potential to span both the 'eye' of the infant (in communication with others) and the 'eye' of the researcher (with the aid of the camera lens) that "provides an opportunity for the image to speak" (Mannay 2010 p. 100) and in doing so generates

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[2] See, for instance, contemporary video-based software programmes marketed to ECE centres to share images with families in their absence: https://www.storypark.com. Several well-regarded international curriculum projects foreground the visual as a source of tremendous insight – see, for instance, Reggio Emilia in Italy , NZ learning stories and dialogic pedagogy (White 2016).

potential for the infant to be seen and heard. Despite such promise few studies have taken this approach in the specific pedagogical arena of under 1-year-olds in ECE. While we can perhaps now begin to understand why, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to the potential realisation of such promise. In doing so I hope to initiate an optimistic, albeit cautionary, proposition for future work in this field.

9.4   Invoking the Eye(s)

Arising from these significant provocations, I set out to generate possibilities for the understanding of under-1-year-old infant experience in ECE settings through visual means. Knowing full well at least some of the many challenges that beset me, I built on my recent doctoral research with toddlers (White 2009) as a source of insight and inspiration. In that work I had developed a new kind of visual methodology based on the philosophical work of Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1984, 1986, 1990). More specifically, I operationalised his notion of 'visual surplus[3]' which orients seeing as an answerable act that obligates the seer to offer their insights to the seen. In my view this approach began to tackle some of the identified challenges for research with the very young. Firstly, I wanted to find a way of entering into the rich social experience of people, places and things that comprise the early childhood curriculum and which – by definition and design – far exceeds the social complexities of a laboratory. Secondly and, in hindsight, somewhat naively, I set out to generate data that would reveal this experience as infants themselves experienced it, not as I assumed from my own visual field. Like Bakhtin (1984), I was tantalised by the subjective promise of the polyphonic novel whereby subjects speak for themselves through the text as 'a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices …' (Bakhtin 1984, p. 51) by asking the broad question 'How might infant experience be understood through multiple visual fields, including those of the infant?'. Through the deployment of a method I describe as 'polyphonic footage' (White 2010), I thus set out to access the visual fields of infants alongside the perspectives of adults in the setting (Fig. 9.1).

The following image portrays a screenshot of time-synchronised polyphonic footage taken from a small nano-pod cam-hat[4] on two infants, one teacher and myself as researcher.

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[3] As Bakhtin (1990) explains: …that author knows and sees more not only in the direction in which the hero is looking and seeing, but also in a different direction, in a direction which is in principle inaccessible to the hero himself" (p. 13).

[4] In my original PhD research with 18-month-old toddlers (White 2009), I used a standard security camera on a miner headband (cam-hat) that could transmit video to an external device. However, research with under-one-year-old infants who have softer heads required an adaptation in terms of a softer, cushioned, head band and a small nano-pod device that recorded into itself without the need for any transmission (since this was a concern raised by a parent which I responded to immediately). The technologies used posed no threat to the infants and could be easily removed if they caused any discomfort. I viewed this as a form of assent that remained in constant surveillance during filming.

Fig. 9.1 Polyphonic footage showing camera view from four visual fields

What can be 'seen' from these four visual fields on the same time-synchronised event clearly differs from each *even though they share the same event*. In top left field, 'Teacher 2' is what the key teacher sees. Note how closely attuned her vision is towards the reach of 10-month-old Lola, sitting on her teacher's lap, towards 4-month-old Harrison who is lying on the floor. In the bottom left field of 'Infant 2', we have access to Lola's visual focus towards Harrison – either to Harrison himself or the object he is holding (we cannot be certain of which, but the direction of her eye gaze would suggest the latter), while 'Infant 1' in bottom right directs his look towards the key teacher. The researcher in top right has a much broader evaluative view but less detail. While we cannot account for eye movement that takes place beyond the direction of the head (i.e. a sideways glance), these visual fields offer important insights into the event and how it might be interpreted.

The employment of polyphonic footage provided a potential means of literally 'seeing' the infant through the eyes of another. But access to visual fields in the absence of interpretations did not, in my view, provide sufficient textual depth to the analysis. Additionally I set out to discover the kind of insights polyphonic footage could offer other adults, as well as myself, in extended research dialogues concerning the infants and the teachers' pedagogical insights. Generally speaking this meant working closely with teachers through reprobing interviews based on shared access to the polyphonic footage generated. In this approach I take the view that meanings are negotiated in and across time and space rather than presented across a unified sense of 'what is' that is typical of laboratory research. This seems to me to be a particularly important standpoint to take in educational research with infants

since (i) they do not share the same language forms as adults who are interpreting meaning; (ii), as a researcher I did not have an intimate relationship with the infants that would grant me deeper understanding of social acts; and (iii) centre-based infants draw from multiple social spaces, each representing different types of language and associated meanings. It is my contention that such richness, embraces the work of the eye to its fuller extent and far exceeds the potentialities of any laboratory setting.

9.5   Encountering the 'I' Subjectivities as an Effort of Trying

It is important to emphasise, at this juncture, the fleeting, uncertain nature of such insights in research which draw attention to the subjective 'I' of the researcher. As a kind of visual intertextuality, polyphonic footage in tandem with participant interpretations provided no more than a way for me to *try* to understand the infant experience. My emphasis on 'trying' highlights the futility of ever fully knowing another as an unethical act of consummation while simultaneously recognising the importance (and reality) of such effort in the life of another (Bakhtin 1990). In other words, there is an obligation to share ones insights with others but not to given them the final word on any individual or personality. Research of this nature places emphasis on the form-shaping potential of subjectivities in play (Sullivan 2013) – in the case of infants, it provides opportunities to interpret the infant in ECE as part of a complex dialogic space in which they are shaped by others and, as I discovered, play a significant role in shaping their social experience (White et al. 2015a, b; White and Redder 2015). It is also an opportunity to uphold the researcher 'I' as a subjective, reflexive engagement with the visual rather than the ultimate author of infant knowing.

The growing number of culturally located studies in education suggest that this latter point is an important agenda for research in contemporary society since the meanings that are attributed to social acts differ across cultures and individuals (see, for example, Blackledge and Creese 2014; Demuth et al. 2012; Kurban and Tobin 2009) as well as between home and educational sites (White 2009). Moreover, from a Bakhtinian standpoint, language is constantly altered in dialogues with others. The notion that any particular form of language (or its use within a particular genre), such as a cry, holds any one meaning for any infant for all time, for all infants or for the adults who work with them is demolished in this view. As Lobok (2014) explains, 'Every person without exception has his/her absolutely unique experience with culture … as the most profound and significant result of the educational process' (p. 1). What is seen and how it is interpreted is therefore central to the intersubjective encounter that is under scrutiny as much as it is to the research agenda. Researchers, as well as subjects, are fully implicated in this stance also, and a complete separation between the two seems now impossible or, in its absence, unethical

at the very least. As a visual entreaty both sides of the camera lens are therefore under investigation and the 'I' is fully implicated.

9.6   Analysing Language and Its Meanings

Entering into this visual encounter with infants, as researcher, meant that I needed to consider ways of understanding communication well in excess of my current conception of infant language and its meaning beyond the spoken word. While there has recently been increasing attention paid to the body in understanding infant experience (see, e.g., Johansson and Lokken 2014), a residual Cartesian attitude to its invisibility in generating meaning has dominated the field. Bringing the moving, speaking body into view, made possible through the video lens and its relationship to other bodies, created a way of deeply interrogating this significance. With Bakhtin's emphasis, I was able to enter into a systematic analysis of both language acts and their meaning (as described by participants as well as my own interpretations). These included initiations, responses and sequences of interaction, as well as detailed codes that were generated out of the data.

Summoning a quantitative analytical framework to the methodology allowed for further comparison of the different types of language and their impact in the social event. Used in tandem with rich qualitative description of the events I felt that the results would have more leverage in policy since causal assertion is the language of certainty (however illusionary) that speaks to those in authority. For instance, one of our strongest statistical discoveries was that when teachers used verbal and nonverbal language forms as initiations, infants were significantly more likely to employ similar combinations in their response (White et al. 2015a). Qualitatively, we also depicted a kind of synchrony to their interactions that bore some similarity to my colleagues in the laboratory, in particular the work of Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) on communicative musicality. Having access to polyphonic footage allowed us to see these actions from several standpoints and to revisit them over and over again as a means of generating reliability. Of additional significance, we were able to share these with the participants who could then also see the genesis for our claims or contribute re-visioned insights that altered our view again and again. It is this to-ing and fro-ing of analysis that marks out the dialogic richness of this kind of research and makes it especially relevant for visual methodologies of infants in ECE.

9.7   The Language of the Eye

But it was not until some of the research participants themselves – that is, the teachers – raised the significance of different types of 'looks' during the reprobing interview that we began to appreciate the work of the eye to an even fuller extent. As one teacher highlighted to us:

> This is really cool. We just…gaze at each other… That last little look, and I just… thought that was significant…to me, that signified the trust that he has in me, the trust to know him, to respond to him and to care for him… I was totally focussed on him and the way he was responding to me was engaging that response from me as well. (Teacher interview, in White, Redder and Peter 2015b)

Though the language form of a 'gaze' had not featured heavily in our initial analysis[5], we revisited the video footage again (White et al. 2015b). This time we looked for the significance of different types of eye encounters differentiating between a gaze, a watch and a glance. This was very detailed work that revealed the importance of the eye in intersubjective encounters. A 'gaze', for example, tended to generate more sustained engagement between infants and their teachers; while 'watching' provided significant social cues to the infants as they watched others in the ECE environment, including peers. They were able to repeat these observations later in their own social experiences. We discovered combinations of 'looks' that acted as important sequences for communication and which were echoed by the recipient – for example, teachers mimicking infant combinations. This 'work of the eye' in the ECE setting was constant once we recognised its significance in the data as well as in our research agenda itself.

With these additional insights, we quickly came to appreciate the complex nature of such encounters – realising the importance of subtle and nuanced detail in the 'work of the eye'. Together with careful consideration of the significance of bodies in time and space – both the infants and in close proximity (White and Redder 2015) – a view of the infant as highly sophisticated communicator, emerged in ways that greatly expand on what is already known – not only about infants but in terms of their pedagogical engagement with others in the ECE context.

What has been fascinating about this work is that every time we look at the video again, we see something new. I suspect this is partly because we are entering into

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[5]There were several reasons for this:

(i)   Because the unsophisticated technology of the (ipod) cameras did not always allow a view of the direction of the eye as much as the direction of the head

(ii)   Because we had not considered eye movement to be a significant language form up until this moment based on what we had noticed in the footage

(iii) Because our earlier analysis of the direction of a 'look' had not been frequent and we were heavily focused, at that time, on frequencies of statistical significance

In other words our frameworks and the ideologies that upheld them did not allow for this view. Our seeing was limited, and, when viewed in isolation of other points of view, limiting. I assert that it always will be in one way or another and that this is why the effort of trying without finalising is so important.

the experience with eyes that have been influenced by new orientations, insights, discoveries or clues, all of which shift the subjective 'I'. Of course it is also partly due to the complexity of what is taking place in the social space of the footage, its history and its aftermath. Because we have resisted the urge to be satisfied with a declaration of our own limitations in understanding as an endpoint to the research – trying to engage with the insights of others as well as ourselves – we have remained open to alternative views. The significance of time and space cannot be underestimated in this regard and adds significant layers to the research experience. We continue to work with this footage to this day – each time recognising or reacquainting ourselves with its complexity and the wonder of infant communication. I am not convinced that we have solved the dilemmas facing visual research with under 1-year-olds, but we have begun an important conversation about its potential that far exceeds the limitations of visual research with infants that constrain its genesis.

9.8   A Concluding Proposition for Infant Research (and Practice)

Throughout this chapter I have tried to highlight the tremendous tensions that permeate the field of research with under-1-year-olds in early childhood centre contexts. My intention in doing so has not been to warn scholars away from this risky terrain but rather to invoke the work of the eye to its fullest extent in contemplation of what might be revealed when located beyond laboratory settings and through polyphonic 'eyes'. In doing so I have summoned the researcher 'I' as well as the camera eye, and in many cases the infant eye also, to engage in research relationships with infants as provocateurs in the agenda. In this there are many riches to be found – not least of which are those that start to unravel the mystery of intersubjectivity in ECE that has already been alerted to by psychologists in the laboratory. While it is true that this chapter has not provided any certainty about such matters, I have tried to convey the journey taken thus far in earnestly *trying* to understand. I make this assertion while knowing full well there is no end point in this regard. For this reason research of this nature may be deeply dissatisfying to some readers. Nevertheless, in my view it is important work for educational research where researchers are serious about their attempts to understand and interpret the experience of infants in ECE and, based on their insights, informing the decisions that are regularly made on behalf of infants in their so-called 'best interests'.

As we have seen, the work of the eye entails *richly seeing* as an ethical, intersubjective act that is greatly enhanced by the use of cameras in the infant ECE context. In my case, video cameras were employed as polyphonic devices that could provide access to multiple visual fields and which attempted to operationalise Bakhtin's (1986) entreaty to 'give way to the work of the eye' (p. 38). In themselves, these fields are void of meaning unless their significance is encountered and contemplated as 'performance and creativity in a particular place and at a particular time' (ibid).

It is here where subjectivity, the plural 'I', takes centre stage and creates a visual research agenda that implicates all parties in the event being studied. Watching together, over time and with multiple ways of seeing provides a rich textural palette from which to engage with the complexity of ECE for infants. As important as seeing is, a commitment to the relevance of what is not seen, what is hidden and what may be revealed through the eyes of another is equally significant. Such absence as well as presence signals a highly relational creative agenda to infant research and involves relationships with other disciplines (already we have learnt so much from our colleagues in the laboratory, for instance) and other members of the educational community (not least the participants themselves but also other researchers[6]). Through multiple interpretative eyes, we can glimpse at the wondrous potential of infants as they enter into, shape and are shaped within, as well as beyond, the early years' setting. This is a cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural dialogic agenda for all – on and off camera.

Yet while there is much that might be said about the experience of the infants who occupy the social space of the early childhood education setting through invoking the work of the eye, there is still a great deal unresolved. The tension that clearly exists between any visual image that claims to speak on behalf of the infant, however well intentioned, and the presence of meaningful research in ECE is likely to provide a source of scholarly debate for some time to come. There is much work for research ethics to consider and even more for the researcher 'I' in each visual encounter since it is clear that no method or framework for analysis can stand outside of its subjective orientations in visual research. Nonetheless, I remain convinced that it is unwise to become immobilised because of a fear that one's voice might speak for another or to protect the infant from exposure in an (ECE) world that is now publicly accountable. Instead, it seems to me that a way forward might be to contemplate the limitations of one's voice as a source of insight while providing opportunities to explore the voices of others as a dialogic source of inquiry. In this endeavour there is no more worthy companion than the video camera to the contemporary work of the eye and no better subject than the infant in polyphonic symphony with others. In this there is no one voice, but a dialogue amongst many.

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[6] I suggest there is great scope for researchers to engage in joint analysis of video – drawing on their visual surplus to contribute to richer collaborative interpretations.

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Chapter 10
Examining the Dynamics of Infant Reciprocity and Affective Fatherhood

Avis Ridgway, Gloria Quiñones, and Liang Li

Abstract This chapter brings together new research into infants' home upbringing that reflects cultural beliefs and practices. Visual narratives from home lives of three Australian-born babies and their fathers capture events in case examples. These events involve fathers with infants in playful participation around fence building, using cooking toys and experimenting with sound in a recording studio. Each case example illustrates and analyses cultural elements and dynamic forms present in transitory, short-lived infant experiences. A method of interobserver reliability is used. Each author/researcher examines the others' visual data to discuss, debate and form new impressions through the use of dialogue commentary. The unique situation of studying the simultaneous upbringing in Australia of three babies with different cultural heritages offers opportunity to examine the dynamics of infant reciprocity from a cultural-historical view. Collaborative discussion and analysis of data of a family life event reveal reciprocal interactions and embodied emotional engagement framed by different perspectives. We present the notion of *conceptual reciprocity* (a reciprocal intention relating to nurturing and supporting learning through a shared experience) illustrating how it forms in the lives of three babies and their families.

Keywords Visual narrative • Dialogue commentary • Affective fatherhood • Dynamics of infant reciprocity • Conceptual reciprocity

10.1   Introduction: Dynamics of Interaction

> A given form of activity cannot be studied outside of its cultural-historical context. (Davydov 2008 p. 208)

A cultural-historical approach (*in pilot project CF14/2789 – 2014001543 – Studying Babies and Toddlers: Cultural Worlds and Transitory Relationships*) cre-

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ates a dynamic methodology for showing the dialectical relations apparent in the multiple perspectives present in our case examples. It is in examining the relations in dynamic practices through the use of visual narratives and dialogue commentary that our research method is achieved. White (Chap. 9, this volume) notes the 'rapid rise of visuality' that gives researchers new capacities for seeing and understanding from many perspectives.

Infant-toddler research frequently examines the quality of interactions between mother and baby that affects well-being and development (Nakata and Trehub 2004; Creighton 2011; Bigelow and Power 2012; Monk et al. 2013) and is discussed by Monk and Hall in Chap. 5, this volume. Farstad and Stefansen (2015 p56) note 'Contemporary representations of fatherhood emphasize greater emotional closeness in fathers' relationships with their children'. As a point of difference, we use case examples involving fathers to broaden infant-toddler research by asking: what relations are present in involved and *affective fatherhood?*

Through visual narratives, dynamics of interactions are analysed in three different cultural contexts between fathers and infants. In each case example, a pedagogical approach we name *conceptual reciprocity* becomes evident in the relational play activity formed and sustained between father and infant. The dynamic formation of *conceptual reciprocity* is examined. Conceptual reciprocity, where infant and adult act simultaneously as players and contributors to and constructors of action, brings further understanding to the affective nurturing role of playful fathers in infants' learning and cultural development (Carpenter 2002; Saracho and Spodek 2008; Betawi et al. 2014).

When fatherhood is considered from an affective perspective, proximity and closeness with infant combines with the emotional tone of father's involvement in shared activity, to offer the possibility of *conceptual reciprocity*.

Three examples presented were offered to authors by fathers with permission to use family data. Each case example shows fathers' awareness of their infant's playful interest as they draw on home life contexts and meaningful cultural experiences. Through coexisting love, trust and shared cultural interest, affective relationships build between fathers and infants in daily life interactions. We refer to this as affective fatherhood. Affective fatherhood supports cultural learning through meaningful interactions, helping to form conceptual reciprocity that nurtures infant-toddler learning and well-being. A narrative can be considered 'as an expression of a culture's world view' (Bruner 1996, xiv), and through using visual narratives in each case example, formation of cultural identity becomes evident.

We watch video examples independently, read transcripts and make comments, later collating our perspectives. The resultant dialogue commentary provides interobserver reliability with space to reflect and discuss potential theoretical interpretations. A dialogue commentary provides methodological opportunity for using visual narratives. Each visual narrative can reflect cultural awareness and thereby deepen investigation into the dynamics of infant reciprocity. Case examples follow.

10.2 Building a Fence: Jorge and Silvana, Case Example 1

Toddler Silvana (23 months) interacts with father (Jorge) at home. Gloria (Silvana's mother) provides a visual narrative of video data.

10.2.1 Visual Narrative

In November 2014, Silvana, almost 2 years old, is with her family who have been fixing their house since she was born. Jorge, Silvana's dad, is building a recycled fence. He explains to Silvana what happens around the house as there is always something of interest in renovations: like building a fence, fixing pebbles, putting new grass around the garden or playing in the bedroom extension. These activities involve many different work tools that Silvana is familiar with and also enjoys playing with.

Jorge multitasks, explaining to Gloria what he is doing with the fence and paying attention to Silvana. Jorge's intention is Silvana will participate and learn how to help fix things. Silvana knows what 'nails are used for', and Jorge wants her to contribute reciprocally to fence building. He has a purpose for everything, like getting recycled materials to build a fence and helping Silvana understand what nails are for.

In the fence building project, Silvana is with Jorge as he explains about recycled timber and plans to build a fence (Fig.10.1). Silvana has played with these materials over time and participated with getting materials to finally build the fence.

One afternoon Jorge is building the fence when Silvana awakens from a nap. She runs outside to give papa a big hug, and Jorge is affectionate when he sees Silvana coming to join him (Fig. 10.2).

Silvana observes Jorge, interested in what he is doing. She notices the nails and begins to play with them (see Fig. 10.3). Jorge suggests Silvana can pass him the nails. He explains he is building the fence and says: 'pasame los clavos – pass me the nails' (Fig. 10.4).

Silvana responds with arm out 'here, here, here'. She actively participates with Jorge. Mother sneezes and Silvana says 'aachoo' and smiles, acknowledging Gloria's presence. Nail passing continues as Jorge and Silvana finish building the fence (Fig. 10.4).

10.2.2 Dialogue Commentary

Avis Cultural elements, dynamic forms and conceptual reciprocity are present. The ongoing home renovations and fence building are a natural location for shared thinking and joyful action between Silvana and Jorge. When Silvana awakes, she greets Jorge affectionately. It is clear that she loves being with Jorge in his ongoing

Fig. 10.1 Recycled timber

Fig. 10.2 Hugging papa

Fig. 10.3 Finding the fencing nails

Fig. 10.4 Pass me the nails – here, here, here

work. Building a fence is a significant event for cultural learning. Silvana already has some understanding of the materials having observed Jorge collecting recycled timber in preparation to make the fence. Jorge provides Silvana with detailed explanations of both materials and tools. In the video clip, Silvana is asked to pass fencing nails and shows with her whole being that she wants to pass nails to Jorge. She is motivated to engage in this real work, where materials transform into something new: a fence. Transformation of objects (timber, hammer and nails) into a fence requires Jorge's specialised cultural knowledge and family cooperation. Silvana is invited to join Jorge's real work, and although the nails are small, her contribution of passing nails is big, as the resulting fence stands strong. She understands that the little nails she passes to Jorge hold the fence timbers together. Jorge receives each nail and exchanges smiles with both Silvana and Gloria who is capturing the moment on video. Silvana makes this a collective moment when she includes her mother by saying 'bless you' when Gloria sneezes. Dynamic infant reciprocity occurs in this social context where affective fatherhood, material objects and the conceptualisation present in shared fence building are consciously understood by Silvana and encouraged by family.

Liang It is a beautiful moment when Silvana shares her emotional experience with Jorge building the fence. Silvana enjoyed moments working together with her father, and his appreciation (smile exchanges with her) helps create conditions for developing her motives in learning new concepts such as tools, timbers, fence, etc. Through their interactions, Silvana starts understanding her role in performing socially significant activity – being a working partner with Jorge. Conceptual reciprocity has been shaped, giving rise to the need Silvana feels to participate in her father's life and work. The shared attention to building the fence together allows Silvana to explore adulthood. Trevarthen (2011b) explains, *As they play and make sense together, a baby and parent learn to act their part in a set of performances and mannerisms that grow as the beginnings of a cultural way of life or 'habitus'* (p. 180). Silvana and Jorge build a strong sense of togetherness through shared reciprocal moments.

Gloria The event has important cultural value for our family as Jorge wants Silvana to learn about doing things for herself with him supporting her learning about building.

10.3   Elvin's Kitchen Play with Dad: Case Example 2

Recorded by Liang, her infant son Elvin (14 months old) with his Dad (Ran) develop a reciprocal exchange in an environment responsive to Elvin's interest in family cooking and a kitchen set toy.

Fig. 10.5 Holding spoon

10.3.1   Visual Narrative

After breakfast, Dad has a few minutes before work. Elvin is playing in the kitchen when Dad (Ran) comes and joins his play. Elvin holds a solid spoon. Ran uses a slotted spatula to fry vegetable in a pan, and Elvin sings like 'Jiiiiiiii' as he pretends to fry. Ran says, 'Fry the vegetable; it needs some salt' and pretends to put in salt.

Elvin: Yeh. He points his solid spoon to use it to mix something in the saucepan. He shows Ran how to mix it. Ran says, 'This is soup. Then, we need to put in some sauce for soup'. Ran takes Elvin's solid spoon to mix the imaginary sauce into the soup and says, 'mix it, mix it, mix it'. Elvin tries to join the action and holds the spoon together with Ran (Fig. 10.5).

Dad suggests Elvin taste it to see if it is yummy and helps Elvin by holding the spoon together to take some soup to taste. Dad says, 'try it, try it, and see if it is yummy' (Fig. 10.6).

Elvin pretends to taste it and by offering the spoon up to Ran, asks his Dad to taste it (Fig. 10.7).

Elvin takes a spoon of soup and gives it to his mum, 'eh…'. (Fig. 10.8).

Mum tries and says 'quite hot', using her lips to make sounds like yum eating. Elvin then opens and closes his lips to make sounds like 'yum, yum, yum…'. Ran suggests Elvin taste it for himself. Elvin takes one more spoon of soup over to the other frying pan and fries it. Dad asks him again to taste the soup and Elvin continues frying it in the pan. Dad says 'this pan is for frying' and uses the slotted spatula to fry. Elvin stops frying and observes Dad carefully. Dad keeps frying and says again, 'fry it, fry it, then we can eat it. Right?' Elvin is looking carefully at Dad's actions. Then he also makes sounds like 'en, en, en…'. (Fig. 10.7).

Fig. 10.6 Try it, is it
yummy?

Fig. 10.7 Dad taste it

Ran takes some imaginary fried food from the frying pan asking Elvin to taste it, and this time he tastes it with a smile and also makes the eating sound by opening and closing his lips. Ran makes the same eating sound to confirm it is very yummy.

Fig. 10.8 Mum to try

10.3.2   *Dialogue Commentary*

Avis The cooking play game at home is a shared family activity. The imaginary quality of the play is richly described. Father (Ran) enters Elvin's activity by encouraging him to use his toy kitchen set in a game where familiar experiences of preparing, cooking, tasting and serving food are reworked. Together father and son take cues from each other's gestures and actions. This brings a dynamic sense to the playful event creating a meaningful narrative understood by both and concluding with eating pretend food from a plate. The relationship of three things interest and motivate Elvin: the kitchen toy utensils, his father's proximity to him and Elvin's desire to include his mother in the event she is videoing.

There are real and imagined conceptual elements for Elvin to make sense of, and Ran works at supporting his son's cultural understanding in the cooking play. Father is instructive and helpful, explaining about frying first. When father sees Elvin move the spoon to the pot, he playfully adds salt and Elvin puts the spoon in. This exchange reflects how infants build reciprocity in imaginary play. Father takes the spoon from Elvin who quickly puts out his hand to hold the spoon with Ran. This is a dynamic gesture on Elvin's part, indicating to his father that he could try this for himself. Until this moment, Elvin concentrates on play materials and follows father's guidance. Elvin looks up and gazes directly at Ran who smiles warmly and shows enjoyment in their imaginary cooking game. From Elvin's perspective, there is a thoughtful transitory moment when he includes his mother by holding out the spoon, inviting her to taste the imaginary food. In this game, there are many moments where Elvin expresses his wish to follow his ideas like wanting to use the spoon

himself. When Elvin offers the spoon up to Ran to try the soup, father happily enters this game and sustains their play with the idea of salty. Father smiles and Elvin seems to find this smile a satisfying moment. This is a moment of reciprocity embodied in Elvin's smile and shining eyes. Elvin forms conceptual reciprocity with mother, when he looks up at her during filming. He gazes at her with warm smiling eyes offering a spoon of pretend soup to include her in the cooking play.

Gloria This is a very interesting video clip, beautiful wooden toys. I can see enjoyment from all the family. Father is very instructive, and I agree with Avis that there is a fine line between intervening like talking and listening. All these moments are balanced. I can see even before reading Liang's transcript in the video that it's about 'trying out' for father and he is sustaining a play script of we cook, we add salt and pepper, we taste, and then we serve it to the plate. Elvin follows this script carefully and is more inclined to move the objects and make noise. He is engaged and watches carefully first to his mum, then to what his father (Ran) is doing and how he uses the spoon. I think Ran has a strong play script of how he can support his child, and when Elvin indicates he wants to hold the spoon, Ran realises in that moment somehow ahh ok yes, you want to do this yourself and I will follow and guide. He lets Elvin have the spoon, and then he takes the spoon for him to try the food Elvin is preparing and keeps referencing mum. This is a moment of appreciation from Ran too. Elvin takes the spoon and wants his mum to try out. He carefully puts it into the casserole and then tries the pan where Ran begins to cook and he now knows that this is about trying the food too. Then they play trying food together. Ran keeps the play script going by putting food on the plate which he indicates with his finger which I think is a gesture that also communicates what Ran wants. From Elvin's perspective, he is learning and is very gentle in listening to his dad's play script and moving actions. *We are born to generate shifting states of self-awareness, to show them to other persons, and to provoke interests and affectionate responses from them* (Trevarthen 2011a, p.119). This quote reflects what Elvin is doing, generating awareness of what Ran is thinking and taking his perspective, which provoked an interest and affectionate response from Ran who even so might look very instructive but is gentle towards Elvin touching him on some occasions and gazing and observing him. There is so much affectionate response from both father and son that leads to conceptual reciprocity which is an affective relationship to learning and being aware of the world of playing.

Liang Elvin's kitchen toy has been set in the family kitchen area as we would like him to engage in the real world through his mini kitchen. Elvin's father is very busy in his work everyday, but he tries his best to spend more time with Elvin in play. This short play event happened in the morning spontaneously as Elvin shows his interest in the kitchen toys. His father takes Elvin's initiation to engage in his play and, through the instruction, helps Elvin to understand the Chinese cooking process. The reciprocity between Elvin and his father has been formed.

10.4   Playing with Sound: 'Hi Luci', Case Example 3

Father records on laptop camera. Luci (2.2 yrs) and Matt (her father) are in the home studio using a vocoder voice synthesiser. The vocoder produces vocal expression and permits response to velocity and pitch. Luci is familiar with Matt's studio; however, the vocoder is new to her. Matt says of their five-minute studio interaction: *I'm aware and listening carefully to her vocal initiations and responses and I try extending her vocal range to making sounds in longer, deeper, higher, slower, sharper, lighter and softer ways.*

10.4.1   Visual Narrative

Matt starts by saying *Hi Luci* into the microphone and invites her response. Luci responds *Hi Luci* three times and then holds the microphone closely and says *Luci*. With eyebrows raised, she pitches her *Hi Luci* responses higher and then louder. Using both hands on the microphone, she slows and deepens her *Hi Luci* response as Matt modifies the vocoder's vibrational response on the computer beside them.

Luci attunes herself when she hears her own responses. These sounds are being adjusted by Matt watching carefully as Luci experiments. The sounds give Luci instant feedback to her *Hi Luci* responses.

Luci moves closer to the microphone and shapes her mouth in a rounded fashion to produce a deeper and longer 'Hi Luciiiiii' sound that resonates strongly, thanks to father's vocoder management (Figs. 10.9 and 10.10).

Fig. 10.9 Hi

Hi Luciiiiiiiii, Hi…, she says and then has a laugh together with her 'dada' and puts
    greater focus on the *Luciiiiiiiii….*
Hi Luci, hi Luci, hi Luci, hi Luci, hi Luciiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii.
After experimenting, Luci says *dada do this*, *dada done…hi Luci.*

Keep going and *Hi Luci* continues.

Luci repeats: *Dada done.*

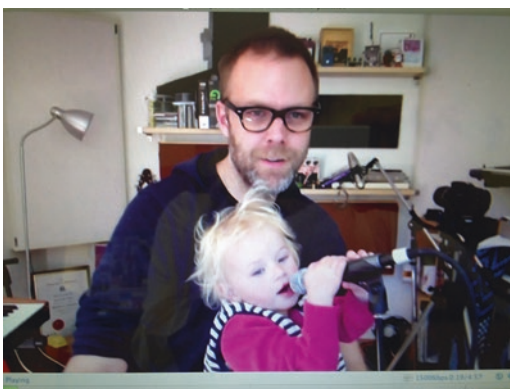Father asks: *This one, you want to play this one as well…?*

Luci: *Luci Hi*, *Hi Luci*, and she says *Hi Luci* again.

Father gets the small keyboard Luci's seen nearby and says *let's get a sync* (a jarring noise emerges) *whoah…hang on not that one….*

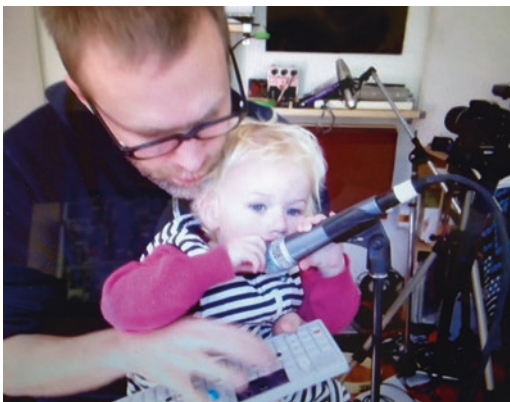Luci speaks *Hi Luci*.

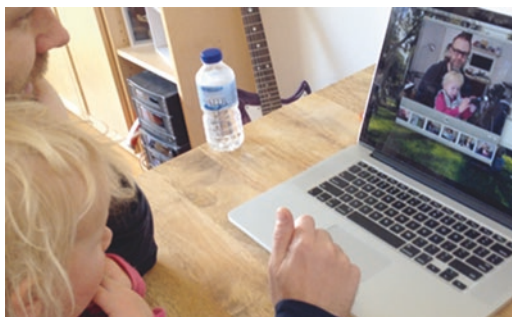Father: *Want to speak into the mic?*

Fig. 10.10 Hi Luciiiii

Father: *Let's go….*

Luci: *Hi Luci, Hi Luci, Luci…. Hi Luciiiiiiii*

Fig. 10.11 Want it BIG

Fig. 10.12 Replay, review

Luci: *BIG….*

Concentrating on recording, Matt asks Luci: *What are you saying ….big?*

Father: *You want it big – you want to plug it in so it's loud?*

A BIG sound rolls out of the little keyboard now synchronised with computer. Father says, *no not that one.* He tries another, *do you like that one?*

Luci looks to keyboard and uses her index finger to make a tune sounding like Twinkle twinkle little star. Matt says: *Do you want to do Twinkle twinkle little star?* Luci nods yes, holds the microphone and starts singing: *Twinkle twinkle little starrrrrrrrr how I wonder what you arrrrrrreee….*

Father adjusts vocoder so it extends her final words. The effect appears magical to Luci.

Father: *Do you want to do it again?*

Luci gives no response. She finished the song and seems satisfied.

Later, Matt and Luci review the event. The replay is collectively felt, seen and heard by wider family (including Avis the researcher). The shared event, played out in Matt's home studio, represents a culturally mediated experience. On the computer screen, the replay indicates father's sensitive emotional proximity that may support building foundational cultural knowledge of music for Luci. Experimenting joyfully with sounds in Matt's studio, Luci's vocal and hearing senses mediate the possibilities for dynamic and reciprocal interpretation (Fig. 10.11).

Positioned on her father's knee reviewing the experimental studio time, Luci leans closely into Matt and re-experiences their trusted moments of exchange. This act of shared reflection supports conceptual connectedness as Luci watches the experimental replay of their studio experience intently on the laptop and feels the embracing support of on-looking family (Fig. 10.12).

10.4.2   Dialogue Commentary

Gloria While observing this video clip of Matt and Luci, I could see there was a pattern of excitement for both of them. This shared experience involved exploration, but at the same time, it included repetition, variation and musical actions that lead

into conceptual and abstract forms of understanding the gift of musicality Matt wants to share with Luci, and she shares with Matt. Matt is able to provide a rich musical environment for Luci, invent variations, imagine new voice variations and empower Luci into creating these!! Matt is able to balance his own intentions and those of Luci's giving her freedom to explore with her voice. What is more surprising is that this is ordinary life for Luci, an everydayness that takes the form of being special, creatively acting with imaginative forms of sounds and music. It is actually what Luci and Matt take an interest in where conceptual reciprocity is generated. The microphone of sound production is just the process of creating music. There wouldn't be any music if Luci and Matt did not have this special affective relationship, and there is so much love, closeness and connection to each other. Is it because of gender? Daughters and fathers? In excitement of creating music together, Luci can be Luci because there is Matt.

Liang This exploration of the greeting sound 'Hi Luci' music activity gives a strong sense of shared interaction. Luci's father makes the playful event with Luci to explore the sounds in different forms by using a vocoder voice synthesiser. Here, Luci feels joyful to play with the musical instrument, microphone and vocoder. She has shown her interests and interpretation of the different sounds in high, low, soft and strong by saying 'Hi Luci…'. This is part of awareness of her own name called in different tunes and extension of her interest of the sounds to the familiar music by playing the keyboard, 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'. The most important thing is that her father acknowledges her interests and motives in making the sounds and offers her the musical environment to communicate using her own voice. Her father caught the moment of Luci's sustained thinking in exploring the keyboard to see how the *Twinkle, twinkle little star* song sounds like in the vocoder. The communicative musicality supports daughter-fathers' sensitive and responsive interaction, which shows their shared intention and conceptual reciprocity in exploring the music sounds. Luci's perspective has been embedded in their interaction and music environment. Her father not only makes the music environment available to her, he also intentionally encourages her to explore the different sounds through the vocoder. They both achieve conceptual reciprocity in music.

Avis Luci shared five minutes with Matt in his home studio. As interactive partners, they are both attuned to the shared experience, where affective attunement occurs (Cameron et al. 2014; Ridgway et al. 2015). Affective fatherhood exists in their shared performance. Both father and daughter feel the music, transforming it into new forms, and, in doing so, unify external activity into internal thinking that becomes embodied in subsequent responses. Matt draws on Luci's actions as starting points for the responsive interactions that follow, sharing his passion for music with his daughter. With father's sensitive support (mediated through technology) the playful event brings together interpretation and personal imagining that requires from both father and daughter, a special kind of responsive reciprocity where cultural learning may occur.

10.5   Discussion: Examining the Dynamics of Infant Reciprocity

Meaning making involves situating encounters with the world in their appropriate cultural contexts… meanings provide a basis for cultural exchange. (Bruner 1996, p. 3)

We find common features when examining the dynamics present in infant reciprocity in Elvin's imaginary cooking game with Ran, in the fence building between Silvana and Jorge and in Luci's vocal responses to Matt's *Hi Luci*. Visual narratives show each playful experience located in culturally meaningful and emotionally complex interactions.

Bozhovich (1985) notes motivation, aspirations and affective responses come from daily living conditions. We find in each infant's case example that living conditions link closely to cultural aspirations the fathers have. Fathers involve their infants in ideas, materials and contemporary tools new to the infants, but familiar to them (see Li, Ridgway and Quiñones, Chap. 3; Quiñones, Li and Ridgway, Chap. 12, this volume).

The cooking set play narrative shows how shared interest, attention and familiarity support reciprocity and drive Elvin's motives for learning. Affective fatherhood involves father (Ran) making quality time to play.

Silvana's response to family aspirations, Gloria suggests, form a motivational sphere in her social situation of development where Jorge's aspirations to share his building knowledge excite Silvana. Affective fatherhood is evident in Jorge's open-armed hugging, reflecting deep love and interest in one another. They are involved in an environment where their work physically transforms materials. This appears quite magical to Silvana.

Matt (like Jorge and Ran with their infant children) is aware of Luci's interests and playfully engages her by experimenting with sound in his music studio. In this environment, he listens, giving respect and value to Luci's responses.

All case examples show how cultural dynamics move through family influences. Silvana's father (and his father before him) uses materials and tools for creating and constructing. In considering the dynamics of historical child development, there exists in this social context a *past-present dialectic* (Ridgway 2010, 2014), where cultural influences are carried on intergenerationally. Jorge is motivated to keep family knowledge in Silvana's life. By undertaking building work in Australia, intergenerational continuity is felt, responded to and enjoyed through culturally meaningful experiences.

Cultural dynamics are also present when Elvin offers the spoon to his father inviting Ran to engage in cooking play – which he does even though busy. Ran joins the play intentionally knowing Elvin's interest in family cooking. When adult demands and infant needs and interests are matched, infant's conceptual understanding extends. Conceptual reciprocity can form within a favourite activity. With Ran's support, Elvin's play content becomes richer, leading to greater understanding of cooking processes. The play shows *the child wants not only to repeat the individual actions of the adult … but also to imitate the complex nature of adult*

activity, acts, interactions with others – in other words the entire way of life of adults (Bozhovich 2009, p. 61). Elvin frequently engages in family cooking activities driving him to imitate the adults' world. When using the cooking toy set, subtle movement and activity occurs, including shared affective gestures showing warm and caring family relationships. When Elvin is joined on the floor by Ran, he is positioned closely to family. He enters a zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978), where family encourage his imaginary food preparation, thus inviting reciprocity.

We notice an interesting moment that brings our attention to cultural interpretations of infant reciprocity. In Elvin's cooking play, father supports his son in understanding how the spoon may be used. Liang interprets this as Ran understanding this is the right moment to show his son how to fry and taste food. She notes Elvin is so excited that he takes the spoon from his father so he can try feeding his dad and mum by himself. Through this action, as discussed in Ridgway et al. (2015), *to frame play activity, an adult needs to achieve conceptual reciprocity by taking the child's perspective, to extend and transform their everyday knowledge through their sustained shared thinking* (p. 41), conceptual reciprocity is considered achieved.

Ran takes his son's perspective by intentionally framing this play activity to extend Elvin's understanding of cooking and tasting processes. Reciprocal interaction exists because of shared cultural knowledge of cooking activity. Elvin's curiosity (needs/interests) are met, and Ran's expectations (demands/aspirations) on teaching the cooking process are also achieved in this shared interaction.

10.5.1 Balancing Playful Intentions

Singer (2013) refers to Dutch Historian Johan Huizinga – who considered the benefits and essential features of play as both giving pleasure and a sense of freedom. Singer proposes that teachers/educators can misuse children's play for their own goals and often spoil the fun. She notes a fine line that exists between being instructional and being playful. The point is made clearly in Elvin's cooking game, where father Ran plays along this fine line by starting out as instructor and guide and then in a transitory moment makes the game playful. Ran really helps his son initially by joining and guiding the play and carefully noticing Elvin's affective responses, giving him time to choose how the play will unfold. Elvin makes sense of this cooking play. With such close proximity to family, Elvin is comfortable to act freely, and the play makes sense to him (Singer, Chap. 14, this volume).

The cultural dynamics present in the cooking play example and the other moments of family interaction with pleasure and freedom in Silvana's and Jorge's fence play and Luci and Matt's music studio activity are intimately connected with the context of their family values and involve a sensitive balance of guidance, autonomy and respect. This, Singer (2013) refers to, as *a magic circle*, a place we think, where conceptual reciprocity forms to support infant learning.

10.5.2   Cultural Learning Through Reciprocity

In each case example, *a magic circle* does form as a special space where father and infant support one another's cultural learning through reciprocity. The *Hi Luci* example in Matt's home studio amplifies the value of cultural awareness and respect for infant's interests. When he and Luci negotiate sound making together, embodied affective engagement occurs. Gloria, commenting on the intimate shared time of studio sound experiment, refers to Singer (2013): *Caregiver and baby create a rhythm or pattern which they carry to maintain the excitement. The first forms of ludic, non-verbal communication are comparable to dancing or music together…. Children can allow these repetitive series of actions to grow into a more comprehensive ritual. Through repetition and variations on series of actions, young children together with caregivers and other children 'co-construct a shared play-reality'* (2013, p. 175), to suggest that the studio experience shows dynamic co-construction of a shared play reality. The subjectivities of Luci and Matt are affectively attuned in an atmosphere of dynamic vitality.

In order to better understand infant reciprocity, Quiñones (2015) brings attention to Bozhovich's (1985) thinking on personality development, in particular the motivational sphere.

Each case example shows different personal interests, aspirations and actions present in the lives of infants, Silvana, Elvin and Luci. These are linked to affective fatherhood which involves cultural awareness, aspirations and caring relationships that bring adult knowledge and family values together to create conceptual reciprocity.

10.5.3   Dynamic Relationships

Vygotsky suggested, *The child is a part of a social situation; his /her relationship with the environment and the environment's relationship with the child occur through perezhivanie and the actions of the child* (Vygotsky 1984, p. 383, Cited in Gonzalez Rey 2014).

Dynamic relationships form in the home environments where, for example, Luci and her father Matt are embodied in the social context of performing in a music studio. Similarly, Silvana's outdoor fence building with Jorge and Elvin's cooking with Ran both provide social environments for active learning. The infants and fathers have shared experiences that are playful and meaningful by using available cultural tools and fathers' specialised knowledge and providing freedom to play imaginatively. This creates perezhivanie in the collectively distributed, lived and deeply felt experiences.

Using the concept of perezhivanie as a theoretical tool for analysis of the '*complex nexus of various higher mental functions thinking emotions, memory, will, reflection and so on'* (Veresov 2015) supports a holistic approach to examining the

dynamic relations involved. Through perezhivanie, we notice the shared experiences are instructive, co-constructive and joyful.

In music studio environment, interactions are lived and experienced fully and experimentally. Through the presence of a sensitive relationship, Matt achieves conceptual reciprocity by taking Luci's ideas, experimenting with them and taking a pedagogical approach to support her learning. Lokken (2011) discusses in relation to exchange in toddlers' lived experiences that there can be a '*feeling of one's way*'. In the studio experimentation with sound, Matt feels his way with *perceptive interpretation* (Lokken 2011, p. 162) of Luci's responses and being attentive to her embodied actions.

Our transcripts and visual narratives indicate that when fathers (Jorge, Ran and Matt) include *affective thought* (Kudryavtsev 2006, p. 9) through sharing their cultural knowledge (building fences, cooking, studio audio modelling), the infant's perspectives are valued. In the moments of perezhivanie, we find shared intentions build conceptual connectedness generating *conceptual reciprocity*.

10.6   Conclusion

We find that *affective fatherhood* reflected in playful daily life exchanges is action oriented and dynamic. The three case examples give insight into how active social contexts are initiated reciprocally when fathers are aware of taking the infant's perspective, which involves sharing interests that build trusting and *sensitive relationships*. Such relationships form *conceptual reciprocity*.

10.6.1   A Relational Ontology

Thinking about how things occur, Stetsenko (2008) takes an activist stance and refers to the need for a relational ontology in research with infants and toddlers. Taking a broader relational perspective is required in order to move further in early childhood research, commonly dominated by motherhood issues, brain studies, gender and essentialist thinking.

A current need exists for new, more robust and forthright relational and reciprocal foci on studying infant/toddlers. These include the combinational cultural complexity for generating alternatives such as interactive, transacted, socially situated experiences of conceptual reciprocity presented in our case examples that involve *affective fatherhood*: 'building a fence', 'kitchen play with dad' and 'playing with sound 'Hi Luci'. A Nordic study by Farstad and Stefansen (2015, p. 67) suggests that *Being a caring father seems nothing less than culturally obligatory*. Our contemporary case examples highlight this by showing how affective fatherhood involves sensitive care and shared cultural interests.

In examining the dynamics of infant reciprocity, we conclude that studying infants and toddlers through *visual narratives* combined with *dialogue commentary* is generative of the relational ontology needed in infant-toddler research. The case examples with fathers show *conceptual reciprocity* develops dynamically in infancy when trusting active and sensitive relationships engage the infant/toddler in shared culturally meaningful activity.

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Chapter 11
Applying the Tavistock Method of Observation and Group Reflection to the Study of Babies and Toddlers in Centre-Based Childcare

Linda J. Harrison, Belinda Friezer, and Robyn Dolby

Abstract This chapter presents new Australian research to illustrate how psycho-analytic theory and methods can contribute to early childhood educators' understanding of the emotional world of infants and children. Working with a small group of educators, the authors trialled the use of Tavistock infant observation method (TOM) in a study of children attending centre-based childcare. The TOM approach is unique in that it places emphasis not only on what is seen and heard but what is *felt* by the observer. Regular discussions led by a TOM-trained psychologist supported the group to reflect upon their emotional responses and insights, using basic psychoanalytic concepts of countertransference, projective identification and container/contained during an eight-session training programme. The authors, who came to the study with differing levels of familiarity with psychoanalytic theory, provide examples from their observational narrative records to illustrate their developing understandings and ability to use psychoanalytic concepts through the process of collaborative reflection within the seminar group. The chapter concludes by considering how the deep understanding that the TOM provides about babies' and toddlers' emotional communication can help educators reconcile opposing notions of the child as competent and vulnerable.

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11.1   Introduction

There is a long history in early childhood education and care of using naturalistic methods of observation as a means of providing information about young children's behaviour. These methods are based in traditions of objective methods of recording and analysing what is seen and heard, often requiring specialised training and achievement of reliability on the part of the researcher (Marcella 2015). The observer, or educator using these methods, is expected to put aside personal interpretations, yet at the same time seek to understand the experience of the child being observed. Goodfellow (2014) points out the difficulties for 'outside observers to gain insights into lived experience' (p. 202), particularly in the case of very young children who cannot report on what was experienced because of limited verbal skills. Reconciling this tension requires new ways of conceptualising observation and the process of observing infants and toddlers in group settings, in particular, by giving attention to the subjective experience of the observer.

Brennan (2014), for example, uses the theoretical framework of *perezhivanie* to emphasise the contribution that educators' subjective and affective experience makes to infant caregiving. Elfer (2010), referring to the focus in the UK on secure educator-child attachment relationships, points to the need for a 'deeper understanding of the emotional dimension of nursery life' (p. 63). Hopkins (1988, p. 110) describes a training and support programme for staff to better understand children's 'attachment, dependency and emotional expression'. Datler et al.'s (2010) detailed documentation of a child's experience of separation on starting childcare highlights the need for educators to 'understand in a deep way the emotions of very young children experiencing out-of-home care' (p. 82). All authors speak to inherent challenges of acknowledging emotions in their research in early childhood settings. For example, Brennan refers to 'taking a somewhat uneasy walk into the subjective nature of development' (p. 289), and Hopkins writes that staff found their work more rewarding and interesting, but also more painful as they 'became increasingly aware of the extent of many children's unhappiness' (p. 105). Elfer's work (2012, 2014), however, shows that psychoanalytic observation methods can not only enable staff to access children's emotional communication but also provide the structures that support staff to reflect on and discuss the emotions that affect them in their daily work.

In this chapter, we build on this work by applying a psychoanalytic method, the Tavistock method of infant observation (TOM) (Reid 2013; Waddell 2013), to a study of infants in Australian childcare centres. The aim of the study was to trial the use of the TOM and assess its applicability to infant-toddler education and care settings. By gathering empirical observations of infants' behaviour and reflective observations of our own feeling states supported by group discussions with a TOM-trained psychologist, the authors sought to use psychoanalytic understandings to develop a deeper appreciation of the emotional worlds of young children in centre-based childcare. A longer-term aim was to assess how TOM might be introduced as a new observation tool for educators in early childhood settings.

We begin the chapter with a brief overview of the theoretical concepts underpinning the TOM, followed by a description of the method used to apply TOM in four child-care centres. Each author then draws on her own experiences to illustrate how psychoanalytic theory (*countertransference*, *projective identification* and *container/contained*) came to be understood and applied through collecting and reflecting on their observations, as supported by group discussion.

11.2   Key Theoretical Concepts Underpinning the Tavistock Method

The Tavistock method has its roots in the early work of Anna Freud (1951) who applied it to the training of nursery workers (Adamo and Rustin 2014). It was further developed by Esther Bick (1964) for child psychotherapists and psychoanalysts, whose training includes close observation of a baby's development in the home environment each week for 2 years. Observers are asked to attend closely to the infant, not taking any written notes and putting aside any preconceptions or professional judgments. Immediately after the observation, a detailed narrative is written about the entire period of the observation, from start to finish. Emphasis is placed upon researcher reflections where what is 'seen' and 'felt' is written down and explored in a series of seminar groups (Rustin 2012, p. 57). Group discussion is led by a TOM-trained leader who 'supports the free associations, ruminations and speculations of the observer and seminar members, to see what other dimensions remain to be discovered' (Reid 2013, p. 4). The three key psychoanalytic concepts inform these discussions: countertransference, projective identification and container/contained.

11.2.1   Countertransference

Initially considered by Freud (1910) as the unconscious feelings that arose in the analytic situation between the analyst and the patient, the phenomenon of *countertransference* was later explored by psychoanalysts, Heinrich Racker (1953, 1957) and Paula Heimann (1950), who came to regard it as being all the emotional responses that the analyst has towards the patient, including responses that are held or sustained over a period of time. As such, countertransference was viewed as being key to understanding the patient. Similarly, in the TOM, observers are encouraged to take note of their own emotional responses, or countertransference reactions, while observing a child. It is the discussion of the observations and of the countertransference responses with the seminar group that allows the formulation of psychoanalytic understandings of the child (Adamo and Rustin 2014).

11.2.2 Projective Identification

How the countertransference reaction assists the observer to understand the infant's emotional communication is explained by the psychoanalytic concept of projective identification. First described by Melanie Klein (1946), projective identification is considered to be a psychological defence mechanism that supports the infant to manage difficult internal feelings. According to Klein, projective identification occurs through an interactive process in which the infant projects feelings and sensations that are perceived to be intolerable, and the mother takes in or introjects these feelings. Klein considers projection and introjection of difficult feelings to be fundamental to the development of emotional life and the personality of the child.

Similarly, in the TOM, the baby's or toddler's feelings are considered to be projected into the observer, in much the same way that they are projected into the mother, through the mechanism of projective identification. The ability of the observer to experience and notice these feelings is part of the countertransference experience.

11.2.3 Container/Contained

Wilfred Bion, a prominent English psychoanalyst, extended Klein's notion of projective identification by exploring its therapeutic implications in his notion of container/contained. Discussed in its very early stages in several articles (1959, 2013), Bion argued that projective identification was a normal part of development in the infant-mother relationship. In the notion of container/contained, projective identification enables the mother to be 'filled up' with her infant's intolerable feelings and sensations just as if she was a container. In this way, she identifies with her infant's experiences as if they were her own, knowing, for example, that her infant feels sad because it touches her own experience of sadness. For healthy emotional development, however, the infant needs to experience a sense of containment. According to Bion (1962), the mother needs to be more than just present; she needs to remain balanced while holding inside her, her infant's difficult feeling states. In this way, the mother is able to reflect upon her infant's experiences, making sense of them and giving them meaning. Her reflective capacity is considered to be a crucial function as it enables the mother to give back a modified version of what was intolerable. It is the mother's capacity to bear the emotional states of her infant, make sense of them and deliver them back in a tolerable form that gives the infant the experience of containment. This, in turn, brings about the development of self-containment (Bion 1959, 2013; Caper 1999). Bion referred to this capacity of the mother as maternal 'reverie'.

Similarly, in the TOM seminar discussion group, observers engage in the experience of reflection through the facilitation of the TOM psychologist and the other members of the group. By reflecting upon the observer's feeling response, the dis-

cussion provides a way of understanding the infant's emotional communications. The process of group reflection helps to make sense of the observer's countertransference experience in a way that makes the child's behaviour meaningful. The child's behaviour is reflected upon as a communication or 'story' about what he might be feeling and what he might need. The observers are supported by the group to understand their own feelings, regain their curiosity and be emotionally attentive to the child's needs. Within the seminar discussions, group members themselves experience containment through the 'reverie' of the group and are helped to have space in their minds to hold the child in mind.

11.3 Applying the Tavistock Observation Method to Childcare Settings

In designing the study, we drew on research by Datler et al. (2010, 2014) in Vienna and Elfer (2010, 2012) in the UK. In the present study, a TOM-trained psychologist provided training for seven participants: two early childhood tertiary educators, two long daycare centre directors, two psychologists with a long record of working with educators in childcare centres and an early childhood educator enrolled in a postgraduate degree. The authors were included in this group.

Ethics approval to recruit children to be observed and discussed, using the TOM approach, was gained prior to commencing the study. With parent consent and the consent of the centre directors and educators, seven children (aged between nine and 42 months) were recruited from four different childcare centres. The directors in two of these centres were among the seven participants described above. Observations of 30 min were collected by the participants at regular intervals over a 4-month period. Observations were made without taking any notes and written down from memory as soon as possible after the end of the observation period. Participants recorded their objective observations of what the child did and felt, as well as the thoughts and feelings that were evoked during or after the observation.

Training consisted of a series of eight 1-h seminar meetings with group and the TOM-trained psychologist. In these seminar discussions, each participant had the opportunity to read from her narrative observation record, which was then discussed by the leader and the group. Participants made their own written notes during the seminar group meetings and added further reflective notes after the meetings.

In the following section, the authors (who were members of the group) provide extracts from their observation records, their reactions and feelings about what was observed (in italics), the interpretations and comments that were made during the seminar meetings and any personal reflections. Each presents a case study to illustrate the process of the TOM observations and discussions and the experiences of each author in coming to understand and apply psychoanalytic concepts of the TOM.

11.4 Case Study 1: Tuan Aged 18 Months – Countertransference

The first author's observations were taken during outdoor playtimes.

11.4.1 First Observation

I arrive, in the late afternoon, when all the children, babies to 5-year-olds, are outside. Tuan is following an older girl along the path. They each have a bucket on a string that they are pulling along. The girl trips and stops, bending over to rub her knee. Tuan also stops, watching her. She starts to cry and turns to go to one of the educators. Tuan watches her, standing still as she leaves. He stays in one spot, watching, without any expression. Then he picks up both strings and starts to walk along the path, pulling the buckets. Another girl, also older, comes behind Tuan and pushes him. He falls and drops the strings for the buckets. She takes them away. He gets up and makes a cry of protest, looking at her as she leaves. Then he picks up the last remaining string toy and walks away, pulling it along.

I continue to watch, following him at a distance as he moves around the large playground, mostly alone, finding different things to do or paths to walk along.

He moves his small body confidently and purposefully, quite self-absorbed, his arms and legs active and well coordinated. There is a rhythm to his movement, punctuated every so often by reaching his right arm up in front of him.

I am puzzled about this movement, which he does over and over again. I wonder if he is trying to get someone's attention, but he isn't looking at anyone. I watch carefully and then see that the cuff of his sleeve is too long and covers his right hand. He is reaching up to free his hand. Then I wonder why none of the educators have noticed this and, also, why he doesn't go to any of the educators for help.

11.4.2 Seminar Discussion: My Introduction to Countertransference

I read my long and detailed description of Tuan's activities throughout the 30 min of observation. The other members of the group listen, and when I have finished, one of the members said she felt sad that Tuan seemed isolated. 'He was walking around to keep himself going'. Another member of the group says 'I feel nothing'.

I am surprised by their responses and recognize with a sense of disappointment that I had not paid any attention to my own feelings during the observation.

Facilitator 'I admire him, he's capable, but he's separate from the others. He has his own way of managing the world, in an "automatic pilot" sort of way…. "He gets the last bucket". He seems quite resigned; he doesn't put up a lot of fight'.

The facilitator went on to explain the *countertransference* experience that members of the group had experienced as I read my narrative. 'Children make us feel what they feel; it's their primary way of communication. For example, children who are enjoyed project joy and liveliness. We love to watch them. Use your *countertransference* to wonder "what does this tell me about the child"'?

11.4.3   Second Observation

Tuan is outside in the babies' play area on his own next to a large cardboard box that has been squashed flat to be a slide. He is throwing himself down on his tummy and sliding, smiling and talking to himself. Nearby is a large rubber cow that he climbs on. He has trouble getting his leg over the cow, but persists. He bounces on it, falls to the ground and onto the box. He repeats this again and again, using one leg and then the other to climb over the cow, pulling it down on top of him and laughing.

I think how much he is enjoying this, but I also see that he doesn't share his pleasure with anyone. He doesn't look at or vocalize to any of the staff or other children.

Later I see Tuan at the fence between the babies play area and the large playground where the older children are. He is pressed against it, reaching through to the other side. His sister is on the other side, with her arms through the fence around him, but he is also pushing her away.

I feel drawn into Tuan's attempt to be with his sister, which doesn't feel comfortable or satisfying.

She asks the educator if she can come in, but she is told 'not just now'. Tuan becomes upset, crying and trying to get closer to his sister through the fence. She stays there and he holds on to her for a bit. Then he sits on the ground.

It feels like an emotional collapse.

Tuan goes over to the educator who is sitting nearby with a group of children. He puts his face close to her face, holding onto the keys she has around her neck, but she is talking with the other children and doesn't respond. He moves behind her and lies down, very still, one arm down to his side, looking away to the fence.

I find it hard to watch Tuan lying there. He feels defeated and depressed, no longer the self-reliant toddler I'd seen absorbed in his own play.

Later, when it's time for me to leave, Tuan is nearby and seems to want to leave with me. I wave goodbye to him and check to see that an educator is with him.

I find myself thinking a lot about the episode at the fence, how hard it was to watch. Through my own feelings (my countertransference) I start to appreciate how alone Tuan was at that time, having no one who could help him to manage his distress. It makes me feel profoundly sad.

11.4.4   Third Observation

Tuan is outside in the babies' playground with another toddler, Erin, and Nina, an educator I haven't seen before. Tuan and Erin are playing in the sandpit, and there is a tussle over a scoop. Erin leaves the sandpit to go and sit with Nina. Tuan plays on his own, but then something distresses him; he cries and looks towards Nina. She calls out to him to 'come for a cuddle'. He gets out of the sandpit, somewhat clumsily, almost tripping as he steps over the sides of the box, and walks slowly and awkwardly to Nina.

I am worried for him; he might fall and collapse.

He gets to Nina's open arms and sits comfortably on her lap, facing away from her. She talks to him, brushing the sand off his legs and rubbing his tummy. Then Tuan gets up and walks a few feet away, looking to the fence.

I am puzzled. Why did he leave the comfort of Nina's lap so soon. Is it hard for him to be in close? And I remember that I have seen him look to the fence, away from the others, so many times before.

Tuan turns and goes back to Nina and Erin and sits close to Nina, on the side away from Erin. Nina attends to each child individually as she talks about the pictures in the book. Tuan sits quietly, his hand on Nina's knee, Nina touching his hand.

I find this image of Nina, sitting cross-legged, her large-brimmed hat covering her face, her head bowed over the two children, so calm and beautiful. I feel reassured and happy that Tuan has been able to make and maintain a close connection with Nina.

11.5   Case Study 2: Estelle Aged 42 Months – Projective Identification

The third author undertook her observations at the end of the day when children are making the transition from childcare and reconnecting with family.

11.5.1   First Observation

When I arrive, Estelle is part of a group of three in conversation with Helen, one of the four educators in the room. They are inside and the afternoon sunlight reaches in to where they are. The light outlines Estelle's face. Her hair is pulled back with a clip in the shape of a red bow with silver diamonds. Her expressions are lively, like the sparkle on her clip.

They sit down to read a book. Helen sits on the floor with her back against the sofa. Estelle lies along the length of the sofa. The other two children tuck in beside Helen on the floor. The children appear to know the book very well and join in some

of the lines in unison. Estelle changes position. Henry is sitting below her next to Helen. I notice that Estelle seems to take care that she doesn't bump into Henry with her feet. In a tender gesture, she lightly strokes his hair as she changes position.

I imagine that Estelle's care toward Henry comes from feeling cared about in this small group.

The outside door slides open as the first parent comes in. This mother enters quietly and goes to the lockers to collect her child's bag before coming into the room. As she comes in, Estelle gets up and moves to another teacher (Karen). She asks her to read to her in the same moment that Karen is comforting a child who is very upset and sitting on her knee. Estelle leaves as quickly as she came. She moves around the room and does not go back to her quiet reading 'nest' with Helen and the other children.

I feel a bit jolted: I'm trying to work out what prompted Estelle to leave Helen and go to Karen. I'm struck by her mis-timing: why would she ask Karen to read to her now, when she is attending to a child who is upset? Just a moment before she was exquisitely sensitive toward Henry.

When Karen is free again, she approaches Estelle and offers to read to her. Estelle accepts, but Karen's reading doesn't hold her interest. Instead, she hands a toy phone to Karen and says that her mother is on the phone. When Karen takes hold of the receiver to join in, Estelle stops the plan and puts the phone down. She goes to the art table, draws a picture, brings this to Karen and tells her that she has done the drawing for her dad, but leaves it on top of the bookshelf instead of putting it in her bag. Karen comes to the bookshelf to say goodbye to Estelle at the end of her work shift. Estelle does not acknowledge Karen's goodbye; after Karen leaves, she gives a small look towards the door that Karen leaves from.

I think about Estelle's focus on Karen and her telephone and drawing play. Perhaps I'm seeing Estelle's preparation for the afternoon transition – how her mind is starting to think about family and getting back to them as well as saying goodbye to her educator, who always leaves at this time. If this is a good guess, I'm struck with how her preparation begins as soon as the first parent arrives in the afternoon. I notice how restless she is and I feel this way too.

11.5.2 Seminar Discussion. How Projective Identification Was Experienced

What I take to the discussion group are my disgruntled feelings: restless and dissatisfied in myself for not being able to make sense of Estelle's play. I tell them that when another child called Henry announces to his teacher, 'I have an idea', I wished I was observing him.

This became the key piece of my observation that the facilitator and group helped me to stay with. Instead of implying that I shouldn't be having these negative feelings, members of the group were very curious about what I was feeling. 'Why did I

get that feeling? What does this tell me about this child'? Psychoanalytic theory asks us to be interested in the transference, interested in what gets projected onto us. Was Estelle projecting feelings that she was having (perhaps her struggle with saying goodbye to her educator and reuniting with her family), and was I taking these feelings in and identifying with them rather than being able to puzzle about them?

Facilitator: 'Perhaps Estelle is wanting you to know what it feels like to be her. You were hopeful that this girl was going to be a joy to observe, and she turns out to be the girl who wants you to know what it feels like to struggle.

I feel my curiosity return. I am no longer stuck with my disgruntled feelings. The group discussion opened up a space for me to feel more at ease and open in my own feelings towards Estelle.

11.5.3   Observation 2

Estelle and her peers are in the foyer in small group time with Karen. As I walk in, Estelle immediately stands up and looks at me.

Me: I am walking through your room.
Estelle: This is not our room.
Me: I am in your group.
Estelle: This is not our group

I sit down quietly. Estelle sits down and rejoins her group. Every so often, she looks across at me, as if to see that I am taking notice.

What I notice is that Estelle notices me the moment I walk in. Is her feisty response to my entry her way of telling me she is not comfortable with being observed or it is just the opposite? I remember the facilitator's words, 'Your interested eyes will help to bring her story up'. When Estelle looks across at me, her expression is open. I have the feeling that she is looking to check that I am with her and interested in her. In myself, I feel at ease, more prepared for and more curious about what I will see. I wonder if this what Estelle is drawn to, is she feeling that I can be with her in her feelings?

11.5.4   Observation 3

I sit down to observe, and Estelle immediately comes over and sits opposite me at a small table. She gets a rope and she threads beads on it. She lays the rope across the table from her to me. She threads on more beads. She comes over to my side of the table and pulls on the rope to make it touch my knee. Then she sits back on her side of the table and threads more beads. Her stillness has returned.

I wonder about what she is telling me in her play. One possibility was that she was saying, 'My story is about making a connection. I need to build a bridge at the

end of the day from my educator back to my family. I can do it really well, if someone is right here with me. You get it; you understand'.

Later I talked with the director about how I noticed that when the first parent arrived at the end of the day, this coincided with Estelle becoming more restless and unsettled in her behaviour. I shared the story of Estelle making a 'rope of connection'. The director, who also was Estelle's educator at the very end of the day, took a decision to invest in stillness. She invited Estelle to sit with her saying that this will be where 'mummy knows to find us', and she invited Estelle's mother to sit down with them when she first arrived, to give Estelle the time and closeness she appeared to need to make the connection back into her family.

11.6   Case Study 3: Donald Aged 12 Months – Container/ Contained

The second author undertook her observations during the morning playtime.

11.6.1   First Observation

I sit on the couch alongside Elly, a childcare educator. Kate, another educator, changes Donald's nappy and then puts him down. Donald cries, reaching for Kate, but she is busy. Instead, Elly picks him up and tries to settle him. The director of the centre enters the room. Elly says to her, 'You know what? I think Belinda's upset Donald'!

Immediately I am overwhelmed with the feelings of 'I shouldn't be here', 'I've caused a disruption. Donald has been good all morning and my arrival has unsettled him'.

Elly hugs and kisses Donald. He remains disgruntled.

I feel uncomfortable, as though I am being intrusive, so I tell Elly that I will give her and Donald some space. I move off the couch.

Elly offers a bottle to Donald, but he fusses and refuses the bottle. Donald reaches for Kate. She takes him and he immediately settles. Elly says, 'ah… he wanted Kate'. Kate offers Donald the bottle and he quickly guzzles the milk. Donald points to me.

I begin to feel very conspicuous and I worry that my presence will disturb and unsettle Donald. I am surprised at how strong my feelings are (my countertransference).

Kate then attends to some waking babies. Donald cries. Elly picks him up and takes him to watch Kate soothe the babies. Other babies begin crying, so Elly puts Donald down. Donald cries more.

It feels stuck. Donald is upset and I feel like I'm hiding so as not to unsettle him. I wonder whether my leaving will upset him more.

11.6.2 Second Observation

I enter the babies' room and see Donald relaxing with Sue, another educator. Changing his clothes, she warmly says, 'you're all wet'.
This moment feels wonderful to watch.
Donald then moves towards Oscar, a boy with autism. Oscar cries when Donald comes close. Donald subsequently cries. Sue moves to settle both children, but another educator takes Donald for his nappy change. He cries.

11.6.3 Third Observation

Donald is looking at the toy cars as if he has a play idea in mind. Felix goes over and pushes Donald away from the cars and then attempts to hug and rumble him. Donald cries and tips over the box of cars.
I feel really annoyed and upset for Donald because his play idea has been interrupted. It feels like Donald can never get settled, even in play.
Kate comes in with Donald's bottle. He sits on her lap and hungrily guzzles down only 20 ml of milk from a full bottle.
I feel confused. He gave the appearance of being so hungry yet he only drank 20 ml.

11.6.4 Post-observation

Elly and I chat in the staffroom. Elly asks me with great curiosity 'what can you tell us about Donald'? I say 'I can't work out what is going on for him. It always feels unpredictable. I never know what is going to upset him next'.
I felt helpless, as I did not have an answer for her about why he was so upset.
Elly responded with 'Oh my goodness. That is exactly how I feel! I can never tell what's going to upset him'. Elly and I looked at each other as if a light bulb had just gone on. By sharing our emotional experience, we had a shared awareness of our experiences about Donald. We had been in isolation with our experience of him, and it was not until we shared our feelings that we were able to realise that our emotional response to Donald was the same and perhaps reflected feelings that he was transferring into us (*projective identification*). By articulating our shared feelings, we were able to recognise Donald's own experience.

11.6.5 Seminar Discussion: How Containment Was Experienced

I had to wait many weeks for my turn to present to the group, and I felt very full with the experience of Donald and what he brings to the educators. The group suggested that perhaps Donald too has felt that he has been holding on for a long time with his feelings, trying to manage what he cannot yet understand on his own.

I describe Donald's unpredictable distress and the strong feelings that I had about interrupting him and not wanting to disturb him. I tell the group about Donald not drinking a full bottle of milk even though he seemed so hungry and how Felix kept interrupting his play. They reflected on how Donald struggles to find a full, uninterrupted moment. Much in the same way that he could not drink a full bottle of milk, they suggested Donald finds it difficult to receive a full moment of connection with an educator or a full moment just to be. There are many transitions in his day and perhaps he is 'starving' for a consistent, fulfilling connection where he is noticed and observed.

The space created in the seminar group for reflection provided new insight into Donald's distress. Reflecting upon my experience in the group helped me to better understand Donald's projected feelings of distress. The group experience provided me with containment by helping to make sense of my emotional response to Donald.

The centre director, who was also a member of the seminar group, took the ideas from the group discussion back to the educators who cared for Donald. In this way, they too received containment. They then offered more uninterrupted moments with Donald. This led to Donald experiencing containment as staff were more able to remain balanced in their own feelings when they were with him.

11.6.6 Final Observation

Donald has just come inside. I smile and say 'hello', and Donald bursts into tears. Kate then settles him. Another educator comes to change his nappy. He goes along willingly and happily, but returns crying. Sue settles him and they read a book. Sue looks at me and says, 'He just seems to be upset with change, and changes happen a lot here. He needs a lot of uninterrupted time'.

I think to myself. 'Yes, she's right'. There seems to be a shift in the staff. They are calmer and less overwhelmed by Donald's distress. They are trying to give him 'full moments' when they can.

Donald gets up and begins to play. He appears relaxed, calm and settled. He continues like this for the rest of the observation. Sue spent time with Oscar and Donald went and sat near them. While Sue nursed Oscar, Donald rolled over her legs. They both seemed to enjoy the comfort, closeness and sensory experience.

It felt to me as if he was now able to tolerate the presence of a third party in the relationship that he had with an educator and that this presence was not experi-

enced as an interruption. Instead there seemed to be warmth and delight in every-one being together and getting to know each other.

Sue put Oscar to bed. She sat next to the door so that Oscar could see her while he went to sleep. While Oscar dozed off, Donald and Sue looked at books together. Occasionally, Donald got up to look at Oscar. As I go to leave, Sue turns to me and says 'I think Donald is receiving his full moment'.

11.7   Commentary

Through the leadership of the TOM-trained facilitator and the group discussions, each of the participants came to appreciate the ways that psychoanalytic concepts could bring new insights to their work with children in centre-based childcare. They became more alert 'to the possible meanings of very young children's behavioural and emotional communications' (Elfer 2012, p. 236) and began to be more attuned to the difficult feelings that children were trying to manage.

The participants were not only helped to open up to and feel children's difficul-ties but were also provided the *thinking space* to reconcile opposing notions of the child as both competent *and* vulnerable. The process of coming to this understand-ing, through the close observation, reflective interpretations and sensitive actions, was illustrated by the narrative records and reflections of the authors during the TOM training. The first author became more attuned to her feelings about Tuan and, by reflecting on her own and the feelings of the group, was able to acknowledge not only his self-reliance and competence but also his separation and sadness. Through the experience of *countertransference*, she was able to 'feel' the difficulties and struggles he felt. This experience, of what Daniel Stern (2000) called 'affect attun-ement', provided her with a deeper and more accurate understanding of Tuan's experience of relationships at childcare.

The third author focused her observations on 'going home time' which has par-ticular emotional significance. Through *projective identification*, she recognised how her own feelings of frustration when observing Estelle could be telling her something important about how Estelle was feeling – the uncomfortable feeling of 'not getting things right' – as she worked out how to manage the goodbyes to her peers and educator and the reconnection with her family. Through the seminar group discussion, she was able to accept her disgruntled feelings, feel more open to Estelle and appreciate the emotional challenge she faced. When Estelle received the still attentiveness she was looking for from the adult, she was able to build the bridge back to her family, so she could think about being 'back together' with them again and loved.

The second author, by sharing her experience of *projective identification* with the educator, was able to help both of them reflect on their feelings of helplessness evoked by Donald's distress. Further, she described how the collaborative reflection that continued in the TOM seminar group led to a sense of the group providing containment for her feelings. The centre director, through her experience of contain-

ment in the seminar group, was able to provide a similar experience for the staff, giving them the *thinking space* to reflect on what Donald was communicating through his behaviour. They were then able to provide containment for him.

11.8   Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has described the theoretical underpinnings of the Tavistock observation method and how it was applied during an eight-session training programme with early childhood educators and clinicians working together through a process of supported collaborative reflection. Only a small selection of the observational narratives gathered and discussed during the programme have been presented, but they illustrate the experiences of all the participants, who found within themselves a growing 'capacity … to be receptive to and contain intense communications of emotion from the children they observed' (Elfer 2012, p. 229). The insights into children's emotional communications were able to be taken back to staff by the directors who participated in the programme. This resulted in a greater appreciation on the part of educators of children's experiences of difficult emotions and the introduction of new approaches that helped them understand and support children.

Our experience as researchers and practitioners has shown that psychoanalytic approaches, such as the TOM, can provide guidance for educators to ensure young children's well-being. It also provides a means to help educators acknowledge and reconcile opposing notions of the child as competent and vulnerable. The notion of children as both more and less competent was introduced by Kalliala (2014) whose observations in Finnish daycare centres found 'a rich variety of children … who need adults in many ways' (p. 14). Similarly, Salamon and Harrison (2015) discuss the contradictory images that educators hold of young children, seeing them as less competent in their emotional and social development and more competent in their physical and cognitive development. While these contradictions may challenge the prevailing view in early childhood of 'the competent child', they also reflect the reality of educator-child relationships, particularly for infants and toddlers. In discussing this tension, Kalliala (p. 6) writes: 'the more fearful adults are of limiting the rich potential of the competent child, the more difficult it becomes to find a positive and active adult role … (and) to trust in his or her abilities to offer the child something valuable'. The benefit of the TOM is that in developing understandings of children's emotional communication, it addresses adults' fears and difficult emotions, through reflection and self-awareness within a supportive group environment, and through that can build a sense of trust and strength. Our hope is that the results of this initial trial of the TOM will provide the basis for further extension of the method into early childhood settings more broadly.

and observe. We also wish to acknowledge the infants from whom we learn. We thank Belinda Blecher for her warmth and expertise as the trainer and facilitator of the seminar meetings – she gave us thinking space and containment – and the group members, Jodie Daley, Gianna Black, Italia Parletta and Toni Lac, from whom our learning grew. Finally, we thank Dr. Peter Elfer, University of Roehampton, whose invitation to collaborate inspired this project.

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Chapter 12
Transitory Moments as "Affective Moments of Action" in Toddler Play

Gloria Quiñones, Liang Li, and Avis Ridgway

Abstract This chapter examines how toddlers develop affective relations while they play. A cultural–historical approach is used to understand affect and play. Visual methodologies are used to illustrate moments of affect in peer play. The case study involves two Australian-borne babies aged one and a half and two with Mexican and Chinese heritages, respectively. The case example analyses how transitory moments emerge when there are "affective moments of action", as toddlers play together affectively and reciprocally. It is found that toddler's affective actions are important in how they develop their play. Familiar games such as peek-a-boo, crawling like dogs and hop up and down like bunnies were played and shared in affective moments of action. These affective moments of action as transitory moments involved toddlers' self-awareness of each other, change of actions and the sharing of multiple affective gazes and movements used to play collectively. Important implications for future research involve being aware of how peer play offers the exploration of toddlers' will and agency and development of affective interest in each other's play and games.

Keywords Toddlers play • Transitory moments • Affective moments • Affective action

12.1 Introduction

In this chapter the concept of *affective moments of action* in how two toddlers play is theorised. Toddler's *affective action* is bodily communicated gracefully – in harmony and responsively and at the same time respectful of one another. The example contains many transitory moments of self-awareness and change, moments of affective action where toddlers share meanings and affective imagined actions. For these

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two toddlers, they both give each other space to have their own willingness to play and give a different meaning to how they use the space, a kitchen full of adults observing them.

Research in play has shown the importance of power relationships as an integral aspect of play (Wood 2010). It is important to recognise power relations exist in play and understand power dynamics, choices and freedom as important aspects of play (Rogers 2010; Wood 2010). In peer play children are able to experience the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and also experience control and power (Rogers 2010). Play allows children's exploration and making their own decisions as an avenue for exploring care and being thoughtful of each other (Edmiston and Taylor 2010). Studies in play with toddlers reveal that children explore their boundaries in their worlds, and when power exists, playfulness creates a great difference (Singer 2013).

For infants and toddlers, it is necessary to understand their experiences and how they relate to their human body, which can be seen as power. This relates to how they are able to move gracefully. Further, their expressions can show self-awareness and their movements, poetic, musical, rhythmic or melodious, can be sensed as powerful. It is strongly believed that teachers need to be intuitive about how to respond and pay attention to infant–toddlers' body movements, facial expressions and hand gestures when they are expressing their impulses (Trevarthen 2011). Children's play engagements involve making eye contact, smiling and giving confirmation; this is important for children's joint play (Singer, Chap. 14, this volume).

Most research acknowledges important dimensions of children's exercise of will and power. A cultural–historical lens allows to look at how these peer relations in different transitory moments unfold and change during play. These "affective moments of action" are real and imaginary and shared with peers. The research question examined in this chapter is how do toddlers affectively relate in play and how can we better identify their graceful and "affective moments of action" as they play together. In order to answer this question, we have visually identified and theorised transitory moments as "moments of affective action". These moments are full of self-awareness, and toddlers learn to respond gracefully – visually we show how their bodies are responsive to each other and in harmony while they maintain their own choices and include each other in the imagined situations they share and create.

12.2   Cultural–Historical Theory

Vygotsky (1966) explains how "children's play is imagination in action" (p. 3). Play brings affective incentives to children, and in play children realise different motives and actions, becoming aware and conscious in the process of acting and imagining. However, how does this process happen in action and unfold? Vygotsky explains there is always an imaginary situation in play. Imaginary situations involve players

and imaginary ideas are played by children. For example, the concept of sister is played by how we have experienced being a sister and our understandings of real situations of what this means. Imaginary situations contain rules of behaviour – that is how to act; in the process of acting, children make meaning of what they imagine through acting out. Through the process of acting out, children are making sense of the situation they are in, for example, the physical space they are in, the players involved and how they might act out their imagined ideas; all these occur while children play.

Vygotsky (1966) explains how situations or fields are directly influenced by perception (visual field) which is related to affective and motor activity. This we have called *affective moments of action*, where toddlers are able to act upon an imaginary field and in relation to the real situation that is affecting them.

> Action in a situation that is not seen, but only conceived mentally in an imaginary field (i.e. an imaginary situation), teaches the child to guide his behaviour not only by immediate perception of objects or by the situation immediately affecting him but also by the meaning of this situation (p. 10)

For young children, the fusion between field of vision and field of sense is important, especially when we think of the concept of imaginary situation. Children have to evaluate the real and concrete situations and their significance as they give meaning to them. They also have to imagine their actions and their role in these situations.

In play there is a dual affective plane – the child's own affects that are spontaneous actions, desires, impulses and personal demands and another stronger affect, renouncing (giving up) the first affect for staying in the game and having (or keeping) self-control in play. This dual affect creates a "maximum display of willpower" (Vygotsky 1966, p. 14) that is negotiated between the players. This willpower shows how the child is able to achieve what might be possible in play and reflects a high level of morality in the child's actions. The development of will in play shows that the child is able to make choices in real and imaginary situations. In this chapter, we explore these ideas as two toddlers are able to affectively relate through what Vygotsky (1966) explains as an affective plane. According to Fleer (2014), in play there are higher levels of conscious understanding that appear and are developed through acting with will and power which lead to higher moral actions.

We have theorised the concepts of agentic imagination and conceptual reciprocity (Ridgway et al. 2015) to strongly emphasise the shared intentions young children develop when they are in real and imaginary situations. Agentic imagination develops when young children can be in the same play space and are able to imagine what they want, and they have strong motives for playing together. We found that very young children are able to affectively engage together in playing and creating collective imaginary situations that arise from what is available to them (Ridgway et al. 2015).

In agentic imagination there are many transitory moments that young children live and experience. These moments are lived so quickly, and visual methodologies allow researchers to review and reinterpret what the child perceives.

12.3   Methodology

Visual methodologies offer a "platform to support the researcher in capturing children's communication and interactions with their families at home" (Li 2014, p. 37). In this chapter, visual methodologies allowed us to look closer at toddlers' interactions in a family.

When researching toddlers as moving and relating bodies in the process of experiencing affective moments of action, a methodology capable of highly nuanced interpretation is required. Building on a visual narrative, the visual methodologies used in this chapter involved using screenshots from a short video clip that captures a spontaneous event in a family home (Li 2012, 2014; Quiñones 2013, 2014; Quiñones and Fleer 2011; Ridgway 2010; Ridgway et al. 2015).

The analysis of the "affective moment of action" in play involved many transitory moments that were selected and named. Using still images that captured affective moments of action was a way for researchers to review the play event from different perspectives.

Analysing the video for the finely detailed exchanges involves interpreting the toddlers' active relations in the physical space and bodily context as well as in the context of their play. This enables stabilising the bodily movements for shareability and closer scrutiny and thus forms part of our thinking behind the use of visual methodology for this research.

A closer look at the physical, lived and imagined space:

• We examine the wider context, space, relations and other significant interactions such as adults involved in the lived space. This lived space not only as the physical or function of the space (Sumsion and Harrison 2014) but as real and imagined and carefully looking at the open possibilities toddlers are able to be and create together.

A closer analysis of the relationships:

• Visually capture any activity where the possibilities of qualitative change in the young child's momentary actions occur, in order to expand our capacity to interpret participants' intersecting motives, inclinations, perspectives, feelings and ideas (Ridgway, Li and Quiñones, under review; Li, Ridgway and Quiñones, Chap. 3, this volume).
• An examination of toddler's participation through looking at gestures, movements, responses, gazes, relational positions, sustained activity and wordless expressions of our infant–toddler subjects with deep feeling and interest (Ridgway, Quiñones and Li, Chap. 10, this volume).

The lived experience of toddlers can be captured by using visual methodology. As Lokken (2011) argued, the observation of the young babies and toddlers should be "lived as perceived, experienced and interpreted while *doing* it as part of the actual context of the study" (p. 162). This can be formed through "feeling one's way" as lived observation. In this study, the visual narrative methodology aims to

capture the lived experience of the infants and toddlers and is interpreted from their perspective to see how they express their cultural experience and willingness in the social situation.

The analysis of the case example began with selecting transitory moments as *affective moments of action*. The identification of these moments related to the toddler's graceful affective moves and any changes and moments of self-awareness are noted. Throughout the case example, selected visual images are followed by a narrative interpretation of what happened.

Visual images are chosen to show toddlers' affective moments of action and the development of their will as they make and negotiate decisions about their play in a shared space. As researchers we choose to make comments on each figure (image) selected for the case example, in order to reflect different cultural perspectives.

12.4   Research Context

The following example took place in the family home of Silvana on the Mornington Peninsula in Australia. Silvana and Elvin, the focus children in this example, are Australian. Each of them has a different cultural background being from Mexican and Chinese heritage families. Silvana is 2 years old and Elvin is 1 year and 5 months old. Silvana and Elvin know each other from childcare, but even so they are in different rooms seeing each other mainly in the playground and when their mothers pick them up.

On this day parents and researcher are having a meeting. Liang is the mother of Elvin, Gloria is Silvana's mother and Avis is the researcher filming. Two family friends are visiting Gloria and Silvana's house; Silvana's father is present. Silvana's father and mother are in the house and Elvin's mother is also present.

Elvin's mother, Silvana's mother and the researcher have a work meeting at Silvana's house. It's a Monday midday and all participants are in the kitchen. The mothers, Silvana's father, Jorge, the two guests and the researcher (who films the event) are present. There is a small white table in the middle of the kitchen, and the mothers are sitting together on a small step at the side. The researcher who knows both toddlers since birth starts spontaneously filming Silvana and Elvin's playful exchange. Jorge is preparing something in the kitchen for the friends who sit at a table in the corner of the room.

It's Elvin's first time in the house, and it's a new space for him, different from Silvana who knows the space and is familiar with the guests who are sitting at the larger table. Elvin has just arrived at the house and is observing the different interactions occurring.

As a play space for the toddlers, the room presents exciting possibilities and uncertainties to negotiate. For Silvana she is showing excitement at having Elvin present and near her table that has some toys on it, including trains as the family thinks he might like them. For Elvin, he takes time to be familiar with this new space and people around him. He is sitting on his mother's lap and starts gazing

around the new environment. His mother follows him to make him feel comfortable rather than forcing him to communicate with other people. Elvin listens and looks at his mother's interaction with others. After a while, he shows his interest in the train toys that his mother presents to him. He started to move out of his mother's lap, showing confidence.

The adult participants seem to feel comfortable in this kitchen space as Jorge prepares food, and they sit at the side on steps or at the table. There is a nice feeling of home and family, and for the toddlers (who are the focus of our research), there is some excitement in being together and exploring possibilities and uncertainties in a new social situation.

12.5 Case Example

The following visual narrative example starts with Silvana running about excitedly and making sounds. Silvana says "aweee" and the father laughs. Silvana runs and says "auuu eeee" and holds two trains. She runs around the table. Silvana suddenly stops and looks at Elvin who is close to his mother and also makes a noise. The adults have a conversation about how Elvin looks like his father.

Silvana's steady gaze and stillness are clear in Fig. 12.2, as she becomes aware of toddler Elvin's presence. Silvana has been moving and running around before this, and now she is very still, with open mouth and wide eyes, taking in new possibilities in the changed context of her social situation. Her table and the toys and little trains are not attracting her attention in this transitory moment of self (and other)-awareness as she looks with interest at Elvin who occupies her familiar space.

Silvana places the trains back on the table. Elvin comes close to Silvana and begins a peek-a-boo game. These two images, Fig. 12.2 and Fig. 12.3, show how the toddlers are making sense of transitory moments of self-awareness and beginning to relate to each other as their play unfolds.

Elvin moves towards Silvana, and in his active movements, he offers a game – "peek-a-boo" – that he plays often. He approaches Silvana with body positions that show his readiness to play this game. Hands up, peeping through fingers, he is looking at Silvana trying to catch her eye. Silvana gently places the two trains back on the table and empties her hands, perhaps in readiness to join the play Elvin is suggesting. She reads his gestures, his invitation to play, and turns towards him (Fig. 12.4).

The transitory moments of their play are indicated through their affective moments of action. Vygotsky (1966) has argued on the union of affect and perception. "Perception is generally not an independent feature, but an initial feature of a motor-affective reaction…The child cannot act otherwise than as constrained by the situation-or the field- in which he finds himself" (p. 10). Elvin has become familiar with the new space and started the communicative initiation of interacting with his peer, Silvana, through the peek-a-boo game. It reflects his affective reaction to the new space and awareness of the others in the new space.

Fig. 12.1 Kitchen: Play space

Fig. 12.2 Transitory moment of self-awareness for Silvana

Fig. 12.3 Transitory moment of play: Elvin plays peek-a-boo with Silvana, and Silvana places the trains together

Fig. 12.4 Moment of relating: Silvana looks and smiles back at Elvin, while Elvin looks at Jorge

Silvana turns to see Elvin as he comes closer to her, and Elvin looks up, moves his "peek-a-boo" hands down and turns his head to see Jorge. Elvin looks past Silvana at Jorge. Silvana gives a warm welcoming look and smile to Elvin, and her whole body moves around showing readiness to play with him. Elvin says "eehhh" and smiles back at Silvana. Silvana hears Elvin. She quickly puts the trains on the table, looks at the researcher and responds to Elvin with "eeehhh".

In Fig. 12.5. Silvana jumps like a bunny, goes down to Elvin's eye level and looks at Elvin who smiles back. They hold a direct gaze in this transitory moment that now becomes an affective moment of action.

Both toddlers attend a childcare centre where a bunny jump action game is played. Silvana is familiar with the bunny jump, and Fig. 12.6 shows how Silvana is excited to start this game. Elvin is watching her moves carefully and attentively and is willing to participate.

Elvin responds to Silvana with an "ooo" and stands up.

These two images, Fig. 12.5 and Fig. 12.6, show the first affective moments of action. These are the first moments of Silvana and Elvin affectively relating and actively engaging in play. As Vygotsky (1966) explains, this develops as young children have their own spontaneous actions. This moment is reciprocal as Elvin relates back to Silvana creating a game of sounds with graceful gazing between the two toddlers. Both toddlers show their willingness in playing with each other, and their affective actions show the reciprocal response in play.

In Fig. 12.7, Silvana responds back with "aaooo" and socially references her mother who is sitting on the side step. In this affective moment, Silvana says "aaa" and both she and Elvin spontaneously and harmoniously move to squat down together. This affective moment of action is strongly felt with toddlers. In these two images of shared action, there are many transitory moments that can be seen as affective moments of action. As the space is surrounded by new people and relationships, Silvana and Elvin are aware of the adults in the space. Despite this, they are

Fig. 12.5 First affective moment of action: game up and down

Fig. 12.6 Second affective moment of action: game up and down

able to spontaneously display their affective actions authored and shared by them in graceful and rhythmic ways, through making their own sounds "up up" and body movements going up and down.

In Figs. 12.9 and 12.10, it can be seen that a new game is initiated by moving up and down. In Fig. 12.11, Silvana leaps up with a big jump and looks at Elvin to see if he saw her action. Elvin waits and looks towards Jorge. Suddenly, Elvin's mother (who has been watching the play) says to Elvin "up", Jorge also says to Elvin "up, up", and Elvin responds by standing up under these instructions. This moment is a transitory moment because in affectively moving with different actions, both children are making meaning of the situations and gaze wanders (e.g. Figs. 12.11, 12.12 and 12.13 as Elvin make sense of the transitory moment).

Fig. 12.7 Affective moment of shared action: game up and down

Fig. 12.8 Shared action: game up and down

For Silvana, it can be seen that she enjoys the squatting and moving up and down play with Elvin, and it is in this moment that their relationship in the play begins to be established. For Elvin, it takes time as he is aware of the many adults in the space (see Fig. 12.14 Silvana invites Elvin to crawl together). There is an expectation of Elvin to follow the game of up and down as both his mother and Silvana's father have said to him "up". However, Elvin is able to take his time to choose and imagine further actions shared together that now begin to develop.

Silvana comes closer to Elvin who now puts his arms over his eyes and Silvana imitates Elvin. Elvin is initiating a game he knows well and enjoys – playing peek-a-boo (e.g. 12.11 peek-a-boo). This is the game that requires a shared affective moment of action to be played. Silvana shows her interest by imitating Elvin's

Fig. 12.9 Continuous action and self-awareness

Fig. 12.10 Elvin waits

action. The affective connections between Silvana and Elvin have been formed through shared understanding of peek-a-boo in their collective imaginary situation (see Fig. 12.12 collective imaginary situation is created with actions).

This time Elvin says something and Silvana's expression shows self-awareness of what Elvin is saying. Elvin says "oye wua?" and Silvana suddenly realises and looks carefully at Elvin. Then they look back at their mothers and Silvana laughs and smiles back. She says in quite a definite manner "mas, more…" (see Fig. 12.13 transitory moment: change of actions).

Silvana points to Elvin who is now moving away and stamping with his feet. She seems to want him to stay near her; however, Elvin moves towards where his mother is sitting. He wants to get a book from her bag. Elvin's mother takes the book out of

Fig. 12.11 Peek-a-boo

Fig. 12.12 Collective imaginary situation

Fig. 12.13 Transitory moment: change of actions

Fig. 12.14 Crawling together

Fig. 12.15 Walking on their knees

the bag. She says something to Elvin "Do you want a book?", and he moves and sits on the floor near his mother and moves his shoe heel onto the concrete to hear the scraping sound. Silvana sits down next to him. Elvin then positions himself as if he is going to crawl away, and Silvana touches Elvin and smiles a beautiful engaging smile. Elvin chooses his movement and begins to crawl off. In an affective moment of action, Silvana follows him crawling along by his side, and they move together in synchrony, side by side (crawling occurs in Figs. 12.15, 12.16 and 12.17).

Now that they are both crawling, they exchange gazes, and Silvana chooses to make more emphasis with her movements. In Fig. 12.17, Silvana makes an "auuu" sound (like the sound of a dog) several times. This captures Elvin's attention and he listens to Silvana and looks across at what she is doing. Elvin chooses to make a

Fig. 12.16 Shared affective gaze exchange

Fig. 12.17 Elvin's display of willpower

similar sound. They show shared agentic imagination and willpower in this affective moment of action.

In this moment, what is important is how it takes time for both toddlers to be reciprocal to each other's action (for example in Fig. 12.17). Elvin stops and Silvana says to Elvin "ven come" and moves her right hand as a sign for him to come (Arievitch and Stetsenko 2014). Elvin stays on his knees, and affective moments of action appear to be signified through body positions and synchronised movements in the toddler's play.

There is a new close relation evident in the movements of crawling and walking in knees. The toddlers are imagining being dogs together, crawling on all fours, imagining being dogs and making dog barking noises. They are embodied in their crawling play experience (see Figs. 12.14 to 12.17).

Soon they both stand up and look at Jorge who provides another idea to extend what they are doing together: "ahora como gato", and then he says in English "like a cat" and Silvana says "miuuu". Elvin using his own will continues with his dog sound "au, au" and doesn't follow Silvana but stays and looks back at Jorge and then to Silvana and then to his mother. Elvin then starts to play the familiar peek-a-boo with his mother, while Silvana continues to play being a cat as suggested by her father Jorge. She is saying "miaow". Elvin turns from this game to look at his mum who is saying "peek-a-boo where is Elvin?". His mother says "yes, where is Elvin?".

In Fig. 12.15, Elvin now looks back at Silvana and crawls towards her (see Fig. 12.14 crawling together; Fig. 12.15 walking on knees and Fig. 12.16 exchanging gaze- together) where they exchange a close intense gaze (Alcock 2009). Silvana's look is full of eagerness to continue the play and she is smiling. Elvin and Silvana look at each other and Silvana says to him enthusiastically: "Aca, here". Silvana says "Aca, ven". Silvana's mum translates "come here, aca". Silvana touches Elvin's back very tenderly and gently tries to hold on to him. Elvin says "aahh" and clearly shows that he doesn't want to come. Silvana's mum says "maybe he doesn't want to". Elvin's mum says "stand up" (see Fig. 12.17 Elvin's display of willpower). Elvin quickly moves and turns around to go towards his mother. Both mothers are engaged in observing and supporting their child's play. Both toddlers respond to this presence in the space, feeling comfortable to choose their own play positions, and freely engage in many affective moments of action.

Silvana now follows Elvin, moves to his back and walks around him (e.g. Fig. 12.16 shairng gaze; e.g. Fig. 12.17 holding him up). She positions herself there, touches him and holds on gently as if she wants him to stand up; however, Elvin makes a noise and lays down. Elvin says "yaya" to indicate he doesn't want Silvana to pick him up. His body movement of physically flattening himself out onto the concrete floor gives a message of resistance to Silvana's desire. He is showing in this affective moment of action that he doesn't want Silvana to pick him up. He wants to be in control of his own body movements and displays his will by choosing his own actions and position. He does this, positioned in close proximity to the mothers.

These final affective moments of action in this small play event have a powerful meaning for both toddlers who are able to exert their own willpower (e.g. Fig. 12.13; change of actions; Fig. 12.17 -Elvin's will power) and yet, at the same time, negotiate understandings in relation to one another's wilful choices of play. They are in a friendly supportive space where adults are accessible and easily socially referenced.

12.6   Discussion

The chapter focused on identifying affective moments of action in play. The different dimensions of affective moments of action emerged from:

Familiarising with the New Social Situation

For Silvana she was familiar with the physical space; she welcomed Elvin to the space providing familiar objects and trains and waiting for him to respond to her actions. The space is secure for the two toddlers because their parents are present. Elvin's mother is present in the space, and he can socially reference her by making eye contact and coming closer when he needs to. Silvana's mother and father are also present and their friends are familiar. This includes a new social situation that is very social for the adults and the children. This social situation shows the importance of the relations between the physical spaces and the imagined space which are significant for affective relations.

Transitory Moments of Self-Awareness and Change of Relations

Each child in order to realise their own motives and actions needed to self-evaluate their own affects in order to not only create something new but engage the other child in shared play. In this example, we see Silvana and Elvin taking their time in understanding and imitating their affective actions.

Shared Affective Moments of Play

Vygotsky (1966) identified in play an affective plane where children had their own affect through giving up their own desires and motives to stay in the game. In this case example, familiar games were important for developing reciprocal play interactions. Elvin the younger toddler holds on to a familiar game "peek-a-boo" (e.g. Fig. 12.11) which forms part of his cultural play repertoire. Silvana uses highly responsive gestures and holds on to her feelings of imagined actions so Elvin could share, such as bunny jump up and down and the pretend play of being dogs. Sharing affective gaze and being together in this imagined play build into a relationship where they can become something else, like dogs, for instance. They have many affective moments of action as they make their own individual choices through both self-will and collective choices using agentic imagination.

Toddlers can sensitively evaluate both real and imagined situational choices though close observation of their movements and actions where willpower may be exerted strongly or tenderly. When the two toddlers acted upon the imaginary field in the new social situation, they experienced their relationship differently and began an affective way of knowing one another in their play.

12.7   Conclusion

Relationships with peers are a significant source of learning opportunities; infants and toddlers have a "keen interest in other children" (Elicker et al. 2014, p. 137). Further, peer interaction can be seen as an arena where children can explore early communication, cooperation, empathy and conflict. These are reasons why peer relations are important to be observed (Elicker et al. 2014). We can see in this

example Silvana and Elvin not only explored but created all these, and we add they welcomed each other to their games and affectively related by being interested and joining in their imaginary situations and imagined actions.

Our research shows how important it is for children to play together as they learn how to affectively relate to their own wilful intentions and how to negotiate with others when playing. Children were able to join into imaginary situations and affective actions (being bunnies (up and down), being dogs by crawling, peek-a-boo by hiding using hands) through agreeing in play; children created a welcoming space and environment for playing together.

Emde et al. (1991) suggest that "the child has a set of emotional signals to guide wilful action according to what feels right or not" (p. 251). From this visual narrative, we see that emotional signals may be identified in the concept of *affective moments of action*, which are theorised as involving toddlers in responsive, graceful and harmoniously coordinated movements where individual transitory moments as affective moments of action are interspersed with shared agentic imagination.

Affective moments of action as transitory moments of play are possible when toddlers are sensitive to each other's agentic imagination. Their actions become collective and shared when there is an understanding of each other's imagination, and in this example, games involved actions that include what Vygotsky (1966) refers to as a dual affective plane – their own individual affect by playing through and renouncing of actions to stay in the game through following each other's affective actions. Silvana and Elvin took their chances while they played; they wanted to play together, and this is the highest level of affective recognition they develop in this play. Peer play offered the toddlers an exploration of their will and agency, and as Johansson (Chap. 2, this volume) mentions "everyone has the opportunity to play with peers". More research is needed to further understand young children's affective actions and engagements in play.

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Chapter 13
Relations of Dynamic Aspects of Motives in Infant-Toddler's Play: Enhance *Small Science* Learning Experience

Shukla Sikder

Abstract Motives as a psychological concept are vital for understanding play and how a play motive influences children's learning and development (Fleer, Early learning and development: cultural-historical concepts in play. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010). Play provides space for the conscious realization of everyday concepts (Fleer, A cultural-historical perspective on play: Play as a leading activity across cultural communities. In Pramling-Samuelsson I, Fleer M (eds) Play and learning in early childhood settings. Springer, London, pp 1–18, 2008). The process of concept formation begins at a very young age (Vygotsky, The development of scientific concepts in childhood (Minick N, Trans.). In Rieber RW, Carton AS (eds) The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky, vol 1. Plenum Press, New York, pp 167–241, 1987). It is evident that science concept formation in infant-toddler's life, named as *small science*, can occur through play and everyday activities (Sikder and Fleer, Research Science Educ 45(3):445–464. doi:10.1007/s11165-014-9431-0, 2015a). It is established that play motives enhance children's learning and development in concept formation (Fleer, The development of motives in children's play. In Hedegaard M, Edwards A, Fleer M (eds) Motives in children's development cultural-historical approaches. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012) and the dynamic aspects of relations of motives have a significant influence in children's learning and development (Hedegaard, The dynamic aspects in children's learning and development. In Hedegaard M, Edwards A, Fleer M (eds) Motives in children's development cultural-historical approaches. Cambridge University Press, New York, pp 9–27, 2012). However, it is still unknown how the relations of dynamic aspects of motives in play might create the conditions and potential for learning *small science* concepts in play contexts at the infant-toddler age. Child's multiple relationships in the play context will be considered as dynamic aspects of motives in play in this chapter. The qualitative case study investigates the dynamic aspects of motives that provide the possibility for scientific concept learning for young children in their everyday cultural life at home. Digital video

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methodology has been utilized for data collection from the child's everyday family context. In this chapter, an analysis of 12 h of video data gathered over 4 months from one child's everyday family life is presented. Hedegaard's (The dynamic aspects in children's learning and development. In Hedegaard M, Edwards A, Fleer M (eds) Motives in children's development cultural-historical approaches. Cambridge University Press, New York, pp 9–27, 2012) planes of analysis were used to analyse the data. The findings indicate that the dynamic aspects of motives have a significant influence on infant-toddler's play. Successful dynamic play motives as a whole enhance infant-toddlers' learning of *small science* concept formation as part of everyday family practice. This research impacts on an under-researched area of infant-toddlers' science concept learning.

Keywords Infant-toddler • Dynamic aspects of motives • Play • *Small Science* concept • Learning and development

13.1 Introduction

There is an extensive body of literature that provides understanding of various types of development through play or everyday activities. The literature shows that play enhances children's specific development in particular contexts, such as children's development in preschool period (Duncan and Tarulli 2003), the effect of relations in development (Lillard 2007), conceptual development (Fleer 2011), emotional development (Chen and Fleer 2013), development on learning roles and rules (Ugaste 2005) and so on in infant-toddler-preschooler's age. However, these studies identify individual aspects of children's learning and development and do not include how the relationship of dynamic aspects of play culture creates a motive for them.

The literature has noted the influence of children's motives for play, learning and development (Fleer 2010; Fleer 2012). However, these studies generally focus on a single entity, such as a societal motive for children's play, and ignore the dynamic aspects of motives in play in a particular cultural context. Additionally, the literature mostly looked at children over 3 years of age. Throughout this chapter, the researcher will examine an infant-toddler's (10–13 months) play motives from the perspective of the dynamic aspects in everyday family culture and how play motives enhance the infant-toddler's scientific learning experience.

It is evident that science activities can provide rich possibilities for supporting children's learning and development (Bayraktar 2011; Fleer and Pramling 2015). However, there are very few studies (Forman 2010; Gopnik 2012; Sikder and Fleer 2015a, b) on infant-toddler's science learning. The literature provides knowledge on children's science concept formation at a young age based on self-interest, inquiry-based science education, parent's engagement in science learning and everyday context for science learning. However, none of these studies reveal how the relation-

ship of dynamic aspects of a play motive enhances infant-toddler's science learning and development in their everyday life. In addition, these studies do not explain play motives in their cultural context. In this chapter, the researcher will try to fill this gap by examining how the dynamic aspects of motives influence infant-toddler's play and how play motives as a whole contribute to infant-toddler's science learning experience in an everyday cultural context.

The next section will discuss the theoretical aspects of motives and the meaning of dynamic aspects of motives for this play context.

13.2 Cultural-Historical Theorisation of Motives in Play and Learning

Unlike other concepts in cultural-historical theory, there is no single standard definition of motives. Chaiklin (2012), p. 223, says, "Motives should be defined and limited more rigorously in relation to societal needs". Further, Fleer (2012) suggests that "Motive defined in this way- as something generated through observing or participating in an activity- rather than as something that comes solely from within is a powerful concept for understanding play" (p. 91). From a cultural-historical point of view, motive is tightly connected with a person's will, and motives influence a person's action (Kravtsova and Kravtsov 2012). In order to understand motives, Hedegaard (2012, p. 24) mentions, "we have to follow the child in his or her activities as intentional actions and interactions with others in activity settings". Therefore, according to a cultural-historical point of view, motives do not develop only from a person's own internal tendencies but also from a person's relationship with others and their environment, in a cultural context.

The concept of motive is central in cultural-historical theory (Chaiklin 2012). In play, the child learns to act in a cognitive realm that depends on internal tendencies and motives, and play provides a background for changes in need and consciousness of a much wider nature (Vygotsky 1966). Elkonin (2005) contends that play is not driven by internal instincts or motives, but rather it is through the child's engagement with their social environment and their relationship to others and the material world that play motives develop. Fleer (2010) emphasizes that a motive is a psychological concept for children's development in play.

For understanding children's play, we should consider their needs, inclinations, incentives and motives to actions in which children's learning advances from one stage to the next (Vygotsky 1966). Similarly, in this chapter, the infant-toddler's play motives will be examined through their multiple relationships in the family context, such as represented in relationships between play partners, interaction between play partners, incentives for actions, cultural influences and influence of the current environment. In other words, these relationships explain the dynamic aspects of motives. Hedegaard (2012) investigates dynamic aspects of children's relations in the particular context of "homework" example and showed how each

aspect of motives contributes to children's learning and development in the situation. Explaining the relations of dynamic aspects of motives, Hedegaard (2012) shows how the particular family culture has been influenced by multiple relations of the moment. Hedegaard (2012) discusses children's relation as relevant to a societal motive, institutional motive, the motive of the situation, person activities as a motive and human's self-driven motive in the family culture. Hedegaard (2012) suggests that the concept of social situation is the key to understanding this dynamic and "the social situation of development is nothing other than a system of relations between the child of a given age and social reality" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 199).

In Hedegaard's (2012) research, the children were studied through using a wholeness approach. Vygotsky (1998, p. 188) argued that "child development is such a complex process that it cannot be determined at all completely according to one trait alone at any stage". It is not meaningful then if we investigate only a single motive to understand children's development in the particular context.

It is well established that a play motive can contribute to children's learning motive and development if teachers connect teaching practices with children's experience or interest in a play context (Fleer 2012). However, it is still unknown how this dynamic aspect of motives in play contributes to children's learning and development at a young age. Using a cultural-historical point of view, children's motives in play should be studied as a system of relations between the child of a given age and social reality as part of the social situation of development, and then we can understand the dynamic aspects of motives in play.

Thus, a play event of a young child (around 12 months) will be investigated where the mother creates a collective play situation for exploring sound concepts in everyday culture of their family home. Since the mother provides some toys for exploring sound concepts, the study investigated how the child was engaged in exploring the sound concepts in this play situation. In collective play, it is significant to consider children's play engagements include intensive eye contact, smiling, sad face and reactions to the moments (Singer 2015). Exploring sound concepts in the play event is considered as *small science* experience in this chapter.

It is established in previous research (Sikder and Fleer 2015a) that infant-toddlers experience *small science* concepts through everyday activities, including play as part of family practices, where *small science* is defined as simple scientific narration of the everyday cultural contexts that infants and toddlers experience at home with their families. Here is an example taken (Sikder and Fleer 2015a) for understanding *small science* concepts in an infant-toddler's life:

> A child (around two years) learned *small science* concepts such as to press hard, to push, to roll and to turn the play dough into shapes (e.g. as a doll or duck through her mother's simple scientific narration to accompany these movements and moments). The language of push, press hard, and roll, as symbolic of actions of Force, represent moments of *small science* that occur during positive and engaged playful interaction at home. At this stage, we can say the academic concept of Force will not be learned completely now. However it will become incrementally understood through the learning of *small science* concepts such as push, press hard, roll in everyday life. The concept of *small science* helps name this incremental process that is so relevant for infants and toddlers experiencing science concepts in

everyday life. The child's everyday play activities through this everyday event helped him/her to experience these science concepts as *small science* moments (p. 13).

The above discussion explains the theoretical understanding of the dynamic aspects of motives and the meaning of *small science* concepts in an infant-toddler's life. It is also argued (Sikder and Fleer 2015a) that small science concepts can be learned if the child can consciously apply his/her learning in a voluntary manner. In this chapter I now examine how the relationship of play motives enhances children's small science learning from the cultural-historical point of view.

13.3 Study Design

13.3.1 Data Collection

The data have been collected from three Bangladeshi children (10–36 months) who lived in Australia and Singapore during the period of 2012–2013. In this study, children used everyday family contexts (e.g. use family mirror for learning body parts) and toys (e.g. cooking toys) available to them in their family culture. The particular play context of one child's (Barnan pseudonym) everyday life was used for understanding the dynamic aspects of motives in child's play and scientific learning experience. The researcher has chosen one example where Barnan aged 11 months and 18 days plays with musical toys in his family home.

The researcher (Bangladeshi origin) captured video data in infant-toddler's everyday cultural contexts such as mealtime, playtime, bath time and story time. A total of almost 30 h of video data were gathered. In Barnan's family, approximately 12 h of video data were gathered in regular cultural practices at home over a period of 4 months.

13.3.2 Data Analysis

For analysing the science learning experience, the researcher used the methodological tool of Visual Vivencias (Quiñones and Fleer 2011). Visual Vivencias is "an analytical tool to further understand visually the child's emotional experience of the event" (Quiñones and Fleer 2011, p. 123). In this chapter, the child has been studied in relation to the dynamic aspects of the social relations in his home culture, as well as how the child was motivated by the dynamic aspects of the play context. To achieve this, Visual Vivencias (Quiñones and Fleer 2011) is used to study the child's emotional experience (e.g. intense eye contact, happy and sad face, level of engagement, actions with energy and attention, interest in the object) in relation to the dynamic aspects of the play in which the child's science learning is taking place.

Table 13.1 Planes of analysis to capture the dynamic relations in children's learning and development

Entity	Process	Dynamic
Society	Tradition	Societal needs/conditions
Institution	Practice	Value motive/objectives
Activity settings	Situation	Motivations/demands
Person	Activity	Motive/intentions
Human's biology	Neurophysiological processes	Primary needs/drive

For analysing the dynamic relations of motives in play, the researcher chose Hedegaard's (2012, p. 19) planes of analysis in which the dynamic relations in children's learning and development are foregrounded (see Table 13.1 above). Hedegaard (2012, p. 18) states, "each plane presented in Table 1 depicts the relation between entity, process and dynamic. These planes are interrelated: society creates the conditions for institutions with its activity settings and persons do so with their specific biological conditions".

The researcher analysed the data from the point of view of each plane (society, institution, activity settings, person, human's biology) and how each plane is related to the child's play culture, as an entity, process and dynamic. The child's play event will be discussed through the dynamic relations of motives in detail in the discussion section where it is shown how each plane motivates the child in the context. It is noted that the researcher discussed each plane based on the play event as required.

13.4   Findings

The findings discussed below are influenced by the theoretical underpinning which framed the research questions and which are central for this chapter.

13.4.1   Background of the Play Settings

Nita (Mother) discussed with the researcher that Barnan is scared of unfamiliar sounds. Therefore, she wants to introduce some toys to Barnan (according to his age) which create different types of soft sounds. Nita is the main carer of Barnan and as a mother she usually takes part in his play. Srabanti is his regular older playmate as she is the closest neighbour of Barnan. Nita introduced a box of musical toys in a collective play moment in their family home.

The following vignette (part one and two) is transcribed from a 37 min video clip where the child explores a musical toybox. The word explore is used as play engagement with the toys. Two parts of the vignette show the similarity and contrast to the

play culture and how the relations of dynamic aspects influence the play culture for experiencing small science concepts in infant-toddler life.

13.4.2 The Vignette: Explore Sound Concepts Through Multiple Toys

13.4.2.1 Part One: Explore Tiger's Roar Sound

Nita: Wow! What is it (look at the toy box)? Barnan looks at the box and touches the box.

Srabanti: Toybox.

Nita: Yes, now we can open the box.

Srabanti picks up a tiger toy from the box and investigates how it works and tries to attract Barnan by showing the toy to him.

Nita: Srabanti, tell the name of the toy to Barnan.

Srabanti: Tiger. Srabanti presses the tail of the tiger, and it makes sound "roar".

Nita: Oma! Tiger makes roar sound. Nita presses hard on tiger's tail, and it makes a roar sound two/three times, and she keeps the tiger in the box. The roaring sound attracts Barnan.

Barnan picks up the tiger and investigates the toy with deep observation and tries to press the tail button but fails.

Nita shows him the white tail and shows him how to press the button (the tail) for making a roar sound.

Barnan again tries to press the tail for making a roar sound but fails and loses interest in it.

13.4.2.2 Interpretation of Part One

The mother creates a collective play moment which is a very common culture in Barnan's family home. Barnan was very curious about the tiger toy and tried to explore the "roar" sound. However, Barnan loses his interest in this play. This will be discussed in detail later.

13.4.3 Part Two: Explore Whistle's Sound, Rattle's Sound and Drum's Sound

Barnan picks up the whistle from the toys and looks closely at the whistle.

Nita: Wow! It is a whistle. Can you blow the whistle, Barnan?

Fig. 13.1 Exploring whistle through play

Nita takes the whistle and blows it lightly two/three times, and the whistle's tail
   becomes long. Barnan is curious about it.
Nita: Barnan, blow the whistle. Nita encourages Barnan by saying it two/three
   times. Barnan blows it, but the whistle does not work. Nita continuously encour-
   ages Barnan to blow.
Then Srabanti blows two/three times into the whistle and makes a sound, and the
   tail of the whistle extends. However, Srabanti blows the whistle very hard, and it
   makes a loud noise and Barnan becomes scared and moves to her mother's lap.
Nita: Srabanti, please do not make the volume loud as it scares Barnan. Afterwards,
   Srabanti blows the whistle lightly which makes a soft sound.
Barnan picks up the whistle and successfully blows it, as the tail becomes long (two/
   three times), but he could not make any sound.
Nita: Barnan, blow hard (two/three times) and then you can make sound. Nita shows
   how the whistle can be blown hard with her physical actions. Barnan tries to
   blow hard, and blows it happily many times although it does not make sound, and
   only the tail extends (Fig. 13.1).

Barnan also successfully makes jigjig sound by shaking a rattle and drums sound
by tapping the box with full engagement and support from Nita and Srabanti in this
collective play.

13.4.3.1 Interpretation of Part Two

Barnan was very happy in this play. He successfully explored various sound con-
cepts such as whistle sound, jigjig sound and drum sound and understands different
volumes of sound such as loud and soft. Why Barnan was successful in part two will
be discussed next in detail.

13.5   Discussions

13.5.1   *Cultural Relations: Dynamic Aspects of Motives in Play*

13.5.1.1   The Collective Play Situation as an Activity Setting – Development of Play Motives

The collective play moment is a regular cultural event in this family. The mother takes the initiative to create the activity setting that all the participants join. During this age, the primary caregiver sets joint object-centred actions based on the child's need which becomes the motive of object-centred activity of the child (Karpov 2005). In the vignette the mother as a primary caregiver sets the collective play situation with the toys by thinking of Barnan's experience of engaging with toys in relation to sound concepts and not to be frightened.

In this collective play, the attention of adult (mother) and older playmate Srabanti is important for creating the attractive play situation for Barnan. This collective play culture as an activity setting motivates Barnan to take part (Hedegaard 2012).

13.5.1.2   Family as an Institution Creates the Relations to Motivate the Child

The demands for the play activity of exploring toys for making sound are created by the family (as an institution) as part of regular play practices, and the demand has become a motive for Barnan. The family play event is very familiar and a regular practice for any child who belongs to the family. Hedegaard (2012, p. 12) relates "the relations between institutional practice and its objective and the person's motivated activity within his/her social situation of development can be seen as the core in conceptualisation of the developmental process as self-movement". As we see, Barnan takes part in the play event spontaneously which is the demand of family play.

Hedegaard (2012) states the demands become a motive through repeated actions, and as we see in both parts of the vignette, Barnan repeats the actions, by making roar sounds or whistling sounds in his play over multiple observations. The family as an institution creates the cultural relations between the child and play context that in turn motivates the child.

13.5.1.3   Culture of Family Play as a Societal Demand

Hedegaard (2012, p. 18) says society creates the conditions for an institution with its activity setting. Family is one of the institutions in society where children develop their basic learning as part of their social situation of development. Family as an institution is developed historically and provides primary conditions for children's social situation of development as part of societal demands (Hedegaard 2012).

In this vignette, Nita (mother) set up the play activity for exploring sound concepts as Barnan is scared of loud sounds or different types of sounds. Nita considers his age and chooses the toys for experiencing sound concepts. Since the family carries the play culture historically (Hedegaard and Fleer 2008), Barnan could explore the preliminary sound concepts from the family play as part of the demands of the social environment (Bozhovich 2009) which will help him understand the societal context in future life.

Through this vignette, it is evident that Barnan is motivated to explore various types of sound toys in relation to societal needs as Chaiklin (2012, p. 223) explains: "motive is limited more rigorously in relation to societal needs".

13.5.1.4 Human Biology as Primary Motives

Hedegaard (2012) states that each institution has activity settings which are set by society and the persons do the activities based on specific biological needs, such as eating, sleeping, etc. In the vignette example, the family created a play environment that the child regularly participated in and where the primary motives of the child were evident.

Hedegaard (2012) also discusses the behavioural and cognitive traditions that societies support, such as eating etiquette or attending school, suggesting that they too are part of the concept of motivation. She notes that people are primarily motivated based on success and failure in these activities, which are driven from both biological and environmental needs. We can see Barnan tries twice to press the tiger's tail for making the roar sound in part one but fails, and therefore, it seems he loses his primary motive to play with the toy again. In contrast, Barnan plays many times with the whistle as he is successful which motivates him to play more. Thus, the child is motivated because of success which primarily comes from within the child's biological needs as well as from the environment.

13.5.1.5 Relations with People Motivate the Child

In the play example, the family participates in the activity setting, and each member contributes to it, where they act according to their previous experiences (Hedegaard 2012). Nita as a mother tries to engage Barnan in the sound exploration activity that might help Barnan to reduce his fear of loud sound. Barnan is encouraged by the surrounding people.

Barnan has intensive interactions with his mother, as we see in the vignette where he is motivated to participate actively. Also, he imitates his mother's activity, by pressing the tail of the tiger or blowing the whistle. It is argued by Karpov (2005) that a child starts to imitate caregiver's actions with objects and toys in accordance with their social meaning. Srabanti, his older playmate, is experienced with all the activities and shows Barnan how he can play with toys to make sounds. Srabanti creates an encouraging environment for Barnan which motivates him to participate.

In both parts of the vignette, Barnan was motivated by the participants' intentions in play and what experience participants brought to the play. However, in part one of the vignette, Barnan could not make the sound by pressing the tiger's tail. If Nita had provided support to Barnan for pressing the tiger tail button, then perhaps Barnan might have understood the action of pressing to make the roaring sound. Since Barnan is a very young child (around 12 months) and has limited or no experience of this "press" concept (precursor to understanding force), he could not imitate the role and function demonstrated by Nita and Srabanti (Fleer 2012).

In part two, Barnan was fully motivated by the participants' activities where their intentions, experience and engagement were intensive. Thus, Barnan potentially engages the concepts of blow, shake and tap and makes different sounds by being active. In addition, Barnan experiences the different pitch and levels of sound as loud and soft in this play. Barnan's engagement in the play can be understood through his facial expressions.

13.5.1.6 Small Science Learning Through Dynamic Aspects of Play Motives

Exploring the concept of sound in play is considered a *small science* moment of learning that encourages the child to investigate sound concepts through familiar toys in a cultural play activity (Sikder and Fleer 2015a). We see how the relations of dynamic aspects of a play motive enhance the development of the child's scientific learning.

Nita creates the play environment for Barnan to explore sound concepts. Barnan is curious about the toybox and toys as seen in the vignette. In part one, Nita shows how the pressing button of the tiger's tail works for creating the "roar" sound. In part two, Nita blows the whistle lightly as she is conscious that Barnan is scared of loud noise. Srabanti blows the whistle hard and makes the whistle's tail long and with a loud sound. Through the play activities, pressing tiger's tail or blowing the whistle and creating sounds might attract Barnan. He potentially learns *small science concepts such as pitch and loud and soft sound* through the play. It is argued (Sikder and Fleer 2015a) that *small science* concepts can be learned if the child can consciously apply his/her learning in a voluntary manner.

Barnan explores the *small science* concepts (pressing button to make a roar sound and exploring sound concept) as the relations with others in the play. It is also understood from the vignette that the materials and the mum/older playmate's modelling provide a way for the child to act in relation to their play motive or contribute to developing a motive for learning (Fleer 2012, p. 92).

It is viewed that Barnan potentially learns *small science* concepts by blowing the whistle, shaking the rattle and tapping the box as he has applied his learning in a voluntary manner. The adult's conscious engagement in the task is important to develop *small science* concepts (Sikder and Fleer 2015b), and it was seen that Nita was consciously engaged in teaching Barnan how to blow the whistle (shake the rattle or tap the box). Nita and Srabanti repeated the task on how to blow the whistle, and Barnan tried several times to do it too. Although Barnan had limited experience

in blowing the whistle, he is finally successful to do it by himself because of the level of engagement of play partners in the task.

Throughout the vignette, Barnan potentially learns *small science* concepts which are blowing, shaking and tapping, as part of science concept of Force. Additionally, Barnan explores various sounds such as the whistle sound, jigjig sound and drum sound, as part of exploring vibrations and pitch building understanding towards the concept of Sound.

13.6   Conclusion

The relations of dynamic aspects of motives are integrated in the activity setting (Hedegaard 2012). However, each aspect of motives has been explained individually in this chapter to provide the idea of its importance in children's culture of play.

Play is a serious game to children under 3 years of age (Vygotsky 1966), and children are serious in their play activities as Barnan is. The mother creates a collective play situation to support the engagement of play partners, further contributing to the child's learning.

The vignette shows that the child's play motives are important for their learning experience. The play motives enhance the child's scientific learning motives when all the aspects of motives fulfil the child's needs at that moment. Therefore, for achieving a successful outcome of the play moment, one might consider the dynamic aspects of a play motive and the successful play motives that create the rich possibilities for infant-toddler's learning of *small science* concept formation in their everyday practices.

This chapter provides theoretical understandings of the relations of dynamic aspects of play motives in children's play, including an adult's engagement. This chapter explains the dynamic aspects of a play motive for enhancing infant-toddler's scientific learning motive in *small science* moments at an early age. This provides pedagogical understandings relevant for early childhood science education and contributes to the limited body of research into infant-toddler learning of science in play.

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Chapter 14

Emotional Security and Play Engagement of Young Children in Dutch Child Centres: A Story of Explorative Research, Experiments and Educators Testing Hypotheses

Elly Singer

Abstract We have to rethink the psychological mechanisms that underlie the emotional security of young children in group settings. In home settings, strong relationships have been found between responsive sensitivity of the parent and child behaviour (secure attachment behaviour, play engagement and involvement in peer play). But the relationships between the educator's sensitivity and child behaviour are less clear in group settings. In this chapter, the concepts of sensitivity and availability of the educator are discussed, both on theoretical grounds and based on empirical data. Availability of the educator as a safe haven cannot be taken for granted in group settings. The focus on sensitivity towards the individual child can result in walking around, unavailability and disruptive behaviour towards other children nearby. Sensitivity should not be defined as a characteristic of the educator's behaviour towards one child, but as a characteristic of the relationship between educator, child and peers. The focus should be on availability and on the balance of power to take initiatives between educator, child and peers. Differences in power relationships between educator-child and peer relationships are discussed. Young children need both kinds of relationships.

Keywords Emotional security • Play engagement • Peer play • Sensitivity • Availability • Group settings • Day care

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14.1   Introduction

Branco (2.7) has taken a couple of musical instruments from the closet. The educator sees him and suggests they play some music together. More children come over to the closet curiously, and the educator starts handing out instruments to them. She takes a seat on the floor and immediately all the children gather around close to her and on her lap. She starts singing a song all the children know, and they enthusiastically start banging and playing on the instruments. After the first song, she asks: 'Would you like me to sing another song'? 'Yeaah'!, the children shout. 'Who can think of a song'? The kids start calling out names of songs. She gives every single child the opportunity to name a song and sings it, and all are happily engaged in this game.

In this example, the children are fully engaged in their play. Their educator fosters their engagement by her warmth, interest and confirming behaviour. She also fosters joint play and a feeling of togetherness in children. In our studies in Dutch child centres, we observed and described many illustrative examples of 2- and 3-year-olds deeply involved in joint play (Singer and De Haan 2007). We observed humour, prosocial and friendship behaviour in children (Hoogdalem et al. 2012). However, in other cases, we observed children fluttering around and repeatedly shifting in play activities (Singer et al. 2014); in our study of peer conflicts, we counted that each child had on average 12 conflicts per hour. Half of these conflicts were minor and lasted just a few seconds; we hypothesized that the children irritated each other (Rourou et al. 2006).

National evaluative studies of the quality in Dutch child centres showed that in general Dutch educators are warm, sensitive and responsive towards children (Vermeer et al. 2008). However, the restlessness and number of minor conflicts cause serious concern about their pedagogical quality. What causes such low level of engagement in activities? Could the children be deprived of the sense of security they need to go all the way in their play? We studied the relationships between the restlessness of children and the pedagogical approach of the educator. In this chapter, we will discuss our findings and the experiences of educators that have tested the hypotheses based on our findings in their daily practice; see for statistical procedures Singer et al. (2014, 2015).

14.2   Emotional Security in Group Settings

In their play, young children are intrinsically motivated to explore, to experiment and to share their experiences with others (Singer 2013; Ridgway et al. 2015). The quality of the play can be varied. In this respect, Laevers (2005) draws attention to the importance of the level of engagement in play. Play with a low level of engagement is stereotyped, is superficial and, with many interruptions, does not offer a rich learning experience. In contrast, play with a high level of engagement offers 'deep-level learning'. During high engagement, children operate at their full capabilities (Ebbeck et al. 2012).

The level of children's play engagement is closely related to the emotional security in the teacher-child relationship (Howes and Smith 1995; Laevers 2005). The emotional security in the educator-child relationship is highly influenced by the educator's pedagogical behaviour and interaction skills (Biringen et al. 2012; Dalli et al. 2011). High-quality infant education centres are characterized by educators with a strongly developed emotional attunement, supportive presence and respect for the child's autonomy (White et al. 2015). In group settings, educators need to be attuned to each individual child, and at the same time, they have to spread their attention between the children. In a meta-analysis of studies of security of children's relationships with parental and non-parental care providers, Ahnert, Pinquart and Lamb (2006) found that in home settings, the caregivers' sensitivity to individual children predicted their emotional security, but in group settings, that was not the case. In group settings, 'group-focused sensitivity' of caregivers was related to the children's emotional security. Group-focused sensitivity is a broad concept of Ahnert et al. (2006) constructed to cover group-related factors such as the caregiver's attentiveness to the group and the amount of time they spent in positive proximate interactions with children while supervising the entire group. The social and material environment has to be well structured in small play groups and in challenging activity areas (Musatti and Mayer 2011). We decided to explore the relationships between children's level of engagement and the educator-child interactions in the context of the social and material structure of the group setting. Could the improvement of 'group sensitivity' and 'group management' in educators have a positive influence on the quality of educator-child interactions and on young children's play engagement?

14.3   Exploration of Quantitative Relationships

Our first step was to explore the relationships between the children's level of engagement and characteristics of the social environment (Singer et al. 2014). We analysed video data of 116 two- and three-year-olds during free play. The children were recruited from 24 groups in licensed Dutch childcare centres in urban areas. The mean group size was 10.5 children and 2.4 educators and trainees. Data were collected by focal individual sampling. Each focus child was video- and audiotaped during their free play on two different days for 30 min. Free play was defined as a situation in which children are free to choose the activity they want; for educator-initiated activities, the children were free to join in or to move out. For each child, we selected from the video data, six 4-min intervals by a fixed interval method; for both tapes of 30 min, we analysed 3–7 min, 13–17 min and 23–27 min. In these 4-min intervals, we analysed the level of engagement and variables that assess characteristics of the social and material environment and educator-child interactions.

Table 14.1 Coding system level of play engagement accessed during the 4-min intervals ($n = 696$)

Play engagement
Poor engagement: the child shows a low level of activity, is frequently distracted or is active without being focused
Moderate engagement: the child is active and shows a brief moment of focused attention – at least for 1.5 min and less than 2 min
Good engagement: the child is active and focused for a longer period of time, more than 2 min and less than 3 min
High engagement: the child is active and focused for a period longer than 3 min

14.3.1 Level of Play Engagement

In order to assess children's play engagement, we used an adapted Laevers' Child Involvement Scale (Laevers et al. 2005); (see Table 14.1). This resulted in six assessments of intervals per child, in total 696 assessments.

14.3.2 Factors in the Social and Material Environment

In every 4-min interval, we assessed the social and material environment. We assessed whether an educator was nearby (within a distance of two metres) of the focus child, walked in and out the child's space or was absent. We also coded whether one or more peers were near the focus child, walked in and out of the child's play space or were absent during the 4-min interval. With regard to the material environment, we assessed the amount of play objects within the child's play space: one kind of play object, several kinds of objects that can elicit diverse play activities and many kinds of toys within the reach of the child.

When the educator was nearby the child during the 4-min interval, we assessed the quality of the educator-child interactions: whether they were 'two sided' (joined attention, reciprocal interactions) or 'one sided' (educator-caregiver-initiated interaction, where the educator does not respond to the signals of the child). We also assessed whether or not the child was involved in a structured and educator-initiated activity (drawing, painting or crafting in a small group), whether or not the educator helped the child to find an activity, whether the educator acted as the child's playmate and if the educator tried to regulate the child's behaviour in a positive or negative way.

14.4 Main Quantitative Findings

The results confirmed our concerns about the low level of engagement in many children in the Dutch centres. Of the 696 observed intervals, 32 % were assigned as poor, 41 % as moderate and 27 % as good engagement (Fig. 14.1).
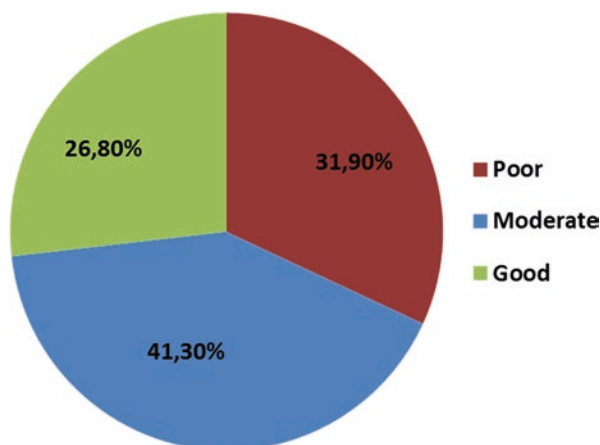
Fig. 14.1 The children's level of play engagement

High engagement (focused for more than 3 min) was too rare to include in the statistical analyses. There were many comings and goings of educators in the child's playing space. In 71 % of the intervals, the educator was moving in and out of the child's play area. In a small percentage of intervals (10 %), educators were near a child for at least 4 min. In the remaining 19 %, the educator was not near. Peers were also often moving in and out of the child's play space. In 80 % of the cases when the educators walked in and out during the 4-min intervals, three or more peers also walked in and out (Fig. 14.2).

When the educator was nearby, the likelihood of reaching good engagement was more than three times greater than when an educator moved in and out or was not near the child. The absence of the educator had a better effect on the children's engagement than moving in and out. We also found significant associations between play engagement and the structure of the physical environment (play objects) and social environment (peers). When there are only a few sorts of play objects and peers are continuously nearby during the 4-min interval, the likelihood of reaching a good level of engagement was greater (Fig. 14.3).

The correlations with the quality of interactions were less strong. We only found significant correlations between two- or one-sided interactions and the level of engagement. We did not find any significant association between the level of engagement and the educator's role as play enhancer (offering a structured activity, helping the child to find an activity, playing with the child and being a playmate). Eventually we found that 3-year-olds displayed a significantly higher level of play engagement than 2-year-olds. Children playing with peers have a significantly greater play engagement than children playing alone. No significant associations were found for gender.
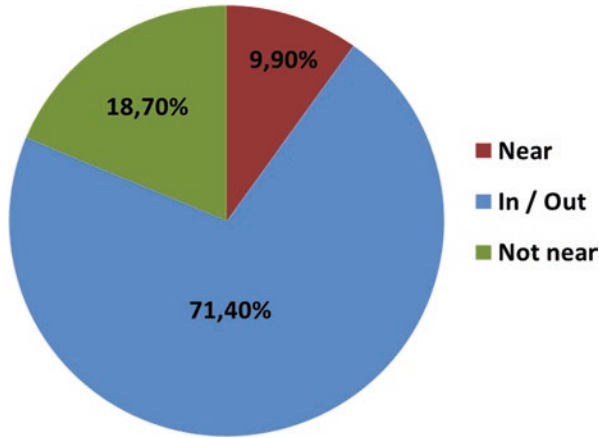
Fig. 14.2 Educators comings and goings in the child's space
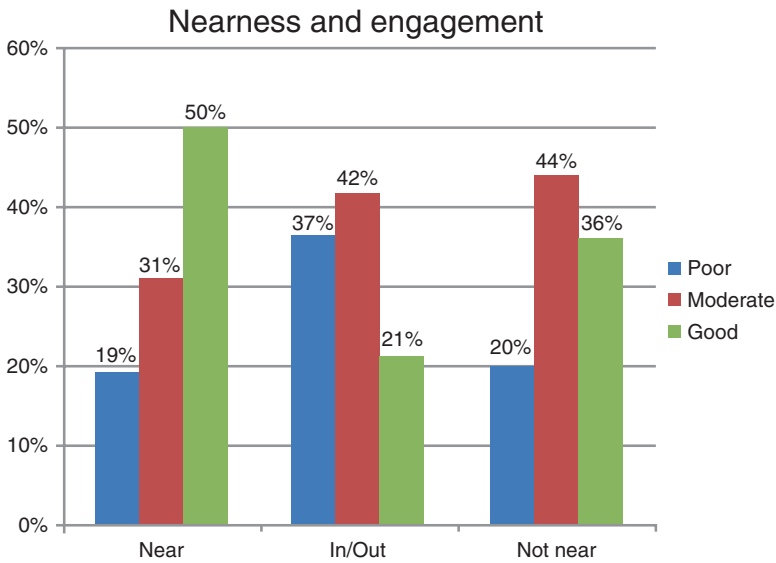
Fig. 14.3 Relationships between level of play engagement and position of the educator (nearby, moving in and out, not near)

14.5 Coherent Patterns of Behaviour at Group Level

After the quantitative analyses, we conducted qualitative analyses to study whether coherent behaviour patterns occur among the educators and children in the group.

14.5.1 Children Walking In and Out and Educators Disturbing Play

Whenever an educator walked in and out of the children's play area, an immediate effect was obvious. Children generally stopped playing and started social referencing: they looked up and started following the educator around to make sure she was not leaving or did something unexpected. The educator acted like a magnet: wherever she went, the children followed her.

We found that the walking in and out of the educator covariates with a greater likelihood of one-sided interactions and more sorts of play objects. When the educator walked into a child's space, she often immediately started to interact; from the child's perspective, such interaction was unexpected. The educators often did not take time to establish shared attention. Suddenly, the child was supposed to take part in this social interaction, which for a young child can require a great deal of energy to switch to. For instance, Prosper stopped playing because of the educator.

> *Prosper (3.5) is playing by himself with some toy animals, mainly dinosaurs. He is very focused. He makes the animals fly and talk to each other. Suddenly, an educator comes over and starts asking him questions: 'What are you doing, Prosper? What is the dinosaur doing?' Prosper looks up and answers: 'They are fighting … ' She asks more questions. He answers obediently.*

Children who walked around also disturbed each other. For example, Leonie during building with Duplo stones:

> *Leonie(2.9) is playing with Duplo near Sally (2.5) and Noah (3.1). Two boys come closer to the girls, banging on cookware lids, singing 'Jingle Bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!' Leonie looks up, slightly distracted, trying to stay focused on her play. Then Noah rises, grabbing some of the Lego blocks, pretending it is a gun, making loud noises: 'Pow, pow!' Leonie looks at him for a few seconds. Another boy comes along, asking Leonie whether she would like a gift. 'Huh?' Leonie asks, distracted once again. The singing boys walk by again, Leonie watches them.*

We have seen many such cases in which children are unable to find a quiet, well-demarcated space to play privately or quietly, with another child.

14.5.2 Quietly Nearby Educator and Undisturbed Play

When the educator was nearby, peers were also nearby in 72 % of the cases and not moving in and out; there were more often two-sided interactions between educator and child; and there were fewer sorts of play objects around. When the educator was nearby, she was often calmly observing the children play and confirming their behaviour by just being there. For instance, educator Cea sat near Megan (3.11) and two other children:

> *Megan is trying very hard to finish quite a challenging puzzle. Megan desperately wants to but cannot do it on her own. Whenever Megan gets stuck, she looks at Cea or says*

'Ceaaaaa'. Cea looks at her and gives confirmation or some tips without disturbing the other children. Megan finishes the whole puzzle.

With the educator nearby, we observed that children actively looked for physical contact. For instance, Josey:

Josey (3.4) jumps around, looking for something to do, and follows the educator who is walking around. After a while the educator notices Josey and grabs her hand. She picks up a box of blocks, takes a seat onto the floor and starts building. Immediately a whole bunch of 2- and 3-year-olds come over and sit down beside her, enthusiastically starting to build too. Josey climbs on the lap of the educator with a little booklet. The educator allows her, giving her comfort and at the same time entertaining the other children. The educator hardly moved.

14.5.3   Playing with Peers with the Educator Not Nearby

When the educator was not nearby and no children were walking in and out, children could play without being disturbed, especially older children, the 3-year-olds in our study, that were engaged in joint peer play and showed a higher level of play engagement than the average.

Peer conflicts were solved without intervention of the educator. Sometimes by turning the conflict into humorous joint play as in the next example:

Suzanne, Sarah-Noor and Joris (3-year-olds) are playing outside with a ball. Suddenly [we do not know why] Suzanne pushes Joris away and says: 'Go, go, go!' Joris looks abashed and keeps staying nearby the two girls. Suzanne repeats: 'Go, go, go away!' Then Joris responds: 'No, no, no!'. Suzanne again: 'Go, go, go away!' And Joris again: 'No, no, no, no!' Sarah-Noor joint in. In the end the three children develop together a joyful rhythmic saying-no-game. And after that they go on playing together with the ball.

14.6   Friendly Intruders

In this study, it was exceptional that the educator stayed in one place for more than 4 min. Mostly the educators seemed very busy, walking from one corner of the room to another. Much of their time was devoted to the creation of a nice, calm and harmonious atmosphere. They made sure that every child had something or someone to play with. For example, by dividing the children into small groups and having them play in different areas, walking back and forth among those playing children, correcting unwanted behaviour, solving little conflicts and handing children toys were exactly the behaviour used by the educators (to create harmony) that seemed to create the opposite – restlessness in the group.

In summary, young children in group settings need the educator as a safe basis for emotional refuelling, confirmation and orientation in the social and material environment, a basis from which the child can freely explore and play. The child

should be in control to either near or further away and always be able to find the educator. When the educator walks around, the child misses a secure basis, follows the educator and looks up repeatedly for social referencing: the child is out of control, and the educator increases the risk of disturbing behaviour in the group.

14.7 Collaborative Studies with Practitioners to Verify Our Findings in Daily Practice

Our findings were discussed in a group of pedagogical coaches and managers of seven child centre organizations. The size of these organizations varied from two to more than 100 centres. The researchers, coaches and managers decided to participate in collaborative research to verify the value of our findings in daily practice. We organized two studies. One was a structured pedagogical experiment to verify our findings in a new study. Besides that, we were especially interested to obtain deeper insight into the interactions between the educator and the children. We wanted to understand why we had found none or modest correlations between the quality of the educator-child interactions and the level of play engagement because that finding was theoretically unexpected. The second study was done by practitioners who tested our hypotheses in their group.

14.8 The Structured Pedagogical Experiment

In the structured experiment, 18 groups of under 4-year-olds were recruited from diverse child centre organizations (see Singer et al. 2015). Using video clips by Laevers et al. (2005), the educators received a 2-h training aimed at the development of awareness of the different levels of play engagement. The goal and the hypotheses of the research were explained. The educators were asked to choose one activities' corner and to furnish that afresh at the start of each filming day. No further guidelines for this request were offered. Filming was done during free play, i.e. when the children were free to choose where and with whom they wished to play during the whole period.

The experiment was as follows:

- *Episode 1 – The newly arranged activity corner with the educator at a distance.* During the first 10 min, the children entered into the play room with the specially arranged corner and the regular activity corners; during this 10-min episode, the educators remained quietly at some distance and available; if children needed anything, they walked over to them.
- *Entrance of the educator.* After 10 min, the educator entered the activity corner.
- *Episode 2 – The educator nearby and in the activity corner.* During the next 10 min, the educator was in the activity corner. She could interact with the chil-

dren in the way she thought was appropriate. There were no further instructions.

14.8.1 The Findings

The findings of the pedagogical experiment are in line with our quantitative study. When the educator does not walk around, the average level of play engagement is higher. In Episode 1, with the educator at a distance, 45 % of the children manifested a high level of play engagement, and in Episode 2, that figure was 43 %. A high level of play engagement means that the children played with concentration for 3 min or longer. This high level of engagement was almost non-existent in our quantitative study.

In Episode 1 with the educator at a distance, we observed that young children observed and interacted with each other, and that made their play richer and more complex (Göncü and Weber 2000; Musatti and Mayer 2011). The children began by exploring the play objects and playing alone or in parallel. After a first contact between them, the children came up with variations in their play. They imitated each other in an increasingly exaggerated fashion and challenged and invented new things. A build-up of interactions followed, leading to a climax. The children then screamed with pleasure.

> *Helen (3.0yrs) and Maartje (2.9yrs) are playing peacefully next to each other with blocks. Then Helen puts an animal on top of Maartje's construction, and Maartje takes an animal and pushes it against Helen's. Helen throws her animal away. Maartje does the same. Helen throws off the point of her tower and Maartje makes a similar movement with her hands against her own construction, so that everything collapses. The imitations become steadily wilder and their pleasure more exuberant.*

In one group of 3-year-olds, cooperative play was observed: a railway with bridges was constructed. The children assisted each other and sang songs together. From time to time, the children made eye contact with the educator who was sitting or walking around at a certain distance. They looked in her direction, indicating their construction, for example, and saying: *'Look, I've made a tower!'* And after the educator replied: *'I can see it',* they went on with their play. Probably the refreshed corner, the presence of peers and the educator available at a distance stimulated the play engagement. This association was also found in the quantitative study.

When the educator entered the corner after 10 min, the disruptive effects were obvious. The children looked up from their play; most of them stopped playing. They asked for the educator's attention: *'Look what I made!'* The educators tried to make contact with them with questions such as *'What are you busy doing?'* That too stopped the children playing. The social structure and the balance of the group were changed by the educator's entrance. The children now turned to the educator. Often a new balance returned to the group after some time, while the educator was in the corner.

The average level of engagement remained approximately the same in Episode 1 and Episode 2 (45 % and 43 % had a high level of engagement). However, a rather different picture emerged when we compared Episode 1 and Episode 2 for the18 groups separately. In ten groups, the level of play engagement was higher when the educator was nearby, and in eight groups, the level was lower. To understand these differences in effect of the educator at group level, we analysed the educator's interactions with the children.

14.8.2   Three Interaction Styles of the Educator

We distinguished three interaction styles.

- Being quietly nearby, observant and available

In six groups, the educators were mostly just calmly present. They expressed their interest and attention by small gestures. Communication was two sided and reciprocal. In all these groups, the level of play engagement was higher when the educator was nearby. The educator was relaxed, responded to children's initiatives, confirmed the child by repeating what he/she had said and asked open questions. Attention was shared. When there was disruptive behaviour by a child, educator regulated this by a small gesture. Her voice was soft and quiet so that she did not disturb the play of the other children.

> *The educator sits with six children playing with Duplo. Lisa (3.2yrs): 'Look!' Educator says quietly and calmly: 'Oh. Lovely, Lisa. With a swing in the garden'. Lisa: 'It's a holiday garden'. The other children remain absorbed in their own play and do not look up. Nathan (3.10yrs) begins to tap with a piece on the table. Educator whispers: 'Nathan, don't do that'. Nathan stops and continues with his construction work.*

- Playing with the children

In seven groups, the educator entered into the children's play. In three of these groups, the level of play engagement was higher and in four lower than in the episode with the educator at a distance. In the three groups with an increased level of play engagement, active involvement was combined with a calm presence, and educators asked open questions. Communication was mostly reciprocal, but at certain moments also one sided. The educators adapted the way they used their voice according to the situation, at one moment speaking enthusiastically and loud to gain the children's attention and then modulating to softly spoken speech in order to give the children room.

In the four groups with a lower level of play engagement, there was more disturbance. In one group, a child frequently walked in and out of the corner and asked the educator for help, then the play stopped and the others had to wait. In another group, the educator was too enthusiastic in her responses; her raised voice distracting the other children from their play. In two groups, the educator's initiatives did

not connect with the children who seemed to be bored by the playthings or responded sluggishly to the educator's suggestions. Maybe these educators tried to play with the children, but failed to do that from the children's perspective.

• Leading initiatives of the educator

In five groups, the educator took the initiative, and the communication was mainly one sided. This leading interaction style led to a lower level of engagement in four other groups. By usurping the initiative, the educator undermined and stopped the children's play. However, in one group of 2- and 3-year-old children, this style raised the level of play engagement. This was the group where, in Episode 1, the children ran around the whole room and were throwing soft blocks. When the educator entered the corner, she immediately took a grip of the situation:

> *'Gather around children. Collect all the blocks. Well done, Sjoerd, and there'*, *pointing to blocks in the corner. The children all obey and collect the blocks. Educator: 'Look, we are going to build a track. It will go through the zoo'. The children start to build.*

She gave each child clear tasks and proposed an imaginary room. The result of this was that they played well together, with a good level of engagement.

Summarizing: when the educator uses an interaction style of being quiet, nearby, observant and available, she increases the chance to support children's play engagement. When she uses the other two styles, playing with the children or taking the lead, she runs the risk of usurping children's initiatives and decreasing their play engagement. She can counteract that risk by being very careful to connect with the children and give them time for active involvement.

14.9   Educators Testing the Hypotheses in Practice

In the second cooperative study, the educators were the researchers. They tested the hypothesis that the level of engagement of children increases when the activity corner is refreshed and when the educator is not walking in and out but sits in the corner. The educators volunteered and were supported by the coaches of their organization. Just as in the structured experiment, the educators received a short training in levels of play engagement and the findings of our study. The educators were free to choose when and how to rearrange what activity corner and whether they were focused on specific children or not. They made a plan that fitted the needs of their group. The educators made videos that were discussed in the team, and they organized parent meetings to inform them. After 4 and 8 months, we organized a symposium for the seven child centre organizations involved and some interested outsiders. There, the educators presented their experiences and main conclusions.

14.9.1 Positive Experiences of the Educators

The educators appreciated the acknowledgement of their expertise. None of the organizations had earlier experience with educators testing hypotheses. Educator's role of researcher fundamentally changed the relationships between the educators and their coaches; being in charge as researcher strongly fuelled the pedagogical creativity and motivation. The educators were the ones to decide what was best for their group and how to solve difficulties. They adapted the general structure of this study to the specific conditions in their group. Some educators decided to increase their availability for one or two children with behavioural problems. Other educators had noticed the restlessness of the children at the beginning of the day, so they changed the greeting procedures, and instead of walking to the parents, they were sitting on the floor and inviting the parents to join them.

The educators gathered valuable information about the pros and cons of being nearby the children in an activity corner. During the presentation of their findings, the educators showed pictures and video fragments; they explained which steps they made during the process of testing the hypotheses and how they interpreted the data. In general, they were very positive. The educators observed that the children loved to play nearby them, many children looked for short moments of physical contact (sitting on the lap, being cuddled), the children were longer and more involved in their play, the educator felt more deeply in contact and attuned with the children and they could better anticipate their needs for new play objects and suggestions. However, they also experienced problems in introducing this new way of working.

14.9.2 Problems in Introducing a New Pedagogical Approach

Several educators found it difficult to remain seated being used to walking around. They felt uneasy 'to do nothing'. The educators had many other tasks: administration, preparing fruit, talking with parents and cleaning the room. Most educators succeeded to solve the problems by making a new division of tasks between colleagues: one being nearby the children in the corner and one for the other tasks. Sometimes that induced feelings of guilt in the educators nearby the children; and when it was very busy, they fell back into the habit of walking around, even during the 20 min they had planned for sitting in one place.

The educators often wondered what they should do with the children when they sat in the activity corner as doing 'nothing' felt uneasy and it could be hard to divide their attention between the children. At times, they felt insecure and out of control. The educators gathered valuable information. On the whole, there was no resistance towards this approach of not walking around. By testing hypotheses in daily practice, they could identify problems to be addressed at group level by the educators and at organization level by the pedagogical coaches and managers.

14.10   Conclusions and Discussion

14.10.1   The Complexity of Group Settings for Young Children

Based on our studies, we conclude that the complexity of group settings for young children is easily underestimated. From the perspective of 2–3-year-olds, playrooms in child centres are huge, even if they are carefully structured and equipped with materials. At times, the behaviour of ten or more peers is unpredictable and confusing. Meta-analyses of studies in various countries show that group settings can be stressful for infants and toddlers, especially in centres of low quality (Vermeer and van IJzendoorn, 2006). Our studies confirm the conclusion of Ahnert et al. (2006) that in group settings, the emotional security of children is highly dependent on the educator's skills to manage the group: the educator has to be available to counteract the complexity.

14.10.2   Availability

The available educator functions as a secure base to explore the surroundings (Dolby 2007). Our data suggest that availability of the educator has an even greater influence than the quality of the interactions with the educator. Probably, this phenomenon is caused by specific dynamics in group settings. Sensitive responsiveness towards the signals of individual children prompts walking around by the educator, and that results in restlessness in the whole group. The educator disturbs the children nearby the young child she is helping, the children do not know where the educator is and engage in social referencing, or they follow the educator while she is walking around.

14.10.3   Follow the Pace of the Children and Not Disturb the Peer Audience

The quality of interaction also makes a difference. In line with earlier studies of educator-child interactions in child centres, we found that the educators with a strongly developed emotional attunement, supportive presence and respect for the child's autonomy, sustain and scaffold children's play engagement (Dalli et al. 2011; White et al. 2015). In this respect, the characteristics of high quality in the parent-child relationship at home do not differ from the educator-child relationship in group settings. However, our data suggest that in group settings, the educators have to be extra attentive to follow the pace and rhythm of the children. At home, young children and their parents have repeated interactions over an extended period of time where they can develop ritualized playful interactions, so the child is able to

anticipate and influence the stream of interactions (Ridgway et al. 2015). In particular, when the educator is less familiar with the child, she has to be very careful to check whether the child understands what is said and wait quietly for the child's response. In our study, we often observed that the educators were too quick and wrongly assumed the child understood what they meant. The tendency of educators to be hasty is enforced when they walk around and when they try to respond more or less simultaneously to several children that ask for attention. Moreover, the educators have to be aware that there is always a peer audience and remember to talk with a soft and clear voice in order not to disturb the other children in their play.

14.10.4 Quietly Confirming the Playing Children and Active Involvement

Several educators expressed their doubt and uncertainty about when and whether to be actively involved in the children's play when sitting in the activity corner. Should they take the lead or refrain from being actively involved? Our data suggest that being quietly available in a well-designed activity corner gave the best chance to support 2- and 3-year-old children's play engagement through making eye contact, smiling, sharing attention and giving confirmation and small suggestions to regulate the children's behaviour. However, taking the lead and entering into children's play can also be a success. Taking the lead or not is not the question. Crucial is whether or not the educator gives time and space to the children. When she takes the initiative to start play, she has to take care that the children can be actively involved. In our study, we observed that it is very difficult for many educators – and maybe for adults in general – because they easily disturb the power balance that is needed for joint play. It is hard to combine taking the lead in group settings and supporting the children's initiatives.

14.10.5 Significance of Testing of Hypotheses by Educators

Our studies demonstrate that educators can significantly raise the level of children's play engagement after a single brief training session. At the same time, however, we have to acknowledge that this new pedagogical approach is not easily implemented. The educators have to change their pedagogical focus: from the focus on individual children to the focus on dynamics in the group and their impact on individual children. To increase availability and timing skills, educators need to organize their day differently and rethink the division of tasks between colleagues. Such a reversal in pedagogical dealings with children requires a firm and enthusiastic management willing to reflect and experiment with the educators (Lazzari et al. 2013). In this respect, the study in which the educators were testing the hypotheses is significant.

Trying out the hypotheses based on the research findings in daily pedagogical practice evoked creativity and enthusiasm in educators who recognized the value of play engagement and were motivated to support young children's play engagement. The hypotheses were helpful. It makes a difference whether scientific results are transmitted as 'the truth' or as 'hypotheses' whose values have to be validated by practitioners in practice. The educators meet conditions and opportunities that cannot possibly be foreseen by scientists. Educators bring new insights in the open and new questions that have to be addressed. Many obstacles that the educators met in trying out the hypotheses were solved with colleagues and in team meetings. Educators, just like any other human being, need respect for their expertise.

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