

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Emergent literacy in New Zealand kindergartens : An examination of
policy and practices**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at Massey University

Claire Jane McLachlan-Smith
1996

Abstract

Current research into emergent literacy suggests that children learn about literacy prior to formal education. Children develop the knowledge and skills of literacy within the context of their home and preschool relationships. A view of literacy as a developmental process which is socially constructed within children's relationships is proposed in this thesis. A kindergarten curriculum which focusses on providing a literacy rich, mediated learning environment is argued to be the most appropriate way to promote children's emergent literacy.

This thesis documents a research project undertaken in New Zealand kindergartens, which examines teachers' and parents' view of children's literacy development. Results of in depth interviews with Head Teachers and structured interviews with parents and Assistant Teachers will be presented, as well as the results of observational studies, which examine the domains of literacy activity in six kindergartens. Teachers in these kindergartens are constructivist teachers, who seek to promote independent learning through a range of "free play" curriculum. They argue a commitment to providing a literacy environment for children. Parents, who come from a diverse range of socioeconomic backgrounds, all describe a high level of literacy involvement with their children and firm beliefs about how children learn and what children need from early childhood education. Observational studies demonstrated that not all children receive the same exposure to literacy activities or to literacy- rich environments. Factors influencing the availability of literacy activities include teachers' views of cognitive and literacy development, curriculum design, kindergarten layout and the resources available to the kindergarten.

The strengths and weaknesses of a constructivist curriculum for promoting literacy development are examined and alternative views of teacher role, literacy environment and parental involvement are proposed. The implications for developing a curriculum for kindergarten which would promote emergent literacy development in children are explored.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisors, Dr. Alison St.George and Professor William Tunmer for their advice, assistance and encouragement throughout the course of this work. I am extremely grateful to Alison for her ongoing support and careful consideration of all parts of the research. I am also very grateful to Bill for his positive and encouraging comments on various parts of the research.

Thanks are also due to the following:

The New Zealand Federation of University Women, for the award of a doctoral fellowship, to allow completion of the research while living the United States. The Massey University Research Fund and Education Department Research fund, for funding to support this research. The Faculty of Education, Massey University, for the award of an Assistant Lectureship from 1991-3.

The teachers and parents in all of the kindergartens studied in this research, who gave so willingly of their time and their experience. I am very grateful to everyone for making me feel so welcome and for giving me such interesting data to study.

Professor Beth Graue, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin - Madison. I wish to thank Beth for her support and many helpful discussions regarding early childhood theory and research. I am also grateful to Professors Michael Apple, Gary Price and Joseph Lawton at UW, for very helpful discussions regarding early childhood education.

Dr. Joy Cullen, for her valued suggestions, ready supply of useful resources and many helpful discussions regarding this research. I am also grateful to Associate Professor Dick Harker and Diana Bloor, for helping to clarify aspects of the data analysis, and Professor Tom Prebble, for his kindness and support over the last few months.

Last, but by no means least, I want to thank my family, for all their patience, support and encouragement over the last four years. I want to thank my parents, Dolly and Stuart McLachlan, for inspiring my interest in literacy and encouraging me to study, and my children, Daniel, Jeremy and Jessica, for inspiring my interest in how children learn. Finally, I want to thank my husband, Clyde Smith, for encouraging me to keep studying, helping me to fulfil the multiple roles that being a mother, a wife, a student and a teacher involve, and for all of his help and support at every stage of this research.

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of contents	iv
List of tables	viii
List of plates	ix
List of figures	x
1. Introduction	1
2. Review of Literature	4
The development of emergent literacy	4
Emergent literacy	4
Story book reading and the development of language and literacy	12
Meaning construction	15
Parent roles in literacy development	19
Parent beliefs about child development and education	22
Teacher roles in literacy development	25
Teacher beliefs about development and education	28
Socio-cultural perspectives: A framework for promoting literacy in the curriculum	31
Vygotsky and the social construction of child development	31
The co-construction of literacy	36
Conceptualising a literacy centred curriculum for kindergarten	40
Literacy rich environments	40
Literacy centred curriculum	46
Kindergarten in New Zealand: From Froebel to Piaget	50
Kindergarten curriculum across the century	50
Piaget: Connections with progressive education	57
Summary	63

3. The Present Study	65
Aims of the research	65
Data collection	66
Ethical considerations	69
4. The In-depth Interview with Head Teachers	70
Methods	70
Sample	70
Data collection	71
Analysis	74
Results and discussion	75
Common sense knowledge	75
Folk wisdom	84
Skill knowledge	88
Contextual knowledge	98
The curriculum	106
Developmental /educational theories	120
Social and moral philosophy	135
Summary and discussion	141
5. The Structured Interview with Parents and Teachers	145
Methods	145
Sample	145
Data collection	149
Analysis	151
Results	152
Reasons for the choice of kindergarten as an early childhood experience	152
Views of children learning	157
Views of language and reading	164
Story reading experience	169
Language experiences and environmental print	180

Summary and discussion	185
Promoting children's learning and literacy development	185
Emergent literacy experiences	190
6. Domains of Literacy Activity in Kindergartens	196
Methods	196
Sample	196
Data collection	196
Data analysis	199
Results and discussion	201
Domains of literacy : Access and availability of print	201
Domains of literacy : Mediation of literacy environment	233
Summary and discussion	256
7. Summary and Conclusions	263
Summary and discussion	263
Views of cognition and emergent literacy in kindergarten	263
The role of the parent and the teacher in literacy development	266
Domains of literacy activity in six kindergartens	269
Toward a literacy centred curriculum for kindergarten	271
Identification and assessment	272
Enrichment of the literacy environment	273
Increase literacy activity	275
Appropriating the literate "voice"	276
Implications for future research	277
Conclusion	278
8. References	280
9. Appendices	299
Appendix 1 : Research proposal given to Head Teachers	299
Appendix 2 : Ethical approval	302

Appendix 3 : Interview consent form	303
Appendix 4 : Interview questions	305
Appendix 5 : Case study sent to Teacher 11	306
Appendix 6 : Copy of a transcript sent to Teacher 11	311
Appendix 7 : Information sheet given to parents	322
Appendix 8 : Structured interview protocol for parents	323
Appendix 9 : Structured interview protocol for Assistant Teachers	332
Appendix 10 : List of available print in K1	341
Appendix 11 : List of available print in K2	342
Appendix 12 : List of available print in K3	343
Appendix 13 : List of available print in K4	344
Appendix 14 : List of available print in K5	345
Appendix 15 : List of available print in K6	346

List of Tables

- Table 3.1 : Flow chart of data collection and analysis
- Table 4.1 : Profile of kindergarten characteristics
- Table 5.1 : Parent' s family income
- Table 5.2 : Parent's reasons for choosing kindergarten for child
- Table 5.3 : What Assistant Teachers think children gain from attending kindergarten
- Table 5.4 : What parents think children gain from attending kindergarten
- Table 5.5 : What teachers think is expected of them in kindergarten
- Table 5.6 : What parents expect of teachers
- Table 5.7 : What teachers expect of parents in this kindergarten
- Table 5.8 : What parents think is expected of them in kindergarten
- Table 5.9 : What teachers think they should do to help children learn
- Table 5.10 : What parents think teachers should do to help children learn
- Table 5.11 : What teachers think parents should do to help children learn
- Table 5.12 : What parents think they should do to help children learn
- Table 5.13 : How teachers think they help children learn language and reading
- Table 5.14 : How parents think teachers help children to language and reading
- Table 5.15 : Is what teachers do more important than what parents do in terms of language and reading?
- Table 5.16 : Where do children learn to read?
- Table 5.17 : How children develop at this age (3:6 to 5 years)
- Table 5.18 : How children learn their language and culture
- Table 5.19 : How often parents checked books out from the library per month
- Table 5.20 : Numbers of books available to child at home and at kindergarten
- Table 5.21 : Teachers and parents views of literacy activity in kindergartens and home
- Table 5.22 : Number of times that parents and teachers have re-read one book in one session
- Table 5.23 : How often children ask questions about stories at times other than reading sessions
- Table 5.24 : Types of words from books used in play
- Table 5.25 : Language games played at kindergarten
- Table 5.26 : Language games played at home
- Table 5.27 : Signs and labels children often "read"
- Table 5.28 : Other language and reading activities at home and at kindergarten
- Table 5.29 : Other reading items which teachers use in kindergartens
- Table 5.30 : Other reading items which parents use at home
- Table 6.1 : Numbers and types of print available in kindergarten classrooms

List of Plates

- Plate 6.1 : Example of print directed at children in K6
- Plate 6.2 : An unusual choice of location for the lending library and major source of books in K2
- Plate 6.3 : Obstructed view of parent lending library in K4
- Plate 6.4 : A poor supply of books on display in K5
- Plate 6.5 : Location of books and maori language print at child's level in K3
- Plate 6.6 : Sign up list in K3, the parent help roster
- Plate 6.7 : Similarity of messages for parents about activities in K1 and K4
- Plate 6.8 : Messages to parents in K5 and K6 about child development and their role in the activity
- Plate 6.9 : "What do I learn in kindergarten?", an example of the message seen in many kindergartens, from K5
- Plate 6.10 : Locker list with corresponding code in K3
- Plate 6.11 : The washing and bilingual weather list at child level in K6
- Plate 6.12 : Labelled boxes keep children's clothes organised in K2
- Plate 6.13 : Where are the labels at this nature table in K3?
- Plate 6.14 : Magnetic name tags in an accessible spot in K5
- Plate 6.15 : A typical writing table in K4
- Plate 6.16 : A typical paper table next to examples of children's writing on their self portraits in K3

Lists of Figures

- Figure 5.1 : How children learn at kindergarten
- Figure 5.2 : Most common type of learning at home
- Figure 5.3 : Most common type of learning at kindergarten
- Figure 5.4 : Most common type of learning for learning ideas about literacy
- Figure 5.5 : Most important type of learning for children in any context
- Figure 5.6 : Major influences on beliefs about language and literacy development
- Figure 5.7 : Number of times per week that child is read to at home
- Figure 5.8 : Length of story reading sessions at home and at kindergarten
- Figure 5.9 : Questions children ask about stories at home and at kindergarten
- Figure 5.10 : What teachers think story reading does for children
- Figure 5.11 : What parents think story reading does for the child
- Figure 5.12 : Reading items used at home and at kindergarten
- Figure 6.1 : Numbers of books in kindergartens
- Figure 6.2 : Printed bilingual communication
- Figure 6.3 : Communications with parents
- Figure 6.4 : Use of labels in kindergartens
- Figure 6.5 : Verbal directions for activities
- Figure 6.6 : Directions for use of centres
- Figure 6.7 : Songs observed during kindergarten sessions

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

New Zealand is known internationally for its high rate of literacy in the population and more recently for the development, by Marie Clay, of the "Reading Recovery" programme for children with reading difficulties. Clay (1991) points out that the age at which reading instruction begins is culturally defined; children enter school at five in New Zealand and Britain, at six in the United States and at seven in Sweden and Russia. The beginning of formal schooling implies a social belief, that the child is now "ready" for formal instruction in general and literacy in particular. On entrance to school, children move from individual learning to collective learning (Clay, 1991). Some children make this transition successfully, predicting a pattern of reading achievement, while others will show the first signs of a trajectory of reading failure within their first year of school (Clay, 1991). Traditionally, the preschool years in New Zealand were seen as the period for getting children "ready" for formal instruction upon starting school at the age of five. Many centres encourage "pre-reading" activities, such as group story book sessions, as a way to promote the easy transition to school. Many early childhood centres, particularly the Playcentre movement, have espoused the notion of a "free play curriculum" as a reflection of their philosophy of child centred, active learning through play (Meade, 1985). The influence of "free play" is reflected in the curriculum of many New Zealand kindergartens and childcare centres to various degrees.

Research in recent years has highlighted the importance of the years before school entry for learning the concepts and functions of reading and writing, skills which are built upon during formal education. Emergent literacy can be defined as the beginning of literacy development, but not simply as a cognitive skill to be learned. Teale and Sulzby (1989) define it as a complex socio-psycho-linguistic activity. This means that the social and contextual aspects of literacy are integral. However, recent research into emergent literacy suggests that children develop literacy skills long before they reach school, and that this emergent literacy is an integral part of later literacy (Teale and Sulzby, 1987). Clay (1982) states that children come to school armed with a functional knowledge of literacy, which she terms a knowledge of the "concepts of print". The present research set out to explore how children are developing these "concepts of print" at home and at kindergarten.

Accepting a definition of emergent literacy means that teachers in new entrant classrooms are faced with children at varying points in their emerging literacy. In order to meet children's learning needs, they have to know what to observe in terms of literacy development during a child's attempt at a literacy task and how best to support the child's learning. Beginning instruction at the child's point of emerging literacy may be difficult to do if a teacher is using a publisher based, lock step, reading programme. Children with

few literacy experiences before school entry may not have the necessary experience to be able to participate in the programme and immediately begin to "fail" the school system. Clay (1991) suggests that children need to be assessed on school entry to see what they can already do with print and to assess what opportunities for book-sharing and exploring with a pencil the child requires. Exploring what literacy experiences kindergarten children have had before school could be useful for curriculum design in New Entrant classrooms.

Although there are interesting and informative accounts of children's literacy experiences before schooling (Strickland and Morrow, 1989), there is little research which has examined the literacy experiences of children in New Zealand before the age of five. Clay, of course, completed many studies of literacy activity with children from five years of age and concluded that children enter school with a functional knowledge of concepts of print. Elley (1989) found that primary school children increase their vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories and Phillips and McNaughton (1990) found that three and four year old children in mainstream New Zealand families will have some experience with constructing meaning from listening to stories. There have been no major studies of how children are being introduced to literacy in early childhood centres in New Zealand, nor have there been any major studies of the beliefs and literacy practices of kindergarten teachers or parents in New Zealand.

Finding out what and how children learn about literacy before school posed several challenges as a research project, as it was a question of immense proportions. To make the project manageable, the decision was made to focus the research on children aged three to five years; literally the pre-school years in New Zealand. Secondly the research was designed to be undertaken in local urban kindergartens, as a majority of children attend kindergarten and children enrolled are aged three to five years. Thirty five percent of the four year old children who attend early childhood centres attend kindergarten (Davey, 1993). Finally, it was culturally inappropriate as a European to conduct research in Nga Kohanga Reo, there were too few programmes serving children aged 3 to 5 years in local Playcentres, and childcare centres offered diverse programmes to a wide age range of children, making comparisons difficult.

In order to find out how children learn about literacy prior to school entry, a three pronged research method was developed. The first approach was to interview all of the Head Teachers in the local city kindergartens to determine what their prevailing policy and practices were regarding literacy development in children. The second approach used a questionnaire with Assistant Teachers in six kindergartens and a group of six parents in each kindergarten to find out how teachers and parents think that children learn, what role they play in children's learning and how they promote literacy development in children. The third approach involved going to six kindergartens to observe the literacy environment and how literacy is practised on a day to day basis.

The research also set out to examine what aspects of emergent literacy research and current practice in kindergartens could be integrated to design an emergent literacy curriculum, in which children could learn the concepts of reading and writing before school entry. Much of the emergent literacy research has been based on the theoretical principles of Vygotsky (1978), who states that children learn through mediation by competent others. A "literacy-rich" (Morrow, 1989a) and "scaffolded" (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1986) learning environment in early childhood centres are proposed as the ideal context in which to develop a knowledge of literacy in a culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate manner.

The review of literature (Chapter Two) is organised into four sections: definitions of emergent literacy in children and the role of the parents and teachers in children's learning; Vygotsky's theory of cognitive, language and literacy development; the implications of emergent literacy research for curriculum design and finally an examination of early childhood policy and practice in New Zealand and the relationship with Piagetian theory. In Chapter Three the aims, methods and ethical considerations of the present study will be outlined. Next, in Chapter Four, the "implicit theories" of Head Teachers in twelve kindergartens will be examined, focussing on how teachers believe that children learn and how they consider that they promote literacy in young children. In Chapter Five, the similarities between teachers and parents beliefs and practices will be reported, in order to examine the literacy experiences that children are receiving at home and at kindergarten. In Chapter Six, the literacy environment in six kindergartens will be explored, in order to examine the continuities between teachers' beliefs and practices. The final chapter will summarise the main findings of the research and discuss how literacy is promoted and practiced in kindergartens, along with the implications for curriculum design and for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

The following review of literature will attempt to bring three major areas of history, theory and research together, to provide the foundation for the present research into the literacy policy and practices of New Zealand early childhood centres. These are current research into emergent literacy in preschool children, Vygotsky's cognitive theory and the implications for curriculum, and the foundations of teaching theory and practice in New Zealand kindergartens. The review will have four quite distinct sections which are briefly summarised below:

1. The first section will examine the literature on emergent literacy and the recent findings that later reading achievement has its roots in the early childhood years. It also addresses the role of parents in children's literacy development and the beliefs that teachers have about teaching and parent roles in children's development.
2. An examination of Vygotsky's theories of cognitive, language and literacy development will be provided, as these have been enormously influential on emergent literacy research.
3. The implications that emergent literacy research could have for curriculum in early childhood are discussed, along with some preliminary ideas about how a literacy centred curriculum could be developed in New Zealand.
4. This section provides a brief history of the nature of programmes and curriculum in kindergartens, and the significance of "free play" to early childhood education. Piaget's cognitive theory will also be discussed, as it underpins current early childhood curriculum in New Zealand and much early childhood practice throughout the western world.

The development of emergent literacy

Emergent literacy

Reading research in this century has been extensive, with considerable emphasis placed upon the need for universality in literacy. Consequently, a large number of theories have been put forward to suggest the best way of teaching reading and writing, in order to ensure that all children acquire literacy. This section of the review will

explore some of the current research into emergent literacy, language development, meaning construction and parental and teacher roles in emergent literacy development.

Research in the last hundred years has concentrated on the notion that literacy is acquired in the school environment. Much of the research has focussed on identifying, testing and finding strategies to help these children toward the goal of full literacy. In the last decade, a new trend has arisen out of the observation that some children are simply better prepared than others, to learn how to read and write. This question is not simply explained away by I.Q. testing or cultural deprivation theories. This new trend has been termed "emergent literacy" (Clay, 1982) to describe the beginnings of reading and writing. This field of study necessarily focuses on the preschool period, to examine what factors are involved in the preschool environment which encourage a child to become literate.

The term "emergent literacy" conveys something of the nature of the concept, that it is a natural, evolving, developmental process (Strickland and Cullinan, 1990). This is opposed to the idea that literacy is a school based acquisition, that suitably qualified school teachers pass on to their students. In many ways, this concept has advantages and disadvantages. The major advantage is that all the hours of quality stimulation and encouragement that parents give to their pre-literate children are now recognised as being particularly important in the child's later preparedness and ability to respond to formal reading instruction. The obvious corollary of this is the handicap of the child who has not had a rich pre-school experience upon starting school. The onus is on the teacher to help this child to experience some of these activities and to keep pace with the reading development of the other children in the class.

The emergent literacy approach looks at the whole process of literacy acquisition and the importance of examining the wider context. An important issue in using a "whole process" approach is that the teacher cannot be held solely responsible for reading failure. The wider context shows parents playing, or being recognised for playing, a major role in helping the child toward acquiring literacy. This approach also encompasses the contribution that stress or difficulty in the home background or impediment to progress in other educational areas can have upon reading progress.

Stanovich (1986) argues that reciprocal relationships exist between good vocabulary knowledge, which facilitates reading comprehension, and reading itself which leads to vocabulary acquisition. Stanovich explains that "the critical mediating variable that turns this relationship into a strong bootstrapping mechanism that causes major individual differences in the development of reading skill is the volume of reading experience" (p.380). A result of the effect of reading volume on vocabulary growth, combined with large skill differences arising from reading volume, could mean a "rich get richer" or a cumulative advantage phenomenon, which is embedded in reading progress. Research into this phenomenon has shown that children who have good vocabularies and are reading well will read more, learn more words and read better.

Children who have smaller vocabularies, read slowly and without enjoyment, have a slower development of vocabulary, which further inhibits reading ability (Walberg et al., 1984; Walberg and Tsai, 1983). Merton (1968) called these consequences of early educational achievement "Matthew effects" from the Gospel according to Matthew : "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath"(XXV:29) (Stanovich, 1986, p. 381). Stanovich states that these "Matthew effects" spill over into other areas of learning, creating a "poor get poorer" phenomenon, so that failure in one area can have a similar effect in other areas formerly progressing normally. The child who succeeds at beginning reading is exposed to a considerable amount of print and consequently practices at her skill. The gap widens immeasurably between the child who succeeds and the child who fails. The implications for a beginning reading programme which fails children are enormous.

One of the reasons why the early childhood area has begun to attract so much attention is because of the deficit apparent in children who have not had a varied and stimulating pre-school environment. These children start school with a natural handicap, which can lead to the sort of "Matthew effects" (Stanovich, 1986) described earlier. Under a traditional "reading readiness" programme, the child would be expected to catch up when the cognitive processes had matured and in response to specific readiness training. Stanovich also points out that not being able to read affects every other cognitive skill.

Slow reading acquisition has cognitive, behavioural and motivational consequences that slow the development of other cognitive skills and inhibit performance on many academic tasks. In short, as reading develops, other cognitive processes linked to it track the level of reading skill. Knowledge bases that are in reciprocal relationships with reading are also inhibited from further development. The longer this developmental sequence is allowed to continue, the more generalized the deficits will become, seeping into more and more areas of cognition and behaviour. Or to put it more simply - and sadly - in the words of a tearful nine year old, already frustratingly behind his peers in reading progress "Reading affects everything you do"(Stanovich, 1986, p.390).

Stanovich (1986) argues that specific intervention, aimed at increasing phonological ability in particular, is crucial to stopping the cycle of "Matthew Effects". This review will later look at the ways in which phonological awareness may be encouraged in a preschool environment.

In 1966, Marie Clay coined the term "emergent literacy" to describe the developmental continuities between emergent literacy behaviour and behaviour when the child is able to read independently. Clay's early research showed that children who couldn't read in the full sense of the word, showed sensitivity to letter and word forms, appropriate directional movements, self correction and synchronised matching of spoken word units with written word units. As Clay (1982, p.22) then concluded :

There is nothing in this research that suggests that contact with printed language forms should be withheld from any five-year-old on the grounds that he is immature.

The fact that Clay observed these prerequisite parts of reading suggest that the child is already cognitively active and has had previous productive experience with print. Strickland and Cullinan (1990) provide a useful definition of emergent literacy, which underscores Clay's proposal that children are already armed with a number of literacy skills when they start reading instruction. As they argue:

The term emergent underscores the fact that young children are in a developmental process; there is no single point when literacy begins. Children's uses, motives and functions associated with reading and writing, and their psycholinguistic processes are to a surprising degree similar to those of adults and older children (1990, p.427)

Further to these early findings, Clay has expounded the dangers of waiting for literacy to occur. In New Zealand, children were not considered to be having reading difficulties until they reached the third or fourth year of schooling, and were obviously behind their peers. Clay (1985, p.11) cites the following results of waiting :

There is a gap or deficit to be made up.
 There are consequential deficits in other aspects of education.
 There are consequences for the child's personality and education.
 An even greater problem is that the child has not failed to learn in his three years at school, he has tried to do his work, he has practised his primitive skills and he has habituated, daily, the wrong responses. A remedial programme must take what has to be unlearned into account.

Clay's research set out to show teachers which children needed extra resources by the end of the first year of school and how to establish effective intervention. This meant exposure to a greater variety of print and trying varied situations to find common ground with the child, on which to build the skills of reading.

Clay's research has sparked curiosity into how children learn these pre-requisite skills to reading, long before commencing formal instruction. Few parents set about actively "teaching" their preschoolers, but something in their daily interaction has been shown to have a beneficial effect for later reading. As Teale and Sulzby comment "children use legitimate reading and writing behaviours in the informal settings of home and community" (1986, p.xviii).

Yetta Goodman (1986) has taken this issue and examined how and where literacy develops in the home environment. She calls her theory of emergent literacy the "five roots of literacy" as a metaphor for the beginnings of reading. She cites the following examples of the "five roots of literacy" and how they are present in the child's environment (Goodman, 1986, p.7).

Root 1 : Development of print awareness in situational contexts. This is the development of knowledge of print embedded in environmental settings, e.g. tins, labels, signs. logos.

The research found :

60% of 3 year olds can read environmental print in context. At 4-5 years, 80% can.
 At any point in decontextualisation, fewer subjects are able to read environmental print.
 All subjects reading by providing the exact information given or a generic term (e.g. toothpaste for "Colgate").
 50% of 4-5 year olds are able to read print in partial context when only the logo is presented to subjects apart from the entire item.

75% report they can't read, despite interaction with environmental print.
No differences in ability to read environmental print based on ethnic geographic, racial or linguistic differences. Differences are due to chronological age.

Root 2 : Development of print awareness in connected discourse. This kind of written material includes books, magazines, newspapers and letters. The conclusions :

Ability to handle books is universal - knowing what they are for, how to handle them, what direction they are read and their function.

Children between 3-5 learn that print carries the message.

Children understand the proper orientation - how to hold, open, turn pages, follow narrative.

Children demonstrate knowledge of terms, e.g. book, page, turn...by responding to appropriate directions, e.g "show me the front of the book"

Subjects say they can't read and will need help when they get to school.

Root 3 : Development of functions and forms of writing. Subjects conceive that writing is different from reading.

All subjects respond that they can write.

50% of 3 year olds make letters which look like letters, in addition to scribble forms.

Subjects produce different representations when asked to draw or write, although the distinction isn't very clear.

Children discuss function of writing more readily than the function of reading.

Root 4 : The use of oral language to talk about written language. Children develop oral language as they have active experience with written language. Children have numerous opportunities to develop this - preschools, television, advertising, books, all designed for preschoolers to provide them with names of letters, sound, numbers, and rhythm of spoken and written language.

Root 5 : Metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness about written language. This is the ability to analyse and explain the process of language. Goodman (1986, p.7) narrows her definition to include only statements that show evidence of the child's analysis of the written language process :

Children provide metalinguistic statements about language. They use terms appropriately, and make statements about reading and writing when written language is not in view.

These comments do not have a direct relationship to their degree of sophistication in reading and writing.

Metalinguistic statements represent personal and public concepts about written language; they reflect children's idiosyncratic statements about their observations of language or what they may have heard or understood from the community.

As Goodman presents it, all children receive a comprehensive introduction to literacy. This seems to happen whether it is through the parents actively stimulating or inviting response to the environment, or through the child watching television, other people or the environment's activities in general. There can be little doubt, however, that the greater the amount of experience in these "five roots of literacy", the better prepared the child will be for formal instruction upon reaching school.

Teale's research (1986) set out to trace the relation between the home background and the roots of literacy. The research followed on from Goodman's "roots of literacy"

research, using a "naturalistic inquiry" method (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, in Teale, 1986, p.173). He chose this method because of its qualitative nature; observation, interview, documentary analysis, in order to detect and identify the relevant variables in research. Teale's San Diego Study focussed on 24 preschool children over a period of 3-18 months. All children were from low income families, and from Anglo, Black and Mexican American cultures. There were equal numbers of boys and girls. The children were all between two and a half and three and a half years when they began to be observed. Teale's study revealed that every child in the study was involved in reading and writing to some degree, from 5 to 53 times per day and spent an average of between 40 minutes and 7.5 hours per day in these activities. Teale (1986) discovered two major areas in his research; the participant structure (i.e. the other participants in the event) and the domain of activity. Teale's findings of the participant structure in the homes studies were as follows :

- 1) Not only is there a great overall range in the frequency and amount of literacy in the homes, there is a comparable range in the various participant structures.
- 2) In some homes there are numerous demonstrations of literacy, in others very few.
- 3) Some parents interacted a great deal with their preschoolers in activities mediated by literacy, others rarely did.
- 4) Some children "read" and "wrote" considerably, others did rarely.

Teale also identified nine domains of activity in the homes of which literacy was a fundamental part (Teale, 1986, p.185). Briefly, the domains were daily living routines, entertainment, school related activity (e.g. homework of siblings, notices), work, religion, interpersonal communication (letters, cards etc.), participating in "information networks" (reading papers, journals for the purpose of interacting socially and being well informed e.g. sport pages), story book time and literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy (e.g. to teach the child).

So if children do have the comprehensive introduction to literacy that these research studies indicate, then how does this "emergent literacy" manifest itself? Much of the earlier research stemmed from the debate concerning when children should be taught to read (Adams, 1990). I.Q. tests and cognitive maturation, being "mentally ready", had been used as the traditional predictors of reading achievement (Adams, 1990), with a general rule of thumb that reading instruction should start at a mental age of six and half years (attributed to a report by Morphett and Washburne, 1931) and phonics instruction at a mental age of seven years (Dolch and Bloomster, 1937, in Adams, 1990).

Unfortunately, I.Q proved to be a poor predictor of reading achievement, as letter recognition and phonemic awareness are better predictors of success in reading acquisition (Stanovich, 1986; Tunmer and Nesdale, 1985) and individual differences in these skills are independent of mental age on an I.Q. test, so that children with both high and low mental age may acquire the skills (Biemiller, 1977; Stanovich, 1986). These skills may

also be the central consequences of phonics instruction (Ehri, 1980; Morais, Cary, Alegria and Bertelson, 1979; Perfetti, Beck, Bell and Hughes, 1987; Wagner and Torgesen, 1987).

Bond and Dykstra (1967) and Chall (1967) both presented the challenging finding that a better predictor of reading achievement was a child's knowledge of letter names. It was those children who had an easy familiarity with letters who made a successful transition to reading (Speer and Lamb, 1976; Stanovich, Cunningham and Cramer, 1984; Tunmer, Herriman and Nesdale, 1988; Walsh, Price and Gillingham, 1988). Adams (1990, p.63) explains the reasons as follows:

- 1) It is easier for a child who is familiar with letters to name them;
- 2) Speed is the index of familiarity used, as children who are familiar with letters can name them quickly;
- 3) Letter names closely relate to sounds. Children who can relate symbols to sounds have worked out the alphabet principle;
- 4) The ability to name any kind of visual stimuli (colours, numbers, objects) differs between individuals.

Similarly, Meyer, Wardrop, Hastings and Linn (1993) in a study of 650 children at the beginning and end of their kindergarten year, report that the best predictor of children's reading performance at the end of kindergarten was knowledge of letters and words at the beginning of kindergarten.

Although simply teaching children letter names has been found to be ineffective for some children (Adams, 1990), this finding is because only children who are phonologically aware can benefit from letter name training (Tunmer, Herriman and Nesdale, 1988). Reading achievement can be seen to be not just a knowledge of letter names, but an interaction of both letter name knowledge and phonemic awareness. Providing "at risk" readers with instruction in both letter names and sounds and phonological training is more effective than training in either skill alone (Ball and Blachman, 1991).

Children who become fluent readers display good phonemic awareness (Liberman, Shankweiler, Liberman, Fowler and Fischer, 1978; Blachman, 1984a, Tunmer and Nesdale, 1985; Zifcak, 1981). The reason appears to be the causal relationship with decoding ability, which is causally related to reading comprehension (Tunmer and Nesdale, 1985). Successful reading achievement is thus the combined knowledge of letter names and phonemic awareness. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley (1987), seeking the roots of these skills, hypothesised that the foundations of phonemic awareness stem from knowledge of nursery rhymes. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley tested 66 English children who were 3:3 years. The sample comprised nearly equal numbers of males and females, who came from an even mix of middle class and working class families. Parents came from a broad range of educational backgrounds. Children were tested every four months until they were four and a half years. Their results indicated that early knowledge of

nursery rhymes is strongly related to the development of phonological skills and emergent reading abilities.

Other important emergent skills include syllable splitting, the ability to break the initial sound away from a word (Share, Jorm, Maclean and Matthews, 1984); which is considered to be a good predictor of first grade reading achievement. Blending tasks (e.g. /m/ /a/ /p/ is map) (Perfetti, Beck, Bell and Hughes, 1987) demonstrate that a child is aware of segmentation, which is crucial to reading achievement. Oddity tasks, in which children are asked to pick a word which does not belong from a group on the basis of first, middle or end sounds, are also important skills in early reading achievement (Bradley and Bryant, 1983; Stanovich, Cunningham and Feeman, 1984, Wallach, Wallach, Dozier and Kaplan, 1977).

Another interesting finding, is that although I.Q. tests are a poor predictor of early reading achievement, it can be strongly predicted by ability to perform such tasks as classification, seriation and conservation of quantity (Arlin, 1981, Lunzer, Dolan and Wilkinson, 1976). Similarly, Tunmer, Herriman and Nesdale (1988) gave a test of basic logical and analytical abilities to children at the beginning of first grade. In order to examine the relative importance of these skills they also administered an I.Q. test, tests of phonemic, syntactic and pragmatic awareness and Clay's (1979) concepts about print test. The concepts about print test was re-administered again at the end of first grade, along with tests of decoding proficiency and reading comprehension (from Calfee and Calfee, 1981). In Tunmer et al.'s analyses of combined tests results, logical and analytical abilities were strongly and causally related to both linguistic awareness and concepts about print, which in turn were causally related to reading achievement. Their results also indicate that logical and analytical ability is more related to linguistic awareness than I.Q. Children with low phonemic awareness but high logical and analytical abilities caught up within the year, whereas children with low levels of both sets of skills lagged behind. Tunmer, Nesdale and Herriman advise against delaying reading instruction, arguing that it is more efficient to encourage language games and activities to encourage linguistic awareness. These findings have important implications for the nature of curriculum content for kindergarten age children.

The important point to remember about all of these emergent literacy skills is that they do not readily develop without experience of reading directed tutelage by a more experienced sibling or adult (Adams, 1990). Teale's (1986) domains of literacy open up the study of literacy considerably, by introducing the notion of literacy as an integral part of all western living routines, and clearly shows that the child who is initially unable to read story books in the new entrant classroom may be quite proficient with other forms of literacy. Although some of the research into emergent literacy reported in this review stems from the "whole language" perspective (e.g. Goodman, 1986; Strickland and Morrow, 1989), the position to be argued in this thesis will be that children require not

only access to literacy rich environments in order to develop literacy. Children also require skilled mediation of literacy materials and specific instruction in literacy skills, such as letter name knowledge and phonological awareness. This section has brought together the start of the trend toward research in “emergent literacy” (Clay, 1982), the “roots of literacy” in the home environment (Goodman, 1986) and the role of participant structures and the domains of activity in which literacy occurs (Teale, 1986) and has detailed some of the emergent skills which predict successful reading achievement. The next section will consider how children develop literacy skills within relationships with more competent adults or peers.

Story book reading and the development of language and literacy

Discussion thus far has centred around the notion that the acquisition of literacy is an intrinsically social process. The literacy experiences a child has before school may have far reaching effects on the literacy skills that children have on beginning reading instruction. Story book reading is a culturally evolved activity constrained and maintained by a particular group of people for particular purposes, often with the purpose of promoting literacy development. Because of the social nature of literacy, the development of the mental operations involved cannot be studied or understood without examining the wider social context in which literacy is experienced. As Vygotsky says (1978, p.88) “Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them”.

Vygotsky's (1962) argues that “In order to subject a function to intellectual and volitional control, we must first possess it”(p.90). Story book reading provides multiple opportunities for children to learn a variety of concepts about print (Clay, 1982), along with vocabulary (Elley, 1989) and a story schema (Snow, 1983). Through story reading children may learn about their family and culture, as well as seeing demonstrations of how to read, which they may later model and attempt for themselves. This section will examine how language is attained in early childhood and the role that literacy practices and social relations play. The role of story book reading and language development will be closely examined, as so much of the research into emergent literacy has examined this activity. Reading aloud to children has been found to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills eventually required for reading (Chomsky, 1972; Commission on Reading, National Academy of Education, 1985; Durkin, 1966; Goldfield and Snow, 1984; Johns, 1984; McCormick, 1977; and Teale, 1984). Furthermore, experience of story reading has been found to strongly predict reading achievement (Bus, van Ijzendoorn and Pellegrini, 1995).

In western societies, reading story books to children is promoted in the implicit belief that this activity will be beneficial to a child's development; cognitive, linguistic and

social. Cochran-Smith (1984) made use of “parent diaries” to demonstrate that children's early experiences can enrich their experiences outside of books. She argues:

These experiences can play a part in language and concept development, influence later attitudes toward reading, and stimulate and broaden young children's imaginative development (p.12)

Such accounts are by their very nature anecdotal, and as Cochran-Smith points out, they are provided often by parents with academic training in teaching or library work.

However, Cochran-Smith's work highlights an important issue for discussion; that is, whether story book reading is beneficial to a child's development.

Snow (1983) suggests that there are three important elements involved within Vygotsky's “zone of proximal development” regarding language development : semantic contingency, scaffolding and the use of routines. Semantic contingency through story reading is important to language development (Cross, 1978; Wells, 1980) because it provides opportunities to expand upon the child's utterances in response to the text and also to add new information through semantic expansion. This may provide clarification of details or alternative vocabulary. Furthermore, there is opportunity to clarify the child's questions about the text and to model different ways of asking questions. Finally, the child's questions are answered.

Snow (1983) postulates that scaffolding involves taking steps to reduce degrees of freedom in carrying out a task, so that the child can concentrate on a difficult task (Bruner, 1978). Snow also highlights the importance of “accountability procedures” or “upping the ante” (p.174). This means requiring from the child the most sophisticated behaviour which he or she is capable of giving. Similarly, Thomas (1985) states that scaffolding is the reduction of uncertainty in a language task. Parents structure the dialogue and reduce the probability that children will make false starts or fail to complete a task. Thomas stresses that parents enforce “accountability procedures” by requiring task completion in language and literacy tasks.

Snow and Goldfield (1983) state that it is necessary to study language acquisition within the context in which it occurs, and that this must be fundamental to any study of the cognitive mechanisms involved. They further suggest that children learn language through a re-occurring context or a routine. Such routines may suggest ways of talking when the situation reoccurs. These researchers cite story book reading as an ideal routine for learning language in early childhood. Reasons given for its appropriateness are as follows :

- a) the situation can reoccur;
- b) children can identify the original situation;
- c) the child's memory associates the present situation with the previous occurrences.

What this effectively means is that children will often demand stories again, which enables the situation or the event to be re-created. Snow and Goldfield (1983) state that the cognitive strategy involved is the ability to “...identify a situation, remember what is said and say that yourself the next time the situation recurs...” (p.567). This may be heard

when little children “read” a favourite story to themselves; they repeat some of the more memorable lines of the story, amidst their own telling of the story. Parents can establish routines which contribute to literacy, such as bedtime reading and talking about shared events (Heath, 1986, Snow, 1983). Teachers may establish similar routines through “rug-time” reading (Cochran-Smith, 1984). In this way the event (the story) may be remembered with the situation (bed time).

Story books may also have routinized formats which make learning the language of literacy easier. For example, books follow a familiar routine of letter naming and often word association. Similarly, “..A.B.C...” and “Dr. Seuss” books make use of routines of rhyme, rhythm and nonsense words. Ninio (1980) suggests that these routines facilitate rote memorisation of sounds and words and thereby enhance vocabulary acquisition. Routines with and within story book reading may encourage the acquisition of book handling skills (Mason and Allen, 1986) and also the discovery of print, recognition of words and the development of a story schema (Snow and Goldfield, 1982).

Thomas (1985) postulates that it is the quality and quantity of the interaction, not just the presence of written materials and routines which shapes early reading development. It is apparent, however, that none of these routines will take place without access to appropriate written materials nor without willing mediation by a literate other. Smith (1984) states that literate others (i.e. parents) lead children to an understanding of the multiple functions of written language (in Mason and Allen, 1986).

Chomsky (1972) found a strong relationship between story book reading and the rate of linguistic development. Chomsky highlights that there is a distinct language advantage for children if they are read to frequently and hear a variety of rich and complex stories. Elley (1989) states that children learn and retain more from hearing entertaining stories than from working at contrived exercises. Elley cites the “arousal theory” of Berlyne (1960) which provides a list of “collative variables” as to why children learn from and enjoy story book reading. These variables are novelty, humour, conflict, suspense, incongruity and vividness.

Young children can learn new vocabulary from having story books read to them. If teachers (or parents) add explanations of unknown words as they are encountered, then these gains can be doubled (Elley, 1989). Elley (1989, p.184) hypothesises that three factors account for learning a certain word :

- 1) frequency of occurrence of the word
- 2) helpfulness of the context
- 3) frequency of occurrence of the word in picture representation

Wells (1985a) found that the frequency of listening to stories between one and three years was significantly associated with literacy and teacher ratings of oral language skill at five years and reading comprehension at seven years. As he says “ ..stories continue to provide one of the most enriching contexts for the development of language, both spoken and written...” (p.203).

It is important to remember that not all children have access to story reading as a routine activity. Feitelson and Goldstein (1986) found that 60% of kindergarteners in neighbourhoods where children tend to do poorly in school did not own a single book. In contrast, children who tend to do well in school had, on average, more than 54 books at home. In a similar vein, Clay (1991) states that much of the research on emergent literacy has been completed in middle class homes in which children have been exposed to a wealth of literacy activities. Clay (1991) contends “there is nothing exciting to write about the millions of children who are not getting the opportunities to do these things” (p.273).

Story book reading is one of the common ways in which children gain both access and mediation of literacy materials, along with specific instruction in language and literacy skills. Story reading can provide opportunities for adults to scaffold children’s knowledge and skills and to extend children’s vocabulary. Experience of story reading has been found to be a major predictor of reading achievement. It provides opportunities for adults to build on children’s knowledge and understandings in a developmentally and culturally appropriate way. Providing children, especially those who do not receive story reading at home, with opportunities to read stories would be an important aspect of a kindergarten curriculum which seeks to promote reading achievement.

Meaning construction

The important issue that arises from the previous section is that of meaning and how it is constructed. By integrating the child's background knowledge and personal experiences into the process of literacy activities, it would seem possible for children to construct their own personal understanding of a text or the literacy activity.

Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon and Dockstader-Anderson (1985) provide a clear distinction between print and text. Print provides partial clues for text construction. Text is then a personal interpretation based on experience, background knowledge, beliefs and the purpose of reading. They expand on this to propose that parents facilitate text comprehension. The goal of story reading then is the construction of meaningful, comprehensible and relevant text for the child, rather than a precise reading of the print.

Allen (1985) found that children perform better in inferential tasks when texts are linked to their own oral language. In Allen's study, seventy children of varying reading ability read three kinds of stories : their own, peer written and textbook. Allen found that even the least able readers inferred well on their own text and somewhat better on peer stories than textbook stories. Franklin (1988) says that the meaning which children create is a fundamental meaning; tied to understanding their existence, their relatedness to other things. Franklin states that children need opportunities to pursue interests and questions they have about life, and that reading and writing stories may allow such opportunities.

Hall (1976) states that as children see their spoken thoughts put onto paper, they can understand the nature of reading and learn to associate spoken words with written language. Dyson's (1989) research at the writing table presented evidence that children express their fused interests and classroom experience in action and writing, through their dramatic play and their imaginative drawings. Rowe (1989) presented similar findings to Dyson, with the finding that children learn concepts of author and audience within a supportive writing environment and through dialogue.

Wells (1985a) found that most children had engaged in "ritual naming" (Ninio and Bruner, 1978) of familiar objects or representations in picture books in the home setting. They had also been quizzed about familiar events and activities and understood what was expected of them, within the context of purposeful and meaningful activity. In a classroom, however, activities are organised by a set curriculum. Information is presented for its own sake, not its relevance to a practical activity. Some children have difficulty with de-contextualized talk, even if the objects are familiar within a known context, but not usually accessed by language alone.

A child's preparation for this de-contextualized aspect of language may be made easier by early experience with story reading and talking. Roser and Martinez (1985) propose that this early experience motivates reading, fosters reasoning about the text and lays the foundation for later text comprehension. This is dependent upon the child's linguistic competence, developmental constraints, education, social and book experiences. Heath (1986) has pointed out that story telling and story reading is a less frequent occurrence in working class homes, which lends support for the notion that there are class differences noticeable in the preparedness for learning to read amongst children upon entering school. Heath conducted an eight year ethnographic study of working class and middle class communities in the Piedmont Carolinas. During this study Heath (1986, p.163) observed four types of parent-child interactions surrounding the telling of events or narratives :

- 1) recounting - child responding to the adult's requests or questions
- 2) accounting - child constructs a personal account of events that he/she has experienced
- 3) event casting - child produces a running narrative of an ongoing event
- 4) story telling - child tells imaginary stories by elaborating on real or imagined events

Heath observed many more of these types of interactions in middle class families. Heath also noted that these differences were carried into school, affecting the child's ability to talk about or write stories. Heath demonstrated how children's reading acquisition can be greatly enhanced by designing a classroom which draws on understanding of the language and literacy uses in the home setting. This point will be revisited in the section of this review on literacy in the curriculum.

McNaughton (1995) studied a group of Auckland children between the ages of 4 and 6 years, who had been identified as potential high progress readers. Seventeen children from three cultural groups were studied; including four Maori, six Pakeha and

seven Samoan children. Children's families all came from non-professional occupations. Children were observed in their homes and at school every six months. McNaughton (1995, p.20) states that these children's literacy experiences included "jointly constructed activities" (such as reading a story with a child), "personal activities" (such as a child exploring books) and "ambient activities" where the child may observe adults engaged in literacy activity, such as reading the newspaper. All of the families in McNaughton's study used literacy for a variety of purposes; including reading newspapers, magazines, books and religious material. In addition, families wrote letters, shopping lists, recipes and provided secretarial support to various local committees. Children experienced ambient activities with their siblings, through school homework or daily book reading for school. Joint activities included reading books to children, teaching writing, library visits and talking about print. Personal activities occurred often according to parental diaries, although varied according to the literacy resources in the home, such as things to write with, books to read and appropriate time and setting. McNaughton argues that children construct their social and cultural identities and understandings of literacy within these mediated family relationships.

Morrow (1988) found that children who are not read to at home very often still ask specific questions about written language. There can be little doubt, however, that children who are practised at the skills of accessing written language and finding personal meanings from stories will have a distinct advantage over those who have not. Mason and Allen (1986) highlight a research need; that is to explore how story reading activities (listening, discussion, re-reading, reciting, skilful reading...) help children to understand how to read stories meaningfully. The interplay between story reading and word recognition with possible effects on phonemic awareness and later reading is important.

The issue which needs to be stressed is that children are active constructors of meaning in response to story books, because of their background experience, rather than in spite of it. Children of working class families have a wealth of social and language experiences to relate to story reading. Kiefer (1988) says that picture books provide opportunities for literary and aesthetic responses and social and cultural understanding. Kiefer further states that children are active constructors of cognitive and affective meaning; their responses to picture books may include oral discussion, written products, drama, art and physical behaviour. Similarly, Whitehurst et al. (1988), in their research on reading picture book stories, conclude that children need to enjoy and reflect on the form and content of stories.

Wells (1985a) proposes that stories read from books are not always very far removed in form and content from oral recounting of events that have been experienced. It may then be possible to find stories which relate to a child's experience with extra information, so that the child is increasing his or her breadth of knowledge. It would be important therefore to pick stories which did not only relate to white middle class activities. For example a fairly common event for middle class children is to go for a ride

in the car and have a picnic; but this may be an unheard of activity for a child living in low income, state provided housing in a large city, whose parents have no transport. Wells (1985a) calls the process of making meaning "storying" or constructing stories in the mind. Wells states that "storying" has an ancient history in the oral myths and legends of most communities. It seems particularly appropriate in New Zealand, therefore, for schools to lend emphasis in the school curriculum to the myths and legends of the Maori and Pacific Island people.

Parents and teachers may use interactive language when reading a new book; they may stop during the oral reading to talk to the child about how their real life knowledge might be relevant to an understanding of the text (Sulzby, 1985). Roser and Martinez (1985) noted that children construct or negotiate meaning at a variety of levels and make a broad range of responses to story book. Responses are often focussed on the characteristic components of stories and children join in the narration and provide predictions about the text. Roser and Martinez identified seven types of story talk : narrational, interpretive, evaluative, associative, predictive, informative and elaborative. These types of story talk were used to discuss the title, setting, characters, details, events, story language and the flavour of the entire story.

In a similar vein, Dombey (1988) proposes that story reading is a highly complex, multi-level literary experience. Dombey's research was conducted in a nursery class attached to a depressed housing estate in the south of England. Most children were nominated to the school by Social Services, as having a particular social or educational need. In this nursery class, the teacher was primarily concerned with meaning, focussing on the kernel events or those central to narrative structure. The meaning is determined by the children's contributions, thus involving the children's interests and concerns. The observed teacher used the interactive strategy, as detailed by Sulzby (1985), but she was a co-participator rather than a controller of the event. As Dombey (1988) says "...the essential work of constructing or 'reading' the narrative is one that inevitably involves active engagement..." (p.80). This active engagement is an interrogation of the text; the child gives coherence and significance to a text by active participation. Dombey found that this method of story reading with "at risk" children helped them to take on new ways of organising discourse, new meanings, new words and new syntactic forms. This sort of story reading experience has implications for giving children positive experiences with reading, to help to avoid the sorts of "Matthew effects" described by Stanovich (1986).

Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon (1989) have taken a Piagetian perspective to study how a child's questions will uncover the logic and successive stages of the intellectual activity of reading. The child can illuminate perceptions of reading and come to understand connections between spoken and written language. Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon (1989) propose that Piaget's theory of cognitive development is useful in examining how children construct meaning from story books; as it is interactive, constructive as well as dialectical. These researchers state that a child's "spontaneous"

questions do not arise out of a social vacuum, there is a logic and meaning to why they are asked. As Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon (1989, p.192) state:

they are a composite of prior information given by the parent in response to previous questions, the child's own constructed or transformed knowledge in the form of unique and idiosyncratic notions about literacy (c.f. Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982) and succeeding levels of socially negotiated understanding, which are evolving toward more conventional adult concepts.

Questions arise from a gap or "lacuna" in the child's knowledge, and provide a useful insight into how the child's knowledge of literacy is progressing and if it is benefiting from listening to and reading stories.

Wells (1987) claims that story reading provides the child with a breadth of information about the process and functions of written language, from

- a) performative level - decoding, to
- b) functional - how print is used, to
- c) informational - communication of knowledge, to
- d) epistemic - where written language structures become an integral part of the child's way of thinking and acting.

This section has addressed some of the ways in which children come to make sense of literacy activities and learn a variety of literacy skills through talking with others and questioning. It has also proposed that children have the best opportunities to make sense of literacy activities when they are based on their own previous experiences. This section has stated that children learn through interaction with more competent others, as Vygotsky (1978) predicted. The next section will examine some of the evidence regarding how parents interact with their children in literacy events.

Parent roles in literacy development

The notion of interactional style between parent and child during story book reading and literacy development has been explored by many researchers, with a main emphasis on the influence on language development. Some of these recurrent themes will be explored here.

Story book reading and other literacy activities between a parent and child are basically social in nature (Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon and Dockstader-Anderson, 1985). The relationship is initially an interpsychological process between parent and child, but changes with time to become an intrapsychological process. The child achieves autonomy in literacy activities through internalization of the strategies used in the social interaction (ibid, 1985). Altwerger et al. suggest that a mother "fine tunes" herself to the child's background and experiences and to developing language abilities. During observation of mother/infant dyads (from 23 to 29 months of age), these researchers noted that the language event in relation to story book reading is negotiated or an interactional strategy; the child affects the mother as much as the mother affects the child. The mother

responds to the frequent interruptions and also molds the language used to fit the child's limited experience and ability to comprehend.

Vygotsky posits a link between an individual's abilities and social relations. As Lock et al. (1989) point out :

It is not the case that interaction *facilitates* the development of such abilities, as though they would develop anyway : rather, interaction must somehow *constitute* them - they would not develop without it. And that process of developing an ability is not one of acquiring it, or putting it together from scratch, but of gaining control of an ability that somehow already exists within social relations. (Lock et al., 1989, p.247).

Ninio and Bruner (1978) analysed the mother/child interaction which accompanied picture book reading. Their findings provide evidence that mothers direct attention to particular features, ask questions, provide labels and feedback by repeating and extending remarks. Whitehurst et al. (1988) argue that parents use book reading with intent to teach language; by asking questions, giving feedback and adjusting questions to the developmental level of the child.

Parents adjust interaction styles to the child's level of communicative competence (Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel, 1985). Ninio and Bruner (1978) found that parents structure the interaction, by providing questions and comments which make connections between the text and the child's experiences, and by appropriate labelling of pictures and words. Snow (1983) calls this interaction "shared histories"; the purpose being to make sense of the text for the child.

Ninio (1983) found that mothers initiate different labelling formats on repeated discussions of the same referent. Mothers display a high degree of sensitivity to signals of word knowledge or the lack of it, and choose their subsequent question or comment accordingly. (Ninio does not state if the same behaviours can be recorded with fathers.) Mothers only gave labels if the child did not know the word. Correct labelling lead to further questioning by the mother, to check for correct comprehension. Ninio calls these production-eliciting and comprehension responses.

Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon and Dockstader-Anderson (1985) found that parents issue invitations both verbally and prosodically to join in the language event; by verbal invitation and rising intonation with a following pause to encourage the child to predict and join in the story telling. Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel (1985) look at the parents verbal and non-verbal behaviours, in terms of Vygotsky's notion of the "zone of proximal development". They intended to explore if parental interaction became less supportive as the child progressed or if it was related to the verbal I.Q. of the child. They found that parents use two types of cognitive demand strategies (high and medium) and that statements do not vary with the child's age or cognitive status. Parents seemed more concerned with labelling, rather than making inferences or cause/effect judgements. Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel predict that this may have been a reflection of the simple story plots which were used. However, they did find that parents use conversational turns and language to elicit responses from children. They were able to identify Vygotsky's theory

as relevant in the noted level of paraphrasing, which was greater with more competent children. They therefore concluded that paraphrasing is an advanced cognitive strategy.

Children may internalize teaching strategies from their parents, which highlights the need to examine differences between parents in book reading style (Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel, 1985). Roser and Martinez (1985) posit that children's responses to stories align to the customary style of the parent or teacher. In this way, if the parent usually labels pictures, rather than questioning or commenting on the text, then the child is more likely to do as well. Roser and Martinez (1985) hypothesise that parents and teachers act as co-responders, informers/monitors and directors. As a co-responder, parents model the process of interaction with the text and demonstrate that many responses are plausible. As an informer or monitor, parents view themselves as suppliers of information and determiners of understanding. They signal the importance of making connections and drawing on background knowledge. As director the parent introduces stories, announces their conclusion and assumes the management or leadership role in discussion. Furthermore, parents who show an interest and involvement with a child's literacy, increase the likelihood of a child displaying an awareness of literacy (Stewart, 1992).

Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon (1989) propose that monitoring the child's contribution to the story reading event is a useful index of the child's acquisition of literacy knowledge. Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon point out that most studies (Ninio and Bruner, 1978, Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel, 1985, Snow and Goldfield, 1982) on parent-child interaction have focussed on what the parent was asking, rather than what the child wanted to know (Martinez and Roser, 1985, Crago and Crago, 1976 in Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon, 1989). This is surprising, as Durkin (1966) stated over twenty years ago that "most of the parental help which lead to a child's early reading ability was given in response to the child's questions and requests for assistance" (p.135).

It is important to recognise that children may not display the full repertoire of their language skills in an early childhood setting. Wells (1985a) states that all children, no matter what their background use language in a wide range of ways. Difficulties arise for the child in a child care centre because of the specialisations of language which are used, such as "classroom language" and "literacy language". Wells suggests that social class differences in 'readiness for school' have less to do with language differences than they have do with differences in activities related to writing and reading. McNaughton (1995) argues that schools which attempt to use a child's home literacy experiences in curriculum design help children to greater reading achievement. This principle is clearly demonstrated in Heath's (1983) study, in which children who were predicted to fail at initial reading instruction were able to learn to read when the curriculum drew on functions of literacy in their home background.

It seems interesting that few, if any, of the studies have actually attempted to explore the "quality" of the interaction. It seems all too possible for a parent to have an uneasy relationship with a child and for this to permeate the reading event, despite the

interaction "skills" for eliciting responses which they may possess. Conversely, a less "skilled" parent may make the event meaningful by simply providing closeness and proximity. An examination of parent-child relationships with regard to reading development seems an interesting issue. Bus and van Ijzendoorn (1988) in their research on mother-child book reading events found that children's attachment status, or the quality of the social-emotional relationship between mothers and children, is predictive of maternal teaching styles while reading. They argue that social relationships form the foundation of subsequent social cognitive development. Bus, Van Ijzendoorn and Pellegrini (1995) conducted a meta-analysis of empirical evidence related to parent-preschooler reading and concluded that parent-preschooler reading is related to outcome measures such as language growth, emergent literacy and reading achievement. The outcome measures are not related to socio-economic status, but may be affected by problems in the attachment relationship status between parent and child. This means that book reading may be an unpleasant activity for a parent and child with insecure attachment, which in turn discourages the child's interest in literacy. Rogoff (1991) states that is important to look at other social relationships as well, in light of the time many children spend interacting with adults other than their parents, in child care, nursery schools and kindergartens before formal schooling.

This section of the review has examined how parents may interact with their children with literacy activities in general and story reading in particular. One of the aims of the research is to find out what types of literacy activities parents undertake with their children and what types of interaction occur during those events. Later, it will be proposed that teachers base their ideas about "good practice" on a complex set of beliefs about child development. This review will now consider the relationship between parents beliefs about children and development and literacy practice.

Parent beliefs about development and education

One of the important factors involved in a parent's role is their beliefs about the nature of that child's development and what part they should play in shaping that child's growth and development. According to Vygotsky's theory (see later discussion), parents provide a cultural and social shaping of the child's potential development, simply through the process of their daily interaction. However, there has been useful research on parental beliefs about child development which is worth raising here.

McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1982) presents two major findings regarding parental beliefs and practices :

- 1) Parents have complex belief systems about how children develop.
- 2) These beliefs are constructed on the basis of the individual's own personal experiences as a child and as a parent.

These belief systems are related to Kelly's (1955, 1963) personal construct theory. Kelly proposed that each person formulates constructs through which the world is viewed and interpreted. These constructs are used by the individual to predict events and assess the accuracy of predictions after events have occurred. When interacting with other people, behaviour is guided by the constructs. Thus for parents, these constructs or beliefs about development can be viewed as the means through which the parent's behaviour vis à vis their child is guided. Similarly, Kohn (1969, 1977), McGillicuddy -DeLisi (1982), Sigel and McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1984) and Sigel (1992) have shown that parents explicitly adopt particular child rearing practices with a view to fostering the qualities they value in their children. Furthermore, Sigel (1992), McClelland (1961, 1982) and Bloom (1985) have shown that parents' beliefs about the causal connections between child rearing practices and the qualities their children develop are basically correct.

McGillicuddy-DeLisi points out that this is not a closed system. Experiences as a child may influence beliefs, but subsequent experiences as an adult and a parent can modify beliefs (e.g. family size, experience of parenting, sex differences and children's capabilities change). McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1982) concludes

Parenting is the most intensive experience most individuals have with children and it is in the course of interactions with one's own developing child that growth and change during adult years are likely to occur (p.5).

When focussing on belief variables, McGillicuddy-DeLisi's research results indicated that educational level and age of mothers are related to beliefs, while number of children is not. For fathers, educational level and number of children appear to influence beliefs, while age is irrelevant. Beliefs of mothers and fathers tend to be related to one another. The mothers' beliefs were more affected by their own personal history (educational experience and cohort experience) than by experience with one versus three children.

McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1982) concluded that fathers results are relatively straight forward and consistent with the hypotheses, cited above. Fathers' beliefs about development affect parental practices, which impact the child's ability level. The child's ability level, in turn, appears to confirm/reinforce fathers' beliefs. However, mothers' beliefs (in this sample) do not appear to stem from parenting experience, and are challenged by the child's ability level. Their beliefs stem from personal history, and are not related to parenthood, and are not predictive of teaching style. McGillicuddy-DeLisi proposes that these results may be a feature of the sample, which were all full time mothers with children not attending daycare or a preschool. She suggests that these mothers may be more "in tune" with the child, and that their practices may stem from their extensive knowledge of what motivates and challenges their particular child, rather than from general beliefs about development. Therefore, a beliefs-practices relationship may only occur when knowledge of the particular child is not extensive.

Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin (1990) found similar results in their study of home influences on literacy development. They defined homes as providing a strong literacy environment, if

parents provided literary experiences to the children by reading to them, buying them books, teaching them to read and expressing high educational expectations for them. Also included under strong literacy environments were homes where the parents had attained high levels of education and read a variety of difficult reading materials (p.129).

Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin found a positive relationship between provision of a strong literacy environment and their child's language and literacy development. Literacy provision was also strongly related with language (word meanings) and reading development. The strongest predictors were literacy environment in the home, mother's education, mother's educational expectations for the child and father's education. Mother's role is significant, in that they were found to be more involved with homework, story reading and displaying interest in literature. This finding is similar to Chomsky's (1972) finding with middle class parents, whose high recall of their own favourite books as a child correlated to their child's successful language and reading development.

Involvement with the child's school was also seen to be an important factor in the child's literacy development. Parent- teacher contacts were positively correlated with teacher's perceptions of home contributions to children's learning, higher expectations of children's educational achievement and with children's gains in reading. Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin (1990) state that children from low income families (presumably from literacy poor environments) who spend time with adults, show marked gains in literacy development. They recommend a variety of community based opportunities where children can have contact with literate adults.

Adams (1990) states that all parents, regardless of social class, value education for children. However, as Lareau (1989) argues, children from middle class homes have an 'advantage' which is not money per se, but a parent's knowledge of how schools works. Parents of working class children also want their children to learn to read in first grade, but they are not able to compensate at home when children have trouble with learning at school.

Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler and Brissie (1992) studied parent efficacy; the belief that he or she is capable of exerting a positive influence on children's school outcomes. Their results indicate that parental efficacy is related to classroom volunteering, educational activities and telephone calls. Classroom volunteering means that the parent considers they have something of value to offer in the classroom. Parents may get involved with educational activities, because they believe that it will result in improved school performance. There is a negative relationship with telephone calls, as these may indicate difficulties in school. Parents with lower efficacy may seek contact more often, while school initiated calls may indicate to the parents that they are offering less than adequate help to the child. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) state that sex, marital status,

employment status, and family income were not related to efficacy in this study. Results for teachers indicate that there was a positive relationship between teacher efficacy and teacher reports of parent involvement. The general pattern identified is that high efficacy teacher report high levels of parent participation in homework, educational activities, volunteering and conferences. Hoover et al. suggest that this may be because higher efficacy teachers invite and receive more parent involvement or conversely, that teachers who report higher levels of parent involvement develop higher judgments of personal teaching efficacy.

Epstein (1987) argues that parental involvement in schools is crucial for several reasons, as he states;

The evidence is clear that parental encouragement, activities and interest at home and participation in schools and classrooms affect children's achievements, attitudes and aspirations, even after student ability and family socio-economic status are taken into account (p.120).

The level of contact between home and school is positively correlated with academic achievement (Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988; Iveson, 1981). One reason is that the teacher may help parents to work at home with the child (Epstein, 1991). Fox (1990) concludes that schools can not teach children to read and write without a lot of teaching occurring at home. Tizard et al. (1988) suggest that the only factor significantly related to children's progress in reading and writing over a three year period in primary school is knowledge and contact with the school. Brophy (1990) suggests that bridging the gap between the home and the school helps to prevent illiteracy, as discontinuity between the two may put children at risk. This discontinuity between the culture of the home and school has been addressed by Heath (1983), Tizard and Hughes (1984) and Wells (1985a). Epstein and Dauber (1989) argue that teachers are less willing to help parents with learning activities for the child at home, when they perceive the parents as not being interested in the child's education.

Examining the relationship between parents and teachers beliefs about child development and education was an important aim of the research. This part of the review has examined how parent beliefs are influenced primarily by past experiences, if they spend a lot of time with their child. It has also examined how parents perceptions of what they have to offer in school may affect the course of the child's education, while being closely involved has positive outcomes for school achievement. The next sections will address the source of teachers' beliefs and the relationship with educational practice.

Teacher roles in literacy development

It was argued in the previous section that parents' perceptions of their role in children's literacy development plays a significant role in literacy achievement. It seems important to now examine how teachers perceive their role in the literacy development of

the children in their classroom and the nature of their beliefs about development and education. This section will focus primarily on the teacher's role in literacy activities.

For some teachers, there is a gap between how they intend to teach and the actual practice. Even teachers who identify themselves as 'constructivist' teachers, who encourage children's 'active learning', do not always practice what they preach. For instance, Desforges (1989), in his research with seven early grade teachers of maths, found that despite the rhetoric of teachers who endorsed constructivist /progressive teaching theories, 90% of maths work took the form of pencil and paper routine exercises. There was a noticeable gap between their beliefs and practices, but a gap that teachers were well aware of. In Desforges' (1989) study it was because teachers were overloaded with information and routines were a way of coping with the overload.

Hughes (1989) research with reception class teachers had similar findings, with the focus more clearly on language and literacy development and achievement. Teachers in Hughes' study said that children were egocentric and immature, lacked basic skills/knowledge and were unable to socialise. They also thought that children showed poor concentration, showed little evidence of social training and poor language skills. Teachers blamed these "deficits" on the home environment, stating that there was no language in the home, no stimulation and social problems (such as non stereotypical family groupings). Hughes (1989) compared teachers' beliefs about certain children with observation of the child at home and at school, and with the parents' beliefs about the child, and was unable to support the teachers' claims that there was no language or stimulation. Children were clearly articulate in the dialect of the home, a finding with some parallels to Tizard and Hughes (1984) findings of how children learn at home and at school.

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) state that many teachers deprive children of opportunities to hear the sorts of verbal exchanges which have been shown to promote cognitive development in children. Children may experience an instructional conversation at home long before language occurs, as parents see children as conversational partners. However, at school, teachers are likely to talk over, ignore or dominate children. Children who do not get "meaningful discourse" at home may not get it at school either. Teachers often adopt the interactional patterns so often attributed to disadvantaged homes. Reasons given by Gallimore and Tharp are that teachers do not have time for careful observation of children's interests or abilities. They argue that experience as a parent may help teachers to talk to children, but the real problem is that teachers have never been taught instructional conversation and thus have to learn it through experience.

Wells (1985b) states that ratios are a problem in the classroom. In a class of thirty 6 year old children with a ratio of one/two adults, Wells found that 44% of teacher talk is management, safety and control. Children have to learn rules of classroom talk; to take turns and talk about shared topic, rather than changing it at will. Wells found that

organisation problems mitigate versus spontaneity and immediacy and that the intellectual demands of language can be submerged under the demands of daily routine and sheer numbers of children. Wells also found that testing and back to basics ideology is working against constructivist teaching methods. He considers didactic teaching styles are used to cover the curriculum, which reduces opportunities for open ended interaction. He also considers that teachers need to show that children are successful. Wells argues that there is a lack of belief in the value of children's talk, that teachers are deprived of children's explanations and that teachers need to be collaborators rather than organisers and evaluators. They need to listen to children.

Robinson (1990) found that preschool teachers are reluctant to display print, read extended stories or allow children to write, because they are not sure that these elements of literate culture are developmentally appropriate for 3, 4 and 5 year old children. McGill-Franzen (1992) states that developmentally appropriate practice may mean that children are deprived of experiences to explore written language and literacy understandings. Even in New Zealand, where teachers have had access to Clay's writing about emergent literacy for a considerable period of time, it is only recently that schools have been encouraged by the Ministry of Education (in a publication called *Dancing with the pen*) to consider that emergent writing begins before school (McNaughton, 1995). McNaughton (1995) describes a Ministry of Education survey of 100 schools (Thackeray, Syme and Hendry, 1992), which indicates that few schools collect information about children's writing activities and expertise on entry to school. By implication, writing is not considered to be something which is learned at home or develops before school, rather it is a school based achievement.

McNaughton (1995) states that teachers knowledge about children's developing literacy outside the preschool or school and their professional role is based upon theoretical knowledge gained during teacher training. McNaughton considers that a teacher's knowledge of what a child can do depends on how prepared the teacher is to look for and create relationships between settings (such as the home and the school) and to consider different learning systems and forms of expertise in the home. As he explains:

Being a skilful teacher who acts to enhance connections between home forms of literacy and those in the educational setting also entails strategies. These include strategies for communicating with and learning from family members. They also include ways of checking knowledge and the effectiveness of one's teaching based on that knowledge (p.170).

Parr et al. (1991) argue that teachers are seen as and see themselves as experts, and this contrasts with parents who are seen as having little to offer to discussions of curriculum or pedagogy. Parr and colleagues state that this is surprising considering that most early childhood centres and new entrant classes in New Zealand have an open door policy, but

ironically, parents do not seem to be regarded by the professionals as anything remotely bordering on equal partners, but then nor do they view themselves as such (p.330).

Similarly, Hughes (1989) found that teachers were reluctant to involve parents of “deprived” children in the classroom, as they would provide a poor language model.

Smith and Hubbard (1988) in their study of parent/staff communication found that where there was more warm, reciprocal staff/parent communication, children were more likely to talk with the teacher or be close to teachers and to have positive social relations with peers. Parents with cooler or more professional relationship with teachers were more likely to spend more time settling children into play activities before their departure.

This section has considered the role of teachers' in the development of literacy in young children. The way that teachers talk to children is an important issue, as is the preparedness of teachers to become involved with families and to build upon family literacy practices in the classroom. Teachers' beliefs about child development and education have a powerful effect on the sort of teacher they are or will become. The following section will consider some of the foundations of teachers' beliefs.

Teacher beliefs about development and education

Donaldson (1987) describes two types of thinking which are useful in explaining the sorts of knowledge that teachers may present about their theories of teaching. These are “embedded thinking” in which thinking is embedded in the life of the mind - in a setting of memories, hopes and purposes - if not in the life of the senses and the muscles”, and “disembedded thinking”, which is steered by logical or formal argument, by using goals of science to describe or explain phenomena in “universal terms” that stand apart from experience (Bruner, 1986).

Greene (1988) describes a teacher's strongest beliefs as “governing obsessions”, and suggests that they tell a lot about what people believe to be “good practice” (in Genishi, 1992). Genishi (1992) states that practices described by teachers may be features of “theories of practice” (p.198) or those theories about children, development, learning and assessment that underlie teacher's curricular decisions and interactions. They can be contrasted with “theories of development” outlined by Fein and Schwartz (1982), which are an account of growth and change from birth to adulthood.

Theories of development are descriptive, they explain how development does occur, not how it should occur. A theory of development is passive regarding children's learning environments. It does not address the question of how adults can enhance development through teaching strategies or activities. Theories of practice on the other hand, apply to particular children and teachers in educational settings. These theories are prescriptive and lead to recommendations about how adults should view development and moreover how they should arrange environments for children (Genishi, 1992). Some examples of theories of practice are the NAEYC guidelines and the “whole language” programmes (Edelsky, Altwerger and Flores, 1991).

Fein and Schwartz (1982) recommend a relationship of reciprocity and mutual dependence between theorists of development and practice. However, Genishi (1992) states that few women in her study clearly articulated theory or verified it. Most adopted an eclectic approach ranging over generations of theory. Similarly, Spodek (1986) suggests that theory in the kindergarten movement alters over time in response to changing theory regarding learning and development or that kindergarten theory and social values influence each other.

Spodek (1988) points out that teachers teaching children of the same age with a similar background training and even teaching in the same school may have completely different "implicit theories". Spodek (1988) says that teachers consistently process information gained from observing what takes place prior to, during and after their decision making, as well as the actions they take based on the decisions made. They project a future based upon knowledge gained from past experience and their educational concepts and values. This information is synthesised to develop a reality which is based on their perceptions, understanding and beliefs. Spodek (1988) calls this collected knowledge "implicit theories" of teachers. Spodek (1988) says that many early childhood educators viewed the early childhood field as an application of the scientific study of child development (e.g Caldwell, 1984) and that preschool teachers would make classroom decisions based upon "the most reliable knowledge about the development of children, the norms of the age group and the goals of parents, the school and the community at large" (Katz, 1984, p.29). Spodek (1988) says that teachers do not refer to developmental theory when they are making classroom decisions, but rather refer to theories they have developed as much from practical experience as from the formal knowledge they gained during their training.

Foucault's (1982) concept of "discourse" is useful for explaining the way that people develop understandings and make sense of their experiences. Parker (1989) says that a sense of self is constructed in discourses and then re-experienced within all the texts of everyday life. Foucault says that the "self" (in this case, the self as teacher) is constructed as the subject and the object of discourse at a particular historical conjuncture. Discourse is a useful concept for explaining how people are active in their construction of a self, which may even be seen to be personally oppressive, in the context of the time, place and political and economic moment. The other important point about discourse is that people are often eclectic or even contradictory in their beliefs and practices. Foucault (1977) says that a person's discourse results in ingrained practices which he calls "regimes of truth". These operate like self fulfilling prophecies. As Prout and James (1990) state "ways of thinking about childhood fuse with institutionalized practices to produce self conscious subjects (teachers, parents, children) who think (and feel) about themselves through the terms of those ways of thinking" (p.23). The 'truth' about themselves and their situation is thus self validating. Breaking into this with another truth (produced by another way of thinking about childhood) may prove difficult.

Cullen (1994) argues that it is common sense for teachers to have a knowledge of child development as part of their professional resources, as common sense tells us we do not want teachers who do not understand the factors underlying children's development or who ^{do not} express delight in children's play. However, Cullen points out that teachers also need to recognise the significance of social contexts in children's cognitive development, and that teachers will need to use a range of interactive teaching strategies to meet the needs of all children. Although this sounds "common sense" in the informal nature of the kindergarten classroom, Cullen warns that teacher:child ratios can work against the teachers' ability to have extended interactions with children.

Carr and Kemmis (1983) state that some of the types of teacher knowledge are rational, although well hidden in the life of practice. Others are more elusive, having a "taken for granted" nature that needs to be made concrete in order to be analysed and understood. They further state that teachers' knowledge is socially constructed:

Educational acts are social acts. As social acts they are reflexive, historically located, and embedded in particular intellectual and social contexts. So knowledge about education must change according to historical circumstances, local contexts and different participants understandings of what is happening in the educational encounter. And it is clear that the knowledge teachers have will to a very great extent be rooted in local historical and social contexts (p.47)

Carr and Kemmis (1983) argue that an understanding of teacher knowledge is crucial as an aspect of education as *praxis*; the aspect which "resides in" the knowledgeable actor or knowing subject.

Graue (1993) has discussed teacher knowledge as a social construction in her research on concepts of readiness in kindergarten teachers. She argues that the meanings attached to institutions, actions, images, utterances and events and customs of a group are called "interpretations" (p.34). She draws this category from Geertz (1987) and outlines how collective interpretations between teachers and families develop on a social and psychological plane. On the social plane, they are shared notions of events or ideas, on the psychological they are individual responses to collective responses. Some of these "collective interpretations" may concern beliefs about children, development and the role of the teacher. Walsh (1989) believes that most developmental theory in use is based on Piagetian theory, but a vulgar form of Piagetian theory which has an emphasis on biological maturation rather than equilibration. Similarly, Halliwell (1983) found that most early childhood teachers vacillate between a romantic/maturationist stance (of the inner virtues and abilities unfolding) and a progressive stance (regarding the interaction between biological potential and environmental influence). Smith and Shephard (1988) found that maturation was seen by teachers to dominate over environmental factors in school success.

Bernstein (1975) found that an invisible pedagogy underlies British infant schools, which legitimizes the experience of children from middle class homes. Similarly, Apple and King (1977) found that children entering kindergarten in the United States are introduced to middle class ideologies of school life, which reflect middle class society.

Halliwell (1980) found that the three teachers she studied responded to their individual, professional perceptions of the needs of children in their classes. They characterized children as having individual growth patterns, interests and learning modes (in Spodek, 1988).

Teachers bring a complex set of beliefs about children and development to their teaching, which may be based on their education and past experiences as a teacher. Parents similarly have complex beliefs, which are often based on their in-depth knowledge of their own child. The literature on emergent literacy demonstrates that children become literate within the social relationships they experience, and through repeated opportunities to practice using literacy skills and to learn new words, new meanings and new ways to use language in oral and written forms. The literature also tells us that children need an environment to learn in that is meaningful to them, based on their own experiences, in which teachers make purposeful contacts with the child's parents and home environment. Many of these ideas can be framed within the context of Vygotsky's social constructionist view of how literacy is developed. The following section will examine Vygotsky's theory and the implications for child development and education.

Socio-cultural perspectives: A framework for promoting literacy in the curriculum

Vygotsky and the social construction of child development

Whereas a lot of the literature on early childhood has been framed within Piagetian theory until recent years, much of the recent research on emergent literacy draws on the research of Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, born in 1896. Vygotsky explored the connection between cognitive and literacy development. The previous sections have briefly discussed Vygotsky's theory, in terms of the social nature of language development, the importance of the role of parent's in children's learning, the importance of teacher's recognising the invaluable importance of using parent's knowledge and experience of their child in the curriculum and involving parent's in curriculum planning. This section will examine Vygotsky's theory in detail, before discussing in the following section how the theory can be applied to promoting emergent literacy in an early childhood setting.

Wertsch (1991) provides a useful analysis of Vygotsky's writings and states that there are three basic themes which can be identified. These are :

- (1) a reliance on genetic, or developmental analysis;
- (2) the claim that higher mental functioning in the individual derives from social life;
- (3) the claim that human action, on both the social and individual planes, is mediated by tools and signs.

These themes are closely intertwined (Wertsch, 1991) and their power derives from the ways they presuppose each other.

Genetic analysis

Vygotsky's genetic analysis was motivated by the assumption that it is possible to understand many aspects of mental functioning only if their origins and the transitions they have undergone are understood (Wertsch, 1991). Like theorists such as Piaget and Heinz Werner, Vygotsky made genetic analysis the very foundation of the study of mind:

To encompass in research the process of a given thing's development in all its phases and changes means to discover its nature - from birth to death - fundamentally means to discover its nature, its essence, for 'its only in movement that a body shows what it is'. Thus the historical (that is, in the broadest sense of "history") study of behaviour is not an auxiliary aspect of theoretical study, but rather forms its very base" (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 64-65)

Vygotsky focussed most his empirical research on development of the individual (on ontogenesis), particularly the individual during childhood. Vygotsky's beliefs about phylogenesis rest heavily on the writings of Darwin and Engels, particularly in his basic acceptance of Darwinian principles of evolution and his overriding concern with the transition from apes to humans. He drew on Kohler's ideas (1921a, 1921b, 1925; in Wertsch, 1991) about tool mediated practical action in chimpanzees, to compare with human behaviour. Vygotsky was interested in Kohler's claim that apes' problem solving is constrained by contextual factors, while humans use representations to overcome limits. Vygotsky's focus on representational tools reflects the basic difference between elementary and higher level functioning that plays a central role in his writings in general and his distinction between phylogenetic epochs in particular. The distinction has been criticised as unclear (Van der Veer and van Ijzendoorn, 1985) and is in need of further elaboration. His early death probably accounts for some of the difficulty. However, this notion plays an essential role in the framework and some version is necessary in a socio-cultural approach to understand the biological processes of change on the one hand and historical, cultural and institutional factors on the other.

Vygotsky's writings were motivated partially by Marxist writings on political economy and by Lucien Levy-Bruhl (1919, 1923; in Wertsch, 1991) on what distinguishes the mental functioning of "primitives" from modern society. This interest in sociocultural history (Scribner, 1985) has meant that his work is often labelled "sociohistorical" or "cultural-historical" in the USSR (Smirnov, 1975, in Wertsch, 1991, p.21). Vygotsky used the distinction between elementary and higher mental functioning to deal with phylogenetic transition, and he introduced a further distinction within a higher (human) mental functioning to deal with genetic transitions in sociocultural history. He termed these the rudimentary and advanced levels of higher mental functioning (Wertsch, 1985). He claimed that transition is played out in many ways, but he only examined it in terms of abstraction and "decontextualisation". Abstraction has been examined in schooled

literacy by Luria (1976), Scribner and Cole (1981) and Tulviste (1988; in Wertsch, 1991). However, an unresolved issue remains, as to how mental functioning changes, other than through the influence of decontextualisation associated with literacy and 'literacy practice' (Scribner and Cole, 1981).

Social origins of mental functioning in the individual

Vygotsky's claim that higher mental functioning in the individual is rooted in social life was influenced by Marxist theory, which basically states that in order to understand the individual it is necessary to understand the social relations in which the individual exists. The task for Vygotsky was to specify the social and individual processes involved. He also borrowed from the work of the French psychologist Pierre Janet (1927, 1928; in Wertsch, 1991) to formulate his most general statement about the social origins of individual mental functioning, the "general genetic law of cultural development" :

Any function of 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...It goes without saying that internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Vygotsky 1981, p.163).

This law is more than the idea that mental functioning in the individual derives from participation in social life. As Vygotsky (1981) states "composition [higher mental functions], genetic structure and means of action [forms of mediation] - in a word, their whole nature - is social. Even when we turn to mental (internal) processes, their nature remains quasi-social. In their own private sphere, human beings retain the functions of social interaction" (p.164). This is not to say that mental functioning in the individual is a simple copy of social processes, in fact his theory of transformation warns against this view. However, he does assert that there is a close connection, grounded in the genetic transitions, between the specific structures and the processes of intermental and intramental functioning. A second claim concerns the definition of higher mental functions (Wertsch, 1991) such as thinking, voluntary attention and logical memory. Vygotsky's definition of mental functions is unusual in that he claims that the notion of mental function can be applied to social as well as individual forms of activity, whereby terms such as "think" and "remember" can be applied to dyads, as well as to individuals.

Vygotsky's general claim about the social origins of higher mental functioning in the individual surfaces most clearly in connection with the "zone of proximal development", which Vygotsky examined in relation to I.Q. and for the organisation for instruction.

With regard to the former, he argued that measuring the level of potential development is just as important as measuring the actual developmental level; with

regard to the latter, he argued that instruction should be more closely tied to the level of potential development than to the level of actual development (Wertsch, 1991,p.28).

Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development suggests the social interaction between the competent adult and the less competent young, by which the adult lends "scaffolding" (Bruner, 1986, p.74) to implant a vicarious consciousness in the child. Sulzby (1986) describes this technique as "a range of social interaction between an adult and child in which the child can perform with degrees of assistance from an adult that which he/she cannot yet perform independently"(p.52). She further adds that the zone of proximal development ends at the level at which the child can operate independently. Vygotsky (1978) defines it as the "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86).

Vygotsky (1962) predicted that the "zone of proximal development" would be evident in the way in which parents and teachers provide a scaffold for the child within conversations between what they know and what they learn to know. The parent or teacher builds one comment or question on another. This process evidently helps the child to move from a situation where the task is carried out by others to a situation where the child can operate independently (Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel, 1985; Brown, 1985, in Mason and Allen, 1986). This may mean making the child responsible for their contribution to communication ; for example during bed time reading and shared events. The zone of proximal development received considerable attention in recent years in western countries (Brown and Ferrara, 1985; Brown and French, 1979; Cole, 1985; Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff and Wertsch, 1984; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). Day, Cordon and Kerwin (1989) state that the expert/novice relationship of the zone of proximal development can help the child to learn by reducing the cognitive workload and by introducing skills which the child will later master with practice.

Mediation

Vygotsky's interest in mediation stems again from the work of Marx and Engels, related to their discussion of the use of tools in the emergence of labour activity. Vygotsky's interest was in psychological tools, particularly in sign systems, such as language systems in intermental and intramental functioning. Vygotsky approached language and other sign systems in terms of how they are a part of and mediate human action.

One of the key assumptions in the third major theme in Vygotsky's work, mediation, is tied to the issue of how Vygotsky saw thinking and speaking to become intertwined in human life. To Vygotsky, mediation was a cogent example of the

interfunctional relationships that characterize human consciousness. As he states "the study of thought and language is one of the areas of psychology in which a clear understanding of interfunctional relations is particularly important" (1987, p.1). He further states that verbal mediational means would be used as widely and as often as possible. This preference for verbal forms of mediation derived from two sources. First, he grew up in an intellectual Russian Jewish family, where verbal resolution of problems was highly valued, and as an adult he lived and worked in professional settings which placed a premium on verbal representation and debate. Second, the formal instruction of literacy was at the centre of his interests and writings and a hallmark of his preferred method of instruction used verbal mediation to represent and resolve problems (Wertsch, 1991). However, not all children or cultures may use verbal mediation as their predominant sign system. For instance, Kearns (1981,1986) found that Aboriginal children used visual strategies, rather than verbal mediation, on a series of spatial memory tasks, and consistently scored better than the European Australian children tested. Vygotsky's theory then reflects an ethnocentric bias, which does not invalidate the research, but limits the applicability of constructs to certain groups and settings.

Vygotsky predicted the twin issues of access and mediation in his theory of development. As previously cited, Vygotsky's theory states that the foundations of cognition are social in nature. He proposed that the individual's higher psychological processes (e.g. reading and writing) were reflections of social processes in which they participated at earlier points in their development. In other words, the way an adult mediates activities for the child will determine how those children develop conceptions of and strategies for reading and writing.

Vygotsky's notion of access and mediation is useful in examining how the process of learning to read is essentially social in nature (Teale and Sulzby, 1987). Access basically means having appropriate written materials in the home, although it tends to implicitly assume a mediator to these materials. Teale and Sulzby indicate that this access enables the child to develop concepts about books and reading: directionality, that print (not pictures) convey meaning, how to locate a word and so forth. They also suggest that children (from 2-6 years) produce language which is different prosodically and syntactically from their normal conversation when they are asked to "read" a favourite story-book. Mediation is a more complex issue; as the same story-book can be mediated differently by different parents or families. Wells (1981) suggests that there is a quantitative difference in the amount of interaction, but also a qualitative difference. He proposes that some parents are more effective mediators and promoters of language development than others. This "eliciting style" has been examined by Ninio (1980) with high SES and low SES mothers, with the finding that low SES mothers were less skilled at eliciting responses. Similarly, Heath (1986) found marked differences in communication between communities with different socio-economic backgrounds in her research in the Piedmont Carolinas of the United States.

In New Zealand, McNaughton and Ka'ai (1990) found that a group of Maori, Samoan and Pakeha (European) families, with non professional occupations, showed the same commitment to reading to their children as a group of middle class Pakeha families. The Maori, Samoan and Pakeha group were also more likely to display what McNaughton (1991) terms "textual dexterity" whereby parents, siblings and extended family would engage preschool children in joint dialogue regarding a range of textual material, including nursery rhymes, beginning reading books belonging to other siblings and church texts. Within this mediated learning situation, children constructed their knowledge of the purposes, functions and meanings of written language.

McNaughton (1995) argues that children are more likely to develop reading skills when there is a close match between the discourse pattern and pedagogical style of the home and the discourse and pedagogy of the school. Te Kohanga Reo (Maori language nests) or Kura Kaupapa Maori (Maori-immersion primary schools) are examples of schools set up by a community to promote a distinct cultural, pedagogical and linguistic style. Such schools can be seen to be effective sites for learning (McNaughton, 1995). McNaughton also argues that intervention which increases the amount of activities occurring at home which are related to school based activities and tutorial patterns will increase the likelihood of reading achievement (McNaughton, 1987; Hewison, 1988). Creating opportunities for teachers and parents to discuss the way literacy is mediated in the home is an important issue for curriculum design, which will be revisited.

This section has examined the key aspects of Vygotsky's theory; the reliance on a developmental analysis, the conception of higher mental functioning deriving from social life and the understanding that human action is mediated by tools and signs. Some of the ways in which these elements influence literacy practice have been discussed and the implications for curriculum have been introduced. Issues of access and mediation of literacy in the curriculum will be addressed more fully in the section on developing a literacy centred curriculum later in this review. The following section will discuss more recent developments in literacy research which are based on Vygotsky's theory.

The co-construction of literacy

More recent research based accounts of the zone of proximal development and the role of mediation in children's learning have expanded upon Vygotsky's theory that learning is socially and culturally mediated (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990; Rogoff, 1990; Valsiner and Van der Veer, 1993; Valsiner, 1994; Wertsch, 1991). Recent research has examined the important role that children play in constructing their own learning; so that development can be said to be "co-constructed" within the framework of interaction with significant others, family, community and culture (McNaughton, 1995). Children's literacy and knowledge and skills are built within the framework of family activity, but

are taken on and transformed into the child's own processes of literacy functioning. Rogoff, Mosier, Mistry and Goncu (1993) call this process of taking and transforming interactional processes "appropriation". McNaughton argues that "co-constructivist" theory explains the way in which children and their families are both the "fuel and the vehicle" (p.15) for literacy development.

Vygotsky's (1987) ideas that the forms of speaking encountered in school provide the framework for concept development in children are usefully expanded by Bakhtin's notion of the "voice" in children's learning, the idea that an utterance always expresses a point of view. As Clark and Holquist (1984) explain "the same words can mean different things depending on the particular intonation with which they are uttered in a specific context ; intonation is the sound that value makes" (p.10). However, Bakhtin's notion of voice is not reducible to an account of vocal-auditory signals. It applies to written as well as spoken communication, and it is concerned with broader issue of the speaking subjects' perspective, conceptual horizon, intention and world view (Wertsch, 1991). Bakhtin considers that people make use of a social language in making an utterance and that the social language shapes what the individual can say. Bakhtin called the process of making unique utterances in a social language "ventriloquation" (Wertsch, 1991). As Bakhtin argues "The word of language is half someone else's . It becomes "one's own" when the speaker populates it with his own intention, own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 293-294; in Wertsch, 1991). Bakhtin viewed social languages and speech genres as the ways in which communicative and mental action are organised. Through mediation or the "voice", children learn not only the words of another person, but also their intention and purpose; which the child may then internalise to enable them to self-instruct the next time the event occurs.

Rogoff et al. (1993), building on Bakhtin's notion of appropriation, argue that children do not use a two stage process of first social lessons and then internalisation of the process, as Vygotsky had proposed. Rather, Rogoff et al. argue that children are already participants in ongoing activity and as such function within activities as they learn to manage the activity in question. As Rogoff et al. explain:

Children make later use of their changed understanding resulting from their contribution and involvement with joint problem-solving processes in new situations that resemble the ones in which they have participated. Rather than importing an external process to the internal plane, they appropriate a changed understanding from their own involvement and can carry to future occasions their earlier participation in and their gains in understanding of social activity. As Wertsch and Stone (1979, p.21) put it, "the process is the product".

Rogoff (1990) calls the process of mediation with active involvement of the child "guided participation". Rogoff et al. (1993) consider that there are important cultural differences in valued activities and means of communication, but that their cross cultural research with children from Guatemala, India, Turkey and the United States suggests that the processes of guided participation are widespread. Children are actively involved in both

observing and participating in the social activity around them, learning from peers and parents of varying skills and status.

However, many children may not have clear access to opportunities for guided participation in the classroom. Gallimore and Tharp (1990), discussing mediation within the zone of proximal development, argue that children experience little interactive teaching and that any children's speech with a teacher is constrained by the teacher's control of the topic and participation. They argue that children learn most readily through assisted performance and state that there are six main types of assisted performance; modelling, contingency managing, feeding back, instructing, questioning and cognitive structuring. The dominant means of assistance in urban societies is linguistic, but this is the requirements of a particular society, not of cognitive development. Through modelling, children learn to take part in family activities through guided participation. Rewards and punishments are used in contingency management to follow behaviour. Children's performance is compared to an established standard through feeding back. Gallimore and Tharp (1990) state that instructing is rarely seen as a means of assisting performance, which they consider to be to children's detriment.

It is important that instructing be included in teaching, because the instructing voice of the teacher becomes the self instructing voice of the learner in the transition from apprentice to self regulated performer. The non-instructing teacher may be denying the learner the most valuable residue of the teaching interaction; that heard, regulating voice, that gradually internalised voice, which then becomes the pupil's self regulating "still, small" instructor" (p. 181).

Questioning calls for active linguistic and cognitive response. There are two types of questions: assistance and assessment. Assessment questions are used most often, while assistance questions are most helpful. Through cognitive structuring the teacher helps the child to organise information; through memorization, recall or accumulating evidence. All of these types of questioning can be used to help children develop through the stages of the zone of proximal development.

There are four stages to the zone of proximal development, according to Gallimore and Tharp (1990):

Stage 1 : Performance assisted by more capable others

Stage 2: Performance assisted by self

Stage 3: Where performance is developed, automatized and fossilised

Stage 4: Where automatization of performance leads to recursion through the zone of proximal development.

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) argue that adults also cycle through the zone of proximal development, when they have to do something they have not done for a while, which used to be automatic. They consider that with peers, assisted performance may be reciprocal, especially if they are engaged in joint activities. A reason, they argue, for providing a lot of small peer group activity in classrooms.

Vygotsky's theory, like Piaget's, is dialectic. For Vygotsky, symbolic play is a cathartic process, whereby children deal with the conflict between their desires and

societal constraints. They realise the unrealisable through symbolic play (Pellegrini, 1984a, 1984b; Pellegrini and Galda, 1993). Vygotsky (1978) considers drawing and early writing to be part of a first order symbol system, which involves symbols "directly denoting objects or actions" (p.115). In this stage of symbolic play, children draw or write to directly represent objects, so that a symbol for dog represents a dog, not the word for dog, which is part of the second order symbol system. According to Vygotsky's theory, writing should not be confused with reading, which is a second order process. Early writers use letters and words to represent objects rather than words (Dyson, 1983). Reading and writing become related later on, but Vygotsky's theory does not predict a within stage homogeneity (Pellegrini and Galda, 1993). Researchers such as Scribner and Cole (1978) treat literacy as a differentiated construct, whereas Piagetian theory treats reading and writing as a unified construct. For Vygotsky, symbolic play is the way that children learn that one thing can represent another, which is important for writing development. Vygotsky (1978) states "symbolic representation in play is essentially a particular form of speech at an earlier stage, one which leads directly to written language" (p.111). Vygotsky considered symbolic play a causal force in development.

Pellegrini and Galda (Galda, Pellegrini and Cox, 1989 and Pellegrini et al., 1991) and Dickinson and Moreton (1991) completed separate research with preschoolers, using measures of play and language, and a battery of standardized measures of emergent literacy and language. Both studies found that the symbolic play of preschoolers and the oral language surrounding it are relatively good predictors of reading related measures of literacy in American kindergartens (which would be the first year of primary school for New Zealand children). However, both studies report that adults suppress symbolic play in children, probably because of the difference in interaction, in which adults assume most of the responsibility in the interaction, whereas in peer group settings, children negotiate these roles. Adults are needed for other types of learning and for facilitating symbolic play in very young preschool children (Pellegrini and Galda, 1993).

This review has so far reviewed Vygotsky's theory of the social construction of child development and then outlined how social processes are an intrinsic part of mental functioning. It has introduced the notion of emergent literacy as a social process, as much of the research into emergent literacy has used Vygotsky's theory as a foundation for examining how children develop literacy. One of the aims of the research was to examine the roles that parents and teachers play in children's cognitive and literacy development. This section has introduced the idea that cognition and literacy are jointly or co-constructed between children and more competent adults or peers. The following section will examine the notions of mediation and zone of proximal development and how literacy can be socially constructed in a kindergarten setting.

Conceptualising a literacy centred curriculum for kindergarten

Literacy rich environments

One of the issues which has been argued in this review is the importance of social context upon a child's early experiences with story book reading. Heath's (1986) study highlighted how having experiences with the written and spoken language structures which are used in the school is of great benefit when learning to read. Dombey (1988) gave an example of how a sensitive and receptive nursery school teacher may introduce a child to the questioning and meaningful nature of story book reading. Examining the literacy context in homes and kindergartens was an important aim of the present study, with a view to later examining how the findings from this study and research on emergent literacy could be incorporated into a New Zealand kindergarten.

The literature demonstrates that reading stories; and the ensuing questions, discussion, drama, writing and art, and singing nursery rhymes and playing language games, lay an important foundation for literacy. It seems obvious that all children should have access to this kind of pre-school experience, although as Clay (1991) argued, the literacy environment which many children grow up in is bleak. Similarly, teaching new entrant teachers to be receptive and culturally sensitive to the different children who enter the school and involving parents in the programme may provide an opportunity for these children to find education meaningful and relevant to their background and experiences (Parr et al., 1991).

It has become apparent, through the numbers of children needing "reading recovery" and the numbers of semi-literate adults, that the Piagetian approach of encouraging children to be independent "active learners" is not helping all children to learn. The literature on emergent literacy demonstrates that all children have an oral tradition to bring to their education (Heath, 1986) and can, with sensitive and appropriate teaching, develop a meaningful and functional use of language and literacy. One of the ways this can be achieved is through the reconceptualisation of the teacher-child or parent-child relationship in learning situations.

In contrast to Piaget's view of the "active learner", Bruner and Vygotsky place more emphasis on the role played by a child's culture and its system of symbols (e.g. languages, sciences, books, diagrams, pictures and so on). Bruner and Vygotsky propose that such systems have a dynamic structuring effect on learning and development, as they are not part of the mere "content" of the environment, but part of the structure and activity (Wood, 1988). As Wood (1988, p.16) concludes "When the child learns a language...he does not simply discover labels to describe and remember significant objects or features of his social and physical environment but ways of construing and constructing the world".

It is for this reason that it is impossible to divorce the academic study of children's thinking and learning from moral, political and economic issues concerning the resources we allocate to education and the way in which we train teachers. What it means to be a "teacher" depends, after all, on how we construe children as learners.

Rasinski and Fredericks (1988) provide eight guiding principles for parents who want to help their children to learn to read and write. These are :

- 1) regular time - for at least 20 minutes per day of parent-child interaction
- 2) purpose and motive - a purpose for reading e.g. a story book, cook book or kitset instructions
- 3) real literacy activities - read real books and stories
- 4) internal interest - towards the child's interests
- 5) tolerance and patience - let child move at own pace
- 6) support and encouragement - explaining, answering questions, sharing examples
- 7) informality - be spontaneous, show literacy to be an enjoyable activity
- 8) interaction - shared responsibility for learning to read and write

These are all reasonable ideas; in line with current research. However, they do not seem to consider that for many parents simply reading and comprehending the guiding principles would be an ordeal. Trying to demonstrate an enjoyment of literacy if you are on shaky ground yourself would be a formidable task. Such principles tend to assume the availability of resources in the home and universal literacy among adults.

The alternative to instructing parents seems to be to provide a stimulating environment for early literacy activities, to which all children have access. This will not address social class or socio-economic differences to any significant degree, but it would ensure that all children had some experience of singing nursery rhymes, listening to stories, creating imaginatively via drama, art and musical play; all the skills which will be called upon in the school. It may be as simple as demonstrating a purpose for learning to read.

Martinez and Teale (1988) propose that providing a well designed library in a kindergarten or similar pre-school, with ready access, is an important first step. Such a library should have a healthy collection of stories, fables, poetry and informational books with a sense of multi cultural sensitivity. Martinez and Teale (1988) suggested the following examples of how children used a library and selected books (p.569) :

- a) book familiarity - books read by the teacher;
- b) degree of familiarity - repeated readings give control over organisation of text;
- c) structure - predictable plots with repetitive, cumulative or rhyming patterns.

Strickland and Morrow (1988) claim that creating a "print rich" environment (p.156) is one way of promoting literacy development. They recommend a library centre in pre-school classrooms; with ready access but also a degree of privacy and tranquillity, to accommodate five or six children. Comfortable seating, pillows and tables will provide opportunities for settling and enjoying a library corner. A revolving supply of books, multiple copies of favourites and a library "check out" system may maintain interest. Morrow (1989a) states that well designed classrooms significantly increase the number of children who choose to participate in literacy activities.

Another method of promoting literacy development is proposed by Strickland (1989) who designed a "core experience curriculum". This curriculum integrates language and literacy in a holistic manner using content themes. Strickland suggests that a print rich classroom is essential, with meaningful labels, signs and captions at child level. A strong literature base is a hallmark of this curriculum, as is an environment which invites children to write, read and talk. Morrow (1992) found that children in second grade from minority backgrounds performed better on measures of literacy after they experienced an enriched literature based reading programme. Similarly, Harris (1986) found that a group of Head Start children's interest in and knowledge of written language increased significantly over a five month period in a curriculum designed to promote literacy growth.

The design of a classroom plays a significant role in the success of an emergent literacy programme, as positioning of literacy activities and provision of appropriate materials are particularly important. Sulzby, Teale and Kamberelis (1989) found that an emergent literacy curriculum should provide opportunities for multimedia construction - putting painting and writing areas side by side. Children can be encouraged to publish their own books or exhibitions. Likewise, children should be encouraged to write "stories" before formal writing is achieved, and to share these stories within a small group. Sulzby, Teale and Kamberelis (1989) conclude that classroom libraries, letter writing, name writing and artwork should be encouraged. Similarly, van Lierop (1985) suggests that children can collectively make booklets, centred on their own activities. Such booklets are of high interest and predictability, creating a motivation for reading. Hall (1976) states that as children see their spoken thoughts put onto paper, they can understand the nature of reading and learn to associate spoken words with written language.

Neuman and Roskos (1992) found that children's frequency, duration and complexity of literacy demonstrations increased when they enriched the kitchen, library and office play areas of two urban child care centres. However, enriching the literacy environment alone may not reap the maximum literacy gains for children. Neuman and Roskos (1993), assessing the frequency of handling, reading and writing of environmental and functional print in 177 preschool children in Head Start, found that children displayed increased ability to read environmental print and to label functional literacy items, when children were assigned to a literacy enriched "office" play with the guidance of an adult. Similarly, Morrow (1990) found that children's literacy behaviour was found to increase significantly when reading and writing materials were included in dramatic play areas. Literacy behaviour was found to increase the most when literacy materials were linked to a dramatic play theme and when use of the literacy materials was guided by a teacher (Morrow, 1990).

Learning within a literary theme may become relevant because it creates a context for play, although children's play may also suggest avenues for learning in a literary

theme. Learning language and literacy skills will be enhanced by the mediation of the text and subsequent activities by the teacher, conducted within the children's group and providing opportunities for social interaction. As Donaldson and Reid (1985,p.15) conclude "children - and indeed adults much of the time - do not interpret the words alone. What they are basically interested in is to understand what people mean, rather than what words mean. They interpret the words in their setting - both the physical and personal setting - to such an extent that we may speak of the language as being embedded in its context".

Durkin (1966) found that early reading was due to parental attitudes, mother's interaction with the child and the child's interest in becoming a reader. Similarly, Clark (1976) reported that the mother's attitude was instrumental in facilitating the child's early reading; where the mother was closely involved with the child's literacy activities, found the child to be stimulating companion and enjoyed the verbal interaction. In such homes, a richness of literacy experiences occurred, expressed by the parent's love of books and communicated by reading to the child at an early age. Both studies have important implications for children in kindergarten, as teachers can also facilitate a love of reading by providing a stimulating and interesting environment for the child to experience literacy within.

In order for literacy to develop, experience and learning need to occur in a meaningful context. Van Lierop (1985) reports the example of an early-reader called Sonia, which provides the means by which a literary centred curriculum could be made meaningful. Sonia's early literacy was not grafted artificially onto her experience, but was woven into the fabric of her life. Story books were initially a stimulus, pleasure and comfort. Sonia moved from listening to stories, to picture books and finally to reading independently by the age of two and a half years. Sonia's play was intrinsically tied to current favourite stories.

Donaldson and Reid (1985) state that there are four principles regarding what is entailed in learning to read, which have relevance for the design of a literary centred curriculum :

- 1) children come to school knowing a great deal about oral language, even though much of the knowledge is not accessible to consciousness in any way that would enable them to speak about it;
- 2) children are hypothesis testers and rule users by nature;
- 3) children have a strong drive to make sense of what they encounter, to understand what people mean when they speak and what other people's purposes are,
- 4) the ways in which language becomes meaningful are more subtle and complex than once supposed.

A scaffolded (Bruner, 1986) environment, wherein the teacher develops a literary theme may provide a forum for such skills to be developed. Donaldson and Reid (1982) recommend reading aloud, as it helps to familiarise children with new, more complex

linguistic forms, while the living voice helps to bring out the meaning with amplification and explanation if needed. Sulzby, Branz and Buhle (1993), examining the reading achievement of eight classes of low socio-economic black kindergarten children in a newly formed literature based curriculum, found that repeated reading and encouragement of emergent reading of literature was found to increase children's understanding of books and emergent readings of books.

Meadows and Cashdan (1988) cite the work of their student Christianne Hayward, as a way in which a literary theme may form a free play curriculum, in a rich scaffolded learning environment. Hayward selected a book of substance to read as a serial over a two to four week period. Classroom activities were generated by the children's experience of the text; e.g. art, construction, role play, science and so forth. Hayward read Richard Adam's *"Watership Down"* and followed reading of the text with provision of appropriate jigsaws and puzzles, keeping a real rabbit, digging burrows in the sand tray, transforming a "wendy house" into a hill with a burrow underneath, and spontaneous re-enactions of the story line by the children. Testing following the use of this literary theme showed that the children had a greater knowledge of the concepts involved in learning to read, increased vocabulary, an interest in other stories later used as themes and books in general.

Kantor, Fernie and Miller (1992) argue that children have a heightened interest in literacy activities, when they can claim ownership of it, such as seeing their own name on it. For this reason, use of lists, notes and signs in the programme can give children access to functional concepts of print while encouraging writing. As Kantor, Fernie and Miller (1992) state, teachers can help children to make connections between reading and writing and

that these connections are best made as literacy is woven in and through the fabric of classroom life, its school culture and peer culture activities. Literacy takes on shape, pattern, and texture as it is constructed to meet individual and group needs(p.200).

Anning (1991) states that the layout of preschool classrooms proclaim what teachers think are important in children's learning. "The practical areas are there because teachers believe that children learn by doing" and that the "displays are there because they are what are currently "turning the children on" (p.74). Anning suggests that the areas of the preschool are probably not used the ways that rhetoric would suggest.

It is likely that the book corner is rarely used by the children as a space for quiet and sustained reading (Southgate, 1981). Instead the comfortable carpet is likely to provide the boundaries of wriggling children at storytimes or the ubiquitous "mat time" (p.74).

Anning also considers that teachers focus too much on visual brilliance in the classroom, stating that there are schools which "dazzle rather than provoke" (p.77). She observed a lot of schools which were dripping with largely teacher directed friezes. Anning (1991) concludes that the controlled choice of activities in the Montessori classroom may be helpful to children's learning, as the range of activities on offer in some classrooms can also be overwhelming.

Adult structuring of activities may be helpful rather than restrictive to young children. Sometimes what is exhausting about supermarkets is the sheer enormity of choice on offer! Perhaps some classrooms have the same effect on pupils (p.77).

Cochran-Smith (1985) makes the distinction between performance oriented and interaction oriented story time. In a performance session, children sit and listen, although Cochran-Smith contends that here is passive and active listening. Interactive story sessions involve teacher-student interaction, so that the reading and meaning of a text is jointly constructed. In this way the child is required to make sense of the story. Several researchers have advocated small group story reading as the most beneficial to children, in terms of enabling this sort of interaction (Brown, Weinberg and Cromer, 1986; Morrow, 1989b; Morrow and Smith, 1990; Peters, 1993). Yaden (1988) points out that a knowledge of literacy takes time to learn; comprehension develops "bit by bit". Yaden claims that one of the best ways this comprehension can be achieved is through repeated readings. Adults also play a role in children learning letter names and phonological awareness, through language games and in particular nursery rhymes. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley (1987) state

adults play a direct role in fostering the growth of phonological awareness in children with the help of informal linguistic routines. Nursery rhymes are one example of the informal way in which parents, for the most part unwittingly, draw their attention to the fact that words have separable component sounds"(p.280).

Gibson (1989) describes a shared book experience for 4 to 5 year old children, which she witnessed in the United States, which was based upon new entrant classroom practice in New Zealand. Children were completing a guided reading of big books. They read "Hello" and "Mrs. Wishy Washy" from "The story box in the classroom" (Butler, 1988). Gibson (1989) contends that the big books were read by a large group of children with the vigour that they would use on a rhyme or chants. Teachers alerted children to print conventions, such as big letters and exclamation marks, segmented the word sounds and dramatised the story. Big books were available on display in the classroom, along with hand made big copies of favourite stories and children's stories. Gibson argues that the trial classroom encouraged a range of emergent literacy activity, which in turn better prepared children for later reading instruction.

This section has addressed the ways in which the literacy environment in kindergartens can be enriched, through the design of the classroom, provision of books and writing materials and literacy themes in the curriculum. Much of this literature draws from advocates of "whole language" classrooms such as Strickland and Morrow (1989), yet enriching the classroom with literacy materials is only seen to be part of the equation. For children to have maximum opportunities to learn the "concepts about print" (Clay, 1982), children also need opportunities to interact with literacy materials and activities with more competent adults and peers. The next section will address some of the ways that literacy could be mediated in the kindergarten.

Literacy centred curriculum

Although having a range of resources in the classroom is important, it is not enough to help children develop a full understanding of literacy concepts. Children need sensitive help, from skilled people, with lots of practice and lots of feedback if they are to learn effectively (Meadows and Cashdan, 1988). This may function as a "benevolent apprenticeship"; whereby the senior partner sets up learning episodes for the junior partner, helping her to arrive at satisfactory conclusions of achievement and discovery. The senior partner "scaffolds" (Bruner, 1986) the activity and helps the junior partner to evaluate the results. As the junior partner becomes more proficient, the senior partner lets go and the partnership becomes equal. Children are novices on tasks on which adults have become experts, and it is for this reason that education should be a sharing of expertise. For instance, a sharing of specific expertise may be showing a child how to paint a straight line on paper, but sharing general expertise may involve showing the child the easiest way to hold the paint brush, position the paper or improve a technique. A teacher may demonstrate that there is a metacognitive strategy involved in gaining expertise; to memorise tactics, plan, review results and so forth. If the teacher recounts these strategies verbally, as the task is undertaken, the child may perceive a worth to following similar strategies when she next attempts the task. Vygotsky (1978) believed that the transmission of mind across history is effected by successive mental sharings that assure a passing on of ideas from the more able or advanced to the less so. The medium in which the transmission occurs is in language and its products; literacy, science, technology and literature.

In a preschool environment, such "scaffolding" of the child's development can only occur where there are small adult-child ratios and where a commitment is made to talking with the child, rather than to the child. As Tizard and Hughes (1984, p. 261) state

Instead of the present emphasis on fostering play, on devising ingenious ways of using play materials, and on questioning the children about their play, a higher priority would have to be given to widening the children's horizons, extending their general knowledge and listening to them talk.

Clay (1991, p. 265) has argued that New Zealand teachers need to overcome their fear of "teaching" children new concepts and sharing their expertise.

In general terms the goal is to help children move from where they are to somewhere else by empowering them to do what they can do and helping them to engage in activities in which they can learn more. Helping may involve sharing the hard parts of a task while children do the easy bits, and I cannot understand why some educators find that unacceptable. It is how experts interact with preschool children. Teachers and children both need opportunities to negotiate meanings, to uncover confusion, to extend each others' thinking in the interaction, and both need wait-time to actively problem-solve. In Paley's words we need to "open avenues through which our children can reveal themselves to us".

Clay (1991) cites Cazden (1991) as recommending that the best mix for development and learning supported by teachers is to have active learners (actively hypothesising and teaching themselves) who, at the same time,

have teachers who actively support, model, encourage, provide answers and even correct children occasionally (p.264).

Although it is important for teachers to share their expertise with children, Tudge and Winterhoff (1993a) found that children's collaboration with a more competent peer was more beneficial than working alone or with working with a peer who is equally competent. Tudge and Winterhoff found that improvement in a task occurred early in an interaction and that repetition did not further improve performance. Neuman and Roskos (1991) examined whether an enriched literacy environment in a preschool would facilitate informal interactions with print through play. Neuman and Roskos used three criteria for enrichment use: appropriateness (used by children), authenticity (real items) and utility (the item will be useful in literacy attempts). Neuman and Roskos found that enriching the literacy environment led to increased collaboration and scaffolding between peers and increased duration of literacy activity, from 1:5 minute per 40 minutes to 2:8 minutes. Children engaged in three types of discourse about literacy in the enriched environment; naming of literacy objects, negotiating meaning of literacy topics and coaching another child in literacy tasks to achieve a goal in play. Conversation between peers was found to be tied to the context and active engagement in the literacy event; thus embedded in the context (Donaldson, 1978). Neuman and Roskos also found that roles can reverse within the peer relationship, so that peers take turns at being the expert in the relationship; this presents a collaborative learning model, rather than a scaffolded apprenticeship.

In Tizard and Hughes (1984) study of preschoolers at home and at school, there were some noteworthy differences observed between teachers and parents, which have important implications for curriculum design. The most outstanding difference noted is that parents play with their children, teach specific skills and impart a tremendous amount of information to their children. This information concerns the child's family, babies, household matters and also more general information about science, history and geography. In contrast, teachers talk to children about play and routines, such as picking up toys, listening attentively and following instructions. Tizard and Hughes (1984) conclude that children learn a great deal more in the "scaffolded" environment of the home, despite the inherent difficulties (other children, tired parents, lack of material resources), because of the personally relevant information communicated to the child and the one-to-one teaching.

Gallimore and Tharp (1990) provide an interesting example of how literacy can be integrated to the curriculum, in a way that promotes both literacy and cognitive development. They give an example from KEEP (Kamehaha Early Education Program), which teaches literacy from Kindergarten to Grade 3. The programme used is called ETR, which is based on content from children's experiences (E), plus a text (T) and examination of the relationships (R) between the two. The ETR programme is used with five to six children at one time in an activity setting. Teacher's performance is monitored by observation, video taping and conferences; to enable teachers to reflect if they are

helping children to "make sense", by giving feed back, instructions, reinforcement, questioning and cognitive structuring. Gallimore and Tharp consider that children with limited home experience of literacy may require teachers to build word meanings on an everyday, verbal level and to gradually introduce the linguistic stream of writing itself. They call this process of teaching "weaving", whereby schooled concepts are interwoven with the concepts of everyday life. Books and other textual material may come to make sense because it is linked to the concepts of everyday life. A similar approach was taken by teachers in Heath's (1983) study of working class communities in the Piedmont Carolinas. When literacy was linked directly to children's experiences, children who were "at risk" of school failure were able to learn to read at grade level.

Dyson (1993) argues that socio-cultural differences should make a difference to literacy theory and practice. Dyson contrasted conventional assumptions of developmentally appropriate literacy practice, such as invented spelling and process writing, with the interpretations of these activities made by children from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Dyson argues that if teachers infuse situatedness and culture into the ways they observe children interact with literacy activities and make sense of language, then they will begin a range of literacy pathways and teaching as normal.

Meadows and Cashdan (1988) propose their notion of "tutorial dialogue" as the means by which the child can experience one-to-one, personally relevant teaching within a class room environment. Tutorial dialogue is based on the method developed by Marion Blank (1973) for work in a one-to-one situation for regular use with poorly functioning children. Teachers would see a child alone for periods of fifteen minutes. However, Meadows and Cashdan (1988, p.58) have applied the method for use within the classroom, for varying periods across the day. There are eight major principles to "tutorial dialogue" for working with a child:

- 1) Teaching to an appropriate range of cognitive demands
 - not too simple or too difficult
 - to cope with different children's strengths and weaknesses (e.g. poor memory or expression).
- 2) Managing the response - use an array of techniques for poor answers, and try a series of simplifications, in order to put the question again. Matching the child's level and asking her to do slightly difficult things is important in the scaffolded relationship, for three reasons:
 - a) match-mismatch theory of motivation and learning - a small extension is best for learning,
 - b) the child's idea of school, as a place where demands can be met, where teachers are sensitive to the needs of the child and interested in her as an individual,
 - c) the child's self image - encourage curiosity and liveliness, and to see herself as successful.
- 3) Developing a sequential theme and engaging in meaningful tasks.
- 4) Select appropriate materials, associated with the real tasks of everyday life - food, outings, washing, sleeping. Activities could include washing a doll, making biscuits, cutting fruit and so forth.

5) Checking the child's response - create real opportunities for sharing by using subjects or areas in the present context.

6) Pacing the session: create a higher demand at the beginning, help the child to find answers. Ease the demand toward the end of the dialogue, so the child is left with a sense of success.

7) Giving the session shape :

- a clear statement of intent, e.g. "shall we cut the apple and find out how everyone can have a piece?"
- draw together the threads of the dialogue, remind the child of the salient events and how answers were obtained.

Meadows and Cashdan (1988) suggest that many of these steps become automatic and normally teachers would concentrate on four major steps in the dialogue, which are :

- 1) deciding on an appropriate task;
- 2) introducing the task;
- 3) preserving the sequence;
- 4) reviewing what has been done.

An intrinsic part of this dialogue is the use of demands and follow-ups, to maintain the coherency of the interaction. Simple demands which the teacher would make of the child are labelling, memory, description, non-verbal demands, imitation, incidental memory, delay and visual search. Harder demands are comparative analysis, cause and effect, imagery/prediction, means-ends relationships, higher level/logical relationships, rationale and word skills. Follow-ups involve attention getting-recapturing, through focus, delay and repetition. Follow-ups also include rephrasing, giving part of an answer, subdividing the task, helping to discard wrong or meaningless answers, presenting comparisons, giving information/demonstrations, asking for fuller responses, repeating a demonstration, relating the known to the unknown, directing action to learn significant characteristics, focussing on relevant features, and substituting action for verbal response. Dialogue, in this sense, is in marked contrast to a normal preschool setting, where an adult poses a series of questions to the child about play. On the contrary, "the adult listens to the child's questions and comments, helps to clarify her ideas, and feeds her the information that she asks for" (Tizard and Hughes, 1984, p.254).

This section has introduced ideas of how literacy could be promoted in the curriculum, based upon the Vygotskian notions of access and mediation in a scaffolded learning environment. The present study will examine whether children in New Zealand kindergartens experience any elements of such a literacy rich, scaffolded learning environment. This section concludes the discussion of the issues involved in emergent literacy, the theoretical framework provided by Vygotsky's theory and the implications of research into emergent literacy and Vygotsky's theory for curriculum design. The following part of the review will now examine relevant aspects of the kindergarten movement's history and philosophy. Piaget's theory, which provides the framework for many early childhood constructivist curriculums will also be examined in this section.

Kindergarten in New Zealand: From Froebel to Piaget

Kindergarten curriculum across the century

The influence of Froebel was strong in the early kindergartens. The first kindergarten was established in Dunedin in 1889 at a time when Froebel's ideas were spreading rapidly, and kindergartens based on his ideas were established in many countries (Hughes, 1989). Froebel believed that play was the best way to develop children's potential, play being the "highest level of child development" (1826, in Anning 1991, p.9). He also wrote that "Play at this time is not trivial, it is highly serious and of deep significance". Froebel created a set of educational materials, which he called "gifts" to bring out the full capacities in children (Hughes, 1989). The set of balls and sets of differently shaped blocks were used in the early Dunedin kindergartens and others for many years. Froebel also believed that children should experience the natural world by playing in natural surroundings with grass, trees, flowers and plants. Although this presented initial difficulties for kindergartens in poor areas, this influence can be seen the present purpose built kindergartens (Hughes, 1989). Froebel's belief that practical craft work, leading to sensory and language training should be central features of kindergarten curriculum is still evident in kindergartens today (Anning, 1991, Hughes, 1989). Hughes (1989) cites the 6th annual report of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association as describing children sewing in wool and silk, weaving coloured papers and playing with bricks "their hands growing deft and their minds unconsciously developing as they think what they are doing" (p.12).

The emphasis of the first kindergarten was on Christian and charitable intervention (Carr, 1991). Kindergartens catered for children of working class parents. Compassion for the children of the poor was a strong motivation for the establishment of the kindergarten movement, but so too was the desire to civilise them and turn them into respectable citizens (Hughes, 1989). Hughes (1989) explains that all early kindergartens "trained children in orderly habits" (p.24), as well as trying to keep them healthy. She quotes a common motto: "Come regularly; be in time; and come clean" (p.24). Socialising children into society was central to the mission of the kindergarten in New Zealand. In 1991 Anne Meade reinforced the social nature of early childhood education when she said that "early childhood teachers put a lot of time into socialisation, and socialisation is cultural transmission by another name" (p.58).

In 1947, the Report of the Consultative Committee on Pre-School Educational Services (the Bailey Report) provided support for kindergartens, but saw child care as being for "deviant" families, where mother had to work (Smith and Swain, 1988). Kindergarten was supported by the government, because it emphasised the companionship of other children and because it reinforced the notion of parental responsibility for child rearing by its half day nature (Carr, 1991). No doubt the government were happy to

support women in their role as housewives and mothers for half the day while the child attended kindergarten, if women would give up their jobs for returned servicemen.

In just over one hundred years, the demand for early childhood education has increased dramatically. By 1991, the census data revealed that 44,363 children were in kindergarten, 21,578 were in Playcentre, 35,127 were in Childcare and 10,451 in Te Kohanga Reo. 1,646 children were in preschool classes in schools and 12,969 were in playgroups, Pacific Island Language Nests and Home based services (Davey, 1993). By July 1992, 91% of four year olds, 73% of 3 year olds, 37% of 2 year olds and 11% of children under a year were in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from a total of 126,134 children. Of that total, 17% were Maori and 5% were of Pacific Island descent, slightly less than their total under five group, which is 22% and 6% respectively (Davey, 1993). 15% of preschool children have mothers in full time employment and 58% have mothers who do not work at all. 24% of children between one and four years have mothers who work part time. As kindergarten hours do not match many full time work schedules, it is much more likely that the children attending kindergarten have parents (probably mothers) who are either not working or working part time.

Some of the early elements of kindergarten education are still present today. There is still a focus on socialising children into society, as Meade (1991) stated. The curriculum in kindergartens still embodies Froebel's notions of the natural environment in which children can naturally develop at their own pace (Carr, 1991; B. Hughes, 1989). The focus is on supporting or guiding the learning of children, rather than directly teaching them (B. Hughes, 1989). Furthermore, there is a sense in which the teachers of kindergarten children provide a nurturing rather than teaching role. Kindergarten teaching could be seen as an extension of mothering (Cook, 1985).

The early childhood teachers who have socialised kindergarten children have nearly always been women. In a review of Equal Employment Opportunities in teaching services for the Ministry of Education, Slyfield (1992) states that women are more likely to teach younger children. Slyfield's review examined teaching services from early childhood to tertiary, and found that 99% of kindergarten teachers were women, 76% of primary teachers, 50% of secondary teachers and 34% of tertiary teachers. These proportions were noted to have changed little since 1981. Women have been seen the appropriate caregivers of young children in New Zealand, because of their perceived nurturant qualities with young children (Cook, 1985).

Saracho and Spodek (1993) consider that wanting to work with children is a common motivation for early childhood training. They state that the characteristics of good early child teachers are often described as physical stamina and knowledge of human development (Almy and Snyder, 1947); a love of children, warmth, security and enjoyment of working with young children (Leeper, 1968); and high energy, nurturance, flexibility and maturity (Almy, 1975). Saracho and Spodek state that these qualities are seldom the result of teacher training and are usually the qualities that teachers bring to

teacher training and practice in their personal lives. Although Saracho and Spodek state that these attributes are worthy, they do not think they justify entrance to teacher training. Saracho and Spodek consider that the lack of importance attached to early childhood teaching by society and teachers themselves, believing that wanting to work with children is enough, denies the impact that early childhood teachers have on children and society. As they state "In order to raise their professional status, early childhood educators need to make others aware of the social significance of the contributions to children" (Saracho and Spodek, 1993, p.5). Increased professional status would require a higher degree of preparation and resulting professional knowledge than most practitioners currently possess. Similarly, Finkelstein (1988) states that the

guardians of children under five are among the lowest paid, least valued, lowest-status workers in the social structure. They exercise little control over licensing, access to, or regulation of the profession and enforce few meaningful standards. They exercise no important regulatory authority over the environments of children under five. More like missionaries than professionals, they command low pay for their work and in recent decades, scant social recognition or respect (p.10).

In order to achieve the required civilisation and socialisation of poor children, kindergarten programmes were run on formal lines until the second world war (Hughes, 1989). Morning tea was a very formal part of the programme, which was intended to "civilise the children of the poor" (Hughes, 1989, p.49). The kindergarten class was divided into small age groups, called tops, middles and tinies, with their own teacher, who stayed with them throughout the morning, and in many kindergartens were only allowed to attempt age appropriate tasks and within a rigid time schedule (Hughes, 1989). Rigid timetabling, including toileting timetables, lasted through to the 40's and 50's. There were few creative activities in the early days, as painting was unheard of and children were expected to neatly colour in templates. However, themes were an integral part of the curriculum in many kindergartens, then and now. A rest period was part of the programme, causing a lot of work putting up stretchers and taking children's shoes off for the rest. By the late 1940's there were anecdotal accounts of free play programmes emerging and by the 1950's the Wellington Association were only sending students to train in "free programmes" (Hughes, 1989). Hughes reports that initially the swing to free play was total, with the belief that any encouragement to intellectual growth would be harmful, but there has been a more recent swing to a middle position with a balance between free activity and guided learning.

Meade's (1985) research in kindergartens, Playcentres and child care centres identified the following features of kindergartens. In 1985 they were administered by Associations in various areas, which were run by volunteers. Associations employed kindergarten teachers to teach, who were paid for by the state. Each centre was built and initially equipped by each association, with considerable assistance from the state. The Free Kindergarten Union was the national administrative body. Teachers were trained at the various Colleges of Education, under the auspices of the Department of Education.

Meade found that the primary goals of the kindergarten programme for teachers in her study was to foster social - emotional development and socialisation of children.

The focus on the social aspect of early childhood education was reinforced for teachers when Caldwell told a New Zealand conference in 1986 that she had coined a new term "educare", from education and care, to suggest the inseparability of the two terms (in Smith and Swain, 1988, p.3). In a similar vein, the Report of the State Services Commission (1980, pp. 3-4, in Smith and Swain, 1988, p.3) stated that

whatever is provided for young children is in one sense care, and in another sense education. The two things in relation to the young child cannot be easily distinguished. One cannot provide care for young children without their learning ideas, habits and attitudes, nor can one educate them without at the same time providing them with care.

In 1988, the nature of early childhood education in New Zealand was profoundly changed by the release of two influential documents from the Department of Education. These were "Education to be More" (1988), the report of the early childhood care and education working group, chaired by Anne Meade and "Before Five: early childhood care and education in New Zealand" (1988), the document which paralleled the "Tomorrow's schools" documents released regarding change in the primary and secondary schools. One of the key elements of "Before Five" was the introduction of a contract with the government called a "charter", which was defined as a statement of objectives and practices, drawn up in consultation with parents and whanau (extended families), which was in keeping with national guidelines for early childhood. (Department of Education, 1988, p.1). In return chartered early childhood services would receive funding for the centre as a bulk grant.

The "Education to be More" report had explained the purpose of adopting the notion of combined education and care in terms of long term benefits for children and their families, citing evidence that children who enter school without the skills of their peers are likely to be disadvantaged (Rescorla and Zigler, 1981; Ramey, MacPhee and Yeates, 1982; Lazar and Darlington, 1982; Weikart, 1982, Braithwaite, 1983; AERA, 1983; Esbensen, 1985; Philips, McCartney and Scarr, 1987; and Woodhead, 1987). Drawing on evidence from the Perry Preschool project, with children from disadvantaged families in Ypsilanti, Michigan (Weikart, Epstein, Scwheinhart and Bond, 1978; Weikart, 1982), Meade and the working group cited the outcomes of early childhood education as increased educational achievement and reduced need for special education, increased likelihood of employment , reduced delinquency and teenage pregnancy and an economic outcome of paying for itself, by saving the taxpayer \$400-700 for every \$100 spent of early childhood education. They also argued that there are spin off benefits for families, which would come with greater family involvement in early childhood.

Given the diversity of early childhood services in New Zealand, the chartering process was often fraught with difficulty, and was not helped by the Ministry changing its mind several times throughout the process about key issues (Farquhar, 1991). The need

for further training and the increased administrative load associated with bulk funding has no doubt lead to an increase in stress experienced by early childhood teachers.

Kindergarten teachers and other early childhood teachers recently joined the primary school teachers in the NZEI (New Zealand Education Institute) as their union, no doubt in an effort to strengthen their position against more government intervention. Apple (1986) states that intensification of teaching through increased administration results in a reduction in the quality, not the quantity of service provided. Teachers have to eliminate what seems inconsequential and cut corners in order to cope with the task at hand. Apple (1986) found that teachers interpret the intensification of their job as a symbol of "professionalism", and yet along with this intensification goes increased de-skilling. The need to learn administrative skills is seen by teachers as skill diversification (Apple, 1986), and yet there is also a process of de-skilling at their own profession which goes hand in hand. As teachers spend more time completing the administrative requirements of their job, they are spending less time on learning new teaching skills, time preparing their own curricula materials or keeping up with reading in their own field.

In 1989, all early childhood centres were required to write and submit the charter to the Ministry of Education, following recommendations made by the "Before Five" Report, to be approved for licensing by 1990. A centre was defined as any group with the responsibility for care and education of children under five years of age. Two copies of the Early Childhood Management Handbook were issued to each centre, with instructions to write their charter, after negotiation with parents and staff members, according to the guiding principles set out within the handbook.

All centres were requested to set their own priorities within the charter, but a list of "paramount principles" (1989, p.9) was provided to guide establishment of these priorities. These "paramount principles" were as follows:

- the needs of the child shall be the first and major consideration
- parents/whanau are paramount in the decision making concerning their children
- all early childhood care and education should enhance the development of the child and support the family
- early childhood care and education should enhance the development of self esteem, confidence, independence, and interest in learning of all children
- the curriculum must recognise the varied individual learning characteristics and needs of each child
- early childhood centres should provide an atmosphere that is warm, accepting and welcoming to both children and adults
- policies and practices in early childhood centres should reflect the dual cultural heritage of the partners to the Treaty of Waitangi

The principle given for curriculum design states that "the curriculum is the sum total of the children's direct and indirect learning experiences in early childhood centres. It promotes the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of young children while responding to the needs of families" (1989, p.9). The document further states that the curriculum must enable all children to experience an environment in which :

- they learn who they are
- they are safe
- they relate positively to others
- they enjoy themselves

- they learn in appropriate ways
- they respect the natural environment
- learning is not limited by race, gender or special needs
- decision making is shared
- conflict is resolved peacefully
- the importance of family and home is recognised
- adults are learners

The guiding principles for curriculum design were further expanded within the section entitled “the learner” (1989, p.7) in the following way :

the environment must facilitate children's curiosity, active exploration and self-paced and directed learning. The importance and power of play must be recognised. There must be time for children to think and dream.

The guidelines in the Charter Handbook reinforced the free play and guided learning focus which Hughes (1989) had distinguished as a feature of the kindergarten curriculum, as well as the socialisation focus that Meade (1985) had identified. As Meade (1985) stated, the importance of play is recognised and widely accepted in New Zealand early childhood curriculum through use of the free play curriculum. “New Zealand free play programmes are based on a philosophy of education which sees the child as an active learner with his or her knowledge being constructed rather than acquired” (Meade, 1985, p.112). The teacher's role in the child's learning is in the provision of direct, personal contact and in the arrangement of the learning environment; space, things, time, people. Meade suggests that the free play approach creates the impression that adults set up the environment and that the children do the rest; which would be chaotic. In reality, teachers have adapted strategies for enhancing learning in a free play programme, but many teachers have difficulty in articulating their reasons for their approach. Lazar (1983) found that some people really deny that there is, or should be, a curriculum. He points out that there is always a curriculum, whether obvious or not. As he stated in 1983 (in Meade, 1985, p.35) :

Someone selects the materials, the stories and songs. Someone decides on their sequences and availability. Someone rewards or ignores specific behaviours. All of these are curricular decisions. If the teacher is unaware of the educational, social and personal learnings provided by these choices, the child may be cheated, confused or simply pulled in random directions. If the teacher thinks through the goals of the activities, essentially the same materials and activities can be organized into a coherent programme for optimal learning and development.

Although children may gain an understanding of the physical world, through playing with sand, water and blocks; they also learn about the social world of the school (Tizard and Hughes, 1984). A new code of behaviour is introduced to them, along with routines, how to communicate with staff and how to focus on play. All of these things teach the child what is considered to be appropriate behaviour in a school setting. The play environment gives the child room to explore, make a noise and to make a mess, but learning by observing an adult is excluded.

The notion of not expressing curriculum goals seems prevalent in New Zealand literature. As Smith and Swain (1988, p.39) state “child care should have developmental rather than curriculum goals”. They further suggest that early childhood education should encourage dynamic development, toward a greater complexity and diversity of behaviour,

rather than teaching specific skills or knowledge. Smith and Swain (1988) propose that intellectual growth is encouraged through play; whereby children can explore and experiment with the environment, stretch thinking and reasoning through making mistakes and actively participate in increasingly complex play.

Clarke-Stewart (1982) proposes that early childhood programmes can be examined along an open-closed dimension. Along the “closed” end of the dimension, learning can be classified in the following way : “she (the teacher) tells the children what to do and when to do it. She gives the class clear and explicit lessons, usually according to a strict schedule” (p.77). An American example of a closed programme would be the Bereiter-Engelman programme. The programme consists of patterned drill, teacher questions and responses, pre-reading and maths activity, in a sparse environment. The goal of such a programme is to increase I.Q. scores and to teach social and intellectual skills relevant to the school situation. A New Zealand example of a closed programme is Dr. Jane Ritchie’s Hamilton intervention programme with Maori pre-schoolers (Smith and Swain, 1988).

By contrast, Clarke-Stewart defines “open” programmes as indirect, individually directed, free to explore and select activities. Interaction is informal, one-to-one and on a flexible schedule. Interaction also revolves around play and materials, rather than an academic curriculum. As Clarke-Stewart (1982, p.77) states “she (the teacher) prepares materials and activities for the children, but then lets them choose among them, going at their own pace, following their own interests and making discoveries about the world on their own. She guides, encourages, and helps the children in their activities but does not exhort, direct, instruct or restrict them”. In New Zealand, open programmes are referred to either as “free play” or resource based programmes. Playcentres epitomise the free play dimension of open programmes, in which supervisors provide the materials and allow children to experiment at their own pace. Children’s play is in response to materials or other children and is rarely structured into group sessions in the curriculum. Another example of an “open” programme is Montessori pre-schools, which use carefully prepared educational materials, at which children progress individually. Although Montessori preschools are also resource based, there is a strong emphasis on task completion and promoting cognitive development (Anning, 1991).

In kindergartens in Palmerston North and possibly elsewhere, some teachers had been using elements of an “open” resource based programme, developed in New Zealand, called “SEACOH” (Structured Environment Allowing for Communicative Original Happenings). This programme has some similarities to Montessori’s ideas of the prepared environment, in that it recommends certain types of sensory activities and readily available resources on child sized furniture for classrooms. The title derives from an in-service course held in the city in 1985, which many teachers and trainers had attended. The ideals are very compatible with the Charter goals, as they also specify that children should develop individuality, independence, creativity, communication and caring

attitudes. Careful structuring of the environment is seen to provide increased opportunities for teachers and children to communicate. The outcome of such a curriculum is seen to be improved self esteem (Seacoh Training Institute, 1990).

Kindergarten, as Hughes (1989) describes it, use many elements of Clark-Stewart's open programmes, using educational resources and free play, as well as guided learning. The introduction of the Charter and combination of education and care by the Ministry of Education presented few challenges for the kindergarten services philosophically, as they had a history of providing progressive education, which included both socialisation and education for young children. However, the introduction of Charters presented a greater challenge to the workload of teachers and the need to work more closely with the parent community. The theoretical foundation for "open", progressive models of early education will be explored in the next section.

Piaget : Connections with progressive education

It has been previously argued in this review that Piagetian theory underpins much current practice in preschool education in New Zealand (Carr and May, 1991). Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) discuss the three dominant ideologies that characterise western education and developmental theories. The first is the "romantic" ideology, reflecting the work of Rousseau, Froebel, Gesell and Freud, who viewed development as maturation and education as the unfolding of inner virtues and abilities. The second ideology, "cultural transmission" conceives of education as passing knowledge, skills, values, morals and social rules from one generation to the next. Behaviourism provide the key educational method in this ideology. The "progressive" ideology view education as helping the child achieve higher level of development as a result of structured though natural interactions with the physical and social environment. The term progressive comes from Dewey (1938), reflecting the pragmatic functional-genetic philosophies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and defines development as a progression through invariant ordered sequential stages. (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972). Kohlberg and Mayer (1972, p.454) cite Dewey and McLellan (1895, p.207) for the following notion of education for attainment of higher levels of development:

Only knowledge of the order and connection of the stages in the development of the psychical functions can insure the full maturing of the psychical powers. Education is the work of supplying the conditions which will enable the psychical functions, as they successively arise to mature and pass into higher functions in the freest and fullest manner.

Kohlberg and Mayer argue that both "cultural transmission" and "progressive" ideology stress the acquisition of knowledge, only the progressive ideology sees this in terms of an active change of thinking brought about by experiential, problem solving situations. The idea of education as the attainment of higher level of development reflects this relation of

human development and education that has resulted in a conception of the teacher as a child development specialist (Spodek, 1988). Progressive ideology is consistent with the constructivist conception of development based upon Piaget's work (Spodek, 1988).

In New Zealand kindergartens there are elements of all of these ideologies. There is obviously an early involvement with romantic ideology through the influence of Froebel and the current provision of natural play environments. The influence of Freud is seen through the "play is the child's work" philosophy which permeates most early childhood services in New Zealand and through the early support for the kindergarten by the 1947 Bailey Report, which would provide support for stay-at-home mothers. The current sessional provision of kindergarten provision is still only suitable for parents who are not in the full-time workforce. Carr and May (1991) in their discussion the development of a National curriculum for early childhood in New Zealand, argued along progressive lines, that children need "areas of experience and learning and the skills and knowledge attached to them on one axis, learning strategies and attitudes (or developmental principles) on the other" (p.222). Carr and May (1991) argue that the theoretical frameworks of Piaget (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969) and Erikson (1950) have been used in early childhood for explaining concern with the whole child in a developmental framework. They further argue that the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (Bruner and Haste, 1987) should be used for explaining how children learn in a social and cultural context. No doubt these ideas may begin to influence practice with the use of the National Curriculum in teacher training.

A "free play" philosophy is founded upon the belief that the child actively constructs knowledge of the world. Such a view has theoretical roots in Piagetian theory (Wood, 1988). Piaget's theory proposes the child as an "active learner". Piaget (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969) suggests that the child's intercourse with the physical world provides the main constraints and contributions to the development of intelligence; the child learns as she acts upon objects in space and time. In this way it is the "things" of the environment which play a major role in the child's development. This view of child development is reinforced in the New Zealand Charter Handbook by the minimum standards for equipment and by the supervisors in Meade's (1985) study in their emphasis on purchasing bigger and better equipment. Meadows and Cashdan (1988) report that play has been idealised as a spontaneous, absorbing, refreshing, enjoyable, creative, ideal way to learn. Furthermore, play enthusiasts claim that humans need to play in order to learn, to work off surplus energy and to practise skills.

Justifications for a Piaget derived theory of the appropriateness of play as the way to learn in a preschool environment have three major sources (Meadows and Cashdan, 1988, p.49):

1) Assimilation - according to Piaget, children fit materials to a play scheme, concentrating on those that fit the scheme and ignoring the rest. Later accounts (derived

from Piaget) make play a balance between assimilation and accommodation, which implies that play in itself is a deficient way of learning, as it lacks testing against reality.

2) Activity - originally simply being actively involved in play was considered sufficient for learning to occur. More recently, theorists have suggested that "thinking about what has been done" is also required.

3) Readiness - learning is controlled and limited by development. This view advocates that there is no point to accelerating beyond the child's level of development or to teach skills which the child is not ready for. In play, children will choose the activity that they are ready for.

Later Piagetian accounts influence the National Curriculum guidelines, which reflect current practice among practitioners (Carr and May, 1991). Children are seen to need to test their hypotheses generated through play and use metacognition (think about their thinking) to develop their solutions. Children are seen to be able to learn best when they are ready, although Carr and May (1991) have advocated inclusion of Vygotsky's (1978) principles of scaffolding for children who need encouragement to play. Investigating whether teachers do draw on these theoretical principles is an important focus of this study.

Piaget (1978) postulated that there is a natural instinct to assimilate, such that the child seeks to incorporate any outside elements to the scheme, which are compatible with its nature. There is some debate over the drive to assimilate (Boden, 1982; Mischel, 1971) and some questioning of how people deal with the affirmations and negations to the scheme, as negations in logic and in scientific theory seem to be hard to manage (Kuhn, 1962; Wason, 1977). Russell (1978) also argues that children have to learn which kinds of knowledge are consistent. Piaget (1978) also argues that equilibration is a force for stability in cognitive structures. Sometimes successful adaptation calls for a radical and pervasive shift if stability is to be regained, an 'equilibration majorante'.

Meadows (1993) cites evidence that problems remain in diagnosis of developmental stages where internal consistency is not clear (Gelman and Baillargeon, 1983; Meadows, 1975; Klausmeier and Sipple, 1982). Cross cultural studies suggest that there are not only variations in the rate of development, which is in itself not a major challenge to Piaget's theory, but in whether the later stages develop in the form described. Determining factors seem to be the schooling the culture provides and the concepts it values (Laboratory for Comparative Human Cognition, 1983). Meadows argues that the research base for the data is also problematic, as "Behaviour is an important source of data for the theory, but it has to be interpreted before its degree of support for his theoretical claims can be assessed" (p.207). This is an important point, as there can be a developmental lag between language and thought, such that hesitant responses could be interpreted as 'failure of thinking' (Donaldson, 1978), when they may in fact be language difficulties. Further difficulties come in the evidence that preschoolers have been trained to complete concrete operations tasks (Brainerd, 1983; Gelman and Baillargeon, 1983). It

would seem that Piaget proposed too negative a picture of children's thinking in the pre-operational stage (Beilin, 1992; Vuyk, 1981). It may be that there is more preschool competence, with a gradual consolidatory transition rather than a qualitative shift during the school years (Braine and Romain, 1983; Donaldson, 1978). For this reason children may be more receptive to learning concepts of literacy than a free play curriculum would display.

Piaget's theory is dialectic; it is concerned with conflict (Biddell, 1988; Rogoff, 1988; Tudge and Winterhoff, 1993b). For Piaget, assimilation, accommodation and equilibration are central to the process, by taking in, modifying and balancing information. Piaget (1966) considered symbolic play an excellent example of an activity dominated by assimilation, while he considered imitation to be dominated by accommodation. Symbolic play within a Piagetian framework is primarily assimilative; it is used for representation of existing schemes. Symbolic play under Piagetian theory is the precursor of literacy development, in that it is the stage in which children learn to understand representation, a crucial concept for reading and writing, a construct which Piaget would unify as literacy (Pellegrini and Galda, 1993). Although symbolic play is encouraged in free play curriculums, with the intention of encouraging representation, one of the interesting factors about curriculum which have areas designed to elicit symbolic play, is that when children use them they do not use literate behaviour and language (Morrow, 1990; Neuman and Roskos, 1991; Pellegrini, 1982, 1983). This suggests that either symbolic play does not lead to representation the way Piaget predicted or that symbolic play in a free play curriculum does not help children to make the links between representation and reading and writing.

Piaget's theory acknowledges that social experience and interpersonal behaviour are an important part of development, but in his theory they play a limited and secondary role. Social interaction (especially with other children) mainly contributes to development by exposing the child to other points of view, providing opportunity for the child to rethink her own point of view. However, such a change can only occur when the child is in an appropriate state of "readiness" to accommodate a new concept. As Wood (1988) states "for Piaget, any social facilitation of development only works when the child's own understanding, based on his commerce with nature, is in an appropriate state of readiness for change" (p.16). In contrast, Wood suggests that developmental readiness is an inappropriate way of understanding how children learn. Social interaction between the child, other children and other adults is the means by which Wood proposes that children achieve a "joint construction" of knowledge of the world around them. McNaughton (1995) similarly argues that learning and development are "co-constructed", through social, cultural and personal interactions. These interactions structure ways of doing and subsequently ways of thinking. McNaughton states that children construct knowledge 'in and through' social interaction, in which they also construct knowledge of social and cultural meanings.

From a different angle, Biddell and Fisher (1992) make a similar argument. They point out that the traditional separation of cognitive structure from context embedded activity creates a readiness dilemma, placing teachers in a helpless position of either waiting for cognitive structures to develop or putting off everyday education in an attempt to stimulate cognitive structures. As they state

From a skill-theory perspective, every child is ready to learn, indeed is learning and developing in daily social interactions in educational contexts. The educator's task is to understand and participate effectively in that process. This perspective removes the helplessness of the of the wait and leap strategy that stems from the context neutral approach to cognitive structure and affirms the developmental value of everyday activities of both teacher and learner (p28).

In Piaget's view, "thought is internalised action" (Wood, 1988, p.19). According to Piagetian theory, any analysis of human knowledge and intelligence must begin with a consideration of motor activity and practical problem solving. It also alerts us to one of his important educational messages, which is that children have to be active and constructive in order to develop their understanding of the world. It is this philosophy which is the impetus behind the "free play" philosophy; children must be active and playing in a stimulating environment in order for them to develop to their full potential. In many ways, such a philosophy takes the responsibility for learning away from the teacher and places it squarely upon the child. After all, if the child fails to learn in the stimulating environment provided, then the teacher can easily conclude that the child did not have sufficient "potential" to learn beyond the level achieved. Similarly, a structured programme places responsibility for the child to pay attention and to learn answers by repetition and rote learning. Neither open or closed programmes give an equal burden of responsibility for the child's learning to the teacher.

Tizard et al. (1988) report that in their London study of preschool centres, free play observed was brief, simple and low level, possibly because the children were distracted by other materials, other children or that they were not put under any pressure by staff to complete any projects. Staff were rarely involved with children's activities, and there were no sustained games or conversations. More talk was observed between children, than between staff and children. Similarly, Burberry's (1980) Bristol study of play groups found that free play was simple and short in duration. There was little adult-child talk and no sustained conversation. Most adult talk was about play or instructive. Sylva and her colleagues (1980) found in the Oxfordshire early childhood groups that conversations between staff and children were rare, that there was a lack of challenging activity and that children engaged in only brief and simple play. As Meadows and Cashdan (1988) conclude :

It seems clear that a very high proportion of children's free play over the range of preschool centres is pleasant, keeps them busy, and does provide opportunities for learning and practising skills; but there is not much challenge, not much discovery, not much excitement, not much sustained conversation and not much persistence at working something out (p.37).

Tizard and Hughes (1984) report that British preschools have clear intellectual aims; in general terms to "develop the child's full potential". Language development is a

high priority (through conversation) as are developing basic skills and understanding. Furthering social development is a primary aim, to make the child independent of the mother, to be a member of a group and finally to prepare the child for primary school, listen to staff, follow instructions and so forth. Although Tizard and Hughes (1984) noted that these aims were clearly articulated in most centres, most supervisors were puzzled by the notion of having a curriculum; as they did not promote a specific body of knowledge or skills, which had to be taught in a specific period of time. Instead of teaching, per se, these supervisors saw their role as providing a rich learning environment. In this enriched environment, the play materials provide the curriculum (e.g. shaped, variously sized water containers teach the child concepts of space and volume). Supervisors reported that they encouraged development by providing a planned environment, in which children learn by self initiated play. Supervisors do not teach reading and writing skills, but propose that they lay the foundations for these to later occur by providing activities that develop pattern recognition, hand-eye coordination, spoken language, and the relationship between stories and printed text (Tizard and Hughes, 1984).

Tizard and Hughes (1984) accept the notion of the child as an active learner, but suggest that Piaget underestimated the role of verbal exploration, puzzling and thinking, in the child's cognitive development. In their study of preschoolers at home and at school, Tizard and Hughes noted that children tackled the task of making sense of a world they imperfectly understood, armed with curiosity, logic and persistence. Children were characterised by their persistent intellectual curiosity and were in a permanent state of intellectual disequilibrium. Such a view opposes Piaget's notion that the child is incapable of decentred or logical thinking at this age. In contrast it suggests that the child's view of the world is limited and distorted by an incomplete conceptual framework, rather than lack of logic.

The social institution of childhood is "an actively negotiated set of social relationships within which the early years of human life are constituted" (Prout and James, 1990, p.7). The immaturity of children is a biological fact, but the ways in which this immaturity is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture. Childhood is both constructed and reconstructed for and by children.

Piagetian theory connects biological and social development. It states that children's activities, their language, play and interactions are significant as symbol markers of their developmental progress, prefiguring the child's participation in the adult world. Piaget does not see these events as significant to the child's social life or to the social context of childhood. As Prout and James (1990) conclude "the decreasing irrationality of children's play as they mature is taken as a measure of an evolving 'rationality' of thought, charting the ways in which 'primitive' concepts become replaced by sophisticated ideas" (p.11). In Piaget's account, child development has a particular structure, consisting of a series of predetermined stages, which lead toward the eventual achievement of logical competence. This is the mark of adult rationality. Within such a

rational scheme, children are marginalised beings, awaiting temporal passage, through the acquisition of cognitive skill, into the social world of adults (Prout and James, 1990). Piaget's work has influenced many other accounts of childhood and social practice around children. His account of developmental stages inform western orthodoxies regarding childrearing practice (Urwin, 1985) and Walkerdine (1984) has shown that Piagetian theory lies at the heart of educational thinking and practice.

Although Piagetian theory has been influential in early childhood education and elsewhere, it is problematic in terms of promoting some aspects of children's cognitive and literacy development; particularly in terms of recognising the role that parents and teachers can play in encouraging development. This section has examined the history of the kindergarten curriculum and the romantic and progressive educational ideologies, from Froebel and Piaget, which have influenced it. Understanding the history of the kindergarten curriculum, and the educational, social, cultural and political influences which shape it, are crucial to this study of how literacy is promoted and practiced in New Zealand kindergartens.

Summary

This review has examined recent research on emergent literacy and the cognitive theory of Vygotsky, whose work has been fundamental to the study of how children learn literacy concepts before compulsory schooling. The role of play was also discussed, as Vygotsky believed symbolic play to be the precursor of literacy behaviour. He considered symbolic play to be the first act of representation, a key aspect of writing. Parents or adults, teachers by implication, can play a major role in children's learning under this theory, as they introduce the purpose for becoming literate, they use reading as a promoter of reading concepts and vocabulary and they provide a scaffolded learning environment. An examination of parent and teacher beliefs about child development and education indicates that communication between parents and teachers is vital to prevent misconceptions about children's home literacy environment. The review also presented some proposals of how results of research into emergent literacy could be used in an early childhood programme.

The history of the kindergarten curriculum in New Zealand was examined, in order to uncover the foundation to the current curriculum philosophy. It demonstrates an early childhood movement based on principles of socialisation, Christian principles and Froebel's theory of the natural play environment. Teachers in the last decade have worked under increasingly intensified administrative conditions, with the introduction of Charters, bulk funding and a National Curriculum. Curriculum in this century has moved from a formal structured programme to a more informal, environmentally structured "free play" programme, with shorter formal periods for large groups.

The review also examined the prevailing conceptualisation of child development and education in New Zealand and other Western countries. Kindergartens appear to espouse both romantic and progressive ideologies of education; there is both a belief in the natural unfolding of the child's abilities, a belief in determined stages to child development and an emphasis on activity in children's learning. Adults play a limited and secondary role in this conception of the child's learning. Play is considered to be the ideal way for children to learn under this framework, through which children are active in their learning, assimilate and take on new concepts at a point of readiness. The next chapter will outline the research methods used in the present study to examine how literacy is promoted and practiced in a group of New Zealand kindergartens.

CHAPTER THREE

The Present Study

This chapter will provide an overview of the present study. It will first examine the aims of the present research, the research questions and the methods used to achieve those aims. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the ethical concerns of the research.

Aims of the research

1) Identify the prevailing theoretical orientation regarding cognitive development and emergent literacy in New Zealand kindergartens through interviews with Head Teachers.

Research questions:

What is considered to be normal or expected cognitive and literacy development for children by these teachers?

What is the role of the parent and the teacher in children's learning?

Is there any relationship between these teachers' beliefs and practices and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development?

2) Identify the perceptions that parents and Assistant Teachers have of their role in children's literacy development.

Research questions:

How do parents and teachers promote cognitive and literacy development?

How do parents and Assistant Teachers perceive themselves as teachers?

How do they see the role of the kindergarten in children's development?

3) Identify the domains of literacy activity in six kindergartens.

Research questions:

What are the most common ways that literacy is presented in the curriculum?

How is literacy activity accessed and mediated in the kindergarten?

4) Examine the implications of the present study and emergent literacy research for developing a literacy centred curriculum for kindergarten.

Research questions:

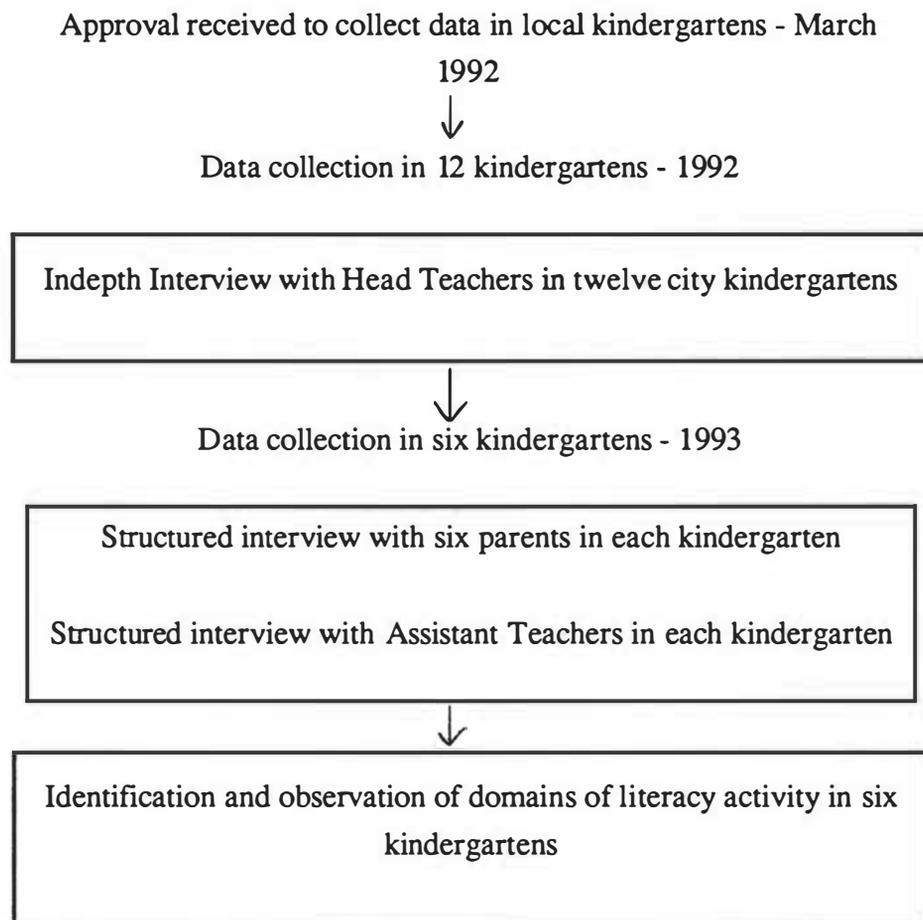
How could emergent literacy be promoted in a kindergarten curriculum?

What are the implications for curriculum design and resources, staffing ratios and involvement of parents?

Data Collection

The data for this research *were* collected in two distinct, but interrelated parts. The first part of the collection process involved interviewing the Head Teachers in the 12 urban kindergartens, and establishing a profile of the Palmerston North urban area. Case studies were then completed and returned to kindergartens. The first part of the research was designed to fulfil the first aim of the research. The second part of the research involved observation of six kindergartens and a structured interview with six parents in each kindergarten and a version of the same structured interview with Assistant Teachers in the six kindergartens. Aims 2 and 3 would be fulfilled through this part of the research. The final aim would be fulfilled through an examination of the implications of the present study for kindergarten curriculum design. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the data collection.

Table 3.1 Flow chart of data collection and analysis



In the first part of the research, the interviews with Head Teachers were designed to provide a foundation for the later parts of the research. It sought to find out the prevailing view of cognition in kindergartens and how this related to the literature and to the information in charters. Teachers were also asked about their intake of children, to establish an SES profile for the kindergarten. The interview also set out to find out what is the expected or "normal" course of cognitive and literacy development in kindergarten children and how this relates to teaching practice. The interview would also yield some preliminary information about the domains of literacy and the role of the teacher and the parent in literacy development. Finally it would give some insight into the role teachers perceive they have in children's learning.

The second part of the research sought to refine, consolidate and validate the information received from Head Teachers. For this reason, observation of centres was used to identify the domains of literacy in the kindergartens, fulfilling the third aim. Structured interviews with the Assistant Teachers and parents were used to gather more information about the role of parents and teachers in literacy development and to compare and contrast their perceived role in children's learning. This would fulfil aims two and three in particular, while providing a foundation for the fourth aim. Both of these sets of

data would contain valuable information about how literacy is currently being practiced. This would provide a foundation for possible ideas about how this information and the research on emergent literacy could be used to create a curriculum designed to promote literacy development in young children.

The kindergarten movement has an easily identifiable history and literature associated with it and it has been developed by New Zealanders for the New Zealand context, as opposed to Rudolf Steiner or Montessori preschools. It would have been interesting to examine the other major New Zealand preschool movements, such as child care, Playcentre and Te Kohanga Reo, but it would be impossible to select a representative range of centres, and to keep the data collection manageable. It would have been inappropriate, as a Pakeha researcher, to be attempting to examine Te Kohanga Reo and their approach to literacy. Another difficulty is the lack of available literature on the rationale, policy and practices of Te Kohanga Reo.

In New Zealand, children can attend kindergarten from sometime after the age of three (depending on the waiting list at the centre), until the age of five years. The majority of children attend kindergarten, and they have a convenient age grouping of children between four and five years, when children are attending morning kindergarten. It is more difficult to get such a clear cut age grouping in any of the other major early childhood services.

The local Kindergarten Association were approached in February of 1992 regarding the protocol of doing research within the centres under their jurisdiction. The Association requested a formal application in writing, which would be considered at a meeting of their Staffing Committee. Approval for the research to be conducted in the urban kindergartens was received in March of 1992. The Association sent a list of contact telephone numbers. Head Teachers were contacted by telephone and then sent a brief three page copy of the research proposal (see Appendix 1), so that they had some idea of what the research was about, and what would be asked of them at the interview. After they had received the research proposal, another telephone call was made to re-check if an interview was possible and to confirm a time and place. The interviews were arranged to take place shortly before and after the May school holidays.

Following the interview with Head Teachers, consideration was given to which kindergartens would give a reasonable range of SES in the city. Kindergartens were selected which were spread across the city and also gave a range of family incomes from high to low SES. When copies of the transcripts and case studies were sent out to the Head Teachers for consideration, letters were also sent to six kindergartens requesting permission to complete observations and the parent and teacher questionnaires in their kindergarten. Permission was received in all requested kindergartens, except Kindergarten No. 8 as the Head Teacher made contact to say that she had shifted to another city and both the other staff members were relocating. Kindergarten No. 3, which had a similar population, was subsequently contacted and teachers there agreed to data

being collected. The kindergartens which took part in the second part of the data collection were No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Kindergartens 1 and 2 had the highest SES families in the city. Kindergartens 5 and 6 had the lowest and Kindergartens 3 and 4 were mostly middle income SES families. It is important to remember that no kindergarten in this research had families from only one economic group.

Head Teachers will be referred to hereafter with the letter "T" and a number. Kindergartens will be labelled with the same number as teachers and the letter "K". Quotations from the interview transcripts will be marked with the teacher number, page number and line number. Observations of kindergartens cited will be labelled with the kindergarten number, page number and line number from the transcript.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this project was sought from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee in February, 1992. Approval was given, provided that the following ethical considerations outlined to the Committee were met :

- 1) To properly inform participants of the nature and focus of the research.
- 2) To ensure anonymity of parents, children, teachers, and centres observed or interviewed during the research.
- 3) To formally invite centres and parents to be involved and to obtain written consent to collect ethnographic data, interview or completed questionnaires.
- 4) To provide "feedback" to participants of any results and invite comments.

In addition the Ethics committee requested (See Appendix 2) that time be given to parents to consult before final consent to interview was given. Accordingly, parents were asked to participate and given an information sheet to take home. They were approached again the following day for their decision.

CHAPTER FOUR

Indepth Interview with Head Teachers

This chapter will present the results of interviews conducted with twelve Head Teachers of kindergartens in the local urban area. The aim for this part of the research was to identify teachers' prevailing views of child development and education with a view to examining their theories of cognitive and literacy development and how these theories are translated into practice. It would also form the foundation for other aims of the research, which are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. These included finding out the role of the parent and the teacher in children's emergent literacy in New Zealand kindergartens.

Method

Sample

The Teachers

The sample consisted of all Head Teachers of kindergartens in the urban Palmerston North area (12 centres in total). Ten of the twelve Head Teachers have their own children, and were over the age of 35. The two teachers without their own children are in their mid twenties. It is interesting to note that only two of the Head Teachers were not in permanent positions at the time of interview. Both were acting as Head Teachers, while the permanent appointee was acting in a more senior capacity in the early childhood service.

The Head Teachers have been teaching a minimum of three years and a maximum of 23 years. Three of the Head Teachers had a break of seven years and four teachers had eight year breaks within their service to have their own families. One of the permanent Head Teachers had been teaching only five years, but the remaining nine permanent Head teachers had been teaching for over eleven years.

Teachers said that they became kindergarten teachers in order to work with children, but said that other child oriented career choices were limited and that kindergarten training was considered an appropriate career choice for a woman. An interest in young children motivated many teachers to train; including some teachers who trained after having their own children.

The kindergartens.

The twelve kindergartens were spread across the city in residential suburbs. One kindergarten was in school grounds. Two others bordered a school. There were two "two teacher" kindergartens, in which there was a Head Teacher and only one Assistant Teacher. Of these, one had a 2:30 ratio, because of little floor space in the kindergarten, the other had a 2:40 ratio. The remainder of the kindergartens had 3:40 ratios at the time of interview. It is important to note that since the interviews were conducted, the Association has urged kindergartens to raise the rolls to 45 children per session where space permits, in order to secure more bulk funding. Kindergartens have been "bulk funded" like child care centres since 1992.

Kindergartens have children from a range of SES groupings. In this study the range extended from a kindergarten with a largely monocultural group of professional families with high incomes to another with a large number of ethnic groups, low income families and over half the parents on unemployment or domestic purposes benefits. Many of the kindergartens had mixtures of these extremes, and also included the more middle income earners, as the city's housing is not clearly clustered into asset defined suburbs. Unemployed make up 10% of the working population in the city, which has a population of approximately 72,000 people. It is a central service area for a large farming community, with a lot of light industry and a strong education/research component with several tertiary institutions and Government research institutes. Information about the number of staff and children at the kindergartens, along with a broad description of the ethnic group and socio-economic background of children's families is summarised in Table 4.1.

Data Collection

The method of data collection was the semi-structured indepth interview. Head Teachers were given a copy of the interview questions, to refer to throughout the interview. Then they were asked again if they agreed to be interviewed and if they would consent to being tape recorded. All the teachers agreed to both being interviewed and recorded. They were then asked to sign a consent form, which outlined guarantees of confidentiality and their rights to refuse to answer any questions (see Appendix 3). The teachers were interviewed over a two month period in May and June of 1992. Most were interviewed in the kindergarten, although one was interviewed in the researcher's home on her way home from work, as that suited her better.

Table 4.1 Profile of kindergarten characteristics

Kindergarten	Staff:child ratio	Family income range	Predominant ethnic groups	Parents' occupations	Notes
K1	3:40	Highest to lowest	Diverse	Professional Unemployed Benefits	Some children came from a state housing area in the middle of a wealthy suburb
K2	2:40	High	European	Professional	K2 did not get a third teacher when others did, because they had lots of parent helpers in the past.
K3	3:40	Low to middle	Diverse	Unemployed Unskilled Trades	SES of families is changing to more middle income earners.
K4	3:40	Middle	European	Professional Management Trades	Note that many mothers work part time. Some Maori and Vietnamese children attend.
K5	3:40	Low	Diverse	Unemployed Benefits Unskilled	Many families receive either Domestic purposes or Unemployment benefits.
K6	3:40	Low	Diverse	Unemployed Benefits Unskilled Trades	Fathers work in trades or unskilled jobs. There are a number of mothers on Domestic purposes benefits.
K7	3:40	Low to middle	European	Trades Unskilled	Some Maori and Polynesian children attend this kindergarten.
K8	3:40	Low to middle	European	Trades Management Unskilled Benefits	Fathers are more likely to be in trades or management. Some mothers work part time.
K9	3:40	High	European	Professional	Some Indian children attend. Their parents have research contracts at the university.
K10	2:30	Middle	European	Farmers Unemployed Management	K10 has a small floor area and is only licensed for 30 children. Note that some parents had been made redundant from their jobs.
K11	3:43	High to low	Diverse	Professional Unemployed	Note that 50% of parents were unemployed
K12	3:41	Low to middle	Diverse	Trades Unskilled Benefits Unemployed	Note that predominant ethnic group is Indo-Chinese

The dimensions of teacher knowledge outlined by Carr and Kemmis (1983) were used as a basis for the interview. Carr and Kemmis (1983) state that a critical analysis is only possible when theory (organized knowledge) and practice (organized action) are treated in a unified way as problematic, and as open to dialectical reconstruction through reflection and revision. They further propose that some kinds of knowledge are more effective for reflection than others. The interview was used to ascertain teacher knowledge, with a view to examining the similarities between theory and practice in the kindergarten.

The interview commenced with a question about why the teacher had become a kindergarten teacher and then a question about the SES background of the children attending. Then questions were asked which tapped into Carr and Kemmis' (1983) categories of teacher knowledge, which are as follows:

- 1) Common sense knowledge.
- 2) Folk wisdom of teachers.
- 3) Skill knowledge- about certain effective teaching strategies.
- 4) Contextual knowledge - of this student, class, community or culture.
- 5) Professional knowledge - teaching strategies and curriculum.
- 6) Educational theory - development of the individual, the role of education in society.
- 7) Social and moral theories and general philosophical outlooks.

The interview concluded with questions about the Chartering process in the kindergarten (as all kindergartens were obliged to write a Charter before 1991) and if the Charter had shaped their practices. A copy of the interview questions is included as Appendix 4.

Giving teachers information about the research and their role in it, was an essential part of the qualitative nature of the research. Oakley (1981) states that it is important to establish a relationship, not just a "rapport", that people need to be given information about the research, to have ethical considerations such as confidentiality and access to publications/reports discussed and to have questions asked to the interviewer answered openly and honestly. Oakley (1981) describes this as "no intimacy without reciprocity"(p.49).

Jones (1985) proposes that a view of people as persons who "construct meaning and significance of their realities" is useful in conceptualising the interview, as people bring "to bear upon events a complex personal framework of their beliefs and values, which they have developed over their lives to categorise, characterise, explain and predict the events in their world" (p.47). The interview is a way of exploring and understanding the meaning and significance that people give to their actions.

These principles guided the interview. Most teachers asked questions about my interest in early childhood and my teaching position at the university before the interview commenced or on the telephone, while we arranged the interview. The interview was started with the question about their own background, as Ely et al. (1991) suggest starting with something the person is comfortable with. Teachers were told that the questions (3-

9) were categories of teacher knowledge and that they could talk about them in any order. Most talked about them in order, but referred back to earlier categories. Having teachers hold a copy of the questions seemed to help them to focus on the topic and to make connections between the aspects of teacher knowledge.

Ely et al. (1991) state that an interviewer should provide a focus for the interview, observe, give directions, be sensitive to clues given by participants, probe, question, listen, amalgamate statements and generally be as involved as possible. Above all however, the participant is a "full partner in the endeavour and often provides surprising directions not allowed by other more researcher centred interviews"(p.59).

For these interviews, it meant giving an explanation of the question if required and responding honestly to any questions, without trying to 'lead' the interview or to take up too much 'air time'. Honest answers about the research focus were given and genuine interest and sympathy to their descriptions of sometimes difficult working conditions was expressed. Ely et al. (1991) call this "judicious entering", Lather (1989) calls it "interactive, reciprocal self disclosure" and of course Oakley's (1981) "no intimacy without reciprocity" also implies this approach. Some of the interviews were more "conversational" than others. Some of the most mature teachers had few difficulties with the intent of the questions and provided really comprehensive answers without constraint. Others, particularly those who were younger or newer to their position asked for more coaching or needed questions rephrased, if the initial answer was lacking in detail.

The interviews differed markedly, as some teachers went into a great deal of detail without prompting, while others needed a lot more questioning to get the same sort of detail. It appeared to be a confidence issue, as Teacher 12 and Teacher 9 needed more prompting. In Teacher 12's case, she was new to the position of Head Teacher and said that she was in the process of re-organising the kindergarten and its curriculum. Teacher 9 was also fairly new to her relieving Head Teacher position. She was distracted a number of times in the interview, as there was a pre-entry session being run in another part of the kindergarten, so she had to stop the interview to answer the phone and so forth. By far the easiest interviews were with Teacher 4 and Teacher 11, who were both relaxed and expansive during the interview and expressed a genuine interest in educational research.

Analysis

The data were analysed in two stages. Interviews were transcribed and a summary of the responses each Teacher made to Carr and Kemmis' (1986) categories of teacher knowledge was prepared for the case study sent to each teacher. The case studies were then combined and common themes in the responses to categories were looked for. This initial coding formed the foundation for the categories discussed in each section discussed in the results. Following this initial coding and analysis, a careful coding of the interview transcripts was undertaken to check for themes occurring across categories within the

interview and between different interviews. These themes were used to further check and refine the existing codes and to examine the links and correspondences between categories of kindergarten teacher knowledge. Sometimes a theme was use of common term or a recurrent idea. Such themes were grouped and then related back to codes within the categories of teacher knowledge. Relationships between answers to questions were documented.

Part of the ethical considerations was to provide feedback from interviews and to seek verification of summaries of the data. Accordingly, the interviews were transcribed and two copies of the interview transcript and "case study" were sent out to teachers interviewed. Teachers were asked to read and amend one copy of each and to send them back. They were informed that another interview could be arranged if they were unhappy with the first, but this did not eventuate. Generally the hoped for reflection on their own comments was a really useful addition to the data. An example of the case study sent to teachers is included as Appendix 5 and a copy of an interview transcript is included as Appendix 6.

Results and Discussion

The results will be presented broadly within Carr and Kemmis' (1983) categories of teacher knowledge. The results within each category will be discussed at the end of each section and then summarised at the end of the chapter.

Common Sense Knowledge

Although at first sight the common sense codes appear to be unrelated, they are all tied together by a common theme, which is the need to care for people and to treat them appropriately. Safety rules are to do with caring for children. Individual differences is to do with treating children's needs with respect, which is strongly related to beliefs about child development. Teamwork is also to do with caring and respecting other teachers.

Many teachers also commented that being a parent had made a big difference to their teaching. The common sense learned from being a parent had improved their teaching and their repertoire of skills with children and with parents. Teachers were asked about their background in early childhood education primarily to make them comfortable in the interview, but it also provided a useful way of finding out how teachers had conceptualised their role as teachers and their role in children's learning, fulfilling part of the second aim of exploring the role of teachers in children's literacy development, as well as fulfilling the aim of understanding teacher's views of cognitive development.

The effect of being a parent.

Some of the teachers had become teachers because of an interest in early childhood which developed when their own children were young. Teacher 1 chose kindergarten because she perceived it to have similar philosophy to Playcentre, which she had enjoyed with her children, but with a superior salary structure. She thinks that kindergarten does not have the same level of parent participation as Playcentre; which she considers to be to the parent's detriment. Teacher 1 has tried to run her kindergarten along Playcentre lines, using a free play philosophy and involving parents as much as possible. Teacher 7 had felt limited by the primary school curriculum when she taught new entrant classes before she had children, as she felt she could not work with children at their level. At one stage, she was running a developmental programme in her class, taking out groups of children to work with. Her approach was considered against the "norm", and one inspector told her she was "spending too much time with the children" (T7:2:33-34). Kindergarten training gave her the chance to work with children in a way that seemed more developmentally appropriate to her.

While other teachers had trained before having children, many of the teachers stated that being a parent had changed their perception of children and of parents. Teachers 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 11 took a seven to eight year break in their kindergarten careers to have children. Most of the teachers returned to teaching when their youngest child approached school age. Teacher 3 commented that after an eight year break, it took her twelve months to develop the confidence to "work alongside another teacher and really give her the support that she needed and deserved" (T3:1:40-41). She was used to decision making in the home, as her husband's job took him away from home a lot, but found it very different to be making decisions which could affect the community.

Teachers 3, 10 and 11 commented that their own experience as a parent had altered their teaching practice. Teacher 11 considered that she was a better teacher because she had experienced the difficulties that parents face :

Because I knew what it was like to have children who bit, or children who misbehave when you really wanted them to be good, or children who wake up fifty times during the night, or children who are wonderful and you are worried about them being too good (T11:3:14-20).

Teacher 10 similarly says that she draws on the wisdom of years of experience and her own parenting knowledge as a teacher. Teacher 3 commented that she "looks back in horror now that I have had a family and I think of the demanding ways I had with parents" (T3:4:43-47).

Teacher 10 stated that much of her common sense knowledge comes from having her own children and from 20 years of teaching experience. She explained that preventing an accident before it happened is an example of common sense:

You see a shoelace undone, so you automatically go and tie it up. I often say to the children that I think I get paid for tying shoelaces up. Or you see a nose that is beginning to drip, so you go and get some tissues and blow it. Even little things like that can make life a lot easier, we are forever tying

shoelaces up, they don't seem to make children sizes of shoelaces so they are really long, and children trip over them, and we have got far too much concrete. You can see a bottom lip drop, Mum is gone, and you just know that they might need a cuddle, you go to them, but you also know when to back off as well, and that is a feeling (T10:5:2-10).

Being a parent gave many teachers what they consider to be "common sense", or a heightened awareness of the many issues which need to be considered when educating young children. Being aware of safety hazards was one area of common sense that teachers described, and applied in the kindergarten through safety rules.

Safety rules.

Children's safety was described most frequently as common sense by teachers, although social rules were also frequently mentioned. Rules occur as a major theme across many questions in the data and are discussed more fully under the section on social and moral philosophy.

There are common sense safety rules in K1, such as earthquake and fire drills, and rules for children such as no running inside. The Kindergarten Association has rules and regulations such as the rolls to be filled out twice a day and organising the money once a week. Aspects of common sense knowledge for Teacher 2 are teaching children to abide by rules (e.g. safety, health), and explaining to children the reasons for those rules. Teacher 2 also expects children to be able to accept discipline. She also says that she has common sense assumptions about parent helpers and student teachers, which are often mistaken. She finds that parents and students don't know the same sorts of common sense things about safety or welfare in the kindergarten. As she states:

Well I would imagine that if they saw just everyday things, like if the child had spilt a pot of glue and things like that. Well surely they would realise that if they take a bird home for the weekend it needs water and you know ...Well, some parents don't know those sorts of things (T2:6:33-37).

For Teacher 4 safety rules are common sense, as well as providing information. It is important for Teacher 4 that all her staff think the same way about safety rules, so that any student teacher coming into the centre will get the same message from everyone. Some of the common sense elements of Teacher 6's practice included things like not putting out hot finger paint, covering electric sockets, reinforcing windows and fencing the outside.

Teacher 5 discussed common sense issues such as telling children the rules of the kindergarten (ie. not taking things that don't belong to you), and sending a child home who is ill, being able to judge when a child is really ill, or telling a parent when it is time to leave a child at the kindergarten. Common sense was also discussed in terms of safety, use of equipment, and explaining to children the consequences of their actions.

Teacher 9 described the safety rules in the kindergarten as examples of her common sense knowledge, and setting behaviour limits for children in groups. As she comments:

Like your running inside your sandpits, your shovels and things to a responsible level. Using the paints and things appropriately so that it is not going to be used in mouths and things like that. Washing hands before food and those types of things (T9:5:35-37).

Another important element of common sense is to be sensitive to others and listening to what others have to say. Teacher 9 considers that this aspect of her common sense has changed as she has matured and become more experienced in her interaction with other adults. Kindergarten limits, such as safety rules are an important part of Teacher 12's common sense knowledge. This common sense involves not letting children go out gates or climb up the zoom slide and jump down. She also considers that there is a lot of common sense guidelines in the social skills that she teaches to children, such as mediation.

Individual Differences.

Many of the teachers included treating children as individuals and promoting individuality and self esteem as aspects of common sense knowledge. Teacher 1 believes that everyone is an individual and will react differently. She uses this common sense belief in working with other teachers, to come to a workable consensus of opinion. Teacher 1 believes that acceptance and tolerance of different backgrounds, teaching styles and strengths/weaknesses is integral to the formation of a good teaching team.

Teacher 2 commented that building self esteem in children was an important part of common sense knowledge. Speaking nicely to children and teaching them to be responsible for their own actions, and to care for others, is part of this common sense. Encouraging good manners and independence skills in children are aspects of common sense knowledge for Teacher 3. She explains:

We want them to feel good about themselves, feel okay, that what they're doing and what they've got to offer is important as...the next child at the table. All those sorts of things. That they learn to be confident ...with all the equipment in the kindergarten, inside and out. And that they have a sense of achievement from what they are doing.(T3:6:22-27)

Valuing children as individuals is an important aspect of common sense for Teacher 8. When she starts to work with them, she looks for things they can do well, before looking for areas that need improvement. Encouraging self esteem in children is part of treating children as individuals. Teacher 8 also considers it to be common sense to develop a good relationship with a child's family, as this "is going to filter down to how you get on with the child as well" (T8:4:8-10). She does "home visits", but only after she has invited parents to invite her. She enjoys home visiting and considers it breaks down any barriers and provides an opportunity to explore any concerns. Making sure that children don't infringe on the rights of others, is another important aspect of common sense for Teacher 8, as she doesn't think that the session flows well if children are hurting or disrupting others. Having respect for, and giving support to teaching colleagues was the final aspect of common sense discussed.

Beliefs about child development.

All of the teachers talked about their theory of child development at some point in the interview and this is discussed in more detail under the section on developmental and educational theories. However, some teachers stated that their beliefs about child development were common sense.

Teacher 7 describes her values, background and experiences as influential in her common sense knowledge. She believes that children learn by doing, but that they can get stuck at a certain level. She uses observation and intuition about children and looks for ways of moving children onward. Sometimes intuitions about children and their abilities come to fruition several years later, when she meets children or parents again.

Teacher 5's viewpoint was that children need limits on their behaviour.

And children I think when they know the limits, the discipline, they get used to it. They are a lot happier when they know what they can do and what they can't do (T5:3:34-36).

However, Teacher 5 also said that she needs to find out the background to a child's behaviour before she thinks of disciplining a child. She gave an example of a little boy, whom she had been having a few difficulties with. The mother had told her that his father was on a murder charge, and that she became aggressive to the child when she is uptight. In this case, Teacher 5 explained that she would "sort of ease him along a bit". She discussed how her experience of teaching helped her considerably with these sorts of situations, and that she would approach it differently than someone just out of Training College. Teacher 6 similarly believes that setting guidelines for children's behaviour is common sense, in order to keep some semblance of control. She said that children need to know what they can and can't do and why.

Teacher 6 also discussed her common sense view that children need to have a mixture of environments, to learn inside and outside. For example, that children don't need to come inside to learn to read. Common sense for Teacher 3 is that children should have fun, and that both boys and girls should enjoy activities inside and out. Exposing children to a variety of activities and also to music in a variety of forms is also described as common sense.

Teacher 11 believes that society has a low expectation of preschoolers, whereas she has high expectations. She thinks T.V. has deprived children of experiencing things for themselves, and that children can get great excitement from experimenting with things like batteries. Observing what children do and extending upon children's interests is an important element of common sense to the planning process for Teacher 11. Children in this kindergarten are perceived by teachers to love surprises, and Teacher 11 tries to relate the surprises to things that the children are interested in. She gave an example of the children's favourite song, "walking in the jungle". Sometimes a group of children will all decide that one song is a favourite:

It doesn't happen often, but this jungle song has really sort of caught them all, so today we dramatised it with face paint and masks, it was really good because you had to choose, you could only be one of three animals, and you had to remain that animal, you couldn't change half way through, and normally when you sing the song you all become whatever is current but in this one you had to be quiet, like if it was crocodiles and you were a tiger, well too bad. And I thought "how will they react?", and I couldn't believe it - first time through no one sang out of turn, and they had obviously captured the whole feeling that tigers don't snap when it is the crocodile's turn sort of thing.(T11:4:4-13)

Teacher 11 also considers it to be common sense to give these children a variety of experiences in the community, using a "Burger Buggy" van, which is offered free of charge by "McDonald's". Every Thursday morning a small group of children are taken to the schools, parks, museums, library or the Science Centre. An important aspect of Teacher 11's common sense is to allow children to excel at something or to be bad at something, not to insist that all children become good all rounders :

I get concerned a lot in education ...the emphasis is on what you're not particularly good at. For instance the children who can read well don't need to spend time reading, we had better give them maths. That sort of mentality a little bit. I am really concerned that children accept what they are good at and that it is fine to keep doing, that there are basic life skills that we all need to learn, but not all of us are ever going to be a mathematician and a linguist. And it is really important that children are allowed to be not good in a certain area. That I learnt from my own children, not from kindergarten, but because I was aware of that I am quite determined that I will promote that area of special interest in children (T11:4:30-40).

She gave an example of a little boy who helped to open all the children's lunches and appeared to be a "natural leader", so Teacher 11 encouraged him to organise the other children into games.

Teacher 4 considers that her common sense knowledge has built up over years of experience with children and by trial and error. She commented that most of her common sense is people oriented:

You have to use common sense when you're working with people. You have to explain to children the reasons why you do things, because if you don't they don't follow things through, because they don't understand why. The common sense things for me are people oriented (T4:2:37-41)

Teamwork.

Common sense when working with people was frequently discussed as teamwork by the teachers. Most of the teachers discussed teamwork as an essential part of their teaching at various parts of the interview. However, the discussion has been included here as it was more frequently described as common sense to have a good team relationship.

The concept of a shared vision or consensus was used by some of the teachers. An important aspect of Teacher 3's common sense knowledge is to share a common vision with the other teachers in the kindergarten. While she believes in individual strengths, a common vision is considered necessary in order to work together. Teacher 1 says that team members have different strengths and weaknesses, but they form a team by

consensus. Final decisions about the curriculum depend on the team. Three is considered to be strange number to work with by Teacher 1 and she says that teachers have to be flexible. Teacher 2 believes that the staff in a centre must "click" or the centre will be discordant. Children sense this according to Teacher 2 and begin to play one teacher "off against the other". Teacher 4 believes in respecting and supporting her teaching colleagues. Her teamwork has helped to develop her skill knowledge. The team makes decisions about how children will be worked with. Teacher 9 says that she needs to listen and see other points of view of the three teachers. She also needs to recognise the experiences of the other teachers and share points of view. Teacher 12 enjoys working as a member of a team and the extra curricular freedom of early childhood education. In K4 any information about children is written in a diary and shared with the rest of the team. Teacher 4 said that a consensus set of values is agreed upon by the team and used. It is not an individual stance, but a consensus view for the children. In K5 a weekly programming meeting helps team members to decide how to meet the needs of children and a team consensus on how to talk to certain children. Ideas generated at the meeting are tried and evaluated at the following meeting.

There are other aspects to working as a team member. For instance, Teachers 10 and 4 find that they can learn from their colleagues. Teacher 10 said that she learnt her skills primarily through her training, but has also learnt from teachers fresh from training over the years. Teacher 4 is happy to have a team member observe her practice and give her a commentary on her observations.

Coping with the limitations of staff and building size are also helped by working as a team. In order to cope with the staff:child ratio, Teacher 3 says that teachers need to work together to cope with workload. K10 only has 30 children because of the building design, and team work is crucial with only two teachers.

Teamwork is also expressed in a "flat management structure" in some kindergartens. Teacher 1 told me that any of the other teachers could have been interviewed, as they could have answered just as easily. In K4 all teachers will give students common sense rules if the Head Teacher is busy or forgets. Flat management in K4 means that parents can talk to whoever they feel comfortable with. All the staff are experienced.

Discussion.

Apple (1986) states that the perceived nurturing qualities of women make them the "ideal teachers of young children" and argues that in every occupational category, women are more apt to be proletarianized than men. He proposes that this could be because of sexist practices of recruitment and promotion, the general tendency to care less about the conditions under which women labour, the way capital has historically colonized patriarchal relations, the historical relation between teaching and domesticity and so on.

Furthermore, Apple (1986) proposes that the relationship between teaching and domesticity is a feature of teaching in many countries. As he states :

Advocates of women as teachers ... argued that not only were women the ideal teachers of young children (because of their patience and nurturing qualities) but that teaching was ideal preparation for motherhood.

It can be seen that several of the women in this study had limited choices of career as options and even more limited if they wanted to work with children. Several gave up their careers in order to have children, or worked in a temporary part time basis while they were young. Others came to see themselves as the teachers of young children, after having their own children. As Cook (1985) points out, women have traditionally assumed responsibility for the care of children in New Zealand. The limited career choice is not mentioned by the two younger teachers (Teachers 6 and 9), which suggests a cohort difference in women's career opportunities in New Zealand. It was an national trend at the time, however, as teachers trained in three of the main centres, in various parts of New Zealand.

It is interesting to note that the orientation of these teacher's common sense, given the prompt:

(3) Common sense knowledge about practice - e.g. assumptions, opinions, for example, knowing that students need discipline.

is within a framework of caring. Given Slyfield's (1992) report on the involvement of women in teaching, and the fact that women are more likely in New Zealand to be the teachers of young children, is it then surprising that the common sense espoused by these teachers is within Apple's (1986) domain of nurturing? Does this tell us that women are more "motherly" in their teaching, or it is a reflection of responding to the developmental needs of children?

Given the emphasis on the individual needs of children and common sense beliefs about child development, it is possibly the latter. Cullen (1994) argues that it is common sense for teachers to have a knowledge of child development as part of their professional resources, as common sense tells us we don't want teachers who do not understand the factors underlying children's development or who ^{do not} express delight in children's play. However, Cullen points out that teachers also need to recognise the significance of social contexts in children's cognitive development, and that teachers will need to use a range of interactive teaching strategies to meet the needs of all children. Although this sounds "common sense" in the informal nature of the kindergarten classroom, Cullen warns that teacher:child ratios can work against the teacher's ability to have extended interactions with children.

It can be seen that some of these teachers do demonstrate the sort of integration of developmental knowledge and understanding of social contexts that Cullen discussed. Teacher 7 outlines the need to work with children when they are getting "stuck", while Teacher 6 says that children need to learn through a mixture of environments. Teacher 5 examines the social context of child before deciding to "ease" him along, rather than

discipline and Teacher 11 expresses the delight that Cullen says is common sense working with children's interest in a "dinosaur" song. She also outlines the importance of changing learning contexts for children and bringing in people from the community to reduce the child:adult ratio to maximise learning opportunities.

Teamwork seems to fall within in the same "caring" category of meeting individual needs, that is a feature of teacher's knowledge of developmental theory. Teachers discuss respect and understanding individual strengths in much the same way that they talk about meeting individual needs. In many ways this "caring" is crucial to a successful programme. The recognition of the need to work together is clearly seen in Teacher 2's statement that you have to have a team that "clicks".

However, the idea that teachers see themselves as nurturant is not easily dismissed. Acker (1983) describes teaching as a semi-profession, similar to social work, nursing and librarianship. All of these semi-professions are highly feminised. Acker questions why teaching young children is regarded as an occupation only suitable for women, and proposes that tradition and the economic advantage to the state of having a cheap mass female occupation play a large part in the strength of the assumption. The assumption that women work in these positions because of their "natural" inclinations to love children or to display "motherliness", is not regarded by Acker to be an accurate or justified position. Acker suggests that women, having carved out this area of influence in early childhood education, have held onto it as one of the few areas in which they could exert power, even at the expense of reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes. Acker states that the notion of teachers as "substitute mothers" is contradictory, as teachers must display a professional motherliness, accompanied by the need to evaluate and assess impartially and to enforce maybe an authoritarian regime in the school. Teachers in this study did not say that it was natural to want to work with children, but they did say that their choices to work with children were limited to highly feminised professions. They did say, however, that experience as a parent had increased their skills in working with children and parents, and had changed not only their views of children, but also of parents, with the result that they are more caring in their approach.

Common sense thus forms an important foundation for teachers views of themselves as teachers and their role in children's learning. It embraces social principles of caring for and working with others as well as theories of child development. It is also mainly experiential, as teacher's comments regarding the importance of being a parent or experience in different teaching situations has had on their beliefs. The next section, regarding the folk wisdom of teachers, is also derived from teacher's experiences rather than their training.

Folk Wisdom

Carr and Kemmis consider that "folk wisdom" is a type of "taken for granted" teacher knowledge, which may be based in cultural beliefs or experience. It may be less articulated even than common sense, which may be explained or spoken about more readily. Responses to the question about folk wisdom, using Carr and Kemmis' example that children get restless on windy days, caused some concern. It looked initially as if teachers had been lead into an unreflective answer, where they simply agreed that children do get restless on windy days. However, when the data were examined more closely, it seemed that teachers agreed and then qualified their agreement, and in Teacher 4's case simply disagreed with the idea that children's reaction to climate is folk wisdom. Teachers further explained that a variety of climates and contexts do have an effect on children, which they consider to be folk wisdom, because it is their experience rather than an established "fact".

The effect of the climate.

One of the examples of folk wisdom given to the teachers was that children get restless on windy days. Several teachers energetically agreed that the climate had a big influence on how a session would proceed and that wind would make children "hyped up", but many also discussed how a variety of things in the kindergarten context could have an effect on how the session would run, which they considered had become part of the folk wisdom of the kindergarten.

For Teacher 1, windy days were seen as days on which children wind themselves up, and also there are children who wind other children up. This is especially apparent on the days that the special needs children attend, as this kindergarten originally had a special needs unit attached, and those children are now mainstreamed. Windy days on which children become noisy and compete with the wind were described as part of Teacher 2's folk wisdom. The noise level and children's activity level were seen to rise on windy days in K5. Teacher 8 commented that sessions will be much calmer on calm days. She also finds boys are more active than girls, and that all children get noisy and "wound up" if they can't get outside on a wet day. Children being more active on windy days was described as part of Teacher 3's folk wisdom. Settling children into a group activity on a windy day was often seen to be a difficult task. Children are seen to be affected by rainy and windy days in K6, and an attempt is made to keep things running smoothly and quietly on such days. Rainy days were described as days on which children become loud and Teacher 9 finds herself telling children to be quiet or sing a song. As she comments "Weather has a lot to do with children's moods"(T9:7:13-14). Teacher 10 commented that children get restless on windy days, and get "hyped up". On such occasions, she brings

children inside for a group time or "Milo" (a hot chocolate drink). Windy days, when children get "hyped up" was another example given of folk wisdom in K12.

One of the interesting exemptions to the general agreement that there is folk wisdom were the comments by Teacher 4, who claims that there is no such thing as folk wisdom. Teacher 4 believes that there is "a reason for everything". Anything that can't be explained is discussed at staff meeting, and observations are undertaken to look for the cause of the unexplained phenomenon. She gave the following challenge to a commonly reported folk wisdom, although inadvertently agreeing that children are affected by climate:

I'd like to challenge the idea that children get restless is folk wisdom, as I think there is a very good reason why children get restless on windy days. The wind effects the things that they're using and playing with, and it speeds up every thing and because we talk about it in our plan, and on windy days, we must be sure to be bringing the children down and settling them down and listen to the wind, that sort of thing. But leaves and things are racing, and that makes them start racing. That may in fact be folk lore but I think it's got a factual base(T4:2:53-59).

Effect of the context.

Just as the climate is seen to affect children, the effect of certain changes in context are part of the folk wisdom of these teachers. Anticipating how children will react to other people in the kindergarten and expecting to be weary on certain days were common examples of folk wisdom regarding the context.

Teacher 2 believes that children are on their best behaviour when a "special" visitor comes into the kindergarten. Knowing that the phone will ring a lot when she wants to get to know a new child or to get involved with a new activity is one of the elements of Teacher 7's folk wisdom. Another item of folk wisdom is the knowledge that parents will be late to pick up their children the day that she has a lunch appointment. Teacher 4 thinks that sessions don't run as smoothly on the days that she has a relieving teacher in the kindergarten, who is not as familiar with the children. Another folk wisdom is that children will gravitate toward a male (parent help or student) in K3, and will do exciting things in the sandpit, with carpentry equipment and trolley activities. She also stated that she believed that children like a routine. She explained that children bring their own morning tea, which is eaten during a combined morning tea/music session. Children are given the responsibility to unpack, eat and then dispose of their morning tea rubbish. The mornings that this music session doesn't occur, children are unsettled and unsure of when to eat their morning tea. Another aspect of folk wisdom for Teacher 3 is that children don't cope well with anything out of the ordinary, like an extra adult in the kindergarten.

With the littlies if you have a lot of adults in the kindergarten you actually don't function normally because the children all they see is these adults and they don't know where to go and what to do and so you have quite a disruptive session (T3: 16:44-47).

There appears to be some divergence of opinion regarding folk wisdom in K6. Teacher 6 said that her co-teachers thought that children needed to unleash their pent-up energy occasionally, whereas she thought that if children are motivated and interested they will keep going throughout the session. T6 said that she thought that the idea of putting things out at children's level and assuming that children will use them is another prevalent folk wisdom.

I guess another one is that if you have things out for children that they are going to use them basically. We have got things out at the children's level and the assumption is that they are going to be able to pick up and choose from what we have got out (T6:3:18-21).

Folk wisdom is also attached to certain days in some kindergartens. Thursdays are found to be difficult days by the other teachers in K1, according to Teacher 1, mainly because it is near the end of the week and there are two sessions that day. Part of Teacher 12's folk wisdom is the knowledge that "if anything is going to go wrong it's going to go wrong on Thursday". She explained that Thursday is a double session day, and children and teachers are tired. Monday can also be problematic, depending on how busy Teacher 12's weekend was. Benefit Day was described as an example of folk wisdom in K5, as both parents and children are seen to get irritable leading up to Tuesday, the day the Benefit is paid. Collecting in the voluntary donation of 80 cents per session was discussed, as Teacher 5 described the difficulties involved in asking parents for money and gauging when is the best time to ask. Monday was often found to be a bad day for Teacher 5, as children are often tired from the weekend, and events such as a late night, or parents growling before the child comes to kindergarten, can unsettle them for the entire session. Teacher 5 reflected that her experience was a key asset in being able to recognise the background to these events. Teacher 5 discussed how problems at home or things that children have seen on television often affect children in the kindergarten. Mondayitis, or a slow start to the week for teachers is one element of Teacher 9's folk wisdom. By comparison, children are "dying to get back to kindergarten". By Friday and the end of term, children are tired and restless, according to Teacher 9. She also believes that teachers, parents and children all need to get out of the routine of attending kindergarten. In terms of folk wisdom, Teacher 10 commented that Mondays are always difficult because the phone keeps ringing.

Expectations of teachers.

Teacher 1 says that parents' belief that kindergarten teachers are experts is folk wisdom. She thinks some parents believe that they are "social welfare type people". Although she does refer people to other agencies, listening to the problems initially is found to be very stressful and time consuming. Children are also seen as treating teachers as experts, but Teacher 1 says they are more accepting if she tells them that she doesn't know the answer and will have to look it up in a book.

Kindergarten teaching has its own folk wisdom, according to Teacher 11, in the form of solutions. As she explains:

Quite horrendous things can happen in kindergarten, out of the blue. And I think the folk wisdom that goes with it is that you are never fazed, teachers don't get fazed. And you have this absolute store of automatic responses to deal with it. Things like when panic hits when someone is raising a hammer really high, and you say "goodness gracious!" and it goes back down, it is like an automatic response to things(T11:5:13-18).

Sometimes Teacher 11 worries later when she thinks about what could happen. This "unfazed" attitude is used a lot when dealing with parents to say "hey this has happened before" to reassure them. Teacher 12 commented that there is a folk wisdom about kindergarten teachers, which is mainly derogatory: "to say that it's not important and that we get paid to baby-sit" (T12:3:44-45). She thinks this attitude has changed over the years, and explains "It seemed a nice thing to do, a socially appropriate thing to do for young ladies. Of course it's a lot more professional now".(T12:3:54-55). Her parents had encouraged her to train, considering it a "nice thing to do, a safe position, a safe career choice and an appropriate career choice" (T12:4:1-2).

All kindergartens are the same.

An interesting folk wisdom regarding the institution of kindergarten emerged across the interviews from five of the teachers, which was the belief that all kindergartens, teachers, children and Charters are fundamentally the same. For example, Teacher 2 considers that all kindergartens are "virtually the same"(T2:10:5-7). Teacher 6 expressed a similar belief by saying that she thought all kindergarten teachers are the same, when she says

we have come in with the same basic philosophy, the same child management, that type of thing(T6:1:36-37).

Teacher 5 expanded this belief in the sameness of kindergartens to include the children , as she states: "I think no matter where you are in New Zealand, what kindergarten, most are similar. A lot of children are all the same basically" (T5:7:3-5). Teacher 8, who had shifted kindergartens after the Chartering process, considered that her new kindergartens' charter reflected her practice because :

I felt that kindergarten teachers probably all over New Zealand made it so general that unless you were sort of worked up really strong about one area or something in particular that you could slot into it(T8:17:25-30).

Teacher 3 provided an exception to this belief, when she discussed the difference in philosophy between kindergartens in the city:

What one teacher feels comfortable with another does not. I mean , you know, yes there is one kindergarten here that you know if parents ...parent help they can't bring their toddlers. Well when I heard that I was absolutely astounded. I couldn't believe it(T3:35:14-18).

Discussion.

Carr and Kemmis (1983) state that some of the types of teacher knowledge are rational, although well hidden in the life of practice. Others are more elusive, having a "taken for granted" nature that needs to be made concrete in order to be analysed and understood. They further state that teachers' knowledge is socially constructed:

Educational acts are social acts. As social acts they are reflexive, historically located, and embedded in particular intellectual and social contexts. So knowledge about education must change according to historical circumstances, local contexts and different participants' understandings of what is happening in the educational encounter. And it is clear that the knowledge we have will to a very great extent be rooted in local historical and social contexts (p.47)

Carr and Kemmis (1983) argue that an understanding of teacher knowledge is crucial as an aspect of education as *praxis*.; the aspect which "resides in" the knowledgeable actor or knowing subject.

Graue (1993) has discussed teacher knowledge as a social construction in her research on concepts of readiness in kindergarten teachers. She argues that the meanings attached to institutions, actions, images, utterances and events and customs of a group are called "interpretations"(p.34). She draws this category from Geertz (1987) and outlines how collective interpretations between teachers and families develop on a social and psychological plane. On the social plane, they are shared notions of events or ideas, on the psychological they are individual responses to collective responses.

Both of these views of the social construction of meanings for teachers have been outlined, as they relate strongly to Spodek's notion of "implicit theories" of teachers, which is discussed in other parts of this section and also because they specify the way in which teacher knowledge is located and constructed by the context in which it exists. Folk wisdom for these teachers does involve considering the climate and context in which they are teaching: the wet and windy city and the timetable within which they are working. Teachers are able to recount the folk wisdom of the kindergartens, but are also able to reflect upon whether they personally subscribe to the folk wisdom, an example of Graue's "psychological interpretations". Teachers can identify the interpretations of the community of parents, who sometimes see teachers as "experts". They also identify a kindergarten teachers' folk wisdom that teachers are "unflappable" and all kindergartens as the same. These are part of the "taken for granted" aspects of teacher praxis.

Skill Knowledge

Whereas common sense knowledge and folk wisdom seemed to be derived from teacher's experiences in specific teaching contexts or from their own background, skill knowledge is the first question at which teachers began to clearly articulate a theory of education and reflection on how experience has changed their practice. It is interesting to

note the emergence of a gap between teacher's rhetoric of providing a resource based, free play curriculum and the "scaffolding" skills which teachers are using to meet the learning needs of children. It is also important to notice the idea of "voice" which emerges in this section, a useful link with Bakhtin's notions of how learning in children is socially mediated.

Talking to children.

Nearly all of the teachers discussed the skills they use to talk to children as being of primary importance to their skill knowledge. Many also comment that this skill is acquired through experience and cannot be readily taught to students. Experience had also taught many of these teachers that knowing the community and the family background would help them decide how to interact with a child.

Being able to listen and to ask open ended questions was an important part of skill knowledge for Teacher 1, which is instrumental in getting children to complete their own tasks. As she says:

You have to ask open ended questions so that the child ends up doing its own experimenting and own solutions. In the long run they'll gain more from it because they've actually done all the work. I mean it would be very easy to sit down and say "this is how it's done", but it wouldn't be them, they wouldn't have gone through the process of doing things(T1:6:19-23).

Being able to scan a room and being able to stop something before it happens was also seen as skill knowledge, as well as being able to get children to talk through confrontations rather than hit each other. Body language is another part of Teacher 1's skill knowledge.

Teacher 2 describes her voice as her best skill. As she explains:

It can be a growly voice, it can be a kind loving voice. I'm really lucky that I've got a musical skill that I can get the children to respond to very easily (T2:7:46-48).

For Teacher 7 getting children to stop and look at her when they are speaking to her, if that is culturally appropriate, is part of skill knowledge. Finger plays and songs are used to settle restless children. A puppet is sometimes used to keep children engaged in a big group activity. Praise is another type of skill knowledge, used to direct children or to get them to do something. She outlined an example of this use of praise:

If I see children, sometimes they are fighting and restless, using their arms, I just say "gosh, you know you have got really strong arms. Show me if you can climb up, you need really strong arms for climbing up the climbing net and you need really strong arms for digging in the sand pit. You have got strong arms I can see". So that sort of diverts them without having to tell them to stop fighting (T7: 6:14-20).

One of the most important aspects of Teacher 3's skill knowledge is to approach every interaction with children positively. Praise is used to get children to complete tasks, and reinforcements such as stamps are also used. As Teacher 3 comments:

If you say something like "all those who have helped today will get a stamp". You know the response is just 100 percent. ...You know if you have been busy with parents or visitors and you know it is past tidy up time

but you don't want to be left with it, if you use something like that it does work and you get the job done in five minutes (T3:9:3-7).

Other examples of skill knowledge were shutting a book and putting it on the floor and crossing her arms, when children are talking during the mat session.

Teacher 5 described her skill knowledge now as a matter of experience, versus the "by the book" methods she might have used just out of training. She has found that talking rapidly to children who are distressed is a useful technique for calming them down, or distracting them to look for birds in the trees and so on. Talking in general was discussed as a useful skill, particularly being able to control the tone of voice. Teacher 5 also commented that skills relate to the period when the teacher trained and that she personally uses voice skills with children rather than strict rules.

Teacher 6 said that communication skills have to be developed, in order to be able to explain to a child how to do a task at their level. She likes to put herself in the child's position and ask herself if she is making a reasonable demand of them, like for instance expecting them to be quiet for long periods of time.

Empowering children to resolve their own conflict is an aspect of Teacher 9's skill knowledge, wherein she encourages children to tell other children not to interfere with them, without the intervention of an adult. Sitting in a large rocking chair for mat time and talking in a quiet voice is used to teach children the skills that will be used in school. Voice control in this situation is described as a useful skill.

Because the children at that stage, they know that this is the quiet time and you're sitting up in the chair so I suppose you have got that thing of "I'm a bigger person, I am the teacher, you have to give us the time, you listen to me" and usually you talk in a quiet voice back. We have, like at school we have, if you want to talk you put your hand up (T9:9:34-38).

Teacher 10 considers that her skill knowledge has developed over time. She uses a variety of techniques to engage children's interest, for instance singing "mat time now" instead of saying it. She uses a quiet time for children at the end of a session, while they are waiting for parents to arrive. It is also a safety measure, to stop children wandering out onto the busy street outside. Sometimes she sits down and starts to sing a song, and eventually all the children will join in. Sometimes directives are used to get all children to engage in a group task. Teacher 10 described some examples of how talking with children can be skilful and get desired outcomes:

I must have been just locking up outside, and most of them had finished up by coming in, and they were being noisy, so she went over on the mat and told them all to lie down, she gave them a directive. And they all lied down, and once they were all lying down they could all hear her then, and they were beautifully silent. So then I did some little exercises with them, put on some music, did a slow sleep and a slow wake up, then sat up and stretched and yawned and stood up and sat down again. So there are lots of little games you can play, it is usually game-wise you can get them to line up...And we now form a snake, and you have one person there and you turn the other person around that way, and then you get them to hold hands, it works beautifully. They don't actually let go, the only directive we must give them is that they must hold hands. They can't see which way to face themselves, so it takes us about two or three minutes to get them lined up. So that is the way we take them out on a walk, we line them up as a snake (T10:7:29-44).

Directives are also used to encourage good manners, for example "excuse me a moment".

Teacher 11 considers that she uses a broad range of skills. She explained that whispering is the only assured way to reduce the noise, because some people will want to know what is being said and will quieten the others. Rhythms or chants are used to settle children, or doing the unexpected:

The other thing that I find is rhythms can solve, like boisterous children and children who are not settling to anything. That if you chant something at them, if directions are given either in a rhythms or a chant or a song, children are not aware that they are directions, and they are inclined to respond to them. Whereas if you say to children, get in a circle please, some will look at you as if they don't want to do it. But if you start chanting "are you in a circle" people can't resist, and I find that a really good solver(T11:6:2-8).

Another tactic she has used of children who have said they don't want to do something, is to tell the child to "lie down and look at the ceiling instead"(T11:6:13). Children respond well to knowing they don't have to listen or become involved. Teacher 11 uses agreement to divert children, like agreeing with a child who says something disagreeable or telling a grumpy child "I felt really grumpy when I got up today"(T11:6:26-27). Teacher 11 reflected on the importance of skill knowledge for teachers:

It is really hard to call to mind, like I think that is what pre-school teachers do develop, is this great list of skill knowledge that is used constantly and we take for granted, we often don't respect it as skill or knowledge. You only have to see someone trying to cope without that bit of skilled knowledge and realise how useful and important it really is. (T11:6:16-22)

Teacher 8 also uses literacy skills to maintain interest in large groups of children. She has a large repertoire of songs, stories, music and finger plays which she uses to get attention or maintain attention in a large group. She considers that she has gained this knowledge over years of teaching and working in different areas with different staff. In terms of skill knowledge, Teacher 12 considers that she has learned a lot by trial and error. She explained that her own awareness of the importance of teaching mediation skills to children had grown, along with her ability to mediate between children and to teach children these skills. Her experience at primary school suggests to her that modelling these skills for children at kindergarten is imperative.

Body language.

Another communication skill, closely linked with discussion of uses of the voice, is that of body language. Body language is often described by Teachers 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10 as a means of maintaining control in group settings or to gain contact with a disruptive child across a room.

Teacher 1 uses body position or facial expression to control children at a distance, or encouraging body language to encourage children to join an activity. Teacher 1 said that effective body language is a learned skill, and that often she has to model it for student teachers, as simply telling them is not effective. Teachers 5 and 6 use physical contact and eye contact for disruptive children, particularly by keeping the child

physically close during a mat session. Teacher 5 commented that these children respond best to a quiet touch or to having their name mentioned during a story to bring them to attention:

I mean there are some children...you don't yell at them, but some of them are yelled at so much in the home, that they don't do anything if you are going to yell at them. Usually I find it best to just go up to a child and just touch them on the shoulder. The only time I may yell at a child is when I thought he might perhaps do something very dangerous (T5:6:12-16)

Relating to children at their own level and giving children affection are skill items for Teacher 9. She explains that giving a hug is a way of expressing delight, whereas a look may be more useful than words. Eye contact is proposed as one the most important elements of Teacher 9's skill knowledge:

Just a general look of either disapproval or delight, whatever the case might be and you often find that you don't have to say anything and the children know what you mean and respond to that. And getting down to their level to talk to them about something special or in general too. Just getting down to talk to them sort of seems better than towering over the top of them (T9:7:31-35).

Using a "look" to control children is also acquired with experience according to Teacher 10:

I have a teacher...who is retired and she was telling us a story. She was in the supermarket one day, not so long ago, and this child was really performing, and M... just looked at the child and the child just shut up. Experience helps you to do that as well, you can actually look at children and have full control, you can pick them out with your eyes, and they know by looking at you that you mean business. That comes with experience (T10:8:5-11)

Teacher intervention / initiation.

Along with recognising that children need to be talked to or to be made contact with, teachers discussed skills required when children are not making the most of the environment provided and need the teacher's intervention to help them to use materials or to engage in an activity. Many of the teachers commented at several points in the interview that they felt concerned if a child was not engaging with the programme offered and described their skills to get children to engage. Most of the teachers framed the intervention in terms of helping children to choose their activities of choice, reinforcing their commitment to a free play curriculum. In the section on developmental/educational theory, intervention is also discussed, linked with the notion of the "teachable moment" and developmental readiness.

Teacher 8 considers involving herself in children's activity a useful skill, when she wants to quieten them down or move them onto something else. Involving another staff member with a group of children when necessary and being "able to bounce ideas off each other" with teaching colleagues were also described as useful skills.

A skill Teacher 6 discussed was the ability to observe a whole area, and the area just outside her field of vision, and to remove children or add resources as required to distract children or prevent fights from occurring. She stated that placement of resources

was crucial to the smooth running of the programme, for example, not putting the blocks in the reading corner. Within a large group of children, Teacher 6 thought it necessary to be able to identify individual children and to move them into other areas if children needed distraction or a more structured activity.

Although the previous examples were given as examples of skill knowledge, discussion of teacher intervention occurred across a number of the interviews. Many Head Teachers discussed how they would intervene with a child if they are not engaging with activities offered. Teacher 1 commented that self selection doesn't always work and that she sometimes needs to intervene. Teacher 7 explained that she had debated over years of experience whether she should intervene and has now decided that she provides "skilled guidance" to children and selects out children who need to learn to engage. Teachers 3, 5 and 6 all used the imagery of "floating" to describe children who need to be helped to engage.

Teachers also discussed what they should teach or what their role was in the intervention with the child. Teacher 6 considers that she motivates children to learn by re-directing them and keeping them happy and interested through out the session. She also thinks that teachers need to display interest and joy in an activity like story reading to motivate children to be interested. Both Teachers 6 and 7, teaching children from low SES groups, discussed teaching children "basic skills" that they think children need. Teachers 1, 7 and 8 all commented that they need to suggest ideas to children if they are getting stuck on an activity or to explain how to complete an activity when it is first introduced. Teacher 6 and 7 both commented that they provide the structure of the environment and need to be aware if children are disrupting the flow of an activity and redirect them or help children who are struggling with an activity. Teachers 1 and 12 stated that they need to role model skills before children can learn them.

Professional development.

Several of the teachers expressed concern for the need to either develop new skills to cope with the existing nature of their job or the need for on going training in order to remain effective in their job. Talking to children and parents with English as a second language is an area of skill knowledge where Teacher 1 feels concerned about her lack of skill. She often writes down messages for parents to take home to be translated, just in case she hasn't been understood properly. Teacher 4 actively tries to improve her skills by reading a lot and watching other people, and adds anything valuable she notices or reads to her repertoire. She considers that she has a great deal more skill now, after years of teaching experience than she did at eighteen. She thinks it is important to share these skills with student teachers, when she is working as an "Associate Teacher" (the term given to the teacher who guides the student's practicum in the kindergarten), but also to acknowledge that she has lost some of the skills that she had as a new teacher:

I try as an Associate Teacher to give them just those practical skills to make life easier. There are ways to get children into a row, which makes it fun and enjoyable. I enjoy just suggesting maybe like try this way or that way. And I like people, when I say "look, I'm having a bit of trouble here" to share. You just have the skill base, don't you, and the broader that base the better. I must say by the same token, that you lose skills as you get older, and I'm very conscious of that. And for young students I don't want them to feel that they are unskilled. It's important for me to make them realise that they have skills that I have lost, because I'm now forty five years old. I think the energy, and they're still really fresh and looking at things with different eyes. I can't look at things the same way they can see things in an entirely different way than you see things. They're more physical with children when they're eighteen (T4:3:15-27).

Teacher 4 considers that maintaining a professional interest in teaching issues is important. She is currently completing a Diploma in Counselling. Teacher 4's colleagues are completing degrees, and she enjoys the sharing of knowledge with her colleagues.

Teacher 12 uses mediation skills with colleagues and with parents, like she does with children. Her fellow teachers she finds easier, as she knows their competencies and philosophies. However with parents it can be more complex:

With parents your knowledge of where they are at is a whole process you have to work through and establishing a basic trust. Which I think is quite a skill, and also you can be getting into areas of counselling, which again is quite another skill to develop (T12:5:20-23).

Counselling is an area in which Teacher 12 would like more training. She wants to provide a warm, welcoming environment and hopes to develop further skills to cope with situations which arise, but as she comments:

I very much see our role as a referral role to other agencies wherever possible because our resources are pretty much stretched to the limit already. But that very much depends on the parents needs and you have to play it by ear I think. You need to know that fine line as to when they are needing extra help (T12:5:43-46).

She considers that her life experiences in a variety of situations help with making these decisions.

Talking with parents /balancing demands.

Both of the younger teachers in this sample found meeting the needs of families one of the most challenging aspects of their jobs. Their youth or shorter period of teaching experience means that they do not have the breadth of life experience that Teacher 12 states that she draws on when working with families. As a kindergarten teacher, Teacher 6 thought that communication ability with parents is the most important and the most difficult skill. Teacher 6 states that parents expect a lot of her, as she says:

Yes they do, and you can understand why too. They see their child as being the most important child and we have forty of them. They come up to you at the end of the session and say "how was so and so today", and to be honest you haven't worked with that child, you haven't noticed them particularly, but you have to reply to it, so you say something like "well I haven't noticed any problems", and you have this huge force pulling you from side to side. You have got to sort of work with your committee as well, so your negotiating skills to try and get them on side with you, to buy equipment and that sort of thing is just horrendous (T6:4:5-14).

Teacher 6 commented that she seemed to be talking all the time and giving people information. She said she was always aware that things need to be done; students needed to know what to do, the phone kept ringing, artwork needed to be displayed, parents to be consulted. She commented that she was constantly balancing all the demands placed upon her. Another major skill area is a knowledge of cultural difference in this kindergarten, and knowing how to meet the diversity of cultural needs. For example, recently a Chinese mother had a new baby, and the older child did not appear at kindergarten for a couple of months. The Senior Teacher (who works for the Association and provides advice and guidance to all kindergartens in the local association) was able to tell her that Chinese mothers stay at home for a couple of months after the birth.

Listening to all points of view is part of Teacher 9's skill knowledge with parents and other teachers. She stated that it is used a lot more with the other teachers than with parents. Teacher 9 considers that this skill comes from attending Teacher's College and also from life experience. She can't remember being taught this skill, she considered that it was basically experiential. She outlined her initial difficulty in the parent education aspect of her job:

Doing parent workshops and things like that where you, basically with women that are older than you, more experienced than you in life experiences, had three children and you hadn't any and you're trying to teach them you know some parenting skills of some kind or about early childhood. But you know as you're always told well you are the so called expert in that area and they are coming to you (T9:9:12-17)

Teacher reflection.

Teachers reflected on the change in their skill base at a number of points in the interview. For example Teachers 1 and 3 both stated that their ideas about children after training had been idealistic. For Teacher 1 because she found it so difficult to put the theory into practice and for Teacher 5 because she had idealistic notions of how children would be treated at home. Teacher 8 stated that her ideas about the best sort of curriculum structure for children had changed over the years.

Several teachers expressed the need for new professional skills or for ongoing training. Teacher 12 commented on the need for more training in the counselling area and said that she hoped to take a correspondence course on counselling the following year from the ASTU - Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit. Teacher 4, who was doing a Diploma in Counselling through the local Polytechnic at the time of interview, stated that it is the teacher's own responsibility to update their own knowledge and expand skills to remain an effective teacher. She also explained that she wouldn't be the teacher she is now if she hadn't kept on training. Teacher 3 similarly commented that ongoing training had opened her eyes to new possibilities with the observations that she does of children.

It is interesting that both Teachers 4 and 12 who expressed a need for training in counselling, were also the teachers who commented on examination of their own practice

in relating to children and adults. Teacher 4 said that she watched how other people interact with children and had her colleagues observe how she interacted with boys and girls to see if she is displaying bias to either sex. Teacher 12 also described observation of colleagues as a way of developing her own skills and described her growing awareness for the need for mediation skills with children and parents.

Discussion.

It was very interesting to discover that teachers who are in the most part firm advocates of a free play curriculum, in which children learn at their own pace through experimenting with the environment, describe their teaching skills as being primarily the ability to talk to children and adults. Talking to children involves not only questioning, but also intervening in children's play to re-direct them or to move them onto another learning opportunity. Language and symbol systems play a large part in the teacher's skill knowledge, as they describe the songs, chants and rhymes that they use to engage children's interest and the body language that they use to control children's behaviour. This body language constitutes a shared symbol system with the children. The repetition of these songs and chants, which are often used for controlling and settling a group of children, are a large part of the literacy environment which children experience in these kindergartens.

Vygotsky's (1987) ideas that the forms of speaking encountered in school provide the framework for concept development in children are usefully expanded by Bakhtin's notion of the "voice" in children's learning, the idea that an utterance always expresses a point of view. Bakhtin considers that people make use of a social language in making an utterance and that the social language shapes what the individual can say. Bakhtin called the process of making unique utterances in a social language "ventriloquation" (Wertsch, 1991). As Bakhtin argues "the word of language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" when the speaker populates it with his own intention, own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin, 1981, Wertsch, 1991). Bakhtin viewed social languages and speech genres as the ways in which communicative and mental action are organised.

Children learn the range of intentions the teacher has through her use of different intonations or body signals, and may later incorporate these uses of symbols into their own communications at later stages. Ideas that all kindergartens are the same and the similarity of teachers views of the use of verbal and body language in the kindergarten combine to a similar notion of Bakhtin's "voice". Teachers are describing a similar social language of schooling, that they have access to from their training and experience, and that children gain access to through experience at kindergarten. The importance of teamwork surfaces, as teachers argued that teachers need to present a united front to children, in other words speak the same social language to children and to each other.

Children who become competent in the kindergarten have learned more than just how to play with activities, they have learned about the ways that language is used by people other than their parents, in contexts different to home. It could be argued that this knowledge of and experience of the "voice" is what makes children able to cope with the transition to school. It may be that the "voice" of the kindergarten teacher prepares the child for the "voice" of many teachers to come in school. The similarity and minor differences between teachers in kindergarten probably prepares children for the range of school teachers ahead. There is a "voice" to teaching in the kindergarten; a point which will be raised again in the discussion of how literacy is defined by time and behaviour rules in the kindergartens in Chapter Six.

Meade (1985) argues that teachers have adapted strategies for enhancing learning in a free play programme, but states that many teachers have difficulty in articulating their reasons for their approach. The skills described by teachers in this section are a clear example of the strategies proposed by Meade, which enable teachers to create the impression that children are engaging in free play, while teachers use advanced skills to help children develop literacy knowledge and an understanding of socially accepted behaviour. These same skills are used to assist parents in difficulty and to teach parents how to assist their child's education.

Although it was expected to find that teachers espoused Piagetian theory, in which teachers would play an important but peripheral role in children's learning, this was only really articulated by Teacher 1 who said that children learn best by hands on experience. This was qualified by saying that children couldn't do the hands on in some cases until they had been given some instruction. It appears that much of teacher's skill knowledge can be clearly related to Vygotsky's three major intertwined principles of how learning and development occur (Wertsch, 1991); which are a reliance on genetic, or developmental analysis; the claim that higher mental functioning in the individual derives from social life; and that human action, on both the social and individual planes, is mediated by tools and signs. It is unlikely, of course, that these ideas had been part of their training, but with the introduction of Vygotsky's ideas into Te Whariki (the National Early Childhood Curriculum), teachers may be able to identify in theory what is part of their current practice. All of these teachers believe in a maturational base to development, which will be further discussed in the section on Educational/Developmental theory. The emphasis in this section on the need to be able to talk to children and to give them experience in the songs and symbol systems of kindergarten culture can be related to an understanding that children are going to develop higher mental functioning through talking with another more experienced person, not simply by being left to experiment with the environment. By the same principle, teachers provide a "scaffold" (Bruner, 1986) for parents as they develop strategies to cope with their children.

Similarly, teachers who discuss the need for intervention with children clearly have an expectation of what the child's potential level of development could be, as they

intervene to provide a scaffold for the child's development. Vygotsky (1962) predicted that the "zone of proximal development" would be evident in the way in which parents and teachers provide a scaffold for the child within conversations between what they know and what they learn to know. The parent or teacher builds one comment or question on another. This process helps the child to move from a situation where the task is carried out by others to a situation where the child can operate independently, for example in shared events or communication (Brown, 1985, in Mason and Allen, 1986, Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel, 1985). Assisting children to a point at which they can operate independently is consistent with the theme of independence in learning which occurs in the interview question regarding the curriculum.

Contextual Knowledge

Understandings of children's needs and potential which are fundamental to later discussions in the section regarding curriculum and the following section regarding theories of development and education, are developed through teachers' contextual knowledge of the class and community. This type of knowledge is arrived at through professional skills and background experience.

Observation and check listing.

Checklisting children in the morning was described as one of the major methods of gaining contextual knowledge of children by Teacher 1. This exercise is done once a term to assist programming for children's developmental gaps. Observation and discussion with parents is used more with the afternoon children who are still in a settling in period. An example was given on cutting, designed when it was discovered that several children couldn't use scissors. During observation, it became apparent that 13 children were left handed and couldn't use the right handed scissors. A purchase of left handed scissors cured the problem. Observation of areas in the kindergarten being under used or over used by one gender is similarly undertaken to look for remedies.

Contextual knowledge was also described as an important element in assessing children's literacy development. Children are observed during mat times for concentration, and children using book corners are observed for noticeable literacy skills - are they holding the book the right way up, interested in books, interested in writing and so forth. Teacher 1 noted that some of the children from lower SES groups do not have these sorts of skills and are unprepared for the variety of kindergarten.

When they first come here there is so much choice that they can't actually do anything. They go from activity to activity just looking and they'll run between activities. I know they come, what it's going to be like, but it still amazes me that they have never seen these things (T1:10:25-28).

Teacher 1 felt that a more limited choice of activities would probably help such children to settle in. Parents in this kindergarten can fit extreme poles, from those who know nothing about how children learn to the other extreme where they are actively "hot housing" the child.

Developmental profiles are completed for each child in K8, and each staff member takes thirteen children on the morning roll to assess over a six month period. At each staff meeting, each child and their needs or teacher's concerns are discussed. Observations are used to assess where the children's strengths are and where they need assistance.

An aspect of contextual knowledge for Teacher 3 is to be aware of children's developmental progress, so that the programme can cater for their needs. Children are observed by staff on a regular basis. Every staff member observes two children each fortnight. At the end of two weeks, a set of objectives for working with the child are drawn up, and the next observations are undertaken. A checklist is currently used for the observations, which can be completed readily in 10-15 minutes. The checklist usually highlights gaps or strengths in the child's development. Programming to meet specific needs (like learning to bounce and catch a ball) can then be incorporated into the activities on offer. Teacher 5 had recently attended a National Course on using observations for programming. This approach to planning has been a useful change, according to Teacher 3, as she explains:

I suppose as kindergarten teachers we have always had these observations but we have never written them down. They have always been things we have observed during the session or things that have come from gut feelings and we have talked about. But sort of now with Tomorrow's schools and being reviewed and everything, you know everything has to be documented. And it was sort of rearranging our schedule to find the time to do it and then to be able to show yes this is what we ...observed but how are we fitting it into the programme (T3:12: 26-33).

The information is selectively conveyed to parents in a positive way to outline what they have observed and what they are doing with the child. Objectives set have to be manageable, as time is limited with three teachers and forty children in each session. Observations of areas within the kindergarten are also used.

Teacher 4 explained that a checklist is used when children move to morning kindergarten. One of the strengths of the kindergarten, in terms of collecting contextual knowledge, is the flat management structure:

There are three of us and we work a flat management, so that it's not a hierarchical structure. And everyone talks to the parents in the same sort of way, and the marvellous thing about this way of working is that I can't be someone that everyone wants to talk to. It's just physically impossible, not every one relates well to one sort of person. But there's three different people here...(T4:4:28-33)

She considers that the teachers' diversity of life experiences is helpful in relating to families. One used to be a primary school teacher, the other a nurse. The information gained from home visiting, discussions with parents, checklists and observations of children are used for short term and long term programme planning:

We actually try to go through our whole roll every so often, at staff meeting. When I say every so often, we programme plan in detail and we do a term, a whole year's programme, long term programme and a short term, term programme and then a programme plan weekly for the needs of the children. And we try and rotate so that every child we're looking at on a regular basis. Some children's needs are much more evident than others, not necessarily more urgent, just more evident, so I think if we're honest we often meet those first (T4:4:56-59; 5:1-5).

However, they do try to discuss each child's needs regularly and target groups of children with specific needs. Teacher 4 commented that everyone is interested in working in this area, but they are conscious that they are already "putting in a lot more time in hours than we are paid for already" (T4:5:26-27).

Use of checklists for evaluating children's progress was outlined as a major source of Teacher 9's contextual knowledge, which is used for programming. Teacher 10 uses evaluations of children's development as contextual knowledge for programming, to tell her "where they are at, what they are doing and what they need to do". She also listens to parents complaints or parents talking, and the information gleaned is also used for programming. As she explains:

We do listen to the parents a lot, at the end of last term parents were coming in, and we could hear children being really rude to their parents, which is bothering us a bit, and being very demanding, and the parents would come back and talk about their bossy children, and by the end of term we had quite decided we would start manners and speaking nicely to each other, and that is how we worked it through. We went on from here, being polite to each other, eating neatly, and we have brought process cooking into this, so we are doing that this week (T10:8:24-31).

Observations of children are used to aid Teacher 11's contextual knowledge of what is appropriate to the programme. The observations cover children's knowledge, skills, feelings and disposition. Information about disposition is particularly useful to Teacher 11. Another aspect of contextual knowledge is gained from observation of different areas in the kindergarten, during changes of climate and also to observe whether boys or girls are frequenting the area, and to record the name of the child. She finds it very useful to work out why an area is popular, rather than unpopular. Her theory is that if it is being used to leave it alone, not to keep changing things. When use starts to wear off, then she changes it. Sometimes she keeps a "wonderful idea" for an area on hold, because the area is already being used well.

Teacher 12 uses evaluation of children as the basis for meeting individual needs, but bases the planning within a child initiated programme. An example of this planning was the focus on bringing parents or other people from the community in to talk about their jobs.

Programming for staff-child ratio.

One of the most important aspects of contextual knowledge for Teacher 2 is to be able to plan a programme for two teachers and forty children. This in itself is considered

to be a challenge, but an even greater challenge when there are children with special needs in the kindergarten. Information about children's needs is gained from home visiting and from information that parents share with teachers. There was only one special needs child in K2 at the time of interview. Teacher 2 commented that there were also gifted children, but that her personal philosophy is to treat all children exactly the same. Teacher 10 was also faced with the problem of programming for two teachers. She likes to develop the following term's programme by week eleven or twelve of each term in order to keep organised. She explained that although she wants to meet individual needs, the reality of two teachers, 30 children and a 1:15 ratio means that working in a group is essential. She commented that they do work individually with children, but usually on specific skills, like social skills.

Knowledge of the community and programme planning.

Using parent's skills whenever possible in the programme is part of Teacher 7's contextual knowledge. People with physical skills, such as painting are asked to help with maintenance. Visits by children and teachers are arranged to homes of parents with "good resources". Sometimes visits to a child's home will be arranged, if a child is not settling in well, and new houses being built will be looked at on the way. Themes on houses will accompany the visit, with discussions and drawings often generated. Parents who are nurses will be invited to talk as part of the programme. Children in this kindergarten are described as "townie" by Teacher 7, so a farm visit is always arranged in Spring time, and the children are taken to the AP&I Show (an annual agricultural show) to see the animals. A visit to the City Library had been arranged to make parents aware of the usefulness of libraries, as so few parents and children make use of the kindergarten lending library. Planning for this group was seen as being difficult as the group is not homogeneous, so Teacher 7 tries to involve the community of parents in any way that she can.

Teacher 8 considers that contextual knowledge builds up over time in a community, and commented that it takes at least a year to "get a feeling for the families and children" (T8:6:46-47). She explained the process of gaining contextual knowledge:

Because here we place quite a bit of emphasis on working with the families and moving into home visiting or informally with our parent help, we spend a lot of time...not a lot of time, but we make the effort to make sure that we chatted to that parent during that session, so that we build up a rapport with home and that gives you a lot more feedback, and they'll tell you something that they're doing at home or the child has been doing at home, and you get a feel for what is going on (T8:6:47-53)

Being culturally aware is a large part of Teacher 3's contextual knowledge, given the multicultural nature of the kindergarten. Teacher 3 said that it is important to make sure she knows of anything that may offend families of differing cultures. She tries to include items from Pacific Island and Maori cultures in the kindergarten, particularly in the use of pictures on the wall, box puzzles, greetings and waiata at the beginning of the

music session. She is also sensitive to address newsletters to "parents or whanau", and has greetings in many languages on the door. Knowing the needs of parents is another aspect of contextual knowledge, as many of the parents are solo mothers, who are only 18 or 19 years old. A lot of time has to be spent reassuring these parents about which developmental events are "normal". A variety of external agencies are used for referral.

In K5, contextual knowledge is mainly used in programme planning, in which the staff discuss their observations and intuitions about children once a week at the staff planning meeting, where plans for meeting children's needs are discussed. Sometimes the planning involves a group of children, and again the whole staff is involved in suggesting and trialling ideas. The community context is a constant challenge in this kindergarten. There is a lot of marital separation, redundancy, unemployment and some criminal activity in the children's home backgrounds, which inevitably spills over into the kindergarten. As Teacher 5 comments:

This community - they brush things off in lots of ways, lots of things happen to them. And the same with [the children] there is not Dad there, but Jim is there and might be Bob for two weeks, and this is all accepted in most homes. They talk quite openly about it, they just chat away as if...and I sometimes will watch their faces and very rarely... it's just part of life. They are used to that. And when I first came here, it was in all kindergartens that you meet the separation of home life, and the marriages breaking up, but it was so much here, and I know for the first year...I wasn't horrified, but it did worry me. but now I think I have become like them, a sort of it being part of everyday, and you just accept it. I think I got very blase about it, and what goes on in the home, when I first arrived I was perhaps horrified, I just sort of laugh it off now. Now the mother who told me her husband was up on a murder charge never blinked an eyelid. And of course I was sort of taken aback, I knew he was in jail, but I didn't know what for...she said "he is like me, he gets violent very quickly". She just openly told me, and there were other mothers around. Then of course I felt very sorry for her and I said I was sorry about that, but she said "it is no good being sorry, he did it". (T5:7:19-36)

Sometimes parents will say that they are a bit uptight and the child will also be nervy and uptight in the kindergarten. Yet Teacher 5 says "I enjoy working here, it has been a challenge" (T5:7:45-46). She also finds this community generous and practical, as she experienced when mothers turned up on her doorstep with tins of baking when she was very ill a few years previously.

Contextual knowledge of children and families is an important part of programming for Teacher 4. She calls her philosophy "child based, family based, so that the child doesn't stand on its own"(T4:3:49-50). Teacher 7 and her colleagues like to develop an appreciation of at least the child's mother and siblings, which home visiting is currently used to establish. Home visiting is currently being re-assessed, as they are working on developing a questionnaire to work through with parents, in order to gain more knowledge about the family and the child. She commented that a lot of contextual knowledge is required to work effectively with a child. Teacher 4 explained the difficulties with home visiting:

Up until now we've visited the family, and we've got some misgivings about that, because at that stage they don't know us terribly well and it's all a bit new and unsure, so they're probably not really sharing things they really

want for their children. We say to them, what do you want for your children and what you will you expect from kindergarten. We think perhaps if we leave it for six weeks and then actually record like you're doing, and find out what everybody wants (T4:4:2-9).

Any information gained about a child or family is shared with the other teachers, and families are encouraged to talk about their children's needs.

In K6, establishing contextual knowledge about children is achieved by home visiting before children start kindergarten. The home visit takes about three quarters of an hour, during which the kindergarten teacher talks to the child and the family, in order to get to know them, see their background, where they come from, what is available for them to play with at home and so forth. This knowledge is shared with the other staff, and "educated guesses" are made about what is happening at home, so that the staff can establish the needs and interests of the child. For example, establishing that there is a cat or dog at home may be an item of shared knowledge to start with. Teacher 6 discussed how the programme can be used to involve children's own experiences in their learning; for example during a transport theme children can be asked how they came to kindergarten - walking, in a car, van and so forth. Discussion can be extended out to include all the children's different lifestyles. Teacher 6 said that contextual knowledge enabled her to make a judgment about a child's needs :

I guess that you make value judgments about where they come from. And you've got it set in your own mind the O.K this child comes from a very deprived or limited ...and you decide that that child needs the basic concepts, you assume that ...from their background... that they haven't got that sort of knowledge, so we attempt to either directly teach it, or for that child to sort of assimilate that knowledge (T8:5:39-44).

Teacher 8 gave examples of basic concepts such as colour, size, animals and what noise they make. Sometimes this information is picked up on a home visit, and sometimes it's not. She discussed how two apparently similar home backgrounds could produce children with a dramatic different amount of concept knowledge. The home visit at least gives them a starting point, and it is easier to cope with than just having the child arrive on the doorstep. She commented that many of the Chinese and Samoan families do not like them visiting them at home. Language difficulties were discussed as an important part of contextual knowledge, that Teacher 8 did not feel that she could simply assume that the families would speak or read English. She said that she is also aware that there is not a lot of money in the community, so she does not put pressure on parents for donations or basic food items for the civil defence kit. They do not fundraise in their own area, or expect people to make cakes, or to spend a lot of time in the kindergarten, as they may be working. She commented that for some of the solo parents this was their only time for a bit of space.

Part of Teacher 9's contextual knowledge is also being aware of the needs of children with English as a second language. She speaks slowly to these children and starts with the basics of language development. Children then learn English from her and from the other English speaking children. Children from this high SES kindergarten have a lot

of experiences with their parents, who travel and have holiday homes, however many children have never had a bus ride, so that is frequently a very popular outing for the children. Parents are very supportive of early childhood education and will support requests for equipment. Teacher 9 explained that this interest has its drawbacks, in that parents also have high expectations of what children will achieve in kindergarten, such as reading and writing. Whereas Teacher 9's philosophy is not to provide structured activities, but to allow children to "learn through play".

In terms of contextual knowledge, Teacher 11 knows that many in the community have no transport, so excursions are an important part of the programme. Multicultural education which reflects the community is also important. She explains the relationship between the kindergarten and the community:

Sometimes families are not aware of the resources within the community, and we find that by taking the kindergarten children to resources within this immediate community we get the parents to use them more. Like there is a branch of the Library here, there is ... Park and two wonderful children's playgrounds. If we organise walks and outings to those areas, then the parents become aware that they are there, and they will use them too. And another one that the children absolutely loved was the library bus, but it doesn't seem to stop here, I must get another...it used to stop by the dairy here and it was lovely because they were there for half an hour and we could take two different groups up to get a book off the library bus, and that was really quite special, and lots of families started to use it then. Some parents feel a bit threatened by things like that because they don't have the information about it.(T11:7:4-16)

Having had seven years involvement in this community, Teacher 11 considers that she has a wealth of knowledge about families. The knowledge "just builds on itself" and Teacher 11 thinks that parents trust her. She said that the general feeling is that a long period in one kindergarten is disadvantageous, because she might become stale. However, Teacher 11 finds that the programme alters every year, according to the interests of the children attending.

Teacher 12 finds her experience of four and a half years at the local primary school has provided her with excellent contextual knowledge for this kindergarten, as she has a good understanding of how the school works and also of the families and the backgrounds of some of the families in the community. She finds this knowledge of the community very useful for programming for individual needs. Involving the community is a high priority for Teacher 12:

Well, I think in terms of another high priority, building self esteem, involving families is an important part of this. So the other thing that we're trying to develop here, because we've got a wide and diverse range of cultures, we're working hard on getting those families involved as well. In fact, that is a high priority too, to establish that cultural identity, we need involvement of community in order to do that, as we haven't perhaps got the background on each culture that we need to have (T12:6:50-56).

There are some language difficulties with parents and children, but she thinks they are lucky, as many of the parents are highly educated and motivated.

Cultural sensitivity.

Many of the teachers expressed their need to be sensitive to cultural differences at several points in the interview. For Teacher 5 it was a need to accept that some families were part of what she termed a "moving ethnic population", who would disappear and reappear regularly, sometimes six months later and still expect to leave the child at kindergarten. Teachers 3 and 6 have found that home visiting is not appropriate to all cultures. Teacher 12 explained that western notions of educational theory and of developmental readiness may not be appropriate to all cultures. Similarly, Teacher 5 has learned that different cultures have different notions of appropriate behaviour for their children and for discipline, as she discovered to her horror:

I said something about "I had learnt my lesson many years ago that if it was ethnic parents, be very careful of the way you approach them about a problem", and I told her the story of how I had approached a Samoan mother and quite jokingly said to her "phew, he has given me the run around the kindergarten today" and he was standing there, and before a split second it was "bang bang bang" right across his ears. And I said to her "why did you do that?" and she said "he will not be rude and naughty", and I said to this kindergarten girl that I had learnt my lesson.(T5:12:9-16)

Discussion.

Contextual knowledge was a fascinating topic to explore with these teachers, as contextual knowledge emerged as another aspect of skill knowledge and experience. Most of these teachers based their curriculum upon a knowledge of what they had previously experienced, had seen through observation of children attending the kindergarten, had seen during home visiting or from what parents told them was needed in the curriculum. Sometimes the needs had to be balanced by what was realistic and achievable by the staff, particularly in the kindergartens with 2:40 teacher:child ratios.

Spodek (1988) says that teachers consistently process information gained from observing what takes place prior to, during and after their decision making, as well as the actions they take based on the decisions made. They project a future based upon knowledge gained from past experience and their educational concepts and values. This information is synthesised to develop a reality which is based on their perceptions, understanding and beliefs. Spodek (1988) calls these "implicit theories" of teachers. These implicit theories of teachers can be seen in this section as teachers discuss the importance of observation to curriculum planning and how important the information gleaned from home visiting is to their understanding of what children's needs will be on entering kindergarten.

Bernstein (1975) found that an invisible pedagogy underlies British infant schools, which legitimises the experience of children from middle class homes. Similarly, Apple and King (1977) found that children entering kindergarten in the United States are introduced to middle class ideologies of school life, which reflect middle class society.

Halliwell (1980) found that the three teachers she studied responded to their individual, professional perceptions of the needs of children in their classes. They characterized children as having individual growth patterns, interests and learning modes. Response of teachers in the present study to individual needs of children, and expectations of what children should be able to do corresponds to Halliwell's findings and also to the findings of Bernstein (1975) and Apple and King (1977). Teachers focus on what they call "basic skills", which children from middle class homes typically have. Teachers also respond one to one or through group programming for individual needs.

Spodek (1988) suggests that many early childhood educators viewed the early childhood field as an application of the scientific study of child development (e.g Caldwell, 1984) and that preschool teachers would make classroom decisions based upon "the most reliable knowledge about the development of children, the norms of the age group and the goals of parents, the school and the community at large" (Katz, 1984, p.29). The use of developmental checklists for making programming decisions, reflects an acceptance by these teachers of some norms for child development; a point which will be examined more closely in the sections on curriculum and developmental/educational theories. Home visiting and knowledge of the community gleaned through experience further add into this reliable knowledge. Spodek (1988) argues that teachers do not refer to developmental theory when they are making classroom decisions, but rather refer to theories they have developed as much from practical experience as from the formal knowledge they gained during their training. These teacher's descriptions of their contextual knowledge demonstrates such a synthesis, where teachers such as Teacher 5 clearly discuss changing her practice to meet her growing understanding of the needs of children and families. Thus the folk wisdom that "all kindergartens are the same" (presented earlier in this section) is probably only true on a very superficial level, as Head Teachers bring an eclectic personal "implicit theory" to their practice.

The Curriculum

Despite being told by Teachers 10 and 11 that curriculum is a "dirty word" in kindergarten, most of the teachers were very comfortable talking about the curriculum and ranged over a number of aspects of the curriculum without any prompting. Teachers had already provided a great deal of information (regarding contextual knowledge) concerning how teachers shape the curriculum and the environment to meet the perceived needs of the children and the community. Teacher 10 said that the term "developmental programme" is used instead of curriculum, which relates strongly to Spodek's contention that early childhood teachers are seen as "child development specialists".

Free play / integrated curriculum.

Free play or free choice were the words most often used to describe the sort of curriculum offered in the kindergartens, meaning that children would make choices about what to play with and would learn through their play in the kindergarten environment. Teachers also stated that they offered an integrated curriculum, whereby children would experience and learn all aspects of the curriculum as they played. The curriculums described integrated the more "academic" subjects such as maths and literacy and the social and emotional aspects of child development.

For Teacher 1 the curriculum is "a very wide environment to experiment in and through that experimentation comes learning" (T1:11:46-47). Teacher 1 dislikes the term free choice, she prefers "self selection". However she says that some children, especially special needs children, don't self select and need to be encouraged to experiment with other activities. Sharing and cooperating with others is seen as a big part of learning. Learning occurs in this curriculum in the following way:

They learn by observing others. By helping others. By experimenting with the material that is there (T1:12:18-19).

Teacher 7 bases her curriculum upon an environment that is set out for children, in which they can choose. She uses some of the principles of SEACOH and some of its ideas for furniture, but describes the curriculum as based upon child initiated activities and adult initiated activities, which cover all aspects of learning. Similarly, Teacher 8 described her curriculum as based on:

children becoming independent, children being able to help themselves and a lot of attitudes, developing positive attitudes as they move through the centre so that they want to continue the learning process (T8:8:30-33)

She considers that children need encouragement and positive role models for these objectives to be achieved. She outlined the components of her curriculum as follows:

we've got down here just some of the things we think are important like self esteem, confidence and language and communication skills, decision making...we've got early maths and literacy. And then we put our social one...ability to interact cooperatively with other children...and the creative side of it, you know, the imagination and using self expression form the activities we have out for choice everyday, so they can choose what they want to do. And the physical skills, with the outside area, developing physical skills. So our curriculum is based on all of that in that we try to offer something in all those areas as an ongoing programme. So it is never one day we are going to do this and one day we are going to do that. It's happening all the time (T8:8:38-48).

Teacher 5 describes the curriculum as "free, relaxed, with their own choice"(T5:8:11-12). However, she thinks it is important to direct children if they are not engaging with anything at all or if they are being disruptive. She thinks that the freedom of the programme is appropriate to these children, because:

You can't have a curriculum that is too set, it has to have a lot of freedom there, freedom of choice for them, otherwise they back off it. Because that is probably the life they are used to, that freedom and their own choice (T5:8:15-17)

Teacher 5 finds that children with special needs require more direction and one-to-one teaching than other children, and do not cope well with having freedom of choice, and can become disruptive. The curriculum in this kindergarten is described as having a relatively open structure, which Teacher 5 thinks makes the children feel secure and safe.

Teacher 4 gave the following description of her curriculum:

Our kindergarten is a resource based programme, which means that the resources are available to children and along with encouragement and things they can do with those things what they choose, with certain guidelines, so its not a formal structured programme. We have a lot of structure, but within a wide structure children are free to choose the ways in which they approach things themselves.(T4:6:19-25)

She considers it to be fortunate that she and her colleagues share the same philosophy of how children learn and that they are well organised, in order to run an efficient programme. Children need to be taught to replace equipment after use so it's ready for the next person. Teacher 4 commented that resourced programmes are ideal if well organised and "an absolute shambles" if they are not.

K6 uses an integrated curriculum, with science areas, book corner, puzzle area, maths area, art area, outdoor area, all in different parts of the kindergarten. However, all these curriculum areas are considered to be integrated throughout the kindergarten, for example maths at the carpentry table. There are two formal learning periods in each session, mat time and quiet time. Mat time lasts for about 20 minutes, and often involves music, stories and various games. Quiet time, where children read books or do puzzles, occurs during the tidy up period. The rest of the session is based upon the notion of children learning through their play. This sort of curriculum was chosen because it fits in with the teaching team's philosophy, it is what is taught at the College of Education, and it is what Teacher 6 saw operating at other kindergartens that she had visited. As she concludes:

Personally, for myself, I have seen that it works effectively and is practical when you have got three teachers to forty children at this age group. You know that children are learning even if there is no adult there, so that you can free yourself to work with an individual or a small group. So you know that learning is happening, and you know the children are experiencing something. It may [not be as] worthwhile without an adult there to question, to provide extension, but it is the best you can do with the resources you have got (T6:7:40-47).

Curriculum planning for 83 children has to be "really diverse" according to Teacher 11. K11 also has an integrated or "sort of free play curriculum", so that children can choose where to play. However, Teacher 11 has noticed that when children start kindergarten they will stay with one activity, and that she may need to persuade them to try other activities. She prefers an integrated curriculum, where maths, language and science are all integral to many parts of the programme. Teacher 11 considers that her initial philosophy of curriculum came from her training, but that she now actively adopts strategies from other people or from her reading. Teacher 11 admitted that she reads prolifically, across a wide variety of material, from anecdotal to academic literature.

Teacher 11 uses this sort of curriculum to "meet the special needs of all children". She explained that she would like a written curriculum, for the following reasons:

When people suggest curriculum it is considered a bit of a dirty word, but we as a teaching team we have decided that we would enjoy having a curriculum as a guideline, not to be bound by, like in a sense it is our responsibility to ensure that we are covering all areas adequately, and at present we are confident we are. So that we have talked quite at length the three of us about how "wouldn't it be lovely" especially in things like Maori, that the variance of the Maori that is offered from one kindergarten to another is dramatic and it's not usually because of the parents, it is not what the parents have written in the 'Charter and it is not what they want. It is the interest and knowledge of the teachers that seem to decide that sort of area. And we would really enjoy having a curriculum so that we can say "right, we will do that and that and that" (T11:10:5-17)

She considers that some guidelines would be helpful for the contentious issues of early childhood education, like how to integrate bi-culturalism to the kindergarten, and to make all early childhood teachers obliged to meet these guidelines. Teacher 12 described a similar integrated curriculum in her kindergarten as follows:

It's very much an open type child centred curriculum base and I think we perhaps ...emphasise the totality of the child and look at all areas of development, social, emotional, etc. and I think we tend to favour a fairly holistic view of the curriculum where there is much interrelation between area of curriculum, maths, science and language, rather than see separate curriculum areas basically, there's sort of an interrelation between the areas, with concepts that can be developed accordingly (T12:7:43-49).

The only written curriculum that Teacher 10 has access to is a Physical Education one. She considers that some of her philosophies of curriculum have come through her training and a lot from teachers who have come through training more recently. She has noticed that some Colleges of Education foster a more "intellectual" training than others, but she thinks it is important that teachers learn to be practical and to be able to cope "with the odd dirty bottom". Teacher 10 has been developing her own "kind of curriculum", as she is currently repeating the programmes that she developed two years previously with another teacher. She uses some elements of the SEACOH programme in her curriculum, as she thinks it helps children to develop at their potential and at their own pace, but as she explains:

The centre - we can not supervise inside from outside, and in the afternoon we were finding that our children were getting younger and we needed to structure the afternoon programme...(T10:11:4-9)

The "governing obsession" in terms of curriculum for this set of teachers is a curriculum in which children are able to self select, have free choice or are able to free play, in an environment in which subject choices are integrated across areas of the kindergarten. There is recognition, however, that some children are unable to freely make some of these choices, and that in order to do so they need to become independent learners. Promoting such independence is therefore an important goal of many of these kindergartens.

Independence / individuality.

Many of the teachers, at various points in the interview, commented that one of the primary goals of the curriculum is to promote independence and self esteem. Many also referred to treating children as individuals. Helping children to develop confidence or self esteem was seen as the means toward the end of being independent in the kindergarten and by implication, independent learners.

Teaching children to become independent is one of the priorities for Teacher 2, with the outcome that children develop a sense of self esteem. As she comments:

They're going away from here full of importance. They're believing in themselves, they know they can do these things. They go off to school and...they've got confidence in themselves (T2:12:34-37)

Teacher 3 describes her curriculum as one which offers reinforcement of things that happen at home, as well as experience in subject areas such as reading, maths and science. The major aim for Teacher 3 is that they come out of kindergarten with confidence and feel good about themselves. Providing activities on an ongoing basis, so that children can master skills and become experts is a key feature of the curriculum.

Teacher 4 stated that the benefits of the curriculum are that children become "self motivated and self disciplined, the things come from within the child, they are not imposed". Mediation skills and learning to resolve conflict are an important part of this curriculum. The outcomes of her curriculum, according to Teacher 6, are that children become independent, learn how to communicate with their peers and learn to sort out their own disputes and resolve conflicts. Children are seen as learning at their own pace and by their own initiative. The worst outcome for her is a child who has a poor self esteem and will not try new challenges. Many activities are open ended or are self correcting, which help children to challenge themselves.

The integrated/ child centred curriculum in K12 has been chosen to meet the individual needs of children, out of "respect for the development of each child". Teacher 12 likes to provide opportunities, and to encourage enthusiasm. The priorities for outcomes for children are social skills, individuality, self esteem and creativity. The curriculum is based on self selection, and has been influenced by Playcentre philosophy, as most of the staff have had Playcentre experience. She considers that the social skills that children learn, stay with them, and that they are important to foster, given the academic nature of the school curriculum. Teacher 12 explained that effective social skills and self esteem are the basis to how children develop, which is why both areas are emphasised in the programme. She thinks that children need to be able to join a small group and to have language and communication skills. She says that there is a pattern to how children learn, but that it varies within cultures.

Teacher role.

Many of the teachers had wrestled with the idea of what their role in the free play/integrated curriculum and children's learning should be. Some of the teachers saw their role as a combination of different, but not necessarily mutually exclusive roles. This blending of roles corresponds with Foucault's notion of discourse and with Spodek's "implicit theories" of teachers. Many of the teachers considered their role as the provider of an environment, to ask questions and to encourage experimentation. Some of the teachers had considered whether they should "teach" children more directly, but for most their role was seen as the promoter of a free play environment.

Teacher 1 sees herself as "The provider of an environment that fosters all those sorts of things. To display it imaginatively, to sell it even more imaginatively" (T1:12:33-34). The provision of appropriate materials and suggestions for how to use the materials is part of her role as provider. Similarly, teachers play the role of "encourager" in K12, but Teacher 12 will teach a child a new concept if necessary.

You have to ask open ended questions so that the child ends up doing its own experimenting and own solutions...in the long run they'll gain more from it because they've actually done all the work. I mean it would be very easy to sit down and say "this is how you do it" but it wouldn't be them, they wouldn't have gone through the process of doing things"(T1:6:19-23)

Encouraging the children to expand their horizons and to think further or develop, basically it's an encouraging role, just to develop the concept that's being considered, what the child is showing interest in. Perhaps teaching things where there are gaps, introducing a concept that's missing or could be further developed or leading the child onto the next step (T12:7:53-57).

Teacher 2 considers that teachers play a big role in how children learn, as she explains:

I actually think we play a big role. And it's not just kindergarten, but it's the teachers in kindergarten that play those roles. Because you can have a dead boring kindergarten with really exciting teachers, but because they've got nothing in it, they're going to extend them with the sand outside or the gifts they've got in them, as opposed to this wonderful building with really dumb teachers...(T2:15:32-37)

Teacher 7 explained that her philosophy regarding curriculum has been evolving or changing. She had wrestled with the notion of only providing "free play" for children, and has now decided that some adult initiated activities are needed. As she says :

I mean I have changed, every few years I change, you know evolve. Or I suppose your thinking and curriculum evolve....We are having more adult initiated activities now than I used to and I didn't use to feel happy about it. I am now coming, I am feeling quite comfortable now about getting children sometimes to come and play say "lets do something with this" because of a need. But that took me a while to come to grips with because I didn't want to push my ideas onto the child. I teach skills. They develop creativity (T7:9:13-22)

The balance for Teacher 7 is in giving children space to develop their own abilities and creativity. Some children can develop these abilities simply by being provided with the materials, according to Teacher 7, but others need her to say "lets come and do this together and we will work through it"(T7:9:42). Frequent observation of children and

record keeping is used to assess children's developmental progress, to help them decide where children need assistance.

Teacher 3 stated that the young starting age of children in this kindergarten played a big role in the curriculum. Children start kindergarten shortly after their third birthday, when Teacher 3 spends a lot of time settling them and helping them to separate from parents, and teaching them how to use equipment, which is readily available to them. This settling in period requires a great deal of guided teaching:

Showing them ...this is a piece of paper and these are some things you can stick on it. and so how to get from A to B. We actually spend a lot of time with them doing those types of things. Teaching them those skills. And until they have learnt then they can't really sort of go onto the next stage of actually thinking independently that "hey well now I want to make an aeroplane" or whatever it is that they want (T3:16:19-24).

Teacher 5 finds this age of children draining mentally and physically. Children gradually learn that when they finish one activity they can move about and choose the next.

Teacher 4 says that her role is very clearly as a teacher, but to support and guide children, rather than direct or do things for them. Teacher 4 says that she has a close working relationship with the primary school, who report that the mediation skills that children learn are carried through the primary school.

I think children learn by being involved with people. People putting in their input and enthusiasm and providing a rich environment for children. I think if they're left to their own devices, even with the most wonderful things, they're not going to reach their optimum development. But I also think it's very important for people to step in and give the children what they need and then back off and let them develop on their own, no we smother them. This is a middle class problem that often happens and you do have to have faith that children do have all these things inside them and stand back and let them go. For me, just rich environments, talking, books, reading, all those sorts of things are just so important. The written word and actually seeing things written down.(T4:9:5-14)

Some teachers discussed how providing structure was part of their role in the curriculum. Despite "free play" rhetoric, many of the teachers talked about the way that they provided structure, either through the programme or through teaching skills, for the benefit of children or sometimes to enable teachers to cope with the staff:child ratio and the age of the children.

Teacher 7 states that she has provided formal structure and teaching skills to the curriculum as a result of her experience, in that she has realised that teaching in the traditional sense of the word is appropriate. Teacher 10 relates how frazzled she got coping with 30 young children aged just over three years in a "free play" curriculum :

We weren't actually surviving, by the end of the afternoon we were really frazzled, and we weren't working with them on a one to one or even in a group successfully (T10:11:40-41).

Teacher 8 considers that kindergarten teaching has changed a lot since she started, when the programme was more structured, with children doing "cut outs and set activities". She considers that a lot of choices were taken away from children. She has noticed a shift into the "free play" area. Teacher 8 would put her curriculum at a midway point between a structured and unstructured curriculum. She expressed that some

activities are teacher based, if it is something special or needs a teacher to initiate it, or that some children need more structure to meet their needs. Sometimes she will introduce an activity into the programme to meet the needs of a wider group of children.

Teacher 2 outlined her curriculum as one in which "children are helping adults, adults are helping the children, and the children are helping each other" (T2:11:30-31). Teacher 2 and her colleague were described as "older teachers", who are not set in their ways, but not happy to run a "SEACOH" programme like some of the other kindergartens do. The programme offered has "some structure and free expression"(T2:11:34-35). Parents are spoken to often and evaluations are undertaken regularly. As Teacher 2 comments:

This is what parents want and this is why we actually get a lot of children who come from out of the area. Because they like some structure in the programme. The children are really happy doing it, because it would soon show if they didn't (T2:11:36-39).

A theme or focus is used each week, which is drawn from either the children, the community or the teachers and student teachers. Teacher 2 commented that the kindergarten is her second home, in which she has tried to bring "the inside out and the outside in" with native plantings and a walk-in bird aviary.

Teacher 9 uses the primary school core curriculum as the basis for curriculum, to work out what "ceiling" she should expect in terms of development of children at this age. She uses time to structure the session, rather than activities. There are always mat times at 9.30 and 1.30 and a music time as well. The programme is a combination of Teacher 9's philosophy and also of the philosophies and experiences of the other two teachers. One of these teachers has recently graduated from Teacher's College and had brought in ideas from her training and teaching practices in other kindergartens within the city. Teacher 9 sees the outcomes of her curriculum as sociability and creativity in children. She encourages children to think for themselves, but provides them with information to find a solution to problems if they are having difficulty.

Children start K10 at 3:7 or 3:8 years. At the time of interview there were ten new children starting. Teacher 10 considers structure imperative to enable herself and her colleague to cope. She has noticed that the age at which children start kindergarten is almost irrelevant:

It doesn't matter what age they start. because we are expecting that when it got up to about 3:8, 3:10 and it was just a general expectation, that the children would come in with quite a few skills. Like they probably know how to hold a paint brush properly and be able to wipe it without us really having to sit down and show them. And they probably would be able to cut and to use the toilet by themselves. They are not actually getting taught at home anything until they come to kindergarten. So it is partly why we have restructured the afternoon programme (T10:11:30-38).

Some parents have requested more structure in the programme, in terms of alphabet recognition and pre-writing skills.

Teacher 12 considers that a child's level of development needs to be considered when programming, and that sometimes structured activities (such as mat time) are

introduced too soon. She gave the following comment regarding the cultural relativity of educational theories:

It's a really interesting one. In fact educational theory is really interesting when you look at it cross culturally as well, in terms of what our culture finds appropriate. I guess, the more I find about other cultures and the more I look at our education system, it raises more questions. I don't feel so comfortable with the educational theory, as there [are] a lot of ways of doing things(T12:9:43-47).

Teachers in these kindergartens have a clear understanding of what role they hope to play in children's learning, and in many cases they have reflected extensively on whether they should intervene in children's learning. Despite their desire to simply encourage children to become independent learners, teachers acknowledge that this will not happen for all children and that some children will require more assistance to independence, either through one to one instruction or through a more tightly structured environment, with fewer choices.

Literacy development.

The understanding that teachers have of children's learning needs surfaced strongly in their discussion of literacy in the curriculum. For many teachers, children's inability to use literacy materials was a signal to intervene and provide the child with some more experiences and often alerted teachers to other developmental or educational needs. Many of the teachers directly addressed the issue of literacy development in the kindergarten, aware of the focus of the research or they addressed it in response to direct questioning of how literacy was promoted in the kindergarten.

Literacy is an important aspect of the curriculum in K1. The kindergarten only meets on the mat for fifteen minutes every day, and Teacher 1 looks for concentration in children for that period. She also looks to see who is using the book corner. For children aged four and half a home contact book is used to get children writing about their experiences at kindergarten and at home. A magnetic board with the children's names is used for helping children to write their name. She said that a lot of children come to the kindergarten with few if any literacy experiences, which makes the choices in kindergarten overwhelming. She explained that children do not know how to listen to a story, to paint pictures or choose from a variety of different writing materials. This makes decisions of what to play with and how to play with resources very difficult for the child.

Language development plays an important role in the curriculum in K2, particularly in a group discussion. There is often a "big word" for the week, which is reinforced daily. Story reading occurs individually at the beginning of a session, at Mat times and sometimes in small groups throughout the morning. Children take home two "library books" per night for parents to read. Language is also promoted through enacting stories.

Teaching early literacy skills is a strong part of Teacher 7's practice, which she attributes to her background and experience of teaching reading to new entrant children. She helps children to develop the fine motor skills for writing, and tells children that stories have a cover and a title, that pictures tell a story and that stories go from front to back and top to bottom. She also tells children to look for the "play group" (the picture on the front cover) when they're putting books back on the shelf, so that they can see the cover and see where "the story says it's a story". About two years ago, Teacher 7 started a library system, but the Committee decided to stop it last year, as about \$2,000 worth of books were either lost or stolen. She has restored the "library" now, with a selection of donated books of lesser quality. Another literacy activity described by Teacher 7 occurs when a child brings something for the nature table. She says "shall we write a story about it", and writes the child's name and that they brought a caterpillar. Then she asks if the child wants to draw a picture and sometimes the child may want to write their own story underneath the picture. She is currently wanting to illustrate and write the songs and rhythms for a chart, so that children can read the words as they are singing. Teacher 7 likes to keep writing materials on a trolley on a lino floor, by a table, so that children will sit down to write. Often children draw pictures and want to write stories underneath and she will help with the completion of the task. Sometimes she will suggest writing a story to a child who she thinks needs extension. Children are encouraged to learn their name by using a name card that is kept on the wall, whenever they draw a picture or write a story.

Literacy plays the following role in Teacher 8's curriculum:

We start off our morning with mat time, which probably goes for 15 to 20 minutes. A lot of language type activities are happening. They can be songs, finger plays, magnetic stories, felt stories. We have a lot of matching games which have no language which we put in as well (T8:9:50-54).

The centre has a quiet room, with books and puppets where children can go and sit. There is also a library system, so children can take books home. "Morning talks", where a child talks about something special are sometimes included in mat time.

Fostering emergent reading skills is an important aspect of the curriculum in K4, which is explained to parents when they first bring the child to kindergarten, so that they can assist this development. As she comments:

And helping the children to sequence events verbally and get them in their mind. Until they can do that they can't read. It's absolutely essential. And teaching children that one of those things that every one knows in our kindergarten that when you're writing children's names we tell all of the parents at pre-entry, when you write your child's name please write it on the top left hand corner and we talk about emergent reading skills and impart those things to parents so that they're working with the children as well. Giving them as many experiences as we can and talking about them. Talking through what happened at the beginning, the middle, the end and all the basic things. In fact if you do have those things by the time the child learns physically to read, the reading's done (T7:9:27-37).

Teacher 6 stated that books play a major role in their curriculum and that books are placed in many areas of the kindergarten. Books are used as resources by children (e.g. guiding a drawing) and stories are frequently read to children. Teacher 6 says that

she teaches children to respect books, learn that there is a beginning and end, that pictures have meaning and that there is writing in books. She likes to express joy in reading, ask questions and request predictions of endings. Stories are presented in a variety of ways, using magnetic stories or children's own stories. Recognising their own name is fostered through use of metallic name tags and learning to write it encouraged. Development of fine motor skills for writing is encouraged through provision of a variety of paintbrushes, felt pens, pencils and so forth. Open ended questioning of paintings is fostered, as is writing down the story underneath the painting, and linking the story to the writing. Teacher 8 considered that most activities in the kindergarten were linked back to literacy development in some way, from developing fine motor skill to linking back play activities to stories or song during mat time.

A store room at K9 has been turned into a "quiet room" or children's library, where all the books are at a child's level and "categorised with blocks so they can match what stories are about by the stickers that are on the blocks" (T9:15:14-15). Books are thus available as a resource. Children can also take books home, using a library card system. Other literacy activities in the curriculum include process cooking where instruction involves pictures and words, story telling, group reading and singular reading. All resources and static displays in the kindergarten are labelled.

Teacher 12 described the role of language and literacy in this kindergarten:

A lot of it is through our oral communications and conversations. Developing their own ideas and talking through them and often writing them down. A wonderful example is this brilliant story that a child told and was written down, and the story attached to it. One of our teacher's is extremely skilled in this area. And again with this pirate thing, it all started from a small group, talking about what they wanted to do, and the language is explored and we'll develop on that next week. They write stories from it, or that may be an outcome, it depends on the children involved, as some have tendencies that way and some need a lot more encouragement. Just some amazing results. That's certainly an area that's being developed at the moment (T12:10:47-56).

Stories are often written by children and shared at "mat time". A book week, where parents come in to read stories, was an effective part of the programme. Only three or four families in this community would have any difficulty with written communication.

This part of the data provided a useful foundation for the observations of domains of literacy in kindergartens, which are discussed in Chapter 6. Provision of books, writing materials and group activities are all seen to be important aspects of literacy, along with encouragement of children's attempts at writing. Many of these activities would give children opportunities to gain some "concepts of print" as well as letter name and phonological awareness. These claims about the role of literacy in the curriculum will be compared and contrasted with observations of kindergartens reported in Chapter 6.

Preparation for school.

Some of the literacy activities described by teachers were seen by teachers to be good preparation for school. Several of the teachers discussed how children's experiences at kindergarten would prepare them for going to school at five. Learning how to sit through a 20 minute mat session was the most frequently mentioned activity which would prepare children for school.

Teacher 9 explained that mat times are 20-25 minutes for morning children, but the time is shortened for afternoon children according to how the children are coping. Knowledge that children will go to school soon is the reason that Teacher 9 uses what she considers to be a longer mat time than most kindergartens. As she explains:

When they come to this morning kindergarten at four and a half, six months before they go to school they are expected to be sitting for quite a length of time, listening. So I think that's just it, that's a good time to actually start and get them ready to start that (T9:11:4-7).

Before children in K6 go to school, Teacher 5 likes to work with them individually to get them ready for the process of schooling. About three to four months before they go to school, she starts to insist that children complete the music session, so that they learn to sit for a period of time. They also have trips to school at this time to promote the transition. A checklist is used to observe in which area children need extension.

Although Teacher 11 says that the greatest advantage that kindergarten children have is that they have learned to concentrate, she said that primary school teachers notice a significant difference between kindergarten children and other children upon starting school. These teachers applaud the compulsory mat time in kindergarten, as children know how to sit down, a fact that Teacher 11 thinks is really sad. She has also been told that any head start these children have upon starting school has levelled out by the age of nine. She explains the possible reason for this levelling effect:

To me it is because their expectations are different. They are looking at achievement, they don't look at social skills and they don't even look at modes of thinking, I mean that really concerns me. One of the advantages I see in children who have been to kindergarten, is that they have learnt to think, and that a lot of children who don't have early pre-school experiences, not just kindergarten incidentally, actually miss out on the learning to think because answers are given, or answers are never given so you stop asking. Whereas at pre-school children are taught "why do you think", "what happened when", all of that....(T11:12:44-49)

In a similar vein, Teacher 6 doesn't think that kindergarten's sole role is to prepare children for school, but she does consider that children go school knowing that they can succeed and be independent and that this does prepare them for school.

Discussion.

A child centred free play curriculum can be seen as an example of what Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) define as a "progressive" curriculum, in which the child is seen to achieve higher levels of development as a result of structured though natural interactions

with the physical and social environment. Spodek and Saracho (1990) suggest that this linking of human development and education has led to the conception of the teacher as a child development specialist.

This view is in fact endorsed by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand by the principles in the Charter Handbook (1989), which state that "the curriculum is the sum total of the children's direct and indirect learning experiences in early childhood centres. It promotes the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of young children while responding to the needs of families" (1989, p.9). The guiding principles for curriculum design were further expanded within the section entitled "the learner" (1989, p.7) in the following way :

the environment must facilitate children's curiosity, active exploration and self-paced and directed learning. The importance and power of play must be recognised. There must be time for children to think and dream.

These principles are integral to "Te Whariki", the new national early childhood curriculum guidelines, which are based on development of the "whole child" and draw strongly on the theories of Piaget and Erikson for guide-lines for appropriate practice (Carr and May, 1991).

Meade (1985) describes the key to a successful free play curriculum, as knowing not only how to provide the environment, but knowing when to step in and out of children's activities. Some of Head Teachers' responses are clear examples of Meade's (1985) description of New Zealand free play curriculums, where the child is seen as "an active learner with his or her knowledge being constructed rather than acquired" (p.112). Although children may gain an understanding of the physical world, through playing with sand, water and blocks; they also learn about the social world of the school (Tizard and Hughes, 1984). A new code of behaviour is introduced to them, along with routines, how to communicate with staff and how to focus on play. All of these things teach the child what is considered to be appropriate behaviour in a school setting. The play environment gives the child room to explore, make a noise and to make a mess, but learning by observing an adult or talking with an adult may be excluded if adults are not aware of how powerful their role in the learning environment can be (Meadows and Cashdan, 1988).

It is clear that the teachers in this study are aware of the power of their role in this learning environment. Teacher 4 says the environment would be a "shambles" if she just left children to play and Teacher 7 describes wrestling with her decision to directly teach skills to children who need one on one teaching. The discussion of the need for structure with younger children is also a reflection of the teachers' awareness of meeting the needs of children, rather than allowing children to float freely in an inappropriate environment. Much of the teaching in this curriculum corresponds to Bruner's (1986) notion of "scaffolding", wherein teachers use one to one instruction for brief periods to assist a child to play independently.

Desforges (1989), in his research with seven early grade teachers of maths, found that despite the rhetoric of teachers who endorsed constructivist /progressive teaching

theories, 90% of maths work took the form of pencil and paper routine exercises. There was a noticeable gap between their beliefs and practices, but a gap that teachers were well aware of. In Desforges (1989) study it was because teachers were overloaded with information and routines were a way of coping with the overload. Here, although teachers are not advocating the same kind of direct instruction as Desforges observed, they are still using a direct teaching style which is different than a "free play" curriculum would usually involve. The gap is acknowledged by both Teachers 3 and 7, but it is to meet the needs of children. Teacher 10 described the sort of overload experienced by Desforges teachers, as she attempted to live up to the demands of providing "free play" and to meet the individual needs of children. Spodek (1988) states that teachers don't rely on developmental theory when making classroom decisions. Instead, they rely on what Genishi (1992) calls "theories of practice" which they have developed from past practical experience, rather than formal training. In this sense, the teachers' decision to teach skills is really developmentally appropriate, in that it meets the developmental and learning needs of the child; so that they can participate in the kindergarten curriculum. Even though direct instruction may not conform to the prevalent (Piagetian) theory of waiting for the child to develop an interest in learning the skill; teachers are meeting the learning needs of children in their classroom. In this sense, teachers' practice appears much closer to the learning apprenticeship, which Vygotsky advocates.

In terms of literacy, all of the kindergarten teachers described ways in which children have access to literacy. Most are exposed to a variety of songs, rhymes and chants, and often a story book, at mat sessions. Teachers 1, 4 and 7 discussed teaching children the concepts of print at story reading sessions, in particular that print carries the message, that words go from left to right, top to bottom, and that the book is read from front to back. Most of the teachers described using a metallic board with children's names on to encourage children to write their own name. Teachers 7 and 12 discussed getting children to write stories in the kindergarten, with Teacher assistance, but this was more rare. Teachers 2, 4, 8, 9 mentioned having a library system, whereby children could take home a story book at night. It is interesting to note that in the kindergartens with the lowest SES it was not common for a library system to be part of the curriculum. Teacher 7 described how many of the books were stolen from such a kindergarten when a library system was used. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, concerning the observations of literacy environments, where the variation between the resources of kindergartens is of particular interest. It would appear that all children have access to a literacy environment, to a greater or lesser extent, but the way that the environment is mediated differs from centre to centre.

It was very interesting to find preparation for school discussed by many teachers. For most of the teachers, preparation for school is not a high priority, but it still features as one of the goals of the curriculum. These results are similar to those of Pramling and Williams-Granelid (1993) who examined preschool teachers conceptions about children

starting school. In their study of twelve preschool teachers, preparing for school goals were the first of their learning to learn goals, which were goals to help children develop an awareness of the surrounding world.

The issue of early childhood education as a preparation for effective schooling has a long history in early childhood literature. Some notable examples of studying whether early childhood education can prepare children for school or overcome the deficits of home background are the Headstart programmes (Schweinhart, Weikart and Lerner, 1986) and the Child Health and Education Study (Osborn and Millbank, 1987). There are undoubtedly long term effects to children attending preschool, but the results are likely to bear more of the "permanent marks" that Plato described (Woodhead, 1989) if children attend high quality child initiated programmes. Teachers in this study seem to espouse a very negative view of primary schooling, as they are outraged by their perception that primary teachers are only appreciative of children's ability to sit still for extended periods of time. Kindergarten teachers, like Teacher 11, are more interested in why children lose the ability to experiment and to question why. Pramling and Williams-Granelid (1993) also note that preschool teachers are negative about the school context.

It is interesting to note that the recently released draft of the National Early Childhood Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1993) has included a section on continuity with the school curriculum, which was not present at the previous draft before the Ministry of Education review. It would appear that the New Zealand Government is beginning to show signs that they are interested in preparing children for school, perhaps a sign of an emerging emphasis on outcome-based education.

Developmental / educational theories

One of the strong themes emerging from teachers discussions of educational and developmental theory is that teachers consider development to be stage driven, maturational and yet individual. Children are seen to learn and to develop when they are "ready". The purpose of education is to encourage this development and to prepare children to become independent, and socially acceptable members of society. This social emphasis of kindergarten is also strongly addressed under the section on social and moral philosophy. There is a set of normative expectations for child development, which are expressed as teachers saying that some children have experienced some deficit in their home background that they hope to remedy. The discussions about parents which occurred across all the interview are included in this section, as teachers' theories of how to educate children are firmly intertwined with their perceptions of the role that parents have in children's development.

Stages and individuality.

A good understanding of the stages of child development and a firm belief in the individuality of development is the basis to Teacher 1's knowledge and use of educational theory. K1 uses parts of the SEACOH programme (which was described in the review of literature earlier) as part of their educational philosophy, especially in terms of the art area.

Teacher 2 commented that she does not cater for extremes in development, like parents who come in and tell her that their child is gifted, and want her to keep helping them. She prefers to focus on the areas in which the child is not so well developed, such as developing social skills or the ability to mix with other children. She explains why she thinks parents expect her to promote giftedness and her own perception of her role in this sort of child's development:

I don't know, it happens all the time, I think they're just so proud of it. Sometimes they bale up other parents and show them what their children have done, we get that a lot. A little girl who was doing maths out at Teachers College, that's how bright she was. Rather than concentrate on that, I go somewhere else. Because that's what my place is, my place isn't here to teach maths or reading, logic to a certain extent but not what these people want. I guess I'm quite naughty like that (T2:16:18-24).

Observations, checklists and discussions with parents are all used to help Teacher 7 to understand how children are developing. Teacher 7 compares a child's developmental progress to a "norm" or her own set of expectations for the child's age. From her assessment, she then helps to move a child onto the next stage of development or provides more experiences or extension at the existing level. She includes physical, social, emotional and intellectual domains of development in the areas that she seeks to extend or accelerate. However, Teacher 7 believes that children need to be motivated to learn. As she explains:

They would have to have the desire to learn. They are not going to learn anything unless they are really motivated to learn. Some children don't need any motivation but some need a lot more. So you have to find out what interests them and how and just feed them and have available a new set of resources and language experiences. Well sort of what we hope our curriculum caters for. But there is ...sometimes ...a limiting factor of your home background and what's inherited. You can extend to a certain extent (T7:14:5-13).

Teacher 8 considers that teachers can work with parents to overcome behavioural difficulties or developmental delays. She has noticed that children's learning is individual, and that children vary in their ability to adapt to and engage in the environment. She explains how important she considers it to persevere with children who are not joining in:

And I think also that if you keep trying, like if, say there is a child that never joins in with a group or something and if you just keep battling away and presenting things in different ways that one day that child is going to open their mouth and sing to it or something like that. And just because they are not joining in then it is still all going in, like the same with languages ... it is still all going in. And quite often the parents will come in and say "oh he sings all these songs at home". We have never seen him sing one word while they're here or something like that. So that you don't actually know

the information that is going in because you cannot visually see it
...(T8:12:39-48)

She commented that kindergarten gives a "positive ongoing support" for a child's development, and to give them more opportunities in which to develop:

To support families and parents in their role in bringing up children. To make the transition from early childhood to school easier. But basically probably the most important, to present that to, to give that child the opportunity to develop in all those areas that we have been talking about. Perhaps, you know, in giving them opportunities that they are not going to get at home, a fair bit on the opportunities for the children at that age.
(T8:13:13-18)

Believing that children will learn or develop when they are ready and at their own pace is one of Teacher 3's views of how children develop. Although she thinks there is a "normal" developmental sequence for most children, she also thinks that this occurs on a continuum. She says she tries to remember that maturation will take care of most problems with children, as she says:

Well okay we are aware of the problem but hey maybe we just have to let it happen, that there is not a lot we can do to make it happen tomorrow. We may not be ready for another month...(T3:19:12-14)

Some children are well behind the "norm", while others are well beyond and require extending or accelerating. Teacher 3 said that she used to worry if a child concentrated too much on one activity, but now she thinks "you know obviously they feel really confident and you know they are gaining just as many skills there". She expressed a strong belief that is important to wait for a child to be ready to learn or develop a new skill, and that rushing the process isn't appropriate. She commented that her own expectations of what happens to children before they start kindergarten influence what she expects of children's development. However, sometimes children have had such limited experiences at home, that providing a variety of experiences for the child is her first concern. She explains that she wants to provide a variety of experiences for children, as her expectations of what will occur in the home environment are often disappointed:

Well I suppose I have learned that you know if you don't have too many expectations you are not disappointed. And why, you know it is a difficult one because you have this expectation that your three should be able to sort of do this and at four they should be this and at five. If they can't, if they are not at that stage it is not a disappointment now(T3:23:37-41).

However, Teacher 3 stressed that she is not judgmental of parents, and she tries very hard to cater for the child and to give appropriate feedback to the parents about the child's development. Direct information about the child's development can be given to confident parents, but Teacher 3 said that giving the parents praise for what the child has completed is an early step toward establishing parental confidence. Teacher 3 has noticed that parents are asking a lot more questions about their child's development than they used to, and do not take her word for gospel as she had previously experienced.

Being able to make use of children's interests to keep them motivated, along with a knowledge of the child's readiness to learn new skills is integral to Teacher 6's understanding of child development. As Teacher 6 states:

I always believe there is an optimum time for learning a particular skill, so you can try and try to teach someone....it is a readiness concept I guess. that

unless a child is ready, they are not going to learn a skill as quickly as they would if they had naturally become ready. So at some stage a child becomes ready and interested in learning to write their name, it doesn't mean anything to them up until that stage, you can try, but if they not ready for it, it is not going to happen (T6:4:42-48)

Teacher 6 said that this readiness is a combination of physical maturation and the intellectual ability. Putting things out on tables, was a way of being able to see when children are interested and making the most of the opportunity. There is an implicit assumption that the child's interest implies a level of readiness, which the teacher can gauge by talking to the child about the activity.

Teacher 5 considers that children develop as individuals, if they are relaxed, if they have got high self esteem, if they are happy, if life is good for them. If they are like that they find it easy to learn and to cope with life. (T5:10:12-14)

She commented, however, that if children come to kindergarten with lots of "hang ups", or if the parents have "hang ups", including negative feelings about education, then the child is also likely to express negative feelings.

Teacher 9 believes that children are all different and develop at their own rate, and that differences even occur between children in families. Teacher 11 believes that there are stages in children's development, but that children never reveal all, nor are they consistent. She gave the following example:

Like children for instance who are at the two year old telescopic language stage, children revert to telescopic language right till they are nine or ten, as suits them, and it just depends when you happen to be listening, what you are going to hear. Like we had two really good examples at the moment with children who fairly constantly speak in two word sentences, and then startling the boots off you by saying "I hate dinosaurs when I am by myself", those sorts of things. And I get concerned that some educationalists are inclined to put dividing lines between the stages (T11:12:1-8).

Teachers have strong beliefs about the importance of child development in education, how development should proceed and what the role of parents and teachers in the child's development should be. Teachers and parents should provide resources and encouragement to children, but they should be hesitant to rush the child to new learning unless they are "ready". Exceptions to this rule are children who have had 'deprived' home backgrounds with few experiences or resources. This view of development is further developed by some teachers' belief in a critical period for learning.

Critical period.

Despite the fact that many teachers stated that children learn best when they are "ready" or motivated to learn, teachers also discussed education in early childhood as being critical to the child's overall development. This apparent contradiction displays the complexity of teachers' "implicit theories". In many ways, the kindergartens are seen to play a complementary or supplementary role in children's development. Some of the

teacher's discussed early child development and education as being critical; in some cases to remedy what has gone before or in others to form the foundation for education ahead.

Teacher 8 considers that parents play the most important role in children's development, but that kindergarten can complement that role, as she explains:

I feel that parents probably have the most important role in their child's development and that by the time we see them at three or four and a half that child is already very moulded into the sort of person they are going to be, six or seven or eight or nine or ten and further on and even into adulthood. So when they move into the kindergarten we tend to encourage that development by giving them new opportunities and extension and enriching what has already been happening. But personally I feel the parent has most probably had the most input in and the most importance in the development of that child as a whole person, a holistic child, who the child's going to be(T8:11:30-39).

Early childhood education and primary education are seen by Teacher 1 as very important, unrepeatable parts of a child's education. Similarly, Teacher 10 says that she is a great believer in preschool education, as it can be a point at which many problems can be sorted out, although she thinks that even then they can sometimes be too late to help children. She gave an example of a little boy who was touching other children inappropriately, whom the Social Welfare Department told her needed to be caught by the age of two to have any hope of changing. She relates her role to this aspect of education:

We have got a big responsibility even as parents, in their formative years. And if we can help them form good habits we may be able to keep them in that line, they are going to go left and right of the centre line all their lives, but as long as they eventually come back. Hopefully we have got some really good kids, and if we can sort out speech problems and hearing problems, try and help parents to cope with their problems, and there is a lot of parent stress out there at the moment, most of it is economic based. If we can help them sort out the problems whatever they are, and get on to them early enough they are going to survive as adults(T10:12:30-39).

Teacher 12 commented that kindergarten has long term effects for children in the following way:

It's also maybe in the area of attitudes towards meeting teachers, it's a first step of meeting with professional teachers, and I think we try very hard to make sure that this is going to be a positive experience. We are very open and warm and welcoming (T12:11:38-41).

She has noticed that some families are very nervous about the first contact with teachers, and that teachers can play an important role in encouraging children and parents to be involved in education. Teacher 4 also outlined her view of the role of kindergarten in a child's education, as providing the first important link between home and outside institution.

Learning through experience.

A strongly reoccurring theme in this data is the concept that children learn best through experience, preferably "hands on" for maximum benefit. This idea also occurred in the discussions of curriculum, but it is discussed here as it forms a strong part of the foundation for how these teacher's believe that children develop. Some of the teachers

alluded to this being a first opportunity for different experiences for some children, which relates to how some teachers have discussed the deficits in some children and their parents.

Teacher 2 considers that children develop from experiencing a variety of different things:

From experiences, so the more experiences you provide, the more a child develops physically. By putting that thing there that they have to jump over, as opposed to walking around. So to me there's just so many different ways that you can develop physically. Emotionally there are so many ways you can develop. by coming into contact with everyday things, sad things, happy things, joyous things (T2:15:10-15).

She doesn't think that there is a stage like formation to this development, more a response to environmental stimuli.

In terms of educational philosophy, Teacher 4 believes that children are influenced by the richness of their experiences, resulting in a well balanced and developed child. As she explains:

I think children learn by being involved with people. People putting in their input and enthusiasm and providing a rich environment for children. I think if they're left to their own devices, even with the most wonderful things, they're not going to reach their optimum development. But I also think it's very important for people to step in and give the children what they need and then back off and let them develop on their own, no we smother them. This is a middle class problem that often happens and you do have to have faith that children do have all these things inside them and stand back and let them go. For me, just rich environments, talking, books, reading, all those sorts of things are just so important. The written word and actually seeing things written down (T4:9:5-15).

Teacher 6 discussed how kindergarten facilitates the social development of children, whereby they learn the interpersonal skills necessary for communication with large groups of people. Children are seen to be solitary in their play at first, then gradually more parallel, then co-operative. Children "learn by doing", according to Teacher 6, and by observing. Active involvement and repetition are also seen as important. Teacher 6 said that she could only tell a child so much, they would learn the rest by watching what was being done. Kindergarten was described as having an important role in the child's developing independence from the family, and ability to relate to adults other than parents. She said that it offered new experiences and excursions to children, that they might not otherwise get. Kindergarten was also described as providing a good base in relating positively to others and working in a friendly, co-operative environment. Teacher 6 outlined her belief that children need to be happy about what they're doing and have a good sense of self esteem, which will provide a good base for education to occur. As she says:

They are going to see that yes, it is interesting to learn, it is a really fun thing to do. We try and get it to be fun so that they can go to school happy and secure in the knowledge that they can succeed, and that they can give themselves new challenges, they can work independently. I believe that they are going to know all those concepts through being at kindergarten, but I don't believe that ... kindergarten's sole role is in preparing for school. I believe that early childhood is a separate stage of development and should be seen like that, it should not be seen as a preparatory role for school (T6:11:1-8)

Teacher 9 considers that kindergarten allows children to gain experiences that they may not gain outside kindergarten and to "grow in their thinking and the social aspect"(T9:15:48). She commented that it is a preparatory time for school, but that learning to be with others and to socialise is more important. She explained that early childhood education "leaves a lasting impression"(T9:16:18), as children learn to separate from parents and gain social and physical skills. From discussions she has had with new entrant teachers, she has been told that children who do not have early childhood education experience are not as outgoing nor as well co-ordinated as kindergarten children. Teacher 9 gave the following explanation of how she thinks that children learn:

They learn from the environment, so if your environment is stimulating and exciting and things are happening I think the children are bound to get something out of it. Learning from their experiences that they have, and talking. Like instead of just being left to play on their own, being included and talked to and told that I am washing the dishes, how I am washing the dishes or whatever. Yes, so being involved in what you are doing, so that they can learn from that (T9:16:34-38).

Teacher 11 explained that children learn by example and experience:

I think personally the biggest learning thing is example. I think that is vital. Example and experience would be my catchwords. I don't believe that children can learn to read if they haven't heard the words, I don't think that children can learn to play if they have never been allowed to make a mess (T11:11:10-13).

Teacher 11 also believes that children can do things much younger than they are given credit for and learn better from hands on experience.

Teachers clearly believe that the best type of learning for children occurs when children are actively involved. They believe that children will not learn until they are "ready", and yet believe that early childhood is a critical period for development. For children who do not show signs of readiness and who are not learning through "hands on" experience, teachers consider it necessary to intervene with the child to extend or accelerate their development. One of the major areas in which intervention was discussed with this group of teachers was children who lacked signs of readiness and independence in their learning.

Perceived deficits in children

Many of the children discussed by teachers were considered to show signs of what I have globally termed "deprivation", as many of these statements were made regarding children's home backgrounds and what teachers could do to make up for the deficit or deprivation in that environment. Many of these signs of deprivation related to literacy ability or lack of literacy opportunities in the home environment.

We have a lot of children in this community who don't know what a book is and they wouldn't know the top from the bottom, the back from the front. They wouldn't be able to hold a pen. They probably...some of them, they have seen a biro, they wouldn't know what a pencil was and mostly a biro is for scribbling on the first available thing, it doesn't matter what it is.(T1:10:22-26)

The child's experiences are so limited, his language you know, his knowledge. I mean you name it, it was limited. We actually taught him the names of all the pictures (on the lockers). Now I haven't done that for ten years, fifteen years, not come across a child with experiences that are so limited that they didn't even know what an elephant is. You know what we take for granted of a mother sitting there with a picture book you know, from very early on talking about, you know all those things, he just didn't have. So our expectations, you know we actually had to go right back to basics and bring that child through the process to get him to where...we felt he really should be for his age (T3:23:22-32)

One of the issues that Teacher 5 discussed was the amount of illiteracy amongst the parents and the community, and the implications that it has for the education of their children. Some are open about it, while others are more secretive. As she explains:

I tell you what I've noticed, it probably comes under this one, is that we have got quite a few parents who can't read and write. Some are quite open about it, if I give out a notice, and some are very cagey and try to cover it up. I find they have difficulty with education for the children because where do they start? They can't read or write themselves, so how are they going to start reading stories for children. At certain times we have problems with say fund raising or anything we are doing in the kindergarten, and often it has stemmed back to the notice having gone out, and that particular time the parents we had here couldn't read or write. If I see that there is a group of them, when we have mat time and we pull across the doors to close off the rooms, I will push back the door and say "your child has notes, it is just telling you that the kindergarten will be closed for two weeks" (T5:10:18-29).

She recounted a story of a youth, aged 15, who had been hanging around the kindergarten. He had a nephew attending kindergarten and liked to work for them. One day, Teacher 5 asked him to help her with inventory of equipment, but it rapidly became apparent that he was unable to count beyond eight.

Teacher 6 explained that she hoped that kindergarten started children off with the right principles for life. As she says:

It is getting them ready for school, but it is also teaching them a lot of other things that perhaps they wouldn't have. It is probably opening up the world a little bit more than what they would otherwise have if they didn't come to kindergarten. And they are learning those skills of mixing with other children, learning to cope with different situations in life (T6:11:12-17).

Some of the teachers described children as having a gap in their development or deficit for teachers to make up. Most of the teachers stated that their role was to identify which children needed extra input to help them catch up with their peers.

Not everyone comes in here with the same opportunity. They're not coming from backgrounds with the same opportunity and as a teacher that's part of your professional teaching responsibility, to pick the children that you feel need extra input and work with them. And that may also be gifted children who need extra input to meet their needs as well. And in doing that some people get less of your time than others, and that's a dilemma that you always have as a teacher. (T4:12:11-17)

Encouraging the children to expand their horizons and to think further or develop, basically it's an encouraging role, just to develop the concept that's being considered, what the child is showing interest in. Perhaps teaching things where there are gaps, introducing a concept that's missing or could be further developed or leading the child onto the next step. (T12:7:53-57)

I guess you make value judgments about where they come from. And you've got it set in your own mind the O.K this child comes from a very

deprived or limited ...and you decide that that child needs the basic concepts, you assume that ...from their background... that they haven't got that sort of knowledge, so we attempt to either directly teach it, or for that child to sort of assimilate that knowledge.(T6:5:39-44)

We try to lift the bottom [SES children] to show that there is more than they have actually seen, that they can get out of it (T1:16:33-35)

Sometimes you have a limiting factor of your home background and what's inherited. You can extend to a certain extent(T7:14:10-13)

I mean you can extend and help to a certain degree and you have to be aware and be realistic of what you can expect from children (T7: 14:19-22)

Teachers 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 all discussed how they use their observations of children to identify these gaps in their development and use that information for programming. This was also discussed in the section on contextual knowledge. Teacher 6 discussing "basic concepts", gives a clear example of what sort of information is looked for:

Concepts like colours, size, big, small, little animals. What noise they make and where they come from. We have got a little girl here who has never seen a cow, doesn't know what it does. She has probably seen one but it has never been explained to her that that is what it is and that is the noise it makes. She just didn't know about that. And colours, just basic colours. (T6:6:1-5)

Teacher 4 stated that sometimes there are children whose needs are more evident, although not necessarily more urgent, and that often those children's needs are met first.

Teacher 10 considers that children need to have fun and to learn how to have fun, as "there is not a heck of a lot of fun in some children's lives". Teacher 10 is increasingly spending time talking with parents about their economic situation, as families are going under stress due to the current economic climate. She commented that it is easier for parents to avoid letting the economic situation affect children when they are little, as there are lots of things happening in the city which suit pre-school children and are free of charge, such as library holiday programmes. However, Teacher 10 thinks that peer pressure is an added stress as children reach school age.

Teacher 11 considers that she has had success in teaching children when she has supported parents rather than threatened them. As she explains:

The other aspect that is really important is that parents can learn with their children, so that parents who have missed out haven't missed out for ever....The parents come to me and say "hey I didn't know, isn't this neat", are actually learning with their children and that learning is much more valuable for their learning because they are sharing it. I find here that even children who do not get on well with their parents, children who have that natural antagonism, as some children do, demand that we approve of their parents, which is really neat, that is really good (T11:11:30-39).

Independence.

A recurrent theme in teachers' discussions of child development was the role of independence. Some teachers like Teachers 3 and 9 considered that children couldn't become independent until they had learnt a few basic skills, while most saw independence

being a prerequisite for successful development, which would lead to confidence for life. Teacher 1 commented that children become too independent for the parent's liking, as they have the confidence to question. Teacher 3 considered that early childhood education gave children an inoculation of confidence, to help them overcome the challenge of future schooling, and also the confidence to independently use and practice using the equipment. Teacher 8 saw the curriculum as promoting independence so that children will learn for themselves. For Teachers 9, 12, 10, and 6 independence is essential to help children to solve their own conflict problems, without involving a teacher. Teacher 6 discussed how children need to learn to be independent of their families and that learning can be fun without parents being present.

Beliefs about parents.

This section will deal specifically with some of the beliefs about parents which teachers expressed during the interview. Although teachers were not specifically questioned about their beliefs about parents, a wealth of information was gathered in their discussions of other questions. At points teachers were asked to elaborate on statements about parents, if their meaning was unclear, which gave more comprehensive information. The major theme regarding parents is that of perceived parental deficit, as so many commented on problems which they saw as stemming from parent's lack of skill or interest in their children. Another important theme is that of parent education.

A deficit in language and literacy terms was mentioned by Teachers 1, 2, 5, 6 and 11. Both Teachers 1 and 2 were doubtful of how much reading children got at home. Teacher 1 stated that she encourages parents to read to children and to talk to them. Teacher 2 said that children take books home to be read to by parents but she is unsure how much language is put in by parents. Others noticed literacy difficulties in parents and discussed how they coped with this. Teacher 11 uses a phone tree to share information with illiterate parents. Teacher 6 cannot assume that parents can speak or read English, so she gives information verbally on home visit. Teacher 5 has noticed problems which stemmed from parental illiteracy. Teacher 1 has noticed a deficit in good manners being learnt in the home, in that children are not taught social rules at home and are punished by hitting, as they duck when she says "don't". Teacher 1 also finds that parents who say that saying 'please' and 'thank you' isn't important drive her crazy. Teacher 1 and 3 discussed a deficit in parent's understanding of children's needs. Teacher 1 says that some parents scorn children's efforts. Teacher 3 says that young mothers do not understand children's needs or developmental stages, as they have insufficient knowledge.

Several of the teachers discussed how they compensate for the perceived deficits in parents or the child's home. Teacher 5 has noticed that parents don't keep their children home long enough after an illness, as they haven't been taught how to care for children.

She has also found that parents will let children watch television until 11.30 at night and children come to kindergarten exhausted. Teacher 11 compensates for difficult or limiting factors in the child's background, but never lets the child know. Teacher 10 tries to help parents with problems, as many parents are under stress, from unemployment and redundancy. Teachers 2, 3 and 7 have perceived a lack of skill in parents. Teacher 2 has found parents to be impractical parent help on occasion. Teacher 7 has found the community unreliable, as the lending library she set up in the kindergarten was taken home and not returned by parents. Teacher 7 has also found that parents do not use the Public library. Teacher 3 has found that low SES parents do not have the skills to be on a committee.

Teacher 3 thought that parents would read to children but has found that she has to teach the basics to some children. Often her norm expectations are discarded and she moves into action. She often challenges her own belief about how children ought to develop when confronted with a very reserved child. Teacher 9 thinks that parents ought to provide experiences for children and if they can't they should put them into a facility where they can get them. Teacher 10 expects children to come in with a few skills, like holding a paint brush or using the toilet without assistance. She thinks they are not taught at home. Teacher 10 says that parents need to use their imagination to entertain children, even if there isn't a lot of money.

Several of the teachers consider working with families to be a priority to the success of their programme. This is expressed as supporting families and providing parent education. Discussion of involvement with community also occurred in the section on contextual knowledge. Parent education is an aspect of Teacher 4's teaching role, as she considers that parent education helps women to understand their child's development and gives them skills they didn't have before. Sometimes she considers that parents need a bit of guidance, which she thinks is important, as "teachers do play God a bit in this way". She will often sympathise with parent's difficulties and suggest things that may have worked in the centre or with her own children. Teacher 4 doesn't like to see herself in an "expert" role, but prefers to think of herself as a resource for parents. She stated that many parents come with their own preconceived ideas about education or a history of their own success or failure in education. She considers that they help to make "people feel good about the things they do in the future"(T4:10:38). She has noticed that they can play an important role in encouraging women to become educated and to "realise what ever happened before, you can start again"(T4:10:42-43). She also thinks that giving parents information about their child's progress is empowering for them.

Some of the teachers discussed how uncomfortable they feel with the parent expectation that teachers are experts. Teacher 1 says that parents expect her to solve everything. Teacher 5 has found that parents are not as accepting of teachers opinions anymore, which pleases her. She has worked in a community where her word was law. Teacher 1 says they are seen as "social welfare type" people, she does talk to people and

then refers them on to outside sources of help. Teacher 9 finds it difficult to be an expert with women who are older than her with more life experience.

Teacher 11 encourages parents to look at schools before choosing. She thinks that knowledge is power and that parents get very baffled by the misinformation in the newspapers, especially about funding issues. Teacher 1 sees a flow-on effect from the children's belief in themselves to the parents, who often seem to develop a similar belief in themselves from their relationship with the kindergarten philosophies. Parent education evenings are offered regularly, but not attended by the parents that Teacher 1 would like to see attend. Teacher 1 thinks that the expectation of teachers have helped women to develop self esteem and thinks that children and parents have changed through the involvement with the kindergarten. Teacher 3 responds to parents inquiries about art by putting up a display for parents. Teacher 3 models praise of child to parents. She also has to evaluate whether approaching parents about a child's development is appropriate. Teacher 10 has taught parents how to dress children for kindergarten.

Teachers in this study see their role in children's learning extending beyond just what the child can do in the classroom. They make decisions about what they perceive children to be lacking and intervene to help children to learn the missing concepts or skills. Teachers see themselves as playing an education role for parents as well, although this can be problematic. Teacher knowledge of development and education encompasses norms for child development, maturational readiness, experiential learning, deprivation theories and theories about the role of parents in children's learning. Such knowledge goes well beyond simply "putting out the playdough" as Teacher 3 states so eloquently.

Discussion.

Te Whariki, the draft guidelines for developmentally appropriate programmes in early childhood services (1993) identify the following aspiration for children

To grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and the in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society (p.8)

This statement seems to nicely tie together the elements of teachers' beliefs and aspirations for children, even though it was produced a year after these teachers were interviewed. There are the key elements of talking, confidence and security, a possible link with competence and independence and the importance of fitting into society. These elements were reinforced in the Charter handbook guidelines given to teachers for writing their Charters in 1989. All centres were requested to set their own priorities within the charter, but a list of "paramount principles" (1989, p.9) was provided to guide establishment of these priorities. The emphasis on individuality, involvement with parents, independence and cultural sensitivity are all included within these priorities. Although teachers are trying to prepare children for society, it is possibly a society which is governed by their own middle class values. The discussion of how parents don't read to

their children and don't teach them manners suggests a certain standard which teachers have set for fitting into society.

Head Teachers could be said to be providing "educare"; both education and care for children (Smith and Swain, 1988); as their philosophy of development and education encompasses both educational and social/moral dimensions. These findings parallel Meade's (1985) finding that kindergarten teachers fostered socio emotional development, independence, ability to make friends and to fit into a group and co-operation in "Oak" kindergarten. "Park" kindergarten's overall aim was "living, learning and sharing", with the aims of helping children play socially, preparing children for school, working with parents. These aims were also emphasized by some of the Head Teachers in this study.

Carr and May (1991) propose that early childhood curriculum is based upon a theory of child development, which includes the theories of Piaget and Erikson. Certainly the Head Teachers' responses in this section say that children learn as individuals and through stages. These stages seem to correspond to Erikson's Play stage, where the developmental crisis is "initiative vs. guilt" and the basic strength is purpose; where a child will develop confidence and self esteem, if they are successful in their efforts and receive encouragement and support from the adults around them. The idea of individuality and stages also corresponds to Piaget's cognitive theory, where learning is primarily through personal experience of the natural environment and through play, in an ordered sequence of development. There are three major aspects from Piagetian theory for the appropriateness of play as the way to learn in a preschool environment (Meadows and Cashdan, 1988, p.49). These are assimilation, activity and readiness, whereby children assimilate and accommodate relevant information, are active in their play and proceed onto different activities at a point at which maturational readiness is acquired (Meadows and Cashdan, 1988). All of these elements can be seen in these teachers' beliefs about child development, in their emphasis on learning through experience, in waiting for the teachable moment or believing that children will come to learn something in their own time.

Piaget's theory acknowledges that social experience and interpersonal behaviour are an important part of development, but in his theory they play a limited and secondary role. Social interaction (especially with other children) mainly contributes to development by exposing the child to other points of view, providing opportunity for the child to rethink her own point of view. However, such a change can only occur when the child is in an appropriate state of "readiness" to accommodate a new concept. As Wood (1988) states "for Piaget, any social facilitation of development only works when the child's own understanding, based on his commerce with nature, is in an appropriate state of readiness for change" (p.16). In contrast, Wood suggests that developmental readiness is an inappropriate way of understanding how children learn. Social interaction between the child, other children and other adults is the means by which Wood proposes that children achieve a "joint construction" of knowledge of the world around them. It is in the

discussion of children's deficits and how teachers help them to overcome these deficits that their understanding of the need for one to one teaching becomes clear. The belief in maturational readiness and the belief in the need to "scaffold" some children is not necessarily contradictory. It is eclectic, certainly, but it is consistent with Spodek's "implicit theories" and Genishi's "theories of practice" in which teachers do what works to meet the needs of children, which is based upon their training and their prior experience.

The kindergarten movement in this country has an early history of "rescuing" young children from poverty (Cook, 1985), in line with a conceptualisation elsewhere of early childhood education as an inoculation against failure (Mindes, 1990). Longitudinal research in the United States has indicated that such early childhood education may not have the desired academic outcomes, but results in an increased social competence (Schweinhart, Weikart and Lerner, 1986). It will be interesting to see if Hendricks, Meade and Wylie's (1993) longitudinal research in New Zealand into the influences of early childhood education on child competency confirms this finding. Most of these examples point to the teachers understanding that all children do not come from what they consider to be privileged backgrounds on a variety of grounds. Teacher 5's comments about her awareness of the literacy problems that parents have also indicates this.

It is interesting that this deficit view persists despite research such as Heath's (1986) which states that most children bring at least a strong oral tradition to early education, even though illiterate parents cannot fulfil all the dimensions of literacy backgrounds proposed by Teale and Sulzby (1989). Teachers' beliefs, in this study, that children lack basic skills and experiences are similar to Hughes (1989) British research with reception class teachers. Teachers in Hughes' study said that children were egocentric and immature, lacked basic skills/knowledge and were unable to socialise. They also thought that children showed poor concentration, showed little evidence of social training and poor language skills. Teachers blamed these "deficits" on the home environment, stating that there was no language in the home, no stimulation and social problems (such as non stereotypical family groupings). Hughes (1989) compared teachers' beliefs about certain children with observation of the child at home and at school, and with the parents' beliefs about the child, and was unable to support the teachers' claims that there was no language or stimulation. Children were clearly articulate in the dialect of the home, a finding with some parallels to Tizard and Hughes (1984) findings of how children learn at home and at school.

Although the role of "expert" or "parent educator" did not sit comfortably with many of the teachers, the comment that parents see them as "social welfare type" people was very common. However, as Parr et al. (1991) point out, teachers are seen as and see themselves as experts, and this contrasts with parents who are seen as having little to offer to discussions of curriculum or pedagogy. Parr et al. state that this is surprising considering that most early childhood centres and new entrant classes have an open door policy, but "ironically, parents do not seem to be regarded by the professionals as anything

remotely bordering on equal partners, but then nor do they view themselves as such.” (p. 330).

Similarly, Hughes (1989) found that teachers were reluctant to involve parents of "deprived" children in the classroom, as they would provide a poor language model. There is enormous variety of involvement of parents in these kindergartens. Some parents are involved in Management Committees, many in fundraising. Some kindergartens have active rostered parent help schemes, while others have no involvement at all. Kindergartens 2 and 12 were noteworthy, in that K2 had the most active parent help roster (a parent for every session) and K12 because they had parents involved with the planning of activities and they were involved in the classroom, particularly with regard to cross cultural issues.

It is in many ways extraordinary that teachers' knowledge of developmental and educational theory is at such odds with their skill knowledge and contextual knowledge. The view of child development described by teachers seems to be achievable if teachers simply provide the right resources and give children encouragement. Although children with deficits in their development are considered differently, there is a strong sense in which most children will simply develop on their own, given enough time. This is a very different view of teacher role than the sections on skill knowledge and contextual knowledge described. Using the teacher's "voice" to promote learning was a major aspect of skill knowledge. Contextual knowledge acquired through observation, developmental checklisting and home visiting provided the teachers with the knowledge to make instruction individually, socially and culturally appropriate. The view of child development described in this section is clearly constructivist, while the view described in skill knowledge and contextual knowledge is closer to a social construction of child development, where teachers build their knowledge of the child through their knowledge of the child's home background and culture and base their instruction on need identified by talking with children. Development could be said to be co-constructed (McNaughton, 1995), guided (Rogoff, 1990), assisted (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990) or scaffolded (Bruner, 1986) between the teacher and the child, according to teachers' accounts of skill and contextual knowledge; their implicit theories of practice. Yet their theory of development is of the traditional Piagetian conception of the individual child, progressing through irreversible stages of cognitive development at a biologically determined rate.

Teachers' theories of development and education are similar to conceptions of child development promoted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1991) in the United States in their guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice. The guidelines adopt a normative perspective, which suggest that programmes should be based on age-related guidelines (Cullen, 1996). The influence of different cultures and contexts on children's learning makes the term developmentally appropriate problematic (Clay, 1991); while a notion of individual appropriateness provides a more dynamic perspective on development which can involve the influence of

individual experiences in families and communities (Cullen, 1996). Teachers in this study use individually appropriate practice with individual children in their teaching, but their theory of development is in terms of broad normative developmental expectations. This is the clearest gap between teachers' theories of development and practice. Teachers think that most children should not need their assistance to learn, but if they do, the teacher will provide scaffolding. By considering that children come to kindergarten with a variety of learning and experiential deficits, teachers virtually blame parents for the need to teach the children in their charge; where it could be argued that the "scaffolding" they undertake with young children from "deprived" homes is a very appropriate way for children to learn.

Views of child development and the role of teachers and kindergarten are further developed in the following final section of the results for this chapter on teachers' social and moral philosophy. The chapter will then conclude with a summary and discussion.

Social and moral philosophy

Social rules were the most frequently mentioned elements of social or moral philosophy in the kindergartens. Social rules fell into three categories; social regulation, rules for life and the importance of social development in kindergarten.

Social rules

Social regulation or learning how to interact socially in an acceptable manner was discussed primarily with regard to the question on social and moral philosophy, but it also emerged throughout nearly all the interviews. Caring for other people is one of the important aspects of Teacher 3's social and moral philosophy, and a frequent aspect of social regulation. She likes to teach children mediation skills and to give them the vocabulary to express their feelings. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 11 all expressed the need to teach children mediation skills, how to share and how to care for other people. Respecting others is an important part of the social and moral philosophy in K8:

So there is the respect thing of, let me say, children not hurting each other, of sharing, of listening to others when there is problems to be sorted out, it there is conflict. Of respecting what other children do, whether it is building with the blocks, doing something in the sandpit, not infringing on that child's activities - you know its like space. We encourage them to encourage each other and to be pleased when somebody has achieved something that perhaps they have been struggling away to do for a long time (T8:14:1-7).

Teacher 8 likes to encourage assertiveness in children, so that they can resolve their own conflict situations. She also encourages good manners, such as sharing, turn taking and saying please and thank you, and giving other children privacy. There are rules in K4, but they are mainly linked to safety, such as not hitting or throwing sand or running inside.

Teacher 3 believes that it is important to teach children "to make choices and decisions that are morally right"(T3:29:14-15). Part of this is making decisions and accepting responsibility for their own actions. Children are encouraged to co-operate but also to express their own point of view. She does not believe in teaching religion, but thinks that children should be prepared to become part of a society, regardless of their personality:

I suppose you know you want children, whether they are quiet or outgoing or vivacious or whatever, you want them to actually fit into society in that position, in that whatever they feel comfortable at and to be accepted and to feel that they can still contribute. They don't have to be the public speaker...or whatever. But in whatever capacity...their skills lay that they can contribute in that way and I suppose that's basically what you are trying to provide for the children (T3:29:42-48).

Learning to share is one important aspect of the social and moral philosophy of K5. Children have to learn to cope with different situations and to learn to communicate clearly with other children, instead of mumbling. Another important issue is the notion of truth. She impresses on children that if they tell the truth and be honest, that nothing will happen to them. She thinks this is difficult for them, when some come from home backgrounds where "it is probably easier to not tell the truth, to shut up"(T5:11:45-46). However, as previously reported in Section 4.2.5., Teacher 5 commented that she is very careful about codes of behaviour with different ethnic groups, and how she talks to parents about any difficulties encountered with children. Teacher 9 says that there are social rules in her kindergarten, where children are taught to be aware of others feelings. As she explains:

We have social rules, that they should be aware of how each other is feeling. We try and promote that. And often we have discussions. We have got games and things that reinforce it with sad and happy faces and we try and get children to express how they are feeling. The same things with the empowering them to go back and tell the other child how they are feeling, why they don't like it. That type of thing (T9:17:29-34).

Teacher 9 thinks that home environments play the most important role in children's development, but that kindergarten teachers can programme to meet children's specific social needs.

Teacher 7 does not believe in telling children to say please and thank you, as she considers this to be simply parroting, but this attitude was the exception. Most teachers expressed the need to teach children "good manners", which was saying please and thank you as well as learning how to wait for a turn and to respect the teacher. Teachers 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10 discussed the need for children to learn how to wait their turn, or the session would not flow smoothly. For some teachers, such as Teacher 9 good manners also included learning how to behave on the mat and respecting the teacher's role on the mat. Teacher 9 gave the following examples of learning how to share and to take turns, regarding process cooking and morning tea:

There is a rule that there is two children at a time. One person can cook at a time or you cook with a friend. Morning tea table there is four chairs, so four people can eat at a time. If there is no chairs then you have to wait (T9:18:26-29).

Children are encouraged to be independent, as :

We want to promote self-help skills. We want a child to be able to think for themselves, to be creative in their thinking as well. We hope our programme gives three hours for creativity (T9:18:39-41).

For some teachers it is seen as important to teach children the social rules that they are perceived as needing through life. Teachers 1, 3, 5, 6 and 10 discussed the need to prepare children for life. Teacher 1 considers that children need to learn the rules somewhere and that they must be learned at kindergarten if not at home. Teacher 3 also considers that children have to be taught to fit into society regardless of their skills. Teachers 6 and 10 both hope that they teach children good habits in relating to people which will lead to positive interactions for life. Teacher 5 thinks that kindergarten sets children up with the right principles for life.

Teacher 6 said that learning how people can and should interact is one of the strongest philosophies in her kindergarten. However, she discussed her awareness of the reproduction of social classes, and her hope that kindergarten makes a difference to children's chances. She is sure that it does make a difference in the short term, as children leave confident that they can do anything and do it well. Teacher 6 outlined her discovery that primary school teachers have little knowledge of how kindergarten operates, and therefore stall some children's long term benefits.

Some of the teachers expressed opinions about the social development of children in kindergarten, and the role that teachers play in that development. Teacher 7 believes that children are usually good, but inquisitive. She commented:

I don't think children are bad. They are usually inquisitive and if what they are doing is not correct at that it is just because of the situation. You know if they are pouring water in the wrong place it is just they are experimenting with water so you just find what they want to do with the water and make sure that play caters for that need. If it is pouring down a hole and blocking up the drain you get a tube or something and pour it in the sandpit. Usually, ...that's why they are doing it. So you can usually find all sorts of, you can just redirect their play. I don't find any problems with that(T7:14:42-47; 15:1-3).

No guns are allowed, but Teacher 7 says that children are "very very clever" and will call even imaginary guns lasers, or say that it is part of a T.V. game. She said that she tells children that she is turning the T.V. game off. Teacher 5 similarly discourages aggressive play and explained that they had been having a lot of trouble with children playing with guns, real or imaginary. As she states :

Even their finger is a gun, they can have a leaf and it is a gun, and they will see you coming and they will put their finger away, and I will say to them "were you playing with a gun?" - "no, no, I just had my fingers out"(T5:29:29-33).

Teacher 5 is not sure if the influence is T.V. or the aggression in society. Teachers 1, 2, 6, and 8 all explained that children are happier if limits are set on their behaviour and they learn the social rules of kindergarten.

A common concern expressed was the need for children to learn social skills before going to school. These skills include sitting on the mat , cleaning up and learning how to interact with others. Children are expected to be able to sit in a group for

discussions in K7, and to tidy up and look after equipment. Reasons are always given as to why it is important to look after equipment. Celebrating children's birthdays is also a social ritual of this kindergarten. Teacher 12, with her experience in primary school, said that schools do not focus sufficiently on social development, but children need these skills before they can be effective learners.

It was interesting to note that three of the older teachers discussed the need for behaviour rules in the kindergarten. Teacher 2 hopes that all children leave the kindergarten displaying what she calls "acceptable behaviour":

That is being able to share, being able to cuddle someone who's hurt, being able to wait until it's my turn to talk, being able to take my turn instead of pushing in for morning tea, I have to wait. Being kind and considerate, yes all those sorts of things(T2:16:50-53).

She explained that this didn't always work, and gave the example of a little boy who they didn't have problems with at kindergarten, but who would go home and throw things through windows to get his parent's attention or threaten the local intermediate children in the street with a knife.

Rules for behaviour are the main aspect of Teacher 10's philosophy. There are few rules, mainly safety ones, to stop children from hurting each other. If they do try, they are re-directed very quickly. Occasionally she uses "time out" and sits a child in one place, if one child has been badly hurt, and she wants to attend to them. She tries to make sure that there are always parent helpers to assist with the supervision of situations. Teacher 7 also discussed the need to prevent children from hurting each other.

Although kindergarten and safety rules were discussed under common sense knowledge, they also occurred in responses to this category of teacher knowledge. Teaching children to learn the common sense and safety rules of the kindergarten are an aspect of the curriculum in K4. Rules are explained to children and put on notice boards for parents. Safety rules include no running, washing hands and using equipment safely for Teachers 3, 6, 8 and 9. Kindergarten rules encompassed time rules, like the time that mat session is started in K2 and K10 and use of equipment rules in K6 and K9. It is interesting that expression of time rules in the kindergarten occurred in some of the older and the youngest teachers.

Equity and personal responsibility

One of the important aspects of Teacher 11's social and moral philosophies is "that everyone is responsible for our own actions"(T11:13:16). She considers they have a responsibility to provide information and support to parents, but also to consult with the community. Consultation takes many forms; including talking at sessions and playgroups, talking with parent helpers or out on outings or by sending newsletters, questionnaires. Problems with knowledge sharing because of language difficulties has been solved by using contacts in the community, and literacy problems are overcome with a phone tree.

The final philosophy that Teacher 11 discussed was that "information is power", in that parents are often amazed that they have a choice of schools and that they can look before they choose.

In terms of a social and moral philosophy, Teacher 12 stated that she hoped they "really do believe in social equity of all sectors and increasingly accepting of all cultures"(T12:12:17-18). The cultural emphasis now present in K12 was absent from Teacher 12's training. She also hopes they provide a good model for the sharing of power and empowering parents. As she explains:

Increasingly our role is going to be one of parents' education. And of supporting parents to help them to find support that is culturally and socially appropriate to them (T12:12:25-27).

She considers that any cultural emphasis in the kindergarten needs to be community based.

Teacher 12 outlined the important impact that early childhood education has on children's lives. She explained that K12 had traditionally had a special needs unit attached to it, but that a government policy change has meant that the special unit was taken away. Children now attend their local community kindergarten with an itinerant teacher. Both groups of children attending the kindergarten benefited from the interaction, according to Teacher 12 and the identifiable group of special needs children "had a very positive impact on the whole kindergarten" (T12:13:23). Truth and justice are part of common sense knowledge, as well as a social and moral philosophy for Teacher 12. She sees truth and justice in terms of equity, as she says:

It's more into personal values, but I do encourage honesty and discourage dishonesty and equity is quite important to me as well, to provide equal opportunities (T12:13:38-40).

Individual differences

Individual differences were also discussed by Head Teachers in the section regarding their knowledge about child development. Social and cultural differences were discussed as part of Head Teachers contextual knowledge. Under social and moral philosophy, the knowledge of individual differences is a mixture of both individual and social differences; recognising both children's innate personality and the influence of the home culture. Part of Teacher 3's general philosophy is to accept the individual differences between children, and to realise that not all children will be socially outgoing and confident. She considers that a lot happens between the ages of 5 and 16, but she hopes that they carry with them some of the confidence that they build in kindergarten. She tries to make kindergarten a fun place, where they can express themselves before they reach the more rigid structure of the school system.

Understanding a child's background and meeting the individual child's need is a large part of Teacher 4's social and moral philosophy, and part of what she describes as her moral obligation. However, she believes firmly in secular education and firmly

resisted pressure from Christian families to include religion in the programme. As a staff, Teacher 4 and her colleagues have worked out what behaviours are acceptable to them and what feels comfortable for them all. Teacher 4 thinks that education can make a difference to children's lives. Teachers 9 and 12 also discussed their belief that all children have different needs and a different developmental rate. Teacher 11 described this difference as different "dispositions" in children.

Discussion

It is interesting to note the relationship between the responses for common sense knowledge and social and moral philosophy. Both sets of responses are concerned with the need to care for other people and to treat children and adults as individuals. The emphasis on socialising children into society has a long history in New Zealand. Compassion for the children of the poor was a strong motivation for the establishment of the kindergarten movement, but so too was the desire to civilise them and turn them into respectable citizens. The earliest conception of a free kindergarten was for those children who had nowhere to play and no-one to care for them while they played (Hughes, 1989), the emphasis on Christian and charitable intervention (Carr, 1991). Kindergarten was also supported by the Government in 1947 in the Bailey Report, because it emphasised the companionship of other children and because it reinforced the notion of parental responsibility for child rearing by its half day nature (Carr, 1991). In 1991 Anne Meade reinforced the social nature of early childhood education when she said that "early childhood teachers put a lot of time into socialisation, and socialisation is cultural transmission by another name" (p.58). Hughes (1989) says that "all kindergartens trained children in orderly habits" (p.24), as well as trying to keep them healthy.

There is a strong relationship between these teachers beliefs about social and moral philosophy and the aims for the National Curriculum. For instance, under the aim of belonging, Goal 4 states that "children and their families will experience and environment in which they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour" (p.70). The knowledge, skills and attitudes that children will develop are an understanding that teachers will be fair, that children will learn rules and the reasons for rules, understand the consequences of their actions and learn to negotiate. Under Aim 3: Contribution, the guiding statement is that "opportunities for learning are equitable and each child's contribution is valued" (p.73). It would seem that the philosophy that these teachers are reflecting is part of a broader trend in early childhood education. One of the more problematic features of Te Whariki is the uneven way in which the aims and goals are supported by reference to theory and research. For both of these aims mentioned, there is no reference to useful supporting research in the last section of the document, so presumably these aims are a reflection of current practice which the advisory groups for the Curriculum Project considered important to include in the National Curriculum.

Certainly the trend to look for equitable individual learning opportunities is reflected in the data reported here, as the phrase "acceptable behaviour" from Teacher 2. Murrow's (1995) review of practitioners' opinions of Te Whariki seem to support the view that the curriculum guidelines are perceived by teachers as reflecting current practice. Statements such as "It's good to have put into words what we promote" suggests that practitioners are perceiving the guidelines in terms of current philosophy and practice (Cullen, 1996). It is probable that the views expressed in the present study are a reflection of a wider set of beliefs shared by early educators in New Zealand. There is a sense of Spodek's (1988) 'invisible agenda' of socialisation, in which there are certain expected standards of behaviour, despite the rhetoric of meeting individual needs. There are exceptions, of course, like Teachers 4, 11, and 12 who clearly discuss meeting the needs and values of children of different cultures.

Summary and discussion

As part of a larger research project designed to look at literacy development in kindergarten, the present research set out to explore the "implicit theories" (Spodek, 1988) of a group of Head kindergarten teachers in one urban area. Interviews involved the nature of teacher's knowledge that they use in their teaching practice. Using Carr and Kemmis' (1983) dimensions of teacher knowledge as a basis for the interview provided a way of teasing out the different elements of the teacher's implicit theories that they use in their practice, which would then provide a foundation from which to make sense of the observation data and the results of the teacher and parent questionnaires.

This part of the data collection was designed to fulfil the aims of identifying teachers orientation toward cognitive and literacy development and to consider possible links with Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development". It was also designed to collect data on Head Teachers perceptions of the role of the teacher and the parent in literacy activities, as well as teachers' views of themselves as teachers and how they perceived the role of kindergarten in children's development.

Teachers revealed views of themselves as teachers in all of the interview questions. They had taken up what was considered an "appropriate career choice" for women, within a limited choice of Karitane/infant nursing or teaching if they wanted to work with children. Most had had a break in their careers to have children, returning after children had gone to school. Teachers considered that they were better teachers after they had had children. These results were unsurprising in a country in which 99% of all kindergarten teachers are women and in which the Government had declared women should care for children, prior to these women training. Teachers had experienced greater stress in their jobs since the advent of government intervention in early childhood in the form of Charters and bulk funding. Some saw it as important to be more accountable,

while others expressed a sense of “de-skilling”, as they had less time to do the curriculum planning and spent more time on administrative tasks.

Teachers discussed using a range of teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of children as common sense and talking to children and adults as the primary focus of skill knowledge. Teaching strategies were described as the means of preventing the free play programme from becoming chaotic. Teachers described using one to one teaching to help children to learn new skills or become independent in the programme. This description is very close to Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development", in which teachers "scaffold" a child's learning on a task. Teachers also described using a social language of kindergarten teaching, or “voice” (Bakhtin, in Wertsch, 1991) through which children come to understand a range of uses of language and intentions, which may prepare them to understand other instructional voices in the future. The use of scaffolding and a teaching “voice” will be interesting issues to follow up in the observations, as teachers have already said that time to do this is limited with the staff:child ratio and that teachers often meet evident needs first. Teachers do understand the power of their role in the learning environment, and do not simply leave children to learn at their own pace in the environment. They are quite aware of the gap between the rhetoric of the free play curriculum and their practice of stepping in and out of children's play if they perceive a “need”.

Head Teachers said that caring is a key element of their common sense knowledge and their social and moral philosophy, as well as teaching children social rules, which are echoed in the Charter handbook as fitting into society and in Te Whariki, the new guidelines for appropriate practice in early childhood, as acceptable behaviour. Kindergarten in New Zealand has a long history of socialising children to be respectable citizens. Teachers discussed teamwork as common sense to coping with the staff:child ratio and an important aspect of respecting and caring for colleagues. Teachers explained during the interview that they gain knowledge of children through observations in the kindergarten, home visits before children start school and through their knowledge of the rest of the family or from the community.

Although Head teachers did not refer to constructivism or Piagetian theory, they were seen to have adopted a constructivist view of cognitive development, in which children are seen as active learners who learn through experience of the environment. Teachers also believe in waiting for the "teachable moment" or believe that children will learn best when they are “ready”. The “free play” curriculum is child centred, meeting Kohlberg and Mayer's (1972) criteria for a "progressive" curriculum. Literacy is an important aspect of the curriculum for many teachers. A story is often read to children at mat sessions and songs, rhymes and chants take up the majority of the group mat time in many kindergartens. A few Head Teachers actively teach children Clay's “concepts of print”, of print carrying the message, directionality and prediction skills. Some encourage story writing, while all encourage use of a magnetic name board so that

children will learn to write their own name. There is an uneven use of library systems in kindergartens, with a noticeable lack of libraries in kindergartens in low SES areas.

Kindergarten was seen to offer children a preparation for school, a foundation for learning and in some cases a place to learn basic skills or concepts. These skills were both cognitive, like learning numbers and letters, as well as social, like learning to wait their turn and say please and thank you. Parents were seen as important partners in children's learning, but often seen to be wanting, as teachers talked about the deficits in children's home backgrounds, and how parents can be educated to help their children learn. Children come from a wide range of SES backgrounds, family structures and ethnic groupings, although not all kindergartens have a wide mixture. K2 and K9 are almost exclusively high SES and European, while K5 and K6 have more ethnic groups, diverse family structures and low SES status.

Spodek (1988) points out that even teachers who are teaching children of the same age, in the same school, may have completely different "implicit theories". The difference in "implicit theories" can occur even if the teachers have a similar training history. Greene (1988) describes a teacher's strongest beliefs as "governing obsessions", and suggests that they tell a lot about what people believe to be "good practice" (in Genishi, 1992). Genishi (1992) states that practices described by teachers may be features of "theories of practice" (p.198) or those theories about children, development, learning and assessment that underlie teacher's curricular decisions and interactions. They can be contrasted with "theories of development" outlined by Fein and Schwartz (1982), which are an account of growth and change from birth to adulthood. Theories of development are descriptive, they explain how development does occur, not how it should occur. A theory of development is passive regarding children's learning environments. It does not address the question of how adults can enhance development through teaching strategies or activities. Theories of practice on the other hand, apply to particular children and teachers in educational settings. These theories are prescriptive and lead to recommendations about how adults should view development and moreover how they should arrange environments for children (Genishi, 1992). Fein and Schwartz (1982) recommend a relationship of reciprocity and mutual dependence between theorists of development and practice. Spodek (1986) suggests that a theory of practice in the kindergarten movement alters over time in response to changing theory regarding learning and development or that kindergarten theory and social values influence each other.

The interesting result is that most teachers have described what Genishi (1992) calls a theory of practice. Genishi (1992) states that theories of practice can be prescriptive, and it is interesting to note the degree of congruence between the teachers beliefs, despite the fact that these teachers have been practicing for as little as three years to as many as twenty three years. There are differences, of course, such as those few teachers who believe in "teaching skills" and those who promote or wish to promote a certain "structure" in the curriculum. These differences are testimony to Spodek's (1988)

statement that teachers “implicit theories” may vary, even within one city. In many ways, however, the theories of these teachers are very similar, despite the different training cohorts teachers have experienced. The similarity of teacher's theories of practice in the present study suggests that this finding might be able to be confirmed with a larger sample of kindergarten teachers.

In many ways, the “implicit theories” of these teachers are eclectic; they range from a normative maturational perspective to a belief in scaffolding, all encompassed by a belief in appropriate practice. However, the “governing obsession” (Greene, 1988) of these teachers appears to be a belief in constructivism, that children are active learners, who need to learn through interaction with the environment. The major role of these teachers is to encourage children to interact with the environment. However, there is recognition that “free play” may not be appropriate to all children, but that the child initiated programme is ‘common sense’ to coping with few teachers and eighty children in two sessions per day.

CHAPTER FIVE

The structured interview with parents and teachers

This data represents the first part of the second phase of the data collection. In each of six selected kindergartens a questionnaire was administered within a structured interview with six parents (36 in total) and all Assistant teachers (11 in total). The data collection was designed to fulfil the second aim of the research; which was to collect data on the perceptions that parents and Assistant teachers have of their role in children's literacy development. This aim included examining how parents and teachers promote cognitive and literacy development, how they perceive themselves as teachers and how they see the role of the kindergarten in children's development.

Methods

Sample

This part of the data collection involved a structured interview with a small number of parents (six in each Kindergarten) to complete a questionnaire, regarding beliefs about child development, their role in children's learning and their literacy practices. A similar interview, with the questions slanted toward an early childhood setting, was conducted with Assistant Teachers, in order to be able to compare the similarities and differences in beliefs between parents and teachers. Kindergartens in which parents and Assistant teachers were interviewed were K1, K2, K3, K4, K5 and K6. K1 and K2 had children from high SES families. K3 and K4 had children from middle SES families and K5 and K6 had children from low SES families. This selection of kindergartens gave a broad representative sample of the city's population. Observations completed in these kindergartens are reported in Chapter 6.

When the interview dates with the Head Teachers were confirmed, selection of parents for the interview was discussed. Teachers were asked to select a group of six parents who fulfilled the following criteria; they were prepared to be interviewed, they had the confidence to be interviewed by a stranger, and they came from a range of educational, ethnic and educational backgrounds. Some of the Head Teachers discussed the reasons for their choice, either before or after the interview had been conducted, although the reasons for the choice were never sought. An outline of the research and the interview (see Appendix 7) was given to each person selected and they were asked to respond the following day if they were interested in being interviewed, after they had had a chance to talk to their family about it. In some cases, people read the description straight away and then said they didn't need to talk to their family and arranged a time at

that point. In other cases, it meant that people were unable to be contacted again, either in person or by telephone and another person had to be selected by the teacher. Although time consuming, this approach did mean that people had time to think about whether they felt comfortable revealing aspects of their lives. When contact was again made with the person, they stated whether they wanted to be interviewed (although there were actually no refusals) and a time arranged for the structured interview. This was often at the beginning or end of a kindergarten session, although some were completed in people's homes, at other times, if that suited them better. Interviewees were informed that it would take about three quarters of an hour to complete the interview.

The parents.

Parents interviewed ranged in age from 26 years to 44 years of age, with a mean age of 34.75 years. Partners ranged in age from 27 to 60 years, with a mean age of 36.73 years. Four of the parents interviewed were male, with three of these being the primary caregiver of the child and the other sharing care of the child with his partner. The other 32 were female and the primary caregiver of the child attending Kindergarten.

School Certificate was the most common highest secondary school qualification of parents. Forty-four percent of parents left school with school certificate, the examinations completed at the end of three years of high school. Sixteen percent of parents had no school qualifications, while 8% had University Entrance, 13% had Higher School Certificate (gained after five years of High School) and 16% had University bursary. Davey (1993) points out that in 1976, around that time many of these people would have been leaving school, nearly 60% of European and nearly 80% of Maori left high school with no qualifications at all. In light of this finding, the group of parents interviewed were moderately well educated for their cohort. Twenty two percent (22%) of parents had completed university; four with Bachelor's degrees, two with a Bachelor's degree with Honours and one with Ph.D. Three other parents had some papers towards a Bachelors degree.

Forty two percent (42%) of parents had gained a national trade certificate or diploma since leaving school, such as the Diploma in Radiography, Teaching or Nursing or the Trade Certificate in Hair Dressing, Short Hand Typing or Engineering. Ten parents (28%) had no formal qualifications. The remainder had completed short training courses related to their work, such as "Pitman's" typing exams, Bank or Post Office training. The most common qualification gained by this group of parents was the Diploma of Teaching, which six parents held. The most common occupation (66%) for this group of parents was house wife/husband or several euphemisms to describe being the parent who stays at home and is primary caregiver to the children. Other occupations of parents included, for example, company directors and managers, nurses, teachers, market researchers, and hairdressers.

Thirty two of the parents described themselves as being of European descent, with two parents of Maori descent, one Pacific Islander and one Philippino. Two children was the most common family size for parents, while no teachers or parents had more than four children. Forty-seven percent of children attending Kindergarten from this group are first born children.

Many families (31%) in this sample earn less than \$30, 000 per annum (see Table 5.1.), although most families (47%) are in the middle income brackets, earning between \$30-60,000 per annum.

Table 5.1. : Parent's family income per annum	Total = 36
<20, 000	9 (25%)
20-30, 000	4 (11%)
30-40, 000	8 (22%)
40-60, 000	9 (25%)
60-80, 000	3 (8%)
>80, 000	3 (8%)

The mean income for the group is between \$40,000-60,000 per annum. Considering that many of these parents do not work, this is a fairly high annual income on a single salary. This is probably explained by the number of educational, professional and technical employment possibilities in the area.

It is difficult to establish exactly what an average income for New Zealanders is, but Davey's (1993) analysis of census data gives some approximate numbers. Income in New Zealand is related to age and sex. Women aged 30-39 often have low family incomes, as they are either out of the work force child rearing or in the part time work force. Income is also affected by ethnic grouping; so that a person with Maori ancestry aged 30-39 will earn on average between \$10-30, 000; a person of Pacific Island ancestry will earn on average between \$10-20, 000 and a person of European descent will earn on average between \$10-30, 000. Personal income is divided into seven ranges of income by the Department of Statistics. The top category is \$70, 000 per annum and over. The bottom range is \$5, 000 and below. Most of the personal incomes of families in this study thus fell into the fifth and sixth ranges of income, as most family income was \$30-60,000. Household income or combined family income is divided into twenty percent quintiles by the Department of Statistics, although these quintiles are not attached to dollar amounts. Davey (1993) states the children of European descent are most likely to live in homes with family incomes in the top two quintiles (corresponding to the upper ranges of personal income), while Maori and Pacific Island family incomes will more likely be in the bottom two quintiles. The high average family income in the present study can thus be explained by the predominance of families of European descent, while the range of

income levels can be explained by the number of single parent families (five) and families living on the unemployment benefit (five).

The children of the parents involved in this study have had an average of about 2 years experience in early childhood education, with the mode being 12-18 months. Of those 27 children who had attended another early childhood service, Playgroups were the most common, totalling 59%. Playgroups and Playcentre were grouped together for this category, as children had attended a variety of once-a-week, parent cooperative playgroups, a few in Playcentre, but others in church halls, Plunket Rooms and kindergartens. The part time nature of all "playgroup" type attendance made the distinction of location relatively unimportant. It was interesting to note that two of the parents also classed Sunday School attendance as early childhood education.

The mode for kindergarten attendance was also 12-18 months, with an average for all children of 18 months of attendance. Thirty-one of the children whose parents were interviewed attended the morning session of kindergarten. The other five attended the afternoon session, most likely the children who have had only six months of kindergarten attendance. This was an interesting outcome, as it had not been specifically mentioned to the teachers prior to beginning the study whether morning or afternoon children were wanted. This may have occurred because teachers know the morning children's parents better, as the child has generally attended kindergarten longer. The teachers probably have a better knowledge of these parents and nominated them accordingly.

The Assistant Teachers

The Assistant Teachers involved in this study range in age from 23 to 56 years, with a mean age of 37.2 years. All of the teachers interviewed were female. Forty-five percent of teachers left school with University Entrance, having completed examinations at the end of the fourth year of high school. Teachers were among the less than 30% of their cohort who a sixth form certificate or better (Davey, 1993). However, 36% of teachers also had only school certificate on leaving school. All of the Assistant Teachers listed that their qualification for their present position was their kindergarten Teacher's Diploma. Only two of the kindergarten teachers had a Bachelors degree, although four teachers had completed 15 papers of a Bachelor of Education in conjunction with their teacher training. Teachers all described themselves as of European descent, with Assistant Teacher 5 also listing Maori ancestry. Four of the teachers had no children, but of those who do, two was the most common number of children to have. Two of the teacher earned less than \$20,000 per year. Both of these were new teachers, who had only been teaching a few months. The other teachers all earned between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per annum. In her examination of the employment conditions of the teaching profession in New Zealand, Slyfield (1992) found that in 1990 the mean salary level of kindergarten teachers was \$29,747 for men, while the mean salary of women was \$28,064. The higher

salary of Head teachers (a maximum of \$35,000 at the time of interview) and Senior teachers increase the average salary.

Teachers have had a range of years of experience teaching, from less than a year to 28 years, with a mean of 8.7 years experience in teaching early childhood education, with a mean of 8.5 years of teaching kindergarten in particular. In addition, most of the teachers have taught in a variety of other early childhood services for short periods of time. The most frequent of these other services is Childcare, which three teachers had taught, although an equal number of teachers have only taught in kindergarten. Some teachers had also worked in Playgroups, new entrant classrooms and as a nanny. Surprisingly, one of the teachers listed teaching Sunday School as early childhood teaching experience.

Teachers were asked their reason for choosing kindergarten as an early childhood service. Their reasons paralleled those of Head Teachers in the indepth interview reported in Chapter four; eight of the teachers said that they wanted to work with children. Other reasons included the importance of early childhood education, contact with parents, team teaching and the job fitting in with family responsibilities. The only interesting difference between the two groups of teachers is that no Assistant Teachers said that their choice was limited or that it was an appropriate career choice. This may be because this is a younger cohort of teachers, who grew up with different cultural expectations.

Data collection

The decision was made to use an interview to complete the questionnaire, because comprehensive data from the questionnaire was wanted. For the same reason, it was decided to interview a small number of parents from each kindergarten, rather than hand out 80 questionnaires to families in each kindergarten. It seemed all too possible to get a poor return on the questionnaires and create confusion and a “paper war” in the kindergartens, as well as getting superficial comments on the questionnaires. The interview would provide an opportunity to explain the questions, that a pencil and paper method would not.

Three revisions of the questions were completed, in an attempt to make questions understandable to people with a range of educational backgrounds. The interview protocol was tried in various formats with parents (personal friends) from the University child care centre. Some of the child care teachers gave advice on the format as well. The trials were recorded, a process which trial interviewees reported was not distracting.

Copies of the interview protocol for parents are included as Appendix 8 and the interview protocol for Assistant Teachers in Appendix 9. The first section of the parent interview asked questions about the person's age, sex, ethnic group, educational background, occupation, family size and income. Teachers were also asked about their qualifications for their teaching position and about their years of experience. The samples

were categorised using Davey's (1993) analysis of 1991 census data in "From birth to death III". Data from the first section have been reported on in the description of parents and teachers above.

The second section of the interview looked at teachers' and parents' perceptions of children's experience of early childhood education in general and kindergarten in particular. The aim was to find out what parents and teacher thought about how children learn in the kindergarten and how they saw the role of the home and the school in children's literacy development. Most of these questions were open ended, in order not to suggest the possible "right" answers to participants. The aim was also to establish if this group of parents and teachers held a common "theory" of child development and cognitive development. These questions had a number of sources, but the primary sources of the types of questions needing to be addressed came from McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1982) and her explanation of the nature and source of parental beliefs, Tizard and Hughes (1984) and their findings on the experiences of children at home and at school, Wells (1985a) on the literacy experiences of children at home, and Meadows and Cashdan's (1988) arguments regarding the role of parents and teachers in children's cognitive and literacy development.

The third section of the interview was drawn from Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon's (1989) Story Reading Experience Questionnaire. It has been altered slightly, in that the order of some of the questions have been changed and the language used in the questions has been rephrased into more common usage. An example is Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon's Question 9(a): "Do you ever make up parts of the story as you are reading such as imaginary dialogue between the characters?" became "Do you ever make up parts of the story such as voices of the characters talking to each other?". In addition, questions about home and school literacy were added to the list, such as Q.39 "do you ever read ABC books with children?" and Q. 40 and 41 about whether children are read or sung nursery rhymes and if they can recite the rhymes. Questions about emergent writing were also included, so that Q.44 concerned children's ability to recognise letters and to spell or write. Questions 45 to 48 concerned children's recognition and use of environmental print.

It was important to follow the sorts of interview methods which had been used with Head Teachers. Giving teachers and parents information about the research and their role in it, was an essential part of the qualitative nature of the research (Oakley, 1981; Jones, 1985). Like the interview procedures taken in the indepth interview with Head Teachers, any questions were answered honestly by the interviewer. This did not compromise the validity of the data, however, as most people only asked questions to clarify the intent of the questions and usually saved more personal questions until the end of the interview. Many parents talked about how confirming they found the interview to be; helping them to realise that all the "ordinary" things they do at home are an integral part of literacy development for their child.

At the arranged time of the interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 7 and 8) and then asked if the interview could be tape recorded, without using their name on the tape to give some back up data in case something happened to the paper copy. A copy of the interview protocol was given to each participant and the questions were also read out loud during the interview.

Analysis

At the completion of the data collection, the taped responses to the open ended questions were transcribed onto the paper copy of the interview. From this point a list of common codes was generated for each open ended question, with similar ideas collapsed into larger categories. A complete list of codes was generated separately for both the teacher and parent interviews. With this list completed, the interviews were examined again, coding the open ended questions and checking the entries for the precoded questions. This data was then entered into an SPSSX programme, which had the questions and value labels written into it. This generated initial descriptive summary tables of the data. Interviews were re-checked against the printout of the data and then the program CRICKET GRAPH was used for graphing and STATVIEW for statistical analyses on the MacIntosh.

The data are presented as graphs and simple statistical analyses, as the numbers are too small to justify a more complex analysis and also because much of the data is self explanatory. The data are not intended to prove that this is the only way that people in New Zealand perceive their literacy practice, more to demonstrate that these are some of the ways that a group of people in a small city practice literacy with children. Moreover, some of the findings of this small sample may uncover the issues to be examined with a larger sample.

As parents and Assistant Teachers were given a modified version of the same interview, the data have been presented together, so that a visual and immediate comparison is possible. Where parents and Assistant Teachers have been questioned using the same categories, a comparison of the relationship between their responses was undertaken by calculating the product-moment coefficient of correlation (sometimes known as Pearson's coefficient) (Graham, 1994, Spiegel, 1994). Pearson's coefficient is calculated on the basis of scores expressed as deviations from the mean. Although product moment correlation is accurate with small data sets, such as those reported in this study, an 'r' value must be very high with such a small batch size to be of any real significance (Graham, 1994, Spiegel, 1994). Correlation is only occasionally used in this chapter to indicate whether the results suggest a trend worthy of further investigation with a larger sample. In the results where correlation has been reported, Student's paired one tailed *t* distribution has been used as a test of significance for small samples (Spiegel, 1994). In line with common practice, $p < 0.05$ has been used as the criterion of statistical

significance. In addition, results that would have met a more stringent criterion are reported as such.

Results

Reasons for the choice of kindergarten as an early childhood experience

Parents and Assistant Teachers were asked what was expected of them in the kindergarten, as part of the second research aim of finding out the role of parents and teachers in children's learning. This section addresses not only what parents and teachers think children are gaining from kindergarten, but also what parents expect of teachers and vice versa. These questions would not only provide more insight into the perceived role of the parent and teacher, but would also further the first aim of finding out what the prevailing theory of cognitive and literacy development is among parents and teachers. This section also provides a point of contrast with Head Teachers' statements that parents are not interested in being involved in kindergarten and have shortcomings in terms of providing stimulating learning environments for children.

Children and teachers in this study are both experienced. Teachers have had a mean of 8.5 years in kindergarten, while children have had an average of 18 months in kindergarten and most children may have had around six months more early childhood education in a Playgroup or Playcentre. Given that most teachers and children have already had some other early childhood experience and have changed, the reasons given for choosing kindergarten give an interesting insight into their philosophy.

The most common reason parents gave for choosing kindergarten for their child was "socialisation" or the possibility to mix with other children (see Table 5.2.). The second and third most common reasons seem to be linked, as near proximity to home and the opportunity for the child to meet children they would go on to school with, seem to be tied to the parent's desire for successful socialisation of the child in the local community. Fourth and fifth most common reasons were preparation for school and because the parent went to kindergarten themselves. Examination of Table 5.2 shows that most of these reasons are tied to the child's ability to fit into society, rather than educational ambitions or achievements.

Table 5.2. : Parent's reasons for choosing kindergarten for child

	Total = 70 ¹
Socialisation	10 (14%)
Local/easy walk/nearest	9 (13%)
To go on to school with the same children	8 (11%)
Parent went to kindergarten	5 (7%)
Preparation for school	5 (7%)
Structure of programme	3 (4%)
Philosophy	3 (4%)
Other children went to kindergarten	3 (4%)
Economical	3 (4%)
Professional qualifications of staff	2 (3%)
Resources	2 (3%)
No harm to child	1 (1%)
Middle of the road option	1 (1%)
Quality of learning	1 (1%)
Learn English	1 (1%)
Early entry to this kindergarten	1 (1%)
Peace/rest for mother	1 (1%)
Link to state system	1 (1%)

¹ Note that parents gave an average of two main reasons for choosing kindergarten.

Parents and teachers were also asked what children gain from attending kindergarten. From the teacher's point of view, children gain the opportunity to mix with other children in a group situation and to gain new skills, which may include group skills and socialisation skills (Table 5.3.). Given that only one teacher considered that she is expected to *teach skills* (shown in Table 5.5.), then children either gain these skills through their own experimentation or mixing with others in a group situation, or there is a marked gap between teachers' beliefs and practice. It was argued by Head Teachers in the in-depth interview that they do need to teach social skills, so that children are able to socialise and mix with a group. The emphasis here on the group situation, however, is very similar to the parents' perception that children gain primarily from "mixing with other children" (Table 5.4.). Other social outcomes, such as socialisation and self confidence also feature strongly for both parents and teachers. The first indication of cognitive outcomes of kindergartens is seen in the code "experience of the programme", especially if combined with the parents' perceptions of "quality experience" in a specific kindergarten in Table 5.4.

Table 5.3. : What Assistant Teachers think children gain from kindergarten

	Total = 22 ¹
Children learn from group situation	5 (22%)
New skills	4 (18%)
Self esteem	3 (13%)
Quality of experiences	2 (9%)
Socialisation	2 (9%)
Independence from parent	2 (9%)
Structure	1 (4%)
Qualified staff	1 (4%)
Care and respect	1 (4%)
Work with parents	1 (4%)

¹ Note that all teachers gave two responses

Table 5.4. : What parents think children gain from kindergarten

	Total = 70 ¹
Mix with other children	23 (33%)
Experience of programme	10 (14%)
Socialisation	10 (14%)
Confidence	10 (14%)
Preparation for school	4 (6%)
Independence	3 (4%)
Quality experience at this kindergarten	2 (2%)
Basic skills	2 (2%)
Mix with other adults	2 (2%)
Time out from home	1 (1%)
Learn English	1 (1%)
Concentration/listening	1 (1%)
Language skills	1 (1%)

¹ Note that most parents gave two responses

The teachers' perceptions of what is expected of them are spread quite evenly (see Table 5.5.). Perhaps the strongest theme emerging is the same one seen in the interviews with Head teachers: that of team work. "Sharing of responsibilities" and "being a productive member of a team" could be combined to a more global code of teamwork. Teachers also see themselves as being expected to provide a good programme, talk with families, be positive and show concern. The emphasis on individual teaching is noticeably small, in contrast to the expectations of parents. It is also interesting that only

one teacher considered teaching skills to be expected of her, whereas Head Teachers (in Chapter Four) had reported teaching skills as an area of their skill knowledge and curriculum. Note also that gaining skills is seen to be an outcome of kindergarten for children, according to teachers. It is possible that Assistant Teachers also teach skills, but do not consider it expected of them. Alternatively, rather than considering that they should teach skills, they may see themselves as providing an environment in which skills can develop.

Table 5.5.: What teachers think is expected of them in kindergarten

	Total = 22 ¹
Be productive member of a team	4 (18%)
Provide a stimulating programme	3 (14%)
Liaise with families	3
Share responsibilities	3
Bring positive aspects to children	3
Concern and warmth	3
Hostess	1
Fundraising	1
Teaching skills	1

¹ Note that teachers gave two responses to this question

Parents most commonly expect teachers to give their children guidance, followed by care, instruction at an individual level and preparation for school (see Table 5.6.). This is an interesting difference from what parents think children are gaining, which is mixing with other children. Parents have more expectation of direct teaching from teachers, than teachers seem to expect of themselves.

It is interesting to note that all of the teachers stated that "parents to get involved" is one of their primary expectations of parents (see Table 5.7.). "Partnership", "working with teachers", "paying fees" and "fundraising" were equally named as expectations, combining as a second major expectation of there being communication and cooperation between teachers and parents, as well as financial support of the kindergarten. Parents also clearly consider that the major expectation of them is to get involved in the kindergarten in some way, as indicated in Table 5.8. Eleven parents also considered that not a lot was expected of them, although just as many named committee work. Fundraising was the second most frequent response.

Table 5.6. : What parents expect of teachers

	Total = 73 ¹
Guidance	14 (19%)
Care	10 (13%)
Teaching at the child's level	8 (11%)
Preparation for school	7 (9%)
Will do the right thing/ fairness	6 (8%)
Kindness	5 (6%)
Professionalism	5 (6%)
Help child learn skills	5 (6%)
Variety of opportunities	4 (5%)
Stimulating environment	3 (4%)
Structure	3 (4%)
Some teaching	2 (2%)
Mat time - learning to behave	1 (1%)

¹ Note that parents gave an average of two responses

Table 5.7. : What teachers expect of parents in this kindergarten

	Total = 26 ¹
Parents to get involved	11 (42%)
Fundraising	3 (11%)
Pay fees	3 (11%)
Work with teachers concerning children	3 (11%)
Partnership between teachers and parents	3 (11%)
Spend time with child in kindergarten	2 (7%)
Parent help	1 (3%)

¹ Note that teachers gave two or more responses

Table 5.8. : What parents think is expected of them in kindergarten

	Total = 82 ¹
Lend a hand/ be involved	23 (28%)
Fundraising	14 (17%)
Not a lot	11 (13%)
Committee work	11 (13%)
Parent help	9 (11%)
Rules of attendance	5 (6%)
Pay fees	4 (5%)
Follow teacher's guide	3 (4%)
Donations of boxes	2 (2%)

¹ Note that parents gave two or three responses

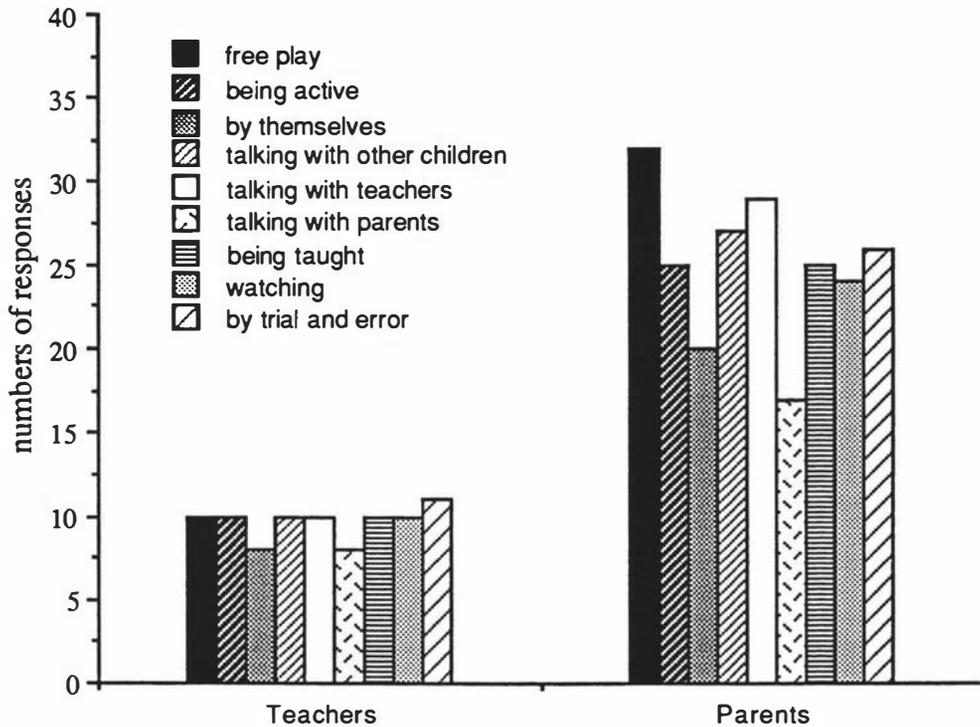
This section has revealed some useful insights into how parents and teachers conceptualise themselves in terms of children's learning and their expectations of what the kindergarten environment will provide for children. Teachers and parents are in agreement that children mainly gain socialisation from attending kindergarten. Teachers consider that they should work as a team member primarily and also provide an interesting programme. Parents, in contrast, have more cognitively oriented expectations of teachers and consider that teachers should be giving children guidance, one on one instruction and preparation for school. Teachers and parents both think that parents should get involved in the kindergarten and provide financial support, although some parents consider that little is expected of them. These preliminary views of parents and teachers provide a useful base to the section which follows, which examines parent's and teacher's views of children learning.

Views of children's learning

Teachers and parents were asked how children learn and were given a list of possible types of learning. They were allowed to choose as many types as they thought appropriate and to add any other unlisted types. The first three types of learning were constructivist, drawing on Piagetian theory; that children would learn through free play, being active and through individual effort. The second set of three are based on learning through interaction; by talking with other children, teachers or parents. The final three types of learning are models of instruction (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990); based on being taught (or direct instruction), watching and trial and error. Most teachers considered that children learn in all of the ways listed (see Figure 5.1), although only trial and error was selected by all of the teachers. In addition, children were perceived by four teachers as

learning through having fun, cooperative learning and through a teaching moment. Most parents perceive children to be learning through free play in the kindergarten, although they clearly considered all the other types of learning to be occurring too. Fewer parents saw children learning through talking with parents in the kindergarten.

Figure 5.1. : How children learn at kindergarten



Interviewees were also asked what was the most common way in which learning occurred at home and at kindergarten, to see if views of learning were the same in different contexts. The two questions revealed some further similarities in teachers' and parents' views of children's learning, as well as some context differences. Both agree that learning occurs primarily through interaction at home and through free play in the kindergarten. Assistant Teachers perceive the most common type of learning which occurs at home to children learning through talking with parents (see Figure 5.2.). Parents also perceive children to primarily learn at home through talking with parents, although "free play" is also considered to be a primary source of learning at home as well (see Figure 5.2.). This is reflected in a very strong positive correlation coefficient of $r = 0.845$ ($t = 3, p < 0.01$), showing that there is strong agreement between parents and teachers about the common types of learning at home, with the greatest number of both parents and teachers choosing "talking with parents" as the most common type. This is an interesting finding, given that Head Teachers had commented that many children are not talked to at home and have to be taught basic concepts.

Figure 5.2. : Most common type of learning at home

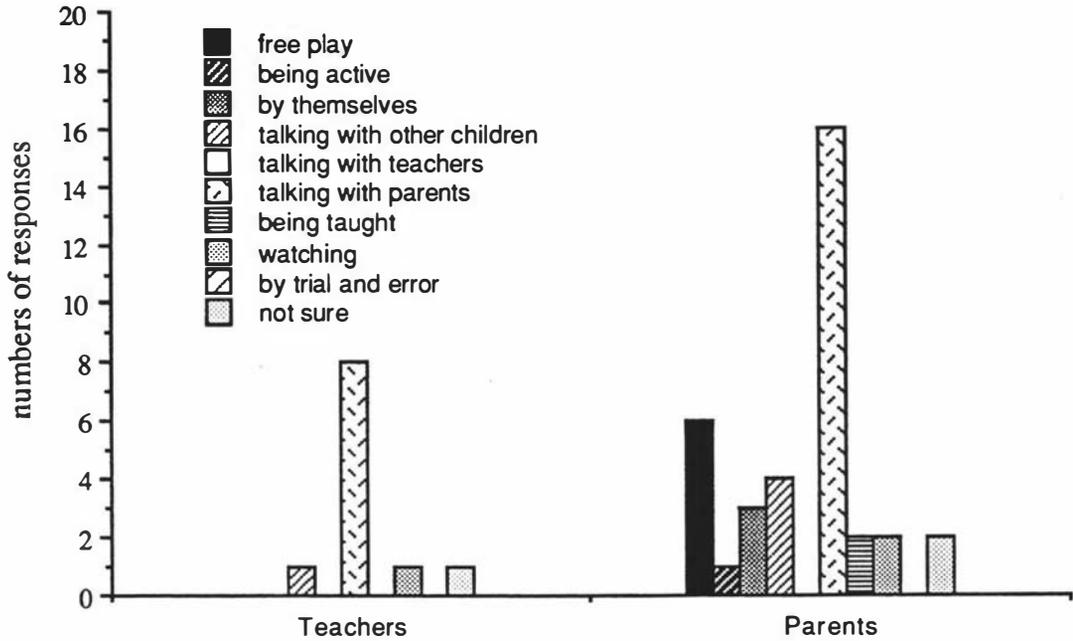
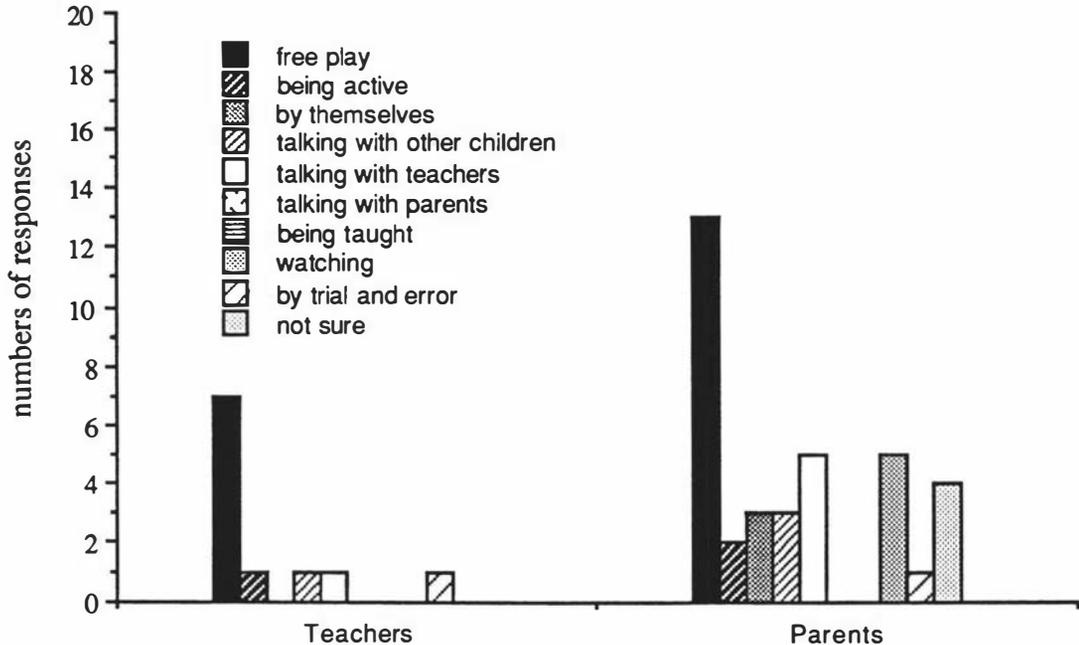


Figure 5.3. : Most common type of learning at kindergarten.



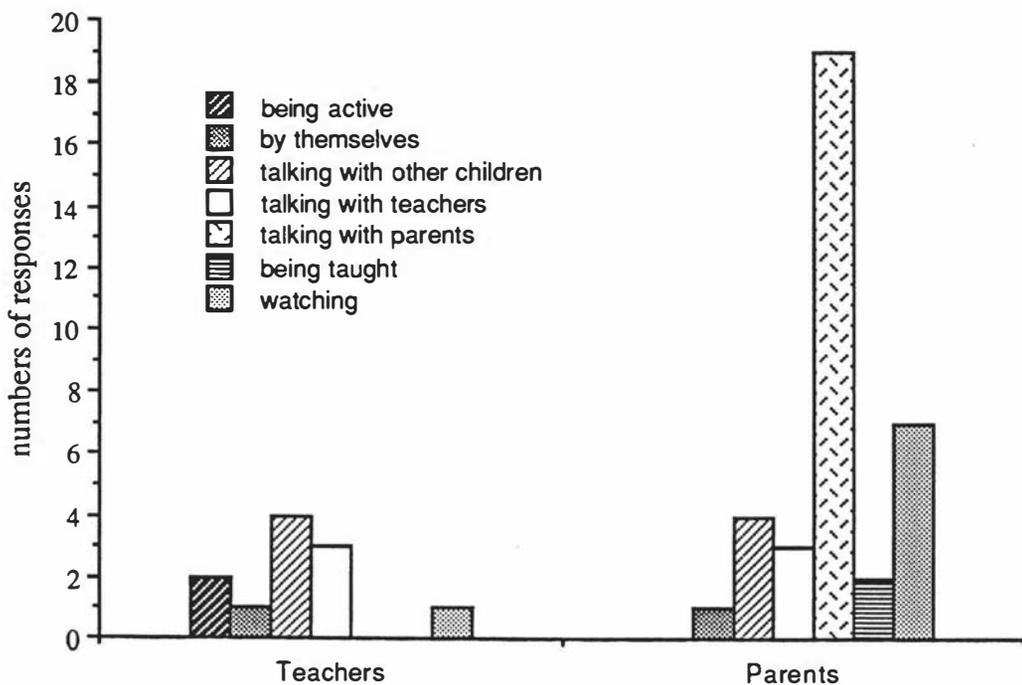
Interviewees were also asked what they considered to be the most common type of learning in kindergarten. In contrast to the emphasis placed by both teachers and parents on talking with adults at home (Figure 5.2), learning through free play was selected as the most common type of learning in kindergarten by the greatest number of both Assistant Teachers and parents (Figure 5.3). Overall, there was a positive correlation, $r = 0.741$ ($t =$

3.55, $p < 0.005$) between the beliefs of teachers and parents concerning the most common type of learning in kindergarten. Note that although Assistant Teachers had cited all of the listed types of learning to occur in kindergarten (see Figure 5.1), the most common type is considered to be free play (Figure 5.3).

So far, the results seem unproblematic. They seem to reflect a strong similarity of theories about learning among teachers and parents. Teachers believe that children learn in a variety of ways in general, but most commonly through talking with parents at home and free play in kindergarten. Most parents also consider that learning occurs in a variety of ways at kindergarten, most commonly through through talking with parents at home and most commonly through free play in kindergarten. Views of learning are thus context specific.

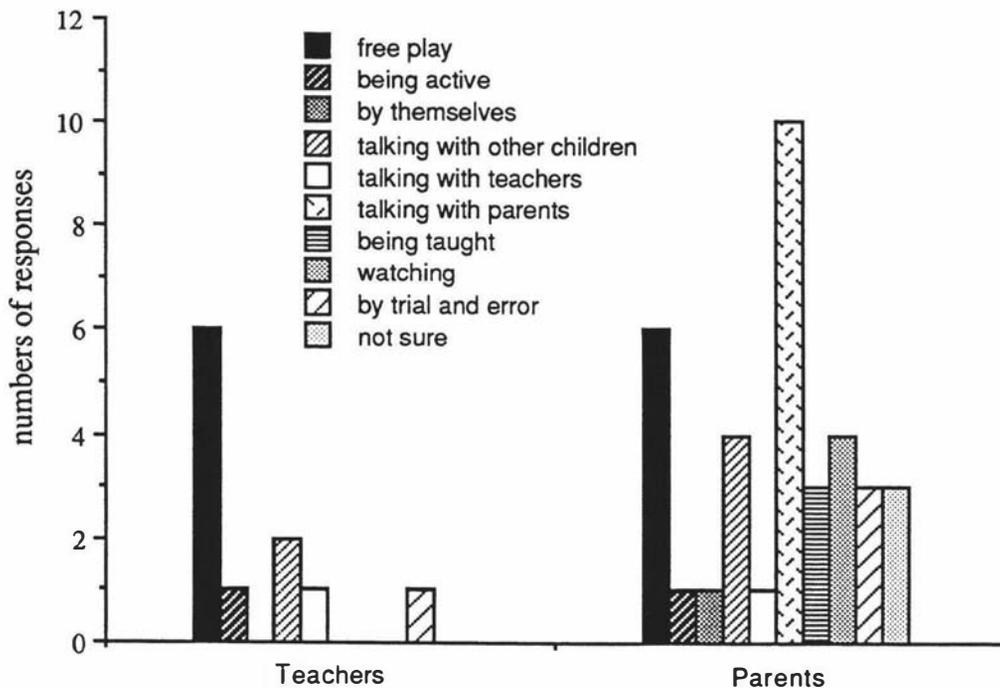
However, the context specific agreement between parents and Assistant Teachers of how children learn disappears when interviewees were asked what is the most common way children learn ideas about literacy. Teachers perceive children as learning about literacy mainly through talking with other children, followed by talking with teachers and being active. In contrast to this however, while parents believe that children learn literacy concepts through talking with parents or watching, talking with other children is the third most common important type of learning (see Figure 5.4). The difference of opinion here is reflected in a zero correlation, where $r = 0.023$ ($t = 1.29$, $p > 0.1$, n.s.). This difference of opinion suggests a different view of literacy development, whereby teachers see it as a school concept and parents see it largely as a home concept.

Figure 5.4. : Most common type of learning for learning ideas about literacy



To conclude the set of questions on learning, interviewees were asked what is the most important type of learning in any context. This question asked parents and teachers to name the most important type of learning for children in any context and to justify their choice. This question aimed to help further establish what the prevailing view of learning held by parents and teachers is. The focus on school based learning by teachers with regard to literacy is reinforced by responses to the question about what is the most important type of learning (see Figure 5.5.). The most striking feature of Figure 5.5. is the lack of importance placed on talking with parents by teachers. Most of the Assistant Teachers believe that the most important type of learning is free play, while parents are largely divided between talking with parents, free play, watching and talking with other children. This lack of agreement is reflected in a zero correlation, where $r = 0.042$ ($t = 2.64$, $p < 0.05$). There is a startling lack of agreement between parents and teachers as to what is the most important type of learning for children, which, when combined with the lack of agreement about how children learn literacy, shows that parents and teachers have a very different view of how children learn.

Figure 5.5. : Most important type of learning for children in any context



When asked why they picked a certain type of learning as most important for children in any context, teachers and parents gave a variety of responses. Teachers justified their view about the most important type of learning by suggesting this happens when children learn on their own, by making mistakes and when they are engaged in what they want to do. This is in contrast to parents who also believe that learning with other children and through free play is important, with a similar explanation to teachers, that

children learn for themselves. However, a large number also believe that talking with parents is the most important type of learning for their preschool child. They explained that "input is vital" and children learn through talking with parents.

Following the set of questions on how children do learn, interviewees were asked what they should do to help children learn. Responses to the question about what teachers should do to help children learn (see Figure 5.9) were consistent with views of learning reported in Figures 5.1 to 5.5. Teachers thought that children learn best through free play, and accordingly they think they help them to learn by providing the resources and the environment. Interestingly they also consider talking to children and extending them to be important, as parents do, in contrast to their views of what is expected of them in the kindergarten which were teamwork and providing an environment. It may be that there is a difference between what teachers "have to do" as a teacher and what they believe they should be doing as teachers.

Table 5.9. : What teachers think they should do to help children learn

	Total = 30 ¹
Provide resources/environment for children	7
Talk to children	5
Extend children	5
Direct children	3
Meet individual children's needs	3
Knowledge of individual children's needs/progress	3
Teach children something	2
Find something meaningful for the child	1
Question the child's understanding	1

¹ Note that teachers gave an average of three responses

In line with the finding that parents think that the most important type of learning is talking with their child, parents also think that teachers should provide a learning environment, extension, encouragement, talk to the child and provide guidance (see Table 5.10.). This finding is consistent with their expectation (see Table 5.6.) that teachers will provide guidance and teaching at the child's level.

There is a strong congruence between what teachers think parents should do to help children learn and what parents think they should do (see Tables 5.11. and 5.12.). Teachers think parents should provide opportunities for children, talk to them and read to them. Parents also consider that they should read to children, as well as provide opportunities and talk to their children.

Table 5.10. : What parents think teachers should do to help children

learn	Total = 68 ¹
Provide extension opportunities	11 (16%)
Talk to child	10 (14%)
Encourage the child	9 (13%)
Provide guidance	9 (13%)
Provide a stimulating learning environment	8 (11%)
Teach basics/preparation for school	8 (11%)
Know children and their strengths	3 (4%)
Explain things to children	3 (4%)
Encourage child to model/copy the teacher	2 (2%)
Help the child interact with other children	2 (2%)
Make the child feel safe	2 (2%)
Teach the child right from wrong	1 (1%)

¹ Note that most parents gave two responses

It is interesting to note that teachers and parents had included literacy as part of parent's role in children learning. Altogether, 30% of teachers responses about what parents do to help children learn were associated with literacy (see Table 5.11.); through story reading, sharing books and using a library. Similarly, 33% of parents responses were concerned with literacy, through story reading and teaching children to read (see Table 5.12.). Note the similar emphasis between teachers and parents on the importance of parents talking to children and providing opportunities.

Table 5.11. : What teachers think parents should do to help children

learn	Total = 30 ¹
Talk to them	8 (27%)
Provide opportunities	7 (23%)
Read to them	5 (17%)
Share books	3 (10%)
Spend time with children	3 (10%)
Modelling	2 (6%)
Use the library	1 (3%)
Involve children	1 (3%)

¹ Note that teachers gave two or more responses to this question

Table 5.12. : What parents think they should do to help children

learn	Total = 69 ¹
Story reading	19 (28%)
Opportunities	16 (23%)
Talking to child	16 (23%)
Teach to read	4 (5%)
Helping	4 (5%)
Enjoyment	3 (4%)
Not teaching	3 (4%)
Teach acceptable behaviour	1 (1%)
Speech therapy	1(1%)
Role modelling	1(1%)
Follow teacher's lead	1(1%)

¹ Note that most parents gave two responses to this question

This section has examined how teachers and parents consider that children learn at home and at kindergarten and given some insight into expected roles of parents and teachers. As with the earlier result reported in Table 5.6., that parents expect more guidance and one to one instruction, parents think teachers should help children to learn through a variety of ways of extending and encouraging children. Teachers also think that they should talk to, extend and teach children. Parents and teachers consider that the parent's role is to promote literacy through story reading, to provide opportunities to learn different things and to talk to children. The following section will examine what types of learning the interviewees consider are involved in literacy development.

Views of language and reading

Whereas the previous section focussed on interviewees' theories of cognition and learning, this section will more specifically examine the theories that teachers and parents have regarding literacy development. Examination will also be made of what role parents and teachers consider they play or should play in children's literacy development.

Parents and Assistant Teachers were asked how they help children to learn language and reading skills. Parents and teachers appear to be in agreement about how teachers help children to learn language and reading, which is by story reading and talking to children (see Tables 5.13. and 5.14.). Teachers also think that they teach children basic book handling skills. Parents stated that teachers help children to write their name and

sing songs as part of literacy teaching. It is worth noting that 10 parents said that had not seen teachers helping children to learn language or reading skills.

When parents and Assistant Teachers were asked whether what parents or teachers do in terms of promoting language and reading is most important (see Table 5.15.), most teachers said that they were less important than parents. Note that there is a very similar percentage (over sixty percent) of parents and teachers who consider that parents are most important in literacy development.

Table 5.13. : How teachers think they help children learn language and reading

	Total = 21 ¹
Talking/explaining	5 (24%)
Reading to children	5 (24%)
Teaching basic book handling skills	4 (19%)
Role modelling	2 (9%)
Extending ideas	1 (4%)
Providing creative aspects of programme	1(4%)
Providing language in every area	1(4%)
Communicating a love and enjoyment of books	1(4%)
Singing	1(4%)

¹ Note that most teachers gave two responses

Table 5.14. : How parents think teachers help children learn language and reading

	Total = 67 ¹
Reading story	23 (34%)
Talking to them	11 (16%)
Not seen	10 (14%)
Singing	5 (7%)
Explaining or reinforcing learning	4 (6%)
Helping children to write their name	4 (6%)
Providing resources	3 (4%)
Modelling	2 (3%)
Encouraging a confidence in the teacher	1 (1%)
Using themes/ new ideas	1 (1%)
Teaching ABC	1 (1%)
Displaying names on fridges/labels in kindergarten	1 (1%)
Providing displays in the kindergarten	1 (1%)

¹ Note most parents gave two main coded responses.

Table 5.15. : Is what teachers do more important than what parents do in terms of language and reading?

	Teachers	Parents
More	1(9%)	0
The same	3 (27%)	14 (39%)
Less	7 (64%)	22 (61%)

Interviewees were asked where they primarily consider that children learn to read. There is strong agreement between teachers and parents that children either learn to read at home or both at home and at kindergarten, although no teachers consider that children learn to read at kindergarten alone (See Table 5.16.).

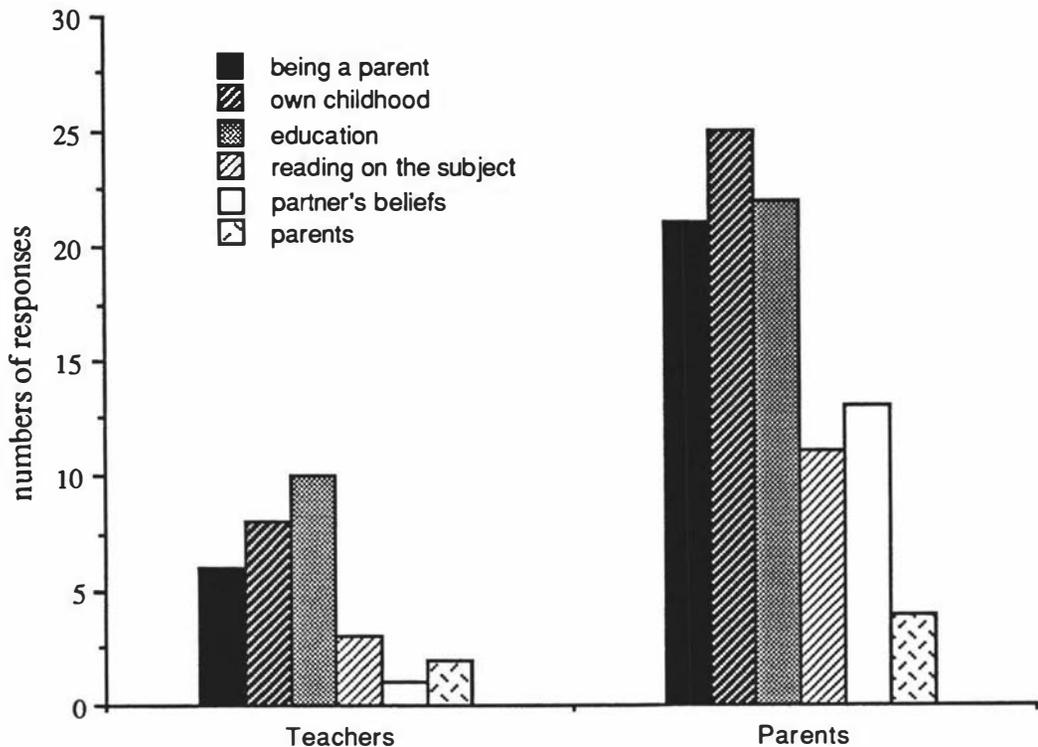
Table 5. 16. : Where do children learn to read?

	Teachers	Parents
At home	3 (27%)	15 (42%)
At kindergarten	0	3 (8%)
Everywhere/both	8 (73%)	18 (50%)

So, if teachers and parents have these similar beliefs about literacy developing at home, then where do these beliefs stem from? Part of fulfilling the aim of examining the role of the parent and the teacher in literacy development was to explore what has influenced literacy practice. Interviewees were given a list of influences, which included both personal experience and education influences and were asked to say which had influenced them, or to name any other influences. Interviewees were told that they could choose more than one influence.

Teachers most frequently cited their education as influencing their beliefs about language and literacy development (see Figure 5.6), although their own childhood was also an important influence for eight of the teachers. Their own childhood was a significant influence for nearly 70% of parents, followed by education and experience as a parent.

Figure 5.6. : Major influences on beliefs about language and literacy development.



Following the question regarding parents' and Assistant Teachers' perceptions of the source of their beliefs about literacy, parents and teachers were asked to choose the primary process of development in the pre-school period, and were given four options which included stage driven, interactional and experiential processes of development or a combination of all three. Results are shown in Table 5.17. The question was broadly framed ("How do children develop at this stage (3.6 to 5 years)?"), so that parents and teachers would give a holistic answer, which could be contrasted with the more specific question on language and culture. This question and the following question, "How do children learn their language and culture?", reported in Table 5.18., were asked as part of questions on language and literacy, to see if parents and teachers could relate their view of literacy to a theory of cognition and language.

Table 5.17. : How children develop at this age (3:6 to 5 years)

	Teachers	Parents
Through a series of stages	3 (27%)	17 (47%)
As part of a cultural or family group	4 (36%)	9 (25%)
Through outside experiences	1 (9%)	5 (13%)
A combination of all of these	3 (27%)	5 (13%)

Almost half of the parents interviewed believe that children learn through a series of stages (see Table 5.17.). Teachers are more divided, believing that children either learn through a series of stages, as part of their cultural or family group or through a combination of all of the ways of developing.

Interviewees were also asked how children learn their language and culture, and were given options that included assimilation by watching and listening, reinforcement by praise or punishment, interactional dialogue through talking with others or an inherited tendency to learn language which is inherited from their parents. There is strong agreement between teachers and parents that children learn their language and culture through watching and listening (see Table 5.18.).

Table 5.18. : How children learn their language and culture

	Teachers	Parents
By watching and listening	8 (73%)	29 (81%)
By praise or punishment	0	1 (2%)
Talking with others	3 (27%)	4 (11%)
Inherited from their parents	0	2 (5%)

No teachers considered that praise, punishment or parental inheritance played a factor, although three teachers thought children learn through talking with others. Four parents shared this view, although the majority (81%) consider children learn their language and culture through watching and listening. This was an interesting finding, as parents had previously said that children learn literacy most commonly through talking with parents and that they help children to learn by reading them stories and talking to them. This difference may indicate that parents have a general belief that children learn through interaction with others, but a specific belief that children learn language and culture through watching and listening. Teachers have more context specific beliefs about learning. Children are perceived to learn literacy through talking with other children and to learn their language and culture through watching and listening, yet they consider that they help children learn language and reading through talking and reading to them. Results of Table 5.17 and 5.18 combined, indicate that the majority of teachers and parents believe that children develop through a series of stages and learn language and culture through a process of assimilation by watching and listening. Such a view of child development is consistent with the constructivist views of child development held by Head Teachers, discussed in Chapter Four, which involved a view of child development that was stage driven, maturational and achieved through active learning or adaptation on the part of the child.

This section has examined the theories that parents and Assistant Teachers have regarding literacy development. Parents and Assistant Teachers are in agreement that they should help children to learn literacy by providing learning opportunities, and talking and reading to them. Interviewees also consider that parents are most important in children's literacy development during the kindergarten period, although children may learn to read both at home and at kindergarten. Teachers' beliefs about literacy have been influenced primarily by their education and their childhood, while the primary influence for parents is experiences in their own childhood. Teachers' beliefs about early childhood development are divided between a belief in maturation through stages and experiences in the family/cultural group, while nearly half of parents believe that maturation is the primary factor in child development. The majority of both parents and teachers perceive children to learn language and culture through a process of assimilation by watching and listening. This section has examined the beliefs parents and Assistant Teachers have that may shape their literacy practice. The following section will begin to look in detail at their perceptions of their literacy practices.

Story reading experience

The previous sections of this chapter established what experience of early childhood education children have had and what role parents and teachers play in their learning. The present section will focus more closely on what literacy experiences children have had and what role parents and teachers play in their emergent literacy.

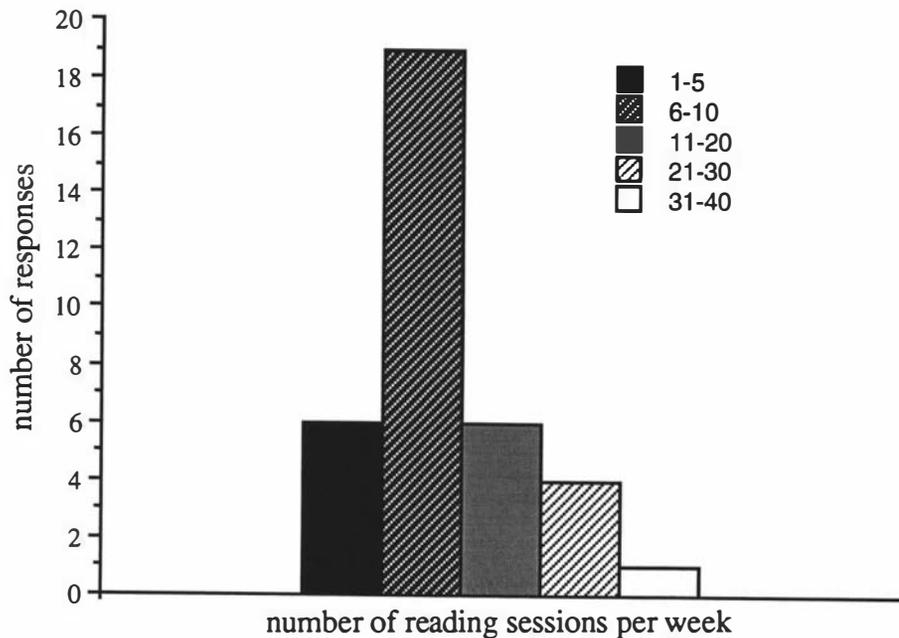
Children are read to in all of the kindergartens. They are read to by the interviewed teacher, other teachers, parents and in five kindergartens they are also read to by student teachers. All parents also said that their child is read to at home. Children are mostly read to by their mothers in this group (94%), fathers (75%), siblings (44%) with the other relatives being mainly grandparents and some aunts and uncles (36%).

When teachers were asked how often children were read to in the kindergarten, they were unable to give a number, but responded within the three categories listed as follows. Twenty six percent (26%) of teachers said that children are read to at kindergarten when they ask for a story, while forty percent (40%) of teachers said children were read to every day or at mat time (33%). Some teachers said both at mat time and when requested. When teachers were also asked the times at which children were read to, they stated that children are read to anytime (53%), at mat time (35%), more in the afternoon (6%) and at quiet time (6%). Teachers listed more than one time at which reading occurred.

Parents found it easier to answer the question of how often children are read to at home. They were more specific about how often children are read to and stated that children are read to between 1 and 40 times per week, with six to ten times per week is the

most common amount that children are read to at home, the average being around ten times per week (see Figure 5.7.).

Figure 5.7. : Number of times per week that child is read to at home



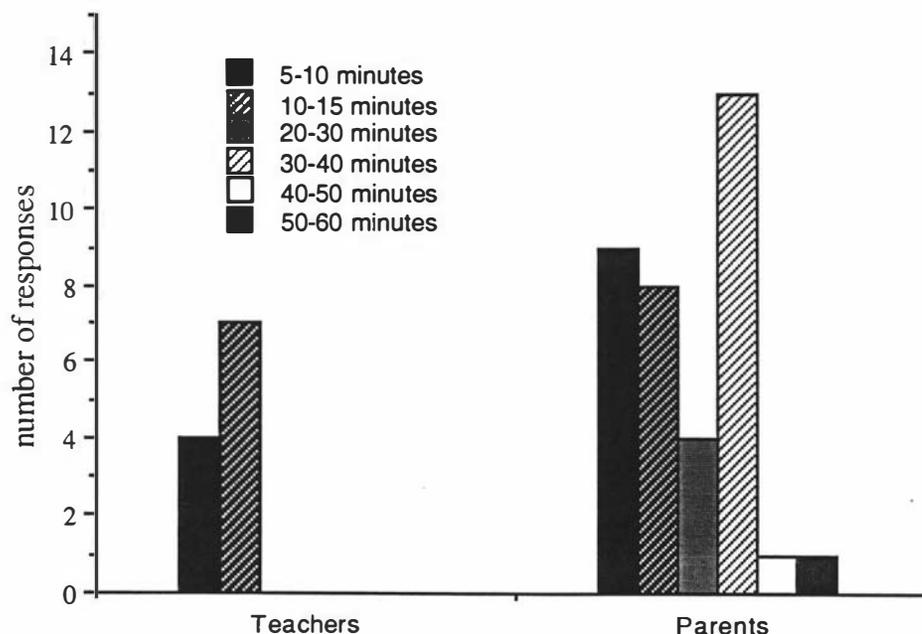
Parents and Assistant Teachers were also asked how often children requested that someone read to them. Some teachers found it hard to estimate how often children request to be read to per week, although 6 teachers said that each child probably asked to be read to between one and five times per week. Another four teachers did not know how often children ask to be read to, while one teacher said that each child asked between six and ten times per week. The majority of parents (18) said that children asked to be read to between one and ten times per week, while another 15 parents said their child asked to be read to 1-5 times per week. Two parents said their child requested to be read to 11-15 times per week, while only one parent said 15-30 times per week. All parents were able to state how often the child asked to be read to.

The most common time for reading at home is the evening, which 18 (50%) of the parents reported. The afternoon and evening are the second most common times for reading, which 13 parents reported (36%). Only four parents read in the morning and evening, while no parents report only reading in the morning.

Ten to fifteen minutes is the most frequent length of time for a story reading session to last in the kindergarten (36%) (see Figure 5.8), while the most frequent length of time in homes is 30-40 minutes (36%). At first glance it looked like some parents read more frequently and for a shorter time. However, there didn't seem to be a strong

connection. It may be, however, that parents who read at various times of the day simply do read more to children than those who only read for 10-15 minutes at bedtime.

Figure 5.8 ; Length of story reading sessions at home and at kindergarten.



Interviewees were asked who selected books to be read to children, as children are more likely to have meaningful experiences with print if they are involved in the selection process and select books with relevance to their own experiences. Teachers mainly state that children (54%) select books to be read at kindergarten. Most parents (66%) also state that children select books, while a further 27% of parents say that books are selected by parent and child.

Kindergartens were asked where they get their books from, in order to find out whether they have the sort of revolving supply of books advocated by Morrow (1989a) for providing a stimulating library. Four teachers stated that books come from their own library and the public library, while the other teachers said that books also came from homes, and donations. Parents have similar patterns of getting books for their children, with the most frequent being home and the public library (36%) and the second most frequent being that children only have books from home (29%). The remainder of parents use public, kindergarten and home libraries for supplies of books for children.

Four of the kindergartens do not have a library system for children and parents. In the other kindergartens, books were perceived by teachers to be checked out as much as forty times per month per family to as little as four times per month. In those kindergartens with a library system, books were seen to be selected by either the child or a child and a parent together. Teachers were not seen as being involved in the decision

making by any teachers. Parents report (see Table 5.19.) a wide variety of library use, from 22% not using a library at all to 11% using a library 10 to 20 times per month.

Table 5.19 : How often parents checked books out from any library per month

	Total = 36
10-20 times per month	4 (11%)
Once	9 (25%)
Twice	10 (28%)
Once per term	5 (14%)
Not checked out	8 (22%)

The number of books available to children is recorded in Table 5.20. Some of the kindergartens have large libraries, but borrow extra books or posters for special themes in the curriculum from the public library. Most of the teachers said that kindergartens have between two hundred and one thousand books. In kindergartens the most frequent number of books was over 500, with 200-500 being the second most frequent. The exact numbers were counted during observations of the kindergartens and are reported in Chapter Six. Parents were asked how many books the child had at home. Many parents clarified that the question only referred to books that would be read to children. The most frequent number of books in homes was between 50 and 200, as equal numbers of parents report having 50 - 100 and 100 - 200. Parents were not asked if they had more than 500 books, as teachers were. As only 2 parents said they had 200 - 500 it seems unlikely that any parents in this sample would have more than 500.

Table 5.20 Number of books available to child at home and at kindergarten

	Parents ¹	Teachers
less than 20	2	0
20 - 50	6	0
50 - 100	13	1
100 - 200	13	1
200 - 500	2	4
more than 500	0	5

¹ Note that parents were not asked if they had more than 500 books for their child

Interviewees were asked a range of questions regarding children's literacy experiences and concepts about print, which required yes or no answers. The questions are presented in Table 5.21, with comparison of teachers and parents responses and the corresponding percentages. It is interesting to note the amount of congruence between teacher's and parent's answers of the questions in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21 : Teacher's and parent's views of literacy activity in kindergartens and home

	Teachers ¹		Parents ¹	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Does anyone read to your children?	11 (100)	0	36 (100)	0
Does your kindergarten have a library system?	7 (64)	4 (36)		
Does your child have a library card?			22 (61)	14 (39)
Do children have favourite books?	9 (82)	2 (18)	31 (86)	5 (14)
Do children try to read themselves?	11 (100)	0	33 (92)	3 (8)
Do children say why they like a book?	5 (45)	6 (55)	8 (22)	28 (78)
Do children ask questions while being read to?	11 (100)	0	32 (89)	4 (11)
Do they ever ask the same question over and over again?	10 (91)	1 (9)	22 (61)	14 (39)
Do they ask the same question in the same place in a book?	9 (82)	2 (18)	23 (64)	13 (36)
Do children request a book to be re-read in the same session?	11 (100)	0	34 (94)	2 (6)
Do they ask questions about books at other times?	9 (82)	2 (18)	23 (64)	13 (36)
Do you answer as many as you can?	10 (91)	1 (9)	33 (92)	3 (8) ²
Do children copy or trace titles or draw pictures about stories?	10 (91)	1 (9)	16 (44)	20 (56)
Do children use words from books?	9 (82)	2 (18)	28 (78)	8 (22)
Do children use words from books in play?	11 (100)	0	27 (75)	9 (25)
Do children know you say the written words?	11 (100)	0	34 (94)	2 (6)
Do you make up parts of the story?	11 (100)	0	35 (97)	1 (3)
Do children know you are making it up?	9 (82)	2 (18)	32 (89)	4 (11)
Do you read ABC books with children?	8 (73)	3 (27)	31 (86)	5 (14)
Do you read or sing nursery rhymes?	11 (100)	0	33 (92)	3 (8)
Can children recite any nursery rhymes	11 (100)	0	31 (86)	5 (14)
Do you play language games?	11 (100)	0	26 (72)	10 (28)
Do children have access to plastic letters?	7 (64)	4 (36)	30 (83)	6 (17)
Can children recognise the letters of the alphabet?	11 (100)	0	27 (75)	9 (25)
Can children spell with plastic letters?	8 (73)	3 (27)	29 (81)	7 (19)
Do children attempt to write words?	11 (100)	0	30 (83)	6 (17)
Do children recognise signs or labels?	11 (100)	0	36 (100)	0

¹ Percentages are given in brackets ² Note that these parents said children do not ask questions, so they do not answer them.

Children are seen to display a lot of literacy awareness by these teachers, as is seen by their perception that children read to themselves, ask questions while being read to, request re-readings of stories, know that teachers are saying the written words, recite nursery rhymes, recognise letters of the alphabet, recognise signs and labels and attempt to write words. In addition, teachers see themselves contributing to children's literacy experience by reading to children, making up parts of a story, singing nursery rhymes and playing language games.

Most of the teachers also believe that children have favourite books, think children ask questions over and over again, and ask questions in the same place in a book. They believe that children ask questions about books at other times than reading sessions and use words from books at other times. They have seen children copying or tracing titles or drawing pictures related to stories and believe that children can spell with plastic or other letters in the kindergarten. Furthermore, teachers believe they answer as many questions about books as they can and read ABC books to children. Seven of the teachers reported having a library system and plastic letters for children to use. Teachers are divided over whether children say why they like a book.

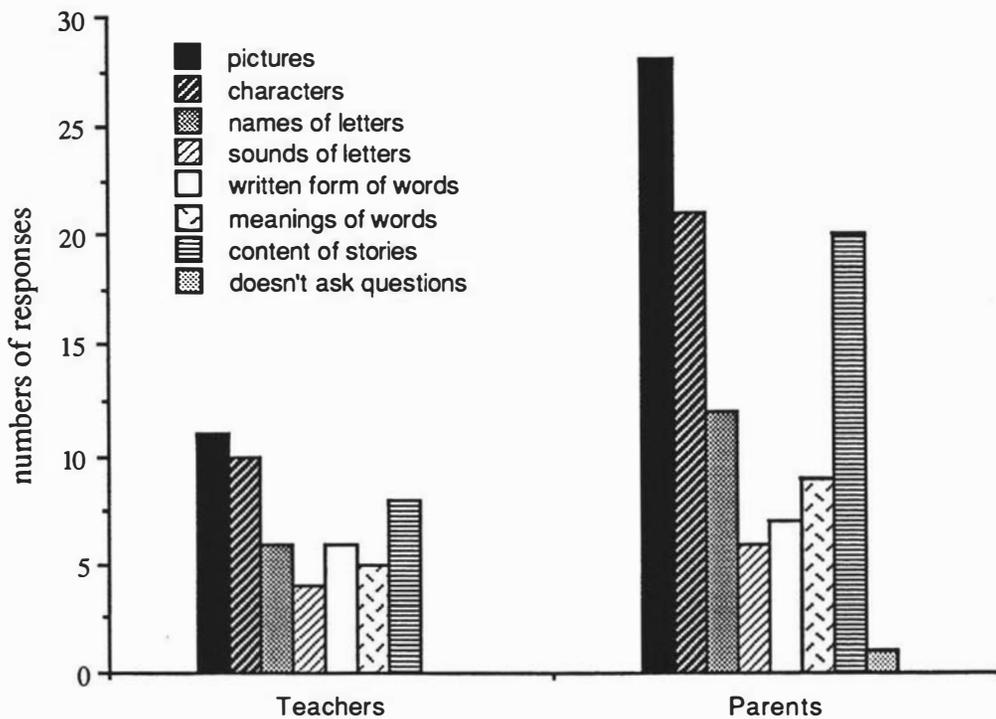
All parents also said that their children are read to and over half of them said that the child had a library card. Parents said that children have favourite books, although few children say why they like them. Most parents said that children read to themselves. They ask questions while being read to, ask the same questions over again and most ask the same question again in the same place in a book. Two thirds of children ask questions about books at other times, which parents try to answer if they can. Forty four percent of the children copy or trace titles or draw pictures about stories read. Most children use words from books in play and conversation and know that parents are saying the written words from the story. Most parents make up parts of the story and think that children know that it is made up. Parents read ABC books and sing nursery rhymes with their children and the majority play language games and own a set of letters. Most parents stated that children recognise the letters of the alphabet, spell with plastic letters, attempt to write words and recognise signs or labels.

Teachers were more certain than parents as to why children liked favourite books. Teachers stated that the primary reasons children like favourite books are because they relate to their own experiences (36%) and that the book is funny (27%). Other reasons given include that teachers infer the reason from the child's reaction, that the book is familiar or that they like the colours in the book. Parents gave a wider range of reasons as to why children liked favourite books, usually that the book related to something the child owned or had experienced, but 66% of parents were not sure why children liked a favourite book or said the child never gave a reason. Many commented that the "favourite" changed so often it was hard to keep up with.

Interviewees were asked what questions children ask about stories as they are being read to. They were given a list to refer to, which can be seen in Figure 5.9, which

included questions about pictures, letters, words and story content. Interviewees were also asked to explain any other types of questions children ask about stories. The most frequent questions children ask are about the pictures, characters and the content of stories. Few parents or teachers mentioned other types of questions to those provided, but some other things that children ask about during story reading sessions are what will happen next and if the story can be read again. Some interviewees said that children don't really ask a lot of questions, rather they make comments about the story, the pictures and how the story relates to something in the child's own life or experience.

Figure 5.9 : Questions children ask about stories at home and at kindergarten



In addition to asking what sorts of questioning and discussion children experience during story reading sessions, interviewees were asked what sort of behaviour is expected during story reading. Interviewees were asked if they ever ask children to sit still while they are reading. All of the teachers said that they asked children to sit still sometimes (63%) or often (36%). This was qualified by some teachers by explaining that children were often asked to sit still during story reading on the mat. The notion of telling children to sit still for story reading relates to Head Teachers discussions of the social rules associated with story reading on the mat, discussed in Chapter Four, and to the routines for story reading which will be discussed in Chapter Six. Most parents (63%) replied that they sometimes asked children to sit still, 14% of parents said they often told children to sit still, while 22% of parents never ask children to sit still while they are being read to.

Story reading is an activity with routines for behaviour for parents and teachers.

Routines for story reading also include the number of times a parent or teacher will read a story (see Table 5.22). Repeated story reading is one way to increase children's understanding of and vocabulary gain from a text .

Table 5.22: Number of times that parents and teachers have re-read one book in one session

	Teachers	Parents
Never	0	6 (17%)
Twice	4 (36%)	18 (50%)
Three times	4 (36%)	9 (25%)
Four times	3 (28%)	1 (2%)
Five times	0	2 (5%)

Many of the teachers seem to be open to the idea of repeated readings, as indicated in Table 5.21. Four (36%) of the teachers will only re-read the book once again, while three (27%) of the teachers have re-read as often as four times. Half of the parents re-read a book only once, with another 25% re-reading three times. Six of the parents also emphatically stated that they never re-read a book, even though the child may ask.

Interviewees were also asked if children ask about stories at other times, when stories were not being read, to see if story reading became a part of conversation or play (see Table 5.23). The majority of teachers said this sometimes happens, while the majority of parents said it happens sometimes or frequently. The noticeable feature of Table 5.23 is that thirteen (36%) of the parents do not know how often children ask questions at other times, apart from when stories are being read, while all of the teachers had some idea of how often it occurs.

Table 5.23 : How often children ask questions about stories at times other than reading sessions

	Teachers	Parents
Frequently	1 (9%)	9 (25%)
Sometimes	6 (55%)	13 (36%)
Seldom	3 (27%)	1 (3%)
Never	1 (9%)	0
Don't know	0	13 (36%)

Having been asked how often questions about stories occurred, parents and Assistant Teachers were then asked when the questions about stories would occur. Teachers found it hard to say precisely when children ask about books, as it happens quite frequently. However, four of them said that it happened when another story is being read, sometimes a similar book for example. One teacher said that questions may occur when children are role playing a story and will ask teachers question to clarify the game. The

other five teachers simply said that questions about books occur sometime later. Seven of the parents said that children do not ask questions about books at other times, but slightly less than half of the parents said that children do ask questions after readings (44%). Few of the parents said that the question was tied to a game, like teachers did, although they did say that questions occur when the child was looking at the book themselves (19%).

Story reading seems to be the main activity that children experience with books, other activities seem to be limited. Six of the teachers (55%) said that children do not copy any aspects of books, while five of the teachers (45%) said that they either copied the cover, the letters or the pictures. Parents similarly said that children do not trace or copy books with twenty five parents (69%) saying that children do not copy or trace books. The remaining eleven parents (31%) gave a range of things that children like to trace or copy, which break down into groups similar to those noted by the teachers; the cover pages, the pictures, letters and something from the child's own interests. Teachers have seen children mainly draw and paint pictures related to stories which have been read to them. Three of the teachers said that the drawings are usually related to something of significance to the child. In close relation to responses regarding tracing and copying, 22 parents (61%) said that children do not draw pictures related to stories. The remainder said that children mainly draw the characters or the animals.

Interviewees were also asked if children used any language from stories in their play, with a view to establishing if story reading is related to symbolic play for these children. Parents and teachers seem to have interpreted the question of the types of words that children use in play from books quite differently (see Table 5.24). Teachers gave specific examples of the language they had heard children use, whereas 13 of the parents described the way the language was used in play. As children have been observed "role playing" from books in kindergartens, it can be concluded that teachers answered the question more specifically than some of the parents. Role playing was the most frequent way that parents heard children use the language of books in play, followed by the phrases and specific words from books. Phrases were the most commonly heard use of book language in kindergartens.

Table 5.24 : Types of words from books used in play

	Teachers	Parents
Names of places	0	2 (5%)
Books - titles and words	4 (36%)	8 (22%)
Role playing	0	13 (36%)
Phrases	6 (55%)	9 (25%)
Not heard	1 (9%)	4 (11%)

As a conclusion to the questions on story reading, interviewees were asked what they thought story reading does for children, as part of the aim of finding out how parents and teachers conceptualise literacy development in children. Teachers gave a range of responses as to what they think story reading does for children (see Figure 5.10). Note that teachers gave two or more responses to this question. There are two modes; that children get different experiences (18%) and that they receive experience with a range of literature (18%). Story reading was also considered to stimulate imagination and provide pleasure and enjoyment for the child.

Most parents gave two responses as to what they think story reading does for children. Developing imagination is the most frequent outcome of story reading cited by parents, followed by the belief that story reading will promote reading development in children (see Figure 5.11). Enjoyment and one-to-one time with the parent or other adult reading the story were also mentioned by at least a quarter of the parents (see Figure 5.11).

This section has examined some of parents' and Assistant Teachers' literacy practices regarding story reading and the story reading experience that children are receiving. Parents and teachers have indicated that children display a knowledge of concepts about print and demonstrate a range of emergent literacy behaviours. Children receive encouragement of emergent literacy development through teachers, parents and extended family reading to them. Story reading is important, according to parents, to encourage the development of imagination and to promote later reading development. Teachers also consider reading stories important for giving children different experiences and exposure to a range of different literature. All children have access to books, although not all children have a changing supply, as there is an uneven use of libraries among parents and kindergartens. Children are seen to use the language from story in play, but are not seen to use story books as a major stimuli for copying, tracing or painting pictures. The following section will examine some of the less obvious avenues to literacy that children have, such as language games, nursery rhymes and environmental print.

Figure 5.10 : What teachers think story reading does for children

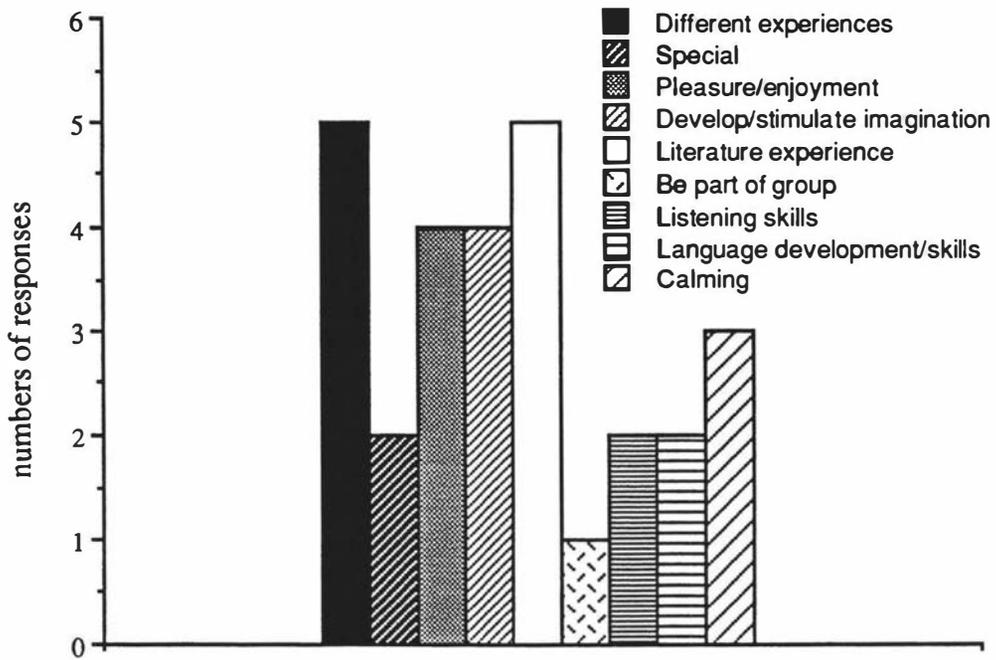
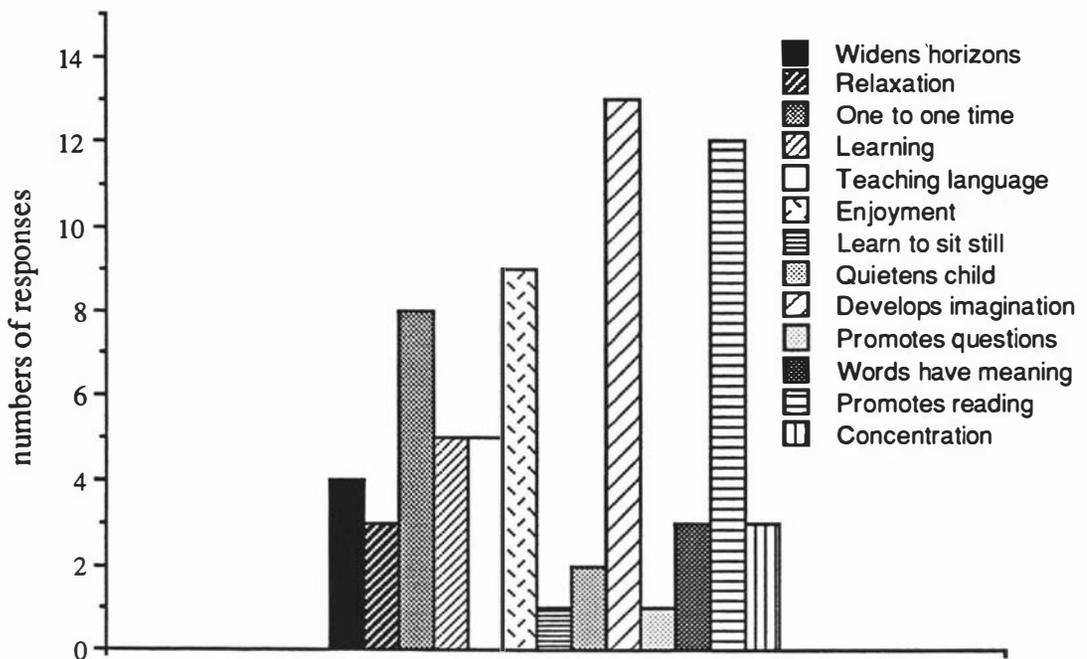


Figure 5.11 : What parents think story reading does for the child



Language experiences and environmental print

Children experience literacy in more ways than just story reading. Research on emergent literacy has shown that children learn a great deal about language and literacy through the rhymes, games and environmental print that they experience around them (Clay, 1982; Goodman, 1986; Maclean, Bryant and Bradley, 1987; Teale, 1986; McNaughton, 1995). This section of the results will examine some of the other access that children have to literacy at home and at kindergarten.

Knowledge of nursery rhymes at the age of three has been found to be a good predictor of the development of phonological skills and emergent reading abilities (Maclean, Bryant and Bradley, 1987). Parents and Assistant Teachers were asked if children could recite any nursery rhymes and to list any they had heard children recite recently. All of the teachers said that children recited nursery rhymes, and only three of the parents said that children did not recite any rhymes. Nine of the parents said that children recite so many rhymes, that it was too difficult to say which was the most common (14%). The most common nursery rhyme recited by children in kindergartens is "Twinkle twinkle little star" (44%). It is also the most common in homes (21%), although it is tied with "Baa baa black sheep" (21%), which was heard slightly less in kindergartens.

Interviewees were also asked if children play language games, as these can be a useful way to practice letter naming, phonological and other language skills (Ball and Blachman, 1991). Language games occur at home and at kindergarten, although children experience a wider range of language games at kindergarten. It is worth noting that Head Teachers (reported in Chapter Four) had said that language games are some of their teaching skills. Table 5.25 includes the general categories of language games, mentioned by a few teachers, such as chanting and finger plays, as well as the specific examples of language games. There are clearly a broad range of language games played in kindergartens, with many involving repetition, chanting and dance routines. Note that the use of some of these games, such as "Bear and the Honey Pot" and "Elephant and a string" were observed in the kindergartens and are reported in the section on mediation of the literacy environment in Chapter Six.

Language games also occur in homes, with "I spy" occurring in nearly half of children's homes (see Table 5.26). The traditional cultural games were used in some homes, including Maori and Pacific Island homes.

Table 5.25 : Language games played at kindergarten

	Total = 19 ¹
Chanting games	3
Finger plays	2
Incy wincy spider	2
I'm selling lollipops	2
Wibbily wobbily woo	1
Bear and the honey pot	1
Elephant and a string	1
Rhyming games	1
I spy	1
Names that start with ...	1
Who stole the cook	1
Farmer in the dell	1
My pidgeon house	1
A variety of games	1

¹ Note that teachers gave more than one response

Table 5.26 : Language games played at home

	Total = 42 ¹
I spy	17 (40%)
Traditional cultural games	7 (17%)
Make up poems and rhymes	5 (12%)
Simon says	4 (9%)
Rhyming games	4 (9%)
Finger plays	3 (7%)
Sounds	1 (2%)
Word games	1 (2%)

¹ Note that some parents gave more than one response

Parents and teachers were asked what signs and labels children recognise. Interviewees were surprised when asked how much print in the local environment children are able to read, but most came up with an extensive list. Environmental print is one often overlooked experience with reading that children routinely have.

Table 5. 27 : Signs and labels that children often "read"

	Teachers ¹ Total = 25	Parents ¹ Total = 99
Fast food shops	4 (16%)	23 (23%)
Street signs	3 (12%)	17 (17%)
Food packets	6 (24%)	20 (20%)
Names	6 (24%)	9 (9%)
Labels/ lists	5 (20%)	1 (1%)
Shops	0	20 (20%)
Advertising	1 (4%)	9 (9%)

¹ Note that most parents and teachers gave more than one response

Most parents were surprised by how much environmental print their children do read when they started to describe the list to me (see Table 5.27). Fast food shops were very common (23%), with "McDonald's", with the big M being most often named. Other common fast food shops were "KFC" and local Fish and Chip shops. Teachers named the same fast food outlets as being recognised by children on school trips and in advertising in magazines or newspapers. Children also recognised many of the names on food packets at home, at kindergarten and during trips to the supermarket. Common items were "Colgate" toothpaste and "Skippy" cornflakes and other common food brands. Parents commented that children were recognising street signs, such as "Stop" and "School", as well as recognising the name of their street when they were out driving or walking. Local shops, like "KMart" were often named by parents as being signs that children would read as soon as they saw them. When asked if children would recognise the sign in print in the junk mail which comes through the letter box, parents stated that they would and also that they recognised signs in black and white in the newspaper. Teachers said most frequently that children recognised names and food packets, which is not surprising given the emphasis on metallic name boards and collage using food packets in the kindergarten (see Table 5.27).

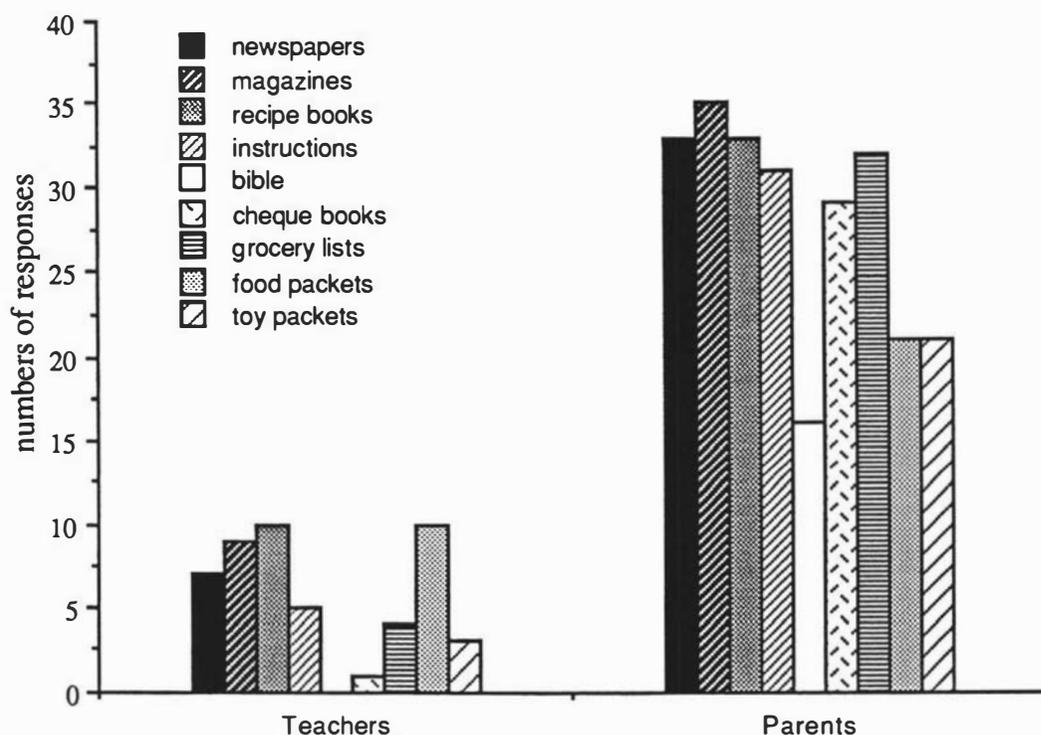
Interviewees were asked if there were any other language and reading activities which the questionnaire had not mentioned, that they do with children. Talking to children is considered to be an important literacy activity by seven of the teachers, which teachers didn't think had been mentioned, but only 12 of the parents mentioned talking to children as another literacy activity not covered by the questionnaire (See Table 5.28). Using puzzles was the most common other literacy activity in homes. Parents often explained that they had puzzles with letters of the alphabet on which children would use. Writing was common in eleven homes, but is not mentioned by teachers in this question, although all teachers and 83% of parents said that children attempt to write words (see Table 5.21).

Table 5. 28 : Other language and reading activities at home and at kindergarten

	Teachers Total = 20	Parents Total = 58
Puzzles	8 (40%)	17 (29%)
Talking	7 (35%)	12 (20%)
Tapes	2 (10%)	11 (18%)
Writing	0	11 (18%)
Outings /opportunities	2 (10%)	0
No other activities	1 (5%)	7 (12%)

As part of the child's overall access to environmental print, interviewees were asked what reading items they personally use. These reading items did not necessarily have to be used with children and this was explained to parents and teachers (see Figure 5.12). Interviewees were given the list which is represented in the legend of Figure 5.12, and were told they could choose any which were appropriate. They were also asked to list any which were not included in the list.

Figure 5.12 : Reading items used at home and at kindergarten



Nearly all parents interviewed said that they used newspapers, magazines, recipe books, instructions, cheque books and grocery lists in their homes (see Figure 5.12). Food

packets, recipe books and magazines are the most commonly used reading items in kindergartens.

In order to find out if children use adult literacy materials with their parents and teachers, interviewees were next asked if any of this adult print is used with the children. Teachers name the most commonly used item with children is food packets (30%), with magazines (23%) and recipe books (23%) second. This is probably not surprising given the use of food packets and magazines for collage in the kindergartens and the use of process cooking recipes charts, which are reported as part of environmental print in Chapter Six. Kindergarten teachers of course do not use Bibles in the kindergarten, nor do they use cheque books. Teachers commented that newspapers are used to keep tables and floors clean, but not for reading. Parents also named using magazines (18%), recipes books (22%) and grocery lists (22%) as adult literacy items shared with children. Newspapers were also shared with children (9%) and six parents mentioned using all the other reading items with children.

As a final question on environmental print, interviewees were asked if they used any other types of reading items, which had not been presented in the list presented in Figure 5.12. The results can be seen in Table 5.29 and Table 5.30.

Table 5.29 : Other reading items which teachers use in kindergartens

	Total = 13 ¹
Process cooking	5 (45%)
Lists	3 (23%)
Posters	3 (23%)
Home contact book	1 (7%)
Education Gazette	1 (7%)

¹ Note that some teachers gave more than one response

Table 5.30 : Other reading items which parents use at home

	Total = 43 ¹
Novels	17 (39%)
Non fiction	15 (34%)
University study guides	5 (11%)
Leaflets	3 (6%)
Diary	1 (2%)
Puzzles	1 (2%)
Computer	1 (2%)

¹ Note that some parents gave more than one response

There is little connection between the other reading items used by parents and teachers. Children are thus exposed to some differences in contextual print between home and kindergarten (see Tables 5.29 and 5.30). Reading books is one of the most common other literacy activities to be undertaken at home; novels and then non fiction books. These items had not been included in the question on what reading items parents and Assistant Teachers use, as they seemed unlikely items for Assistant Teachers to use at kindergarten. Although teachers did not actually say that they did use novels or non fiction, it would be a useful question to ask. No doubt non fiction books are used in curriculum planning for some topics, and it would be useful to identify if teachers use adult or child non fiction books with children in the kindergarten. Nearly half of the teachers cited process cooking as a common other literacy activity in kindergarten, which also explains the use of recipe books.

This section has examined more of the ways that parents and Assistant Teachers promote language and literacy, and some of the experiences that children in their care have with language games, environmental print and other literacy activities. Children in this study access to a variety of language experiences at home and particularly at kindergarten. They are able to recite nursery rhymes and play language games such as "I spy" which are based on a knowledge of letter names and phonological awareness. Children are seen to possess a strong awareness of environmental print, in particular fast food signs. Many children are able to recognise such environmental print out of context as well. Children see parents and teachers using literacy for a range of functions, many of which children are allowed to take part in, such as writing grocery lists and reading magazines.

Summary and Discussion

Parents and teachers were interviewed using a slightly adapted version of the same questionnaire. This provided an interesting comparison of their beliefs about how children learn, how children learn literacy and what sort of literacy environment children are being exposed to. It also fulfilled two of the aims of the research, which included collecting data on the role of the parents and teachers in the child's literacy development and examining parent's and teacher's views of themselves as teachers and how they see the role of the kindergarten in children's development.

Promoting children's learning and literacy development

Graue (1993) has discussed teacher knowledge as a social construction in her research on concepts of readiness in kindergarten teachers. She argues that the meanings attached to institutions, actions, images, utterances and events and customs of a group are called

"interpretations"(p.34). Graue outlines how collective interpretations between teachers and families develop on a social and psychological plane. On the social plane, they are shared notions of events or ideas, on the psychological they are individual responses to collective responses. It has been interesting in this research to look at commonalities and differences between what teachers and parents believe is happening in the kindergarten, at home and in terms of children's development and learning.

Assistant Teachers primarily consider that "teamwork" is expected of them in the kindergarten, which was also large part of common sense knowledge for Head Teachers, that the team must "click" in order for the programme to work. Parents expect them to provide guidance, care and instruction of their children. Teachers and parents are in agreement that it is expected that parents will "get involved" in the kindergarten. Getting involved could mean as little as staying to read a story to a child, to as much as becoming involved with fundraising, field trips and committee work. Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler and Brissie (1992) report a positive relationship between teacher efficacy and teacher reports of parent involvement. These perceptions of parental involvement affect the way the teacher perceives the child to be performing in school. It is important to remember that not all parents feel comfortable "getting involved", which may have implications for the perception by teachers that not all parents provide more for the child in terms of learning than teachers do.

Parents chose kindergarten for their child because of the desire for the child to gain "socialisation" and to go to kindergarten and then primary school in the local community. Teachers believe that children gain the opportunity to mix with other children in a group situation. Parents also believe that children gain from the opportunity to mix with other children. "Socialisation" as the goal and outcome of kindergarten is clearly the common interpretation (Graue, 1993) between teachers and parents in this study. It appears to be a national interpretation as well, given Meade's (1991) analysis that socialisation is a key mission for early childhood education in New Zealand. Socialisation has been found to be an outcome of constructivist early childhood programmes (Weikart and Epstein, 1978; Weikart, 1982). Weikart and Epstein (1978) and Weikart (1982) cited the outcome of early childhood education is that a child is socialised to fit into society. These outcomes of early childhood education were used by Meade to justify the changes to early childhood funding that were part of "Education to be More" (1988). The principles of socialising children to fit into New Zealand society outlined by Meade (1988) are reinforced through the Charter documents negotiated with the Ministry of Education (1989) and more recently through the development of Te Whariki (Ministry of Education, 1993). Te Whariki develops the principles of socialisation under aims and goals of well being, belonging, contribution and communication. Murrow (1995) states that 85% of the respondents to her survey of opinions on Te Whariki supported the document as a whole. This may suggest that the national interpretation of the aims and goals of early childhood education, in a broad sense, is socialisation of the child into society.

Questions asked about how children learn yielded some interesting similarities in beliefs and some intriguing differences. Assistant Teachers all believe that children learn through trial and error in the kindergarten, as well as through a variety of other types of learning. Parents primarily believe that children learn through free play in the kindergarten, although they also think other types of learning occur too. Teachers and parents strongly agree that learning at home most often occurs through talking with parents, although parents also think that free play is a common type of learning too. Assistant Teachers and parents are again in strong agreement that children learn through free play in the kindergarten. This agreement disappears when teachers and parents are asked how children learn something specific like literacy, as teachers say it most commonly happens through talking with teachers and then through talking with other children. It is important to note that the question did not specify literacy at kindergarten and many teachers and parents queried this. Parents, in contrast, believe that children learn literacy largely through talking with parents or observational learning.

There is also strong disagreement over what the most important type of learning is. Assistant Teachers claim that it is "free play", with no teachers considering parent - child talk to be important. Parents primarily consider the most important type of learning to be "talking with parents". The reason given by teachers is that children learn best on their own, through their own mistakes, at what they want to do. Parents, in contrast, say that "input is vital", although they also think that children need experiences and to learn to do some things on their own. Half of the parents believe that children learn through a series of stages, with another quarter stating that children learn through membership of their cultural or family group. The remainder think children learn through outside experiences or a combination of these types of learning. Teachers are more evenly divided between thinking that children learn through a series of stages or through membership of their cultural or family group. Parents and teachers both mainly believe that children learn their language and culture through watching and listening.

Results for these teachers corresponds very closely to the views of children's learning and curriculum in the interview with Head Teachers. Head teachers held a constructivist view of cognitive development, in which children are seen as active learners who learn through experience of the environment. Head Teachers believe in waiting for the "teachable moment" or believe that children will learn best when they are "ready". The "free play" curriculum described by Assistant Teachers is child centred, meeting Kohlberg and Mayer's (1972) criteria for a "progressive" curriculum, in which the child is seen to achieve higher levels of development as a result of structured though natural interactions with the physical and social environment. Assistant Teachers also promote constructivist principles of learning: that children learn through trial and error and through free play, and furthermore that "free play" is the most important type of learning.

Parents' view of learning parallels teachers' in that they believe that children learn mainly through free play in the kindergarten and that children learn through a series of

stages, and the major outcome of attending kindergarten is socialisation. However, their view of how children learn at home and learn literacy is much more interactive, in that they believe that “input is vital” here and that children's learning gains are better if the child is talked to. This view of children's learning is closer to social constructivist approaches to learning, whereby children are seen to learn through their interaction with people possessing greater skills than their own. Children thus receive a “scaffold” (Bruner, 1986) in a mediated learning situation in the home. This idea of “input being vital” is congruent with the guided participation that Rogoff et al. (1993) identified in their cross cultural studies of parents and young children. Rogoff (1990) suggests that this guiding of the child's learning which occurs in homes forms an apprenticeship, whereby the parents give the child knowledge and support as they become experts in their own right. McNaughton (1995) argues that the joint dialogue that parents and children engage in enables children to construct their own purposes, functions and meanings in a learning situation. Teachers undoubtedly do this too, but it is not strongly part of their rhetoric, of believing that children learn best through active individual experimentation. As Cullen (1993) points out, the staff: child ratios in kindergarten obviously work against opportunities to spend extended time talking with children as parents can in homes.

Assistant Teachers think they should provide the resources and environment to help children learn. There are similarities between the present findings with kindergarten teachers in New Zealand and the findings of Tizard and Hughes (1984) in British Nursery schools. In Tizard and Hughes British study, teachers considered that they provided an enriched environment, in which the play materials provided the curriculum. Supervisors reported that they encouraged development by providing a planned environment, in which children learn by self initiated play. Supervisors did not teach reading and writing skills, but proposed that they laid the foundations for these to later occur by providing activities that helped develop pattern recognition, hand-eye coordination, spoken language, and the relationship between stories and printed text (Tizard and Hughes, 1984). This non-interventionist approach to teaching was also identified by Meadows and Cashdan (1988) and Sylva (1980) in British studies of early childhood settings.

The parents interviewed consider that teachers should provide more than just a stimulating environment. They agree that a learning environment should be provided by teachers, and that they also should extend, encourage, talk to children and provide guidance. It was interesting to hear these expectations of pedagogy from parents, as Head Teachers had said that parents often do not provide the “basic skills” for children to learn or that children do not get the amount of reading or language in the home that they should (see Chapter Four). However, Adams (1990) argues that all parents value education, regardless of their socio-economic status. McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1982) considers that parents (in particular the primary caregiver's) beliefs about child development and education will stem from their own experience as a child and from intimate knowledge and experience of the child. Their expectations are therefore integrally related to a

personal understanding of what is individually and culturally appropriate for the child. Teachers' theories are more likely to be a mixture of their own childhood experience, training and teaching experiences (Spodek, 1988). Teachers' beliefs about what is educationally and developmentally appropriate for children in general, may mean that they are teaching tangentially to how parents perceive children ought to be learning. Parr et al. (1991), discussing a study in New Zealand with new entrant teachers, argue that teachers are seen as and see themselves as experts, and this contrasts with parents who are seen as having little to offer to discussions of curriculum or pedagogy. Teachers' conceptions of what is developmentally appropriate for children may be actually excluding a range of literacy opportunities and behaviour for children (Robinson, 1990; McGill-Franzen, 1992). Teachers need to have a range of teaching strategies to meet children's learning and literacy needs (Cullen, 1993), to be aware of cultural and contextual differences in literacy behaviour and be prepared to teach to a range of literacy pathways in development (Dyson, 1993).

Teachers think parents should help children to learn by providing opportunities, talking to and reading to children. Parents are in strong agreement. When asked how teachers help children learn language and reading skills, teachers said that they do this by story reading, talking to children and teaching them book handling skills. Parents said that teachers taught children literacy skills by story reading and talking to children. However, some parents said that they had "not seen" teachers teaching children language or reading. In relation to this question many parents said they would like to see more emphasis on this area, but found that teachers did not agree. Teachers and parents are divided over whether what parents do is more important than what teachers do, although the trend is toward parents being more important rather than the same. As one teacher said "it depends on the parents". Teachers and parents both believe that children learn to read primarily at home and then at both kindergarten and at home. This is a surprising contrast to teachers' beliefs that children learn about literacy through talking with other children. Teachers may have limited their viewpoint to how literacy is developed in kindergarten. There are obviously gaps in knowledge and understanding between the parents and teachers as to what happens in terms of literacy at home and at kindergarten. As McNaughton (1995) has argued, children are more likely to develop literacy skills when there is a close match between the discourse pattern and pedagogical style of the home and the discourse and pedagogy of the school. Finding ways for parents and teachers to discuss the way that literacy is mediated in the home and the kindergarten is of vital importance if the congruence which McNaughton advocates is to be achieved.

Teachers stated that the primary influence on their beliefs about literacy development was their education and then their own childhood. As discussed in Chapter Four, teachers consistently process information gained from observing what takes place prior to, during and after their decision making, as well as the actions they take based on the decisions made (Spodek, 1988). They project a future based upon knowledge gained

from past experience and their educational concepts and values. This information is synthesised to develop a reality which is based on their perceptions, understanding and beliefs. Spodek (1988) calls this collected knowledge "implicit theories" of teachers.

Most parents stated that their own childhood was the biggest influence on their beliefs regarding literacy development, along with their education and experience as a parent. This is consistent with McGillicuddy-DeLisi (1982), who outlines two major findings regarding parental beliefs and practices: that parents have complex belief systems about how children develop and these beliefs are constructed on the basis of the individual's own personal experiences as a child and as a parent.

Emergent literacy experience

One of the aims of this research was to find out what sort of literacy experiences children are receiving before entering compulsory schooling. Clay's (1982) research had established that children learn the pre-requisite skills to reading, long before commencing formal instruction. Few parents set about actively "teaching" their preschoolers, but something in their daily interaction has been shown to have a beneficial effect for later reading. As Teale and Sulzby comment "children use legitimate reading and writing behaviours in the informal settings of home and community" (1986, p.xviii). This study has demonstrated that the children of parents interviewed are experiencing a lot of literacy activity in the home environment, which is reinforced and furthered in the kindergarten.

All children in this study are read to at home and at kindergarten. Children are read to approximately as frequently in kindergarten as they are at home. Children are read to when asked, everyday and at mat time in the kindergarten and an average of five to ten times per week at home. They are mainly read to in the evening or afternoon and evening at home. Reading sessions are longer at home, lasting 30-40 minutes on average, compared to 10-15 at kindergarten. This is an interesting connection with Teale's (1986) study with children of poor families, which revealed that every child in the study was involved in reading and writing to some degree, from 5 to 53 times per day and spent an average of between 40 minutes and 7.5 hours per day in these activities. Children in the present research spend an average of 30 to 40 minutes in story reading alone, without including involvement with household literacy tasks like letter writing, reading newspapers or writing grocery lists.

Two of the six kindergartens in which teachers work do not have a library system. Kindergartens and parents mainly get books to read to children from their own selection or from the public library. Strickland and Morrow (1988) claim that a library "check out" system may maintain interest in literacy in children. Teachers (with libraries) say that books are checked out between 4 and 40 times per month, while parents say that they check them out about twice a month. There is possibly a perception of libraries being

used a lot more than they are, or that this group of parents are low library users, or that they have large book selections at home already. In fact, the average number of children's books the child has at home is between 50 and 200. Most kindergartens have over 500 books on average. Feitelson and Goldstein (1986) found that in communities where children tend to do poorly in school, 60% of Kindergarteners did not own a single book. In contrast, in communities where children tend to do well in school, kindergarteners owned, on average, more than 54 books each. Morrow (1989c) argues that emergent literacy classrooms should have five to eight books per child. By this standard, the kindergarten libraries are generally well provided, as they exceed the 200 to 400 books which would be required for 40 to 45 children in one session. The issue of how many books children have access to will be examined more closely in Chapter Six, where the observations of the literacy environment in the kindergartens are reported.

Both teachers and parents say that children select the books to be read and that they try to read to themselves. Children ask to be read to between 1 and 5 times per week in kindergarten and between 1 and 10 times per week at home. Most parents and some of the teachers will only re-read a story once, while some of the other teachers will re-read as many as four times. Snow and Goldfield (1983) suggest that children learn language through a reoccurring context or a routine such as story reading, because the situation can reoccur, children can identify the original situation and the child's memory associates the present situation with the previous occurrences. What this effectively means is that children will often demand stories again, which enables the situation or the event to be re-created. Snow and Goldfield (1983) state that the cognitive strategy involved is the ability to "...identify a situation, remember what is said and say that yourself the next time the situation recurs..." (p.567). This may be heard when little children "read" a favourite story to themselves; they repeat some of the more memorable lines of the story, amidst their own telling of the story. Children obviously seek out opportunities for the sort of practice that Snow and Goldfield promote, although not all teachers or parents are prepared to re-read a story for children, possibly unaware of the benefits for the child of doing so or not having the time to do so.

Children ask questions about the pictures, characters and content of stories, and sometimes ask questions about books at other times at kindergarten and at home. This is consistent with the findings of Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon (1989), who found that preschool aged children, aged 3 to 5 years, asked questions primarily about the pictures, then story meaning and word meaning. Questions about the graphic form of print occurred most infrequently. Goodman (1986) proposes that children provide metalinguistic statements about language. They use terms appropriately, and make statements about reading and writing when written language is not in view. This is only true for about two thirds of children according to parents, although nine of the eleven teachers said that children ask questions or discuss books at other times than during story reading. Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon (1989) state that a child's "spontaneous" questions

do not arise out of a social vacuum, there is a logic and meaning to why they are asked. Questions are socially constructed through the child's previous experiences with responses to their questions (Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon, 1989) and they reflect children's understanding of literacy concepts. Kindergarten teachers could ask parents what questions children are asking about print on their pre-entry visit to kindergarten, as knowing what questions the child has about print would be one useful measure of the child's development of emergent literacy.

Most Assistant Teachers and parents state that children do not trace, copy or draw anything related to stories, though if they do it is likely to be something of significance to the child or the characters or animals. Children use the titles of stories, words and phrases in conversation and play, which is a good predictor of reading development. Parents commented that this usually occurs during role playing with other children, not with parents. This finding is consistent with studies by Pellegrini and Galda (Galda et al., 1989 and Pellegrini et al., 1991) and Dickinson and Moreton (1991) who report that adults suppress symbolic play in children. This is probably because of the difference in interaction, in which adults assume most of the responsibility in the interaction, whereas in peer group settings, children negotiate these roles. Adults are needed for other types of learning and for facilitating symbolic play in younger children (Pellegrini and Galda, 1993). Both studies found that the symbolic play of children is a good predictor of reading development in kindergarten children.

Teachers primarily think that story reading gives children different experiences and experience with a range of literature. They also believe that story reading stimulates the imagination and give pleasure and enjoyment. Parents mainly believe that reading helps children to develop imagination and that it promotes children's own reading skills. Like teachers, they also believe that the child enjoys it and benefits from the one-to-one time. These findings are consistent with those of Cochran-Smith (1984) who made use of "parent diaries" which suggested that children's early experiences can enrich their experiences outside of books. She argues:

These experiences can play a part in language and concept development, influence later attitudes toward reading, and stimulate and broaden young children's imaginative development (p.12)

Parent's belief that story reading promotes reading is supported by Mason and Allen (1986), who state that routines with and within story book reading may encourage the acquisition of book handling skills and also the discovery of print, recognition of words and the development of a story schema (Snow and Goldfield, 1982).

Goodman (1986) proposes that children aged three to five years develop print awareness and also proposes that the ability to handle books is universal - knowing what they are for, how to handle them, what direction they are read and their function. Children between 3-5 learn that print carries the message. Children understand the proper orientation - how to hold, open, turn pages, follow narrative. Children demonstrate knowledge of terms, e.g. book, page, turn...by responding to appropriate directions, e.g.

"show me the front of the book". Teachers can be seen to fostering this print awareness by exposing children to a range of literature, in a formal and informal story reading environment in large and small group settings. Parents also confirm their knowledge of either children's print awareness or the need to promote print awareness, through their belief that story reading will promote later reading development.

Clay (1991) states that children who have developed concepts about print by six years, when the "Concepts about print" test is administered to children in New Zealand, will know what is the front of the book, that print tells that story, what a letter is and what a word is, some knowledge of upper and lower case letters and some knowledge of punctuation. Children discussed by parents and teachers in this study can be seen to be developing many of these concepts about print. They are reported to be attempting emergent readings of books, they recognise that parents and teachers are reading the words on the page, they recognise the letters of the alphabet and are attempting to write and to spell. Goodman (1986) states that children develop the forms and functions of writing between 3 and 5 years, so that 50% of 3 year olds make letters which look like letters, in addition to scribble forms. In addition, children read environmental print and they are able to recite nursery games and take part in language games, which draw on their letter knowledge and phonological awareness.

Goodman (1986) proposes that children develop oral language as they have active experience with written language. Children have numerous opportunities to develop this - preschools, television, advertising, books, all designed for preschoolers to provide them with names of letters, sound, numbers, and rhythm of spoken and written language. In this study children have ABC books read to them, have nursery rhymes sung to them and play language games at home and at kindergarten. Children have favourite books, although parents are not always sure why they like them. Teachers think children like favourite books because they relate to their own experiences. Children have been heard to recite nursery rhymes at home and at kindergarten, the most common being "Twinkle, twinkle, little star". Other common language activities include talking with children and doing puzzles, both at kindergarten and at home. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley (1987) hypothesized that the foundations of phonemic awareness stem from knowledge of nursery rhymes. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley's results indicated that early knowledge of nursery rhymes is strongly related to the development of phonological skills and emergent reading abilities. Similarly, Ninio (1980) stated the routinized formats of story books, with letter naming (in ABC books) and word association may facilitate rote memorisation of sounds and words and thereby enhance vocabulary acquisition. Children appear to have both access to a literacy environment in which to practice many of the language skills which predict successful reading achievement, and opportunities for adults to mediate or scaffold their understanding of literacy concepts.

Children thus have opportunities at home and at kindergarten to develop a knowledge of letter names and the sounds of language, which will aid the development of

phonemic awareness. Children who become fluent readers display a knowledge of letter names and good phonemic awareness (Lieberman, Shankweiler, Lieberman, Fowler and Fischer, 1977; Blachman, 1984a, Tunmer and Nesdale, 1985; Zifcak, 1981). The reason appears to be the causal relationship with decoding ability, which is causally related to reading comprehension (Tunmer and Nesdale, 1985). Successful reading achievement is thus the combined knowledge of letter names and phonemic awareness (Ball and Blachman, 1991), along with the opportunities in which to observe, learn and practice a variety of literacy activities (Tunmer and Chapman, in press).

Teale (1986, p. 185) identified nine domains of activity in homes of which literacy was a fundamental part. Briefly, the domains were daily living routines, entertainment, school related activity (e.g. homework of siblings, notices), work, religion, interpersonal communication (letters, cards etc.), participating in "information networks" (reading papers, journals for the purpose of interacting socially and being well informed e.g. sport pages), story book time and literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy (e.g. to teach the child). Children in this study read a variety of environmental print, which encompass many of the domains described by Teale. This is mainly food packets and names at kindergarten and fast food signs, shops, food packets and street signs with their parents. Food packets, magazines and books and magazines make up the variety of environmental print in the kindergartens, while there is a wider variety of environmental print available in homes. Children enjoy "reading" and using food packets, magazines and recipes at home and at kindergarten. Goodman (1986), in her theory of the "roots of literacy", states that 80% of four year olds have knowledge of print in situational context. Parents and teachers reported that the children in their care have this ability, sometimes even when the print is a slightly modified form.

This chapter has examined the role of parents and Assistant Teachers in children's literacy development and some of the literacy experiences of the children in their care. Parents and teachers have similar views of how children learn at home and in the kindergarten, although they have differing opinions on how literacy is learnt and what the most important types of learning are. Parents and teachers both describe children as possessing a range of literate behaviours and already displaying many of the understandings about print, which will lead to later reading achievement. Overall, all children discussed in this study have access to story reading and discussion, regardless of parents' educational or economic status. Despite parents' desire for children to succeed later on in formal schooling, their primary motivation for sending the child to kindergarten is to be socialised into the local community.

In this study children have access to literacy activities both at home and at kindergarten, although it maybe offered in quite different formats. At home, children receive more one on one literacy opportunities, while at kindergarten children may learn

more language games and be part of more structured literacy activities. Goodman (1986) argues that all children receive a comprehensive introduction to literacy and that this seems to happen whether it is through the parents actively stimulating or inviting response to the environment, or through the child watching television, other people or the environment's activities in general. However, experience of a literate environment does not ensure that all children learn to read with the same ease. This thesis has argued thus far that children need both access to literacy rich environments and skilled mediation of literacy tasks, in order to develop the critical emergent literacy skills required for successful reading achievement. The next chapter will examine whether children have access to a language and print rich environment and how the literacy environment of the kindergarten is mediated for children.

CHAPTER SIX

Domains of literacy activity in kindergartens

This chapter presents the second set of data collected in six kindergartens. This second part of the research sought to refine, consolidate and validate the information received from Head Teachers. For this reason, observation of centres was used to identify the domains of literacy in the kindergartens, fulfilling the third aim to "identify the domains of literacy in six kindergartens". In addition, the data would provide answers to the research questions for this aim, which were to identify the most common ways that literacy is presented in the curriculum and to find out how literacy is accessed and mediated in the curriculum. This would include observing the types of literacy activity that children had access to and the way in which literacy was mediated by adults and peers in the classroom. Although no formal hypotheses about what types of literacy activity would be in the kindergartens were generated, information gained in the first part of the present study with Head Teachers suggested that kindergartens would be arranged to support a "free play" curriculum, with an open layout and a range of resources available. Data collected would provide valuable information about how literacy is currently being practiced, which in turn would provide a foundation for possible ideas about how this information and the research on emergent literacy could be used to create a curriculum which would promote literacy development in young children.

Methods

Sample

Observations were undertaken in the same six kindergartens as those from which parent and Assistant Teacher interviews were obtained: Kindergartens 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Kindergartens 1 and 2 had the highest SES families in the city. Kindergartens 5 and 6 had the lowest and Kindergartens 3 and 4 were mostly middle income SES families. It is important to remember that no kindergarten in this research had families from only one economic group. Kindergartens will use the same abbreviation K and their number (e.g. K1), which were used in Chapter 4 and 5.

Data Collection

Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) developed a sequence of nine steps to observe, define and rate a language and print rich classroom. The last of these steps, the rating of the teacher's effectiveness in implementing the curriculum, was not undertaken in this study. Here, identifying domains of literacy activity was the focus. For this reason,

observation was structured according to the first eight of Taylor, Blum and Logsdon's (1986) steps. These are as follows :

1) Observe whether the classroom can be categorised as “language and print rich”.

Language and print rich classrooms will have:

- a) large quantities of print
- b) print that is meaningful and relevant

2) To help define step 1, list all incidences of print (examples of written language displays).

3) Identify emerging categories (relationships that bind clusters of incidences)

- a) type of language used in the example
- b) location of print used in the room
- c) availability of print to the children
- d) time frame

4) Continue observation to expand number and type of incidences of print and to refine categories.

5) Identify domains (sets of incidences)

- a) books
- b) communications
- c) lists
- d) directions
- e) schedules
- f) labels
- g) writing materials

6) Develop a surface taxonomy (elements of domains e.g. directions)

- a) classroom rules
- b) directions for activities
- c) directions for use of centres
- d) recipes
- e) personal directions

7) Examine opportunities for interaction with print e.g. accessible and functional display of children's language products.

8) Identify characteristics of language and print rich classrooms :

- a) multiple and varied stimuli for reading
- b) multiple and varied stimuli for writing
- c) accessible and functional displays of children's language products
- d) integrative print
- e) routines
- f) child-centred

Taylor, Blum and Logsdon found that the characteristics labelled a) through f) will be dynamically inter-related in the classroom, so that they can be identified as both access and mediation of the literacy environment. Where the earlier steps are concerned with measuring and quantifying how much literacy children have access to and how it is mediated, this step is concerned with a preliminary analysis of how effective is the curriculum at promoting access and mediation of literacy.

Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) suggest the use of a floor plan, to identify the layout of the centre and to identify the placement of literacy activities. They also suggest the use of photographs or slides of activities and layouts. These suggestions were adopted, to help develop a clear picture of the access that children have to language and its products in the classroom. The floor plans and photographs were invaluable in locating and clarifying the written observation data. As examining the role of kindergarten in children's development was part of one of the aims of the research, the observations were also focussed on how literacy was mediated verbally by teachers, parents and others in the classroom.

To summarise, this section of the data collection involved the following data collection techniques :

- 1) Observation of centres for at least six complete sessions.
- 2) A written account of observations, following Taylor, Blum and Logsdon's (1986) steps for defining a language and print rich classroom.
- 3) A floor plan of the centre and available literacy activities, to be drawn at each session of observation.

During the data collection, every item of print on the walls was recorded. A floor plan for the outside and inside, and photos of examples of the domains of literacy activities were taken. As the data collection always started on a Monday morning, this process normally took all of the morning session and the afternoon session, and sometimes part of the next morning. The other four sessions were used to record children's interactions with literacy activities.

Audio recording was attempted, as a back up to running observations at mat sessions and other structured literacy activities, but it was difficult to obtain good quality recordings without using very bulky equipment. Also, the recordings did not add a significant amount to the written field notes.

A non-participant observer role was readily achievable in all of the kindergartens observed, as the children were used to a variety of people being present at each session. Data were able to be collected without the researcher being conspicuous or obviously altering children's behaviour. To examine how literacy activities were mediated by adults and peers, event based observation was used. Obviously, not every interaction could be seen, but structured and unstructured interactions between teachers or parents and children around literacy activities were recorded whenever possible.

Ely et al. (1991) view research in an educational setting as a transactional process, which introduces "the reflective mode" into a classroom. They state that

once the reflective mode is introduced, this impulse toward examination and impetus is inevitable and inexorable. In fact once the habit of reflection is introduced into a setting, the setting has already changed, however slightly and subtly. People who have never before articulated their beliefs and customs now are asked to do so, and what may never before have been examined has now become verbally objectified, so that it is at least present for examination (p.197)

Ely et al. suggest that this transactional process is "at least two way" and "like much else in naturalistic research, it is emergent and results usually can't be predicted" (p.197). Only in K3 was this sort of process clearly seen as a source of conflict with an Assistant teacher who was concerned about the event based observation, because it wasn't a method of observation she was familiar with. Time sampling is the main method of observation used in K3 by the teachers for ascertaining use of areas. The research methodology and focus possibly presented a different dimension to her world view of teaching. This response to a researcher in the kindergarten is to be expected, according to Ely (1991) who states that merely being present in the room heightens teacher's awareness of what they are doing. Similarly, Ball (1984) discussing his 'Beachside School' research states "I must recognise that my presence stimulated talk, produced response, encouraged concern" (p.82-3). In all of the kindergartens, teachers were interested in the research on emergent literacy and often asked a variety of questions about children's literacy development, which may have influenced future teaching practice.

Analysis

Eisner (1991, p.33-34) describes the following features of qualitative study:

- 1) Field focussed. The study is usually non manipulative, which Lincoln and Guba (1978) call "naturalistic". Eisner says that "on the whole, qualitative researchers observe, interview, record, describe, interpret and appraise settings as they are" (p.33).
- 2) Self as instrument. Eisner describes each person's history and hence world as unlike anyone else's. "This means that the way in which we see and respond to a situation and how we interpret what we see will bear our own signature" (p.34).
- 3) Interpretive character. Eisner explains that this is a two fold process in which the research explains why something is taking place, as well as what that experience holds for those in the situation studied.

4) Use of expressive language. Expressive language and the presence of voice in the text to make it clear that a person is behind the words.

5) Attention to particulars. The study provides a sense of the uniqueness of the case.

6) Credibility. Qualitative research becomes believable because of its coherence, insight and instrumental utility. It should present evidence in a way that satisfies or is useful to the purposes embraced.

Eisner points out that these features are present in varying degrees in any particular study. This research contains many of these features, as it set out to describe what the literacy environment is like for children in a group of New Zealand kindergartens and it did not seek to manipulate any aspects of that environment. Secondly, it was focussed using methods used for assessing emergent literacy activity and environments. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) state that in many cases theoretical position will be incorporated into research design. In this case, using an adapted rating scale for an observational guide structured the observation toward looking for an emergent literacy environment and provided the theoretical base. The research is interpretive, as examination of what was taking place is presented and consideration is given to what sort of experience the situation provided for children and teachers. The excerpts included from interviews and observations also present the voices of teachers, parents and children involved in the study. The data is reported in the first person, where it seems important to clarify that it is my opinion or experience being expressed. Finally, a range of presentation styles have been used, including graphs, maps, photographs and vignettes of observed events to try to convey a sense of the uniqueness of the kindergartens.

The theoretical position, implicit in the methodology, shaped the observations and the first attempts at analysis. Observations were hand written in the kindergarten, using a non-judgemental, descriptive narrative and were transcribed later. The data speaks for itself, without narrative comments. The structure of Taylor, Blum and Logsdon's rating scale was used for the preliminary analysis of the data collected to see if there was anything which would correspond to those categories. The data was then coded using those categories and refinements to the categories. A list of codes was developed, which briefly detailed the nature of the incident and the site of the data within the transcript. Frequency counts were used and graphed to confirm impressions formed within the codes. The results are presented within Taylor, Blum and Logsdon's categories, but codes are grouped together into a broader framework of domains of literacy. This framework will examine two major areas of the curriculum :

1) what access to print the kindergarten provides (reporting steps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and categories a, b, c, and d of Step 8); and

2) how the literacy environment is mediated for children (steps 6, 7 and 8).

Results and Discussion

Domains of literacy : Access and availability of print

Research into emergent literacy has demonstrated that children are more likely to develop concepts of print if they are involved in language and print rich environments. This section will examine the access to and availability of print in kindergartens, as an integral part of the domains of literacy in the kindergartens. Domains of literacy activity are the provision of print on the walls, books, labels and writing materials. A listing of items observed in each kindergarten is found in Appendices 10-15.

Access to print

As Table 6.1 indicates, there is wide variety in the type and number of incidences of print in the kindergartens. K6 clearly has the most print with 79 recorded examples. The notable feature of print in all these classrooms is that information directed at parents makes up a significant proportion of print available. This ranged from 15% in K2 to 41% of all print in K5. K1 had the lowest total number of incidences of print of the six kindergartens overall. K2 had the highest number of labels of all the kindergartens, with 50% of available print in this category. K6 had the most bilingual print of all the kindergartens, no doubt reflecting the teacher's focus on meeting the needs of her multicultural classroom.

Table 6.1 Numbers and types of print available in kindergarten classrooms

Kindergartens	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Labels	11	24	9	16	4	15
Songs /rhymes	1	3	0	1	7	14
Bilingual communications	5	5	7	1	7	18
Parent communications	9	7	15	11	15	24
Posters	2	5	2	1	1	2
Notices for children	1	1	2	0	1	2
Rosters and lists	1	1	3	0	1	3
Recipes	0	1	1	6	0	1
Schedules	1	1	0	1	1	0
Totals	31	48	39	37	37	79

Table 6.1 demonstrates that the most common types of print available in these classrooms is print directed at parents, as parent communications, rosters and lists and

schedules. There are a number of labels in most kindergartens too, which could be directed at parents or children. K6 is noteworthy, as it not only has the most print of all the kindergartens, it also had the most songs, rhymes and bilingual communications of any kindergarten. Much of this material was directed at children, being songs and rhymes which were used in mat or music sessions and these were often presented in an appropriate format. For example, Plate 6.1 shows the song "My Daddy ate an apple" and a bilingual colour song, which clearly connect the topic and the song.



Plate 6.1 : Example of print directed at children in K6

One of the difficulties that teachers frequently expressed about the kindergarten buildings, was the lack of wall space to display anything at child's height. One of the most notable features of the literacy environment in nearly all these kindergartens is the height on the walls at which print is hung. In most kindergartens, the locker lists, which were in some cases excellent ways of connecting a word with an object were hung up above the lockers so that only adults could see them, so that an activity which was based on promoting literacy and word/concept recognition was made inaccessible.

K3, K4, and K6 made process cooking recipes charts available on a daily basis in permanent positions, while these were only occasionally available in K2 and not seen in

K1 and K5. A good example of making print available was seen in K2 with the use of an easel with the "daily news" on it. It is worth noting that only in K4 and 6 are books spread throughout the kindergarten. In the other kindergartens, books are mainly confined to a book corner.

For most of the centres, the structure of the classroom remained unchanged throughout the data collection period, the only differences were daily table top activities, such as clay versus playdough on different days of the week. The only exception was K3 where the staff re-arranged the kindergarten completely on the last afternoon of data collection in the kindergarten, while the Assistant Teachers were being interviewed. These changes have not been recorded, as children were not observed interacting with this new environment. Teachers in most kindergartens said that posters would change with the current theme. In K2 the insect posters had been put up for the theme "insects", while in K5 and K6 the posters on dinosaurs reflected the theme at the time. K3 and K4 had "Whakapapa" (ancestors) trees on the walls, reflecting their themes on families.

At a superficial glance, these kindergartens could be said to be "print rich", as there is a lot of print on the walls. However, if Taylor, Blum and Logsdon's (1986) criteria are applied, they do not all have print which is meaningful and relevant to children. Print is largely inaccessible to children by its location high on the walls and by the fact that print is mainly directed at adults. K2, K4 and K6 provide some print in the form of labels, songs and recipes, which are clearly accessible and meaningful for children.

Integrative print.

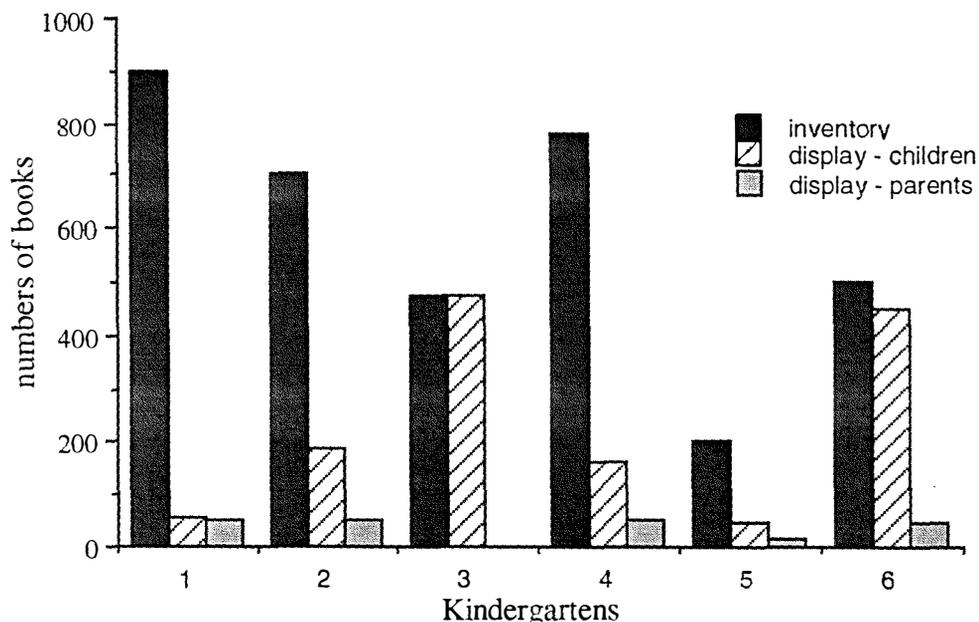
The category of integrative print examines how effectively the available print has been utilized in the classroom. As Table 6.1. showed, there was a large amount of print directed at adults in all of these centres and little print directed at children. The use of an easel in K2 was an effective means of integrating print in the daily routines, although this was not used for sheets of songs during the mat session, as it could have been. Similarly, bright presentation of children's rhymes in pictures of cows, fire engines and so forth in K6 (see Plate 6.1) around the mat area provided an effective way of integrating print into the daily mat session, as children were made aware that teachers were reading the words off the wall. There were little to no opportunities for children to use writing as a tool in kindergartens for anything but writing their name on their artwork, probably indicating an expectation of child development for this group of children. Little opportunity was provided for children to sign their name on lists or to use reading materials as resources, although teachers said that these things sometimes happen. Some of these tasks are well within the range of a preschool child. This finding that literacy plays a limited functional role in the kindergarten may indicate a belief by teachers that such activities would not be developmentally appropriate with this age group of children. McGill-Franzen (1992)

found that many teachers deprive three and four year old children of literacy opportunities, such as writing lists and books, in the belief that it is developmentally inappropriate, even though researchers such as Goodman (1986) have identified that many three and four year old children already possess a great deal of functional knowledge about literacy.

Books and other stimuli for reading

One of the most interesting aspects of the observations was drawing the diagrams of the centres and observing the number of books and location of books in the kindergartens. Figure 6.1 shows how many books each kindergarten has on the inventory of equipment and how many books were available at the time of observation for display for children and for parents. In all of these kindergartens there are books, puzzles, posters and in most there were some songs, rhymes or bilingual communications on the walls. In addition, there were product boxes in the collage materials, such as cereal or toothpaste cartons. Often old Christmas or birthday cards and magazines were part of the collage materials.

Figure 6.1. Numbers of books in kindergartens



Although some kindergartens, such as K1, reported to have 900 books in their inventory, there were fewer than 100 on display in the centre and these were all in close proximity to each other. Approximately half of these were aimed at parents. K2 chose an

unusual location, putting 162 books on display in a large shelf in the locker room, in front of the children's toilets (see Plate 6.2). It was perhaps a good place to keep the books in good condition, as it was rarely seen to be used in the session. Children were not observed stopping to select a book, although parents used the selection for children's library books. The selection on offer is changed, as the bookcase does not hold the entire inventory. Children were only observed using the small number of books on a low shelf in the classroom (see the section later in this chapter on the observations of how literacy is mediated). There were also 22 books on a low shelf in the mat area, on the theme of insects, which were more frequently used. K3 had their entire inventory available to children, with 25 on the theme of families on a low puzzle table. Other books were located in one corner of the kindergarten and were firmly stacked into a book case, so that only the spines were visible to children. K4 had a distribution of books throughout the inside and outside (under a verandah) of the kindergarten. These books were all located at child level and were very accessible. The only exception in K4 was the location of the parent library by the kitchen, and its obscured location behind a Christmas raffle box (see Plate 6.3). Plate 6.3 is an example of a parent library in K4, which is located next to the kitchen, out of the "flow" of parent traffic. During observations, this collection remained completely obscured by the raffle. No parents were observed to use these books, although this may have been a temporary problem, a factor of the raffle or the imminent onset of the Christmas season. K5 was noteworthy by having the poorest selection of books available to children. Teachers explained that most of the kindergarten's books had been destroyed in a flood in the storeroom of the kindergarten, so that there were only 200 books in the inventory, but there were only 58 books on shelves, and these were all located in the book corner. K6 provided a good supply of books, over 500 available in a range of locations in the kindergarten, for a variety of purposes. There was 412 books in a bookshelf, used as a lending library at the edge of the area used for mat sessions, "Spot" and "Dr Seuss" books in the "quiet room" for children to read, parent books by the parent information boards and books related to themes in the curriculum, such as "dinosaurs" and "nature" spread about the kindergarten.

Plate 6.4 shows how bare the book corner in K5 looks, despite an attempt to provide comfortable seating and carpeting. Although the book corner does not have a good supply of books, the area was observed to be well used by children, parents and teachers. Observations of the mediation of literacy activities will be discussed further in the second part of this chapter. Plate 6.5 shows a typical low bookshelf in K3, holding a supply of books on families related to the "Whakapapa" (ancestors) theme. Children were seen to "read" these books, whereas a bookcase filled with the kindergarten's inventory was largely ignored.



Plate 6.2 : An unusual choice of location for the lending library and major source of books in K2



Plate 6.3 : Obstructed view of parent lending library in K4.



Plate 6.4 : A poor supply of books on display in K5

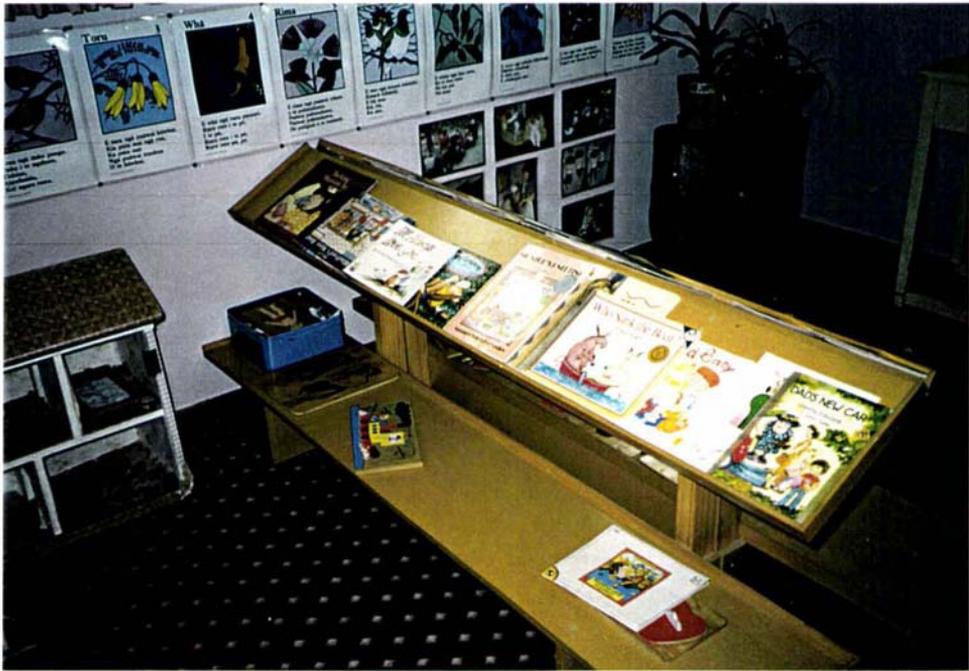


Plate 6.5 : Location of books and Maori language print at child's level in K3.

The supply of books in the kindergartens is adequate, according to the guidelines for equipping a literacy rich classroom outlined by Morrow (1989c). Morrow states that classrooms which seek to promote emergent literacy require 5-8 books per child, with a changing supply of at least 25 books every week or two, so that books seem new and exciting again to children who haven't read them for a while. Only K5 had barely enough books for 45 children, with only 200 available altogether. The choice of books available was related to the theme of insects in K2, whakapapa in K3 and dinosaurs in K6. Apart from the whakapapa theme, which involved displays of children and their families and stories about families on the bookshelf, there were no clear instances in which the curriculum in the kindergartens was building on the experiences of the children attending (McNaughton, 1995). Although it could be argued that studying dinosaurs and insects is standard and appropriate early childhood curriculum, they are not necessarily meaningful or relevant to children's home experiences. Insects could be meaningful to children, if they arose from children's discovery of insects or if teachers related the topic to children's interests by getting them to go hunting for insects in the kindergarten or at home. However, in K2 it was a planned for topic in the curriculum, which involved use of pre-determined activities, books and posters. Although there were insects on a nature table, these did not seem to feature highly in mat session discussions or observed interaction around literacy activities concerning insects.

Although the supply of books in the kindergartens is adequate, the way in which they are used is problematic in some kindergartens. In order to maximize the relevance and accessibility of books for children in the curriculum, teachers need to think carefully about where the books are located, how they relate to the objectives of the curriculum or theme at the time, how they can be located and used to promote connections between reading and writing and what role adults will play in promoting their use. This point will be addressed in the second section of this chapter on how literacy is mediated for children in the kindergartens.

Communications.

Communications can be seen as distinct from directions, although both may be concerned with giving information about something in the kindergarten or how to participate in an activity or event. Communications can be more general than directions, although they can give specific information about how to do an activity. Directions, although also concerned with communicating information, are more likely to be given verbally and in relation to a specific event or activity. The second section of this chapter, which describes how literacy is mediated in the kindergartens, will discuss how directions are given verbally in the kindergartens, while communications are more likely to be on the walls as available print.

Figures 6.2 and 6.3. more closely examine the information about available print which was presented in Table 6.1. Figure 6.2 shows that a variety of bilingual literacy materials are available in the kindergartens, which indicates that kindergarten teachers are interested in promoting bilingual literacy. Most bilingual communications had the message in Maori, translated into English. In the case of numbers, a picture of several items would be labelled with the appropriate number. K6, with the most bilingual communications overall, had mainly songs in Maori and English. K4 had little bilingual communication, despite a theme entitled "Whakapapa", the Maori word for ancestors, at the time of observation, although Figure 6.2 shows that there were four songs in Maori on the walls. K1 had only one song on the walls, which was in English and partially obscured on the wall by a piano.

Much of the communications on the walls of these kindergartens is parent education; telling parents what their child is learning from activities and how they should be helping children to learn. Communications for parents were almost exclusively in English and concerned administrative information, such as board minutes or rules for parent helping, or gave information of the usefulness of the activities in the kindergarten for child development. Figure 6.3 shows that information for parents about activities was in all kindergartens, except for K1, and formed a significant amount of communications for parents in K3, K5 and K6. K1 did have general information about child development posted on the walls. It is interesting to note that welcome notices only appeared in K5 and K6, both kindergartens with families with the lowest SES in the sample. Both welcome notices were in multiple languages to reflect the cultures of children attending. Note that Figure 6.3 does not include rosters and lists within totals for parent communications, as these are aimed at both parents and children and are discussed separately, in the next section.

Written directions are fairly scarce in these kindergartens, as most directions are given verbally. This is discussed in the second section of this chapter, under Directions for centres and Directions for activities. The exceptions are the notices to "wash your hands" in most children's bathrooms, fire and earthquake instructions, library rules in K2 and K6 and the process cooking instructions in K2, K3, K4 and K6. Directions for signing up to be a "Parent Help" (see Plate 6.6) are directed at adults and on a door at adult height.

Figure 6.2. Printed bilingual communications.

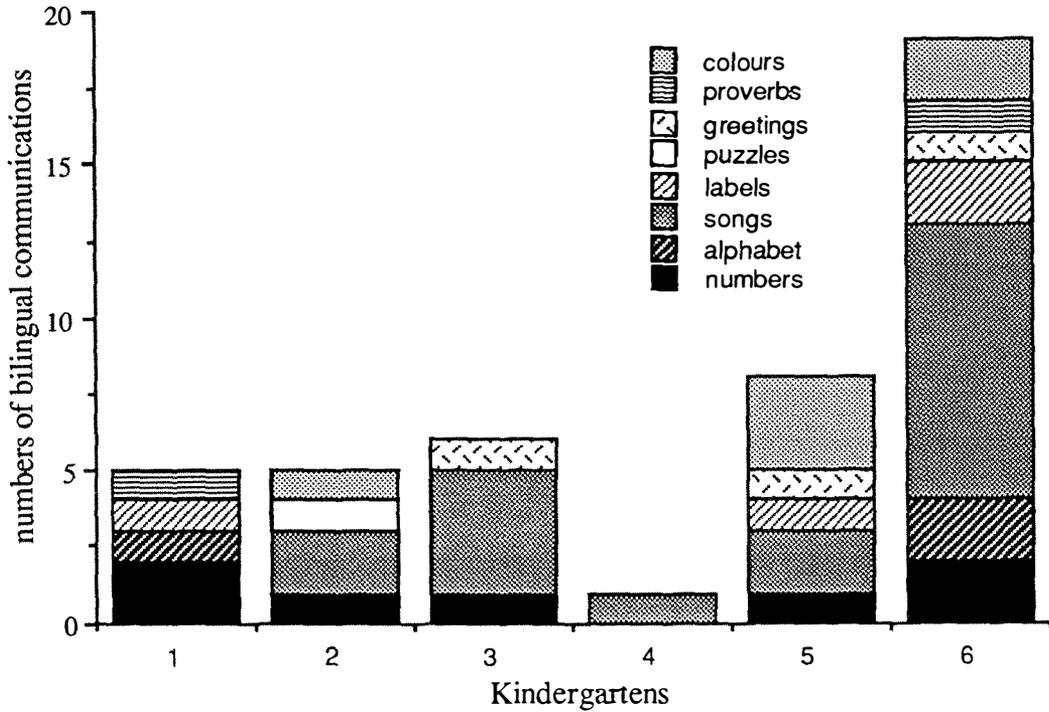


Figure 6.3. Communications with parents

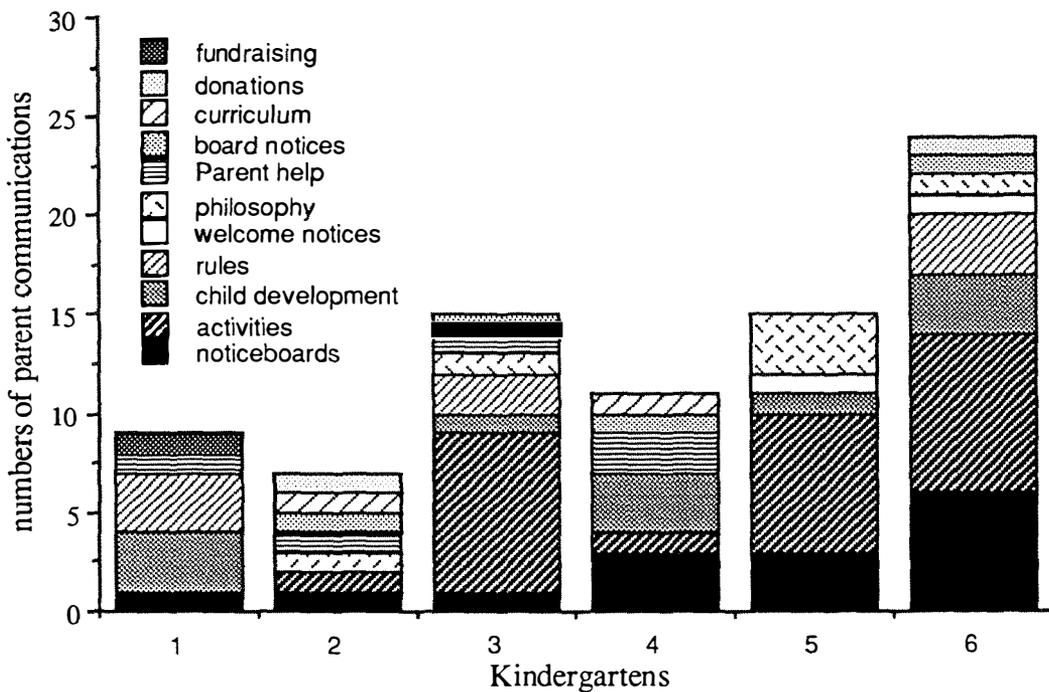


Plate 6.7 demonstrates some of the general messages for parents about child development. These posters demonstrate the pooling of resources which occurs among the kindergartens, as well as instructions to parents about what is developmentally appropriate for preschool children in terms of literacy. There is a clear implication in these posters that children will not learn to read before they are five years old, but that

children should be encouraged to learn the concepts of print; of directionality, of print carrying the message and the functions of reading and writing. Messages in Plate 6.7 carry implicit messages, that parents should demonstrate a love of reading to their child. Plates 6.8 is more explicit. They clearly tell parents how to interact with children around an activity. They explain the proposed link with child development and then tell parents how to question children, in order to promote development. These messages tell parents what is considered to be "good practice" in the kindergarten. Plate 6.9 is a typical message concerning what teachers consider children learn in kindergarten. This poster was seen in K1 and K5, in identical format, and in slightly different versions in all other kindergartens. Although the message states what children will learn, it is clearly directed at parents and encompasses many of the ideas concerning child development that Head Teachers identified in Chapter Four. These are that children will make choices or free play, that they will be independent, that they will learn to socialise with other children and learn the rules of school and that if they do all these things they will become a healthy happy person. These are clear expectations of what children should become through their early education. The messages for parents are congruent with the constructivist approach to early education which was discussed by Head Teachers in Chapter Four and Assistant Teachers in Chapter Five. The emphasis on promoting independence and socialisation through early childhood education is also found in the Charter Handbook (1989) and more recently in "Te Whariki" (Ministry of Education, 1993), the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education in New Zealand.

Communications are primarily in print on the walls and directed at parents in the kindergartens. They tell parents how they are to participate in kindergartens and how children are perceived by teachers to be learning by the various activities, such as painting, using playdough, blocks and so forth. Few communications are directed at children, as the intention seems to be to promote the teachers' "interpretation" (Graue, 1993) of how children learn to parents who enter the kindergarten. Children are also told what teachers expect of them within activities in the classroom, but this is more likely to be done through verbal directions for how to behave in a given activity. Hence, both children and parents have access to the teacher's "voice" or her meanings and intentions (Bakhtin, 1981), but children are more likely to get this information verbally. This point is addressed in the second section of this chapter in the section on directions for activities and use of centres.

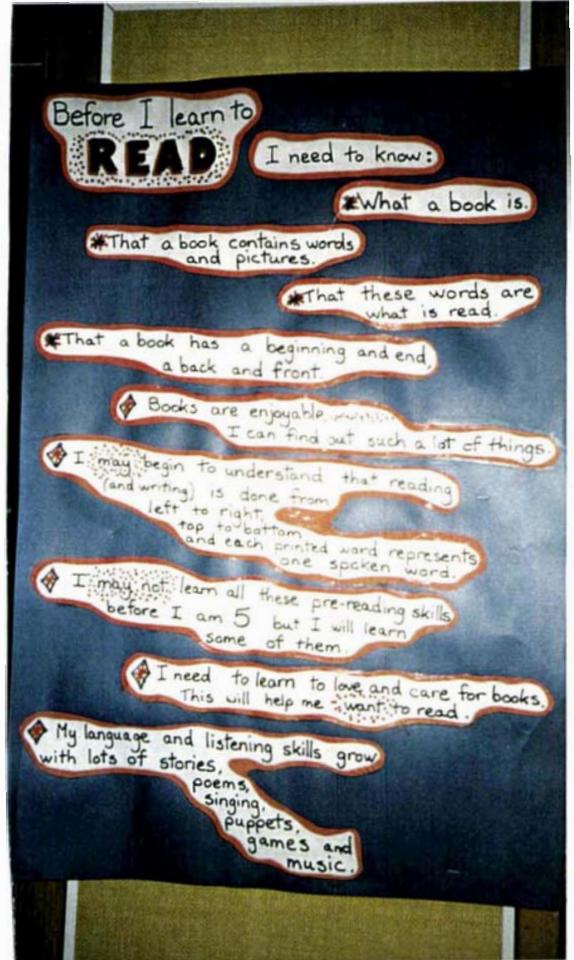
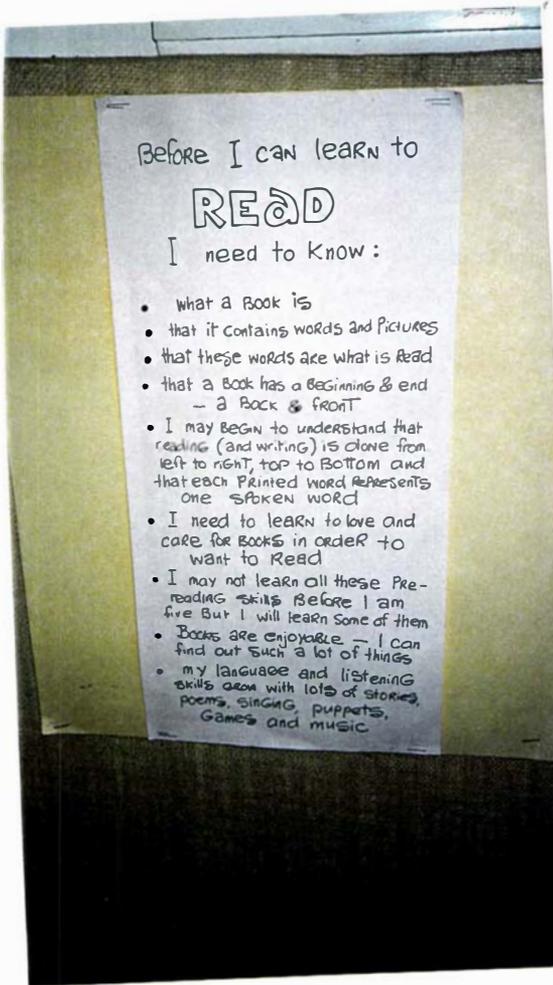


Plate 6.7 : Similarity of messages for parents about activities in K1 and K4.

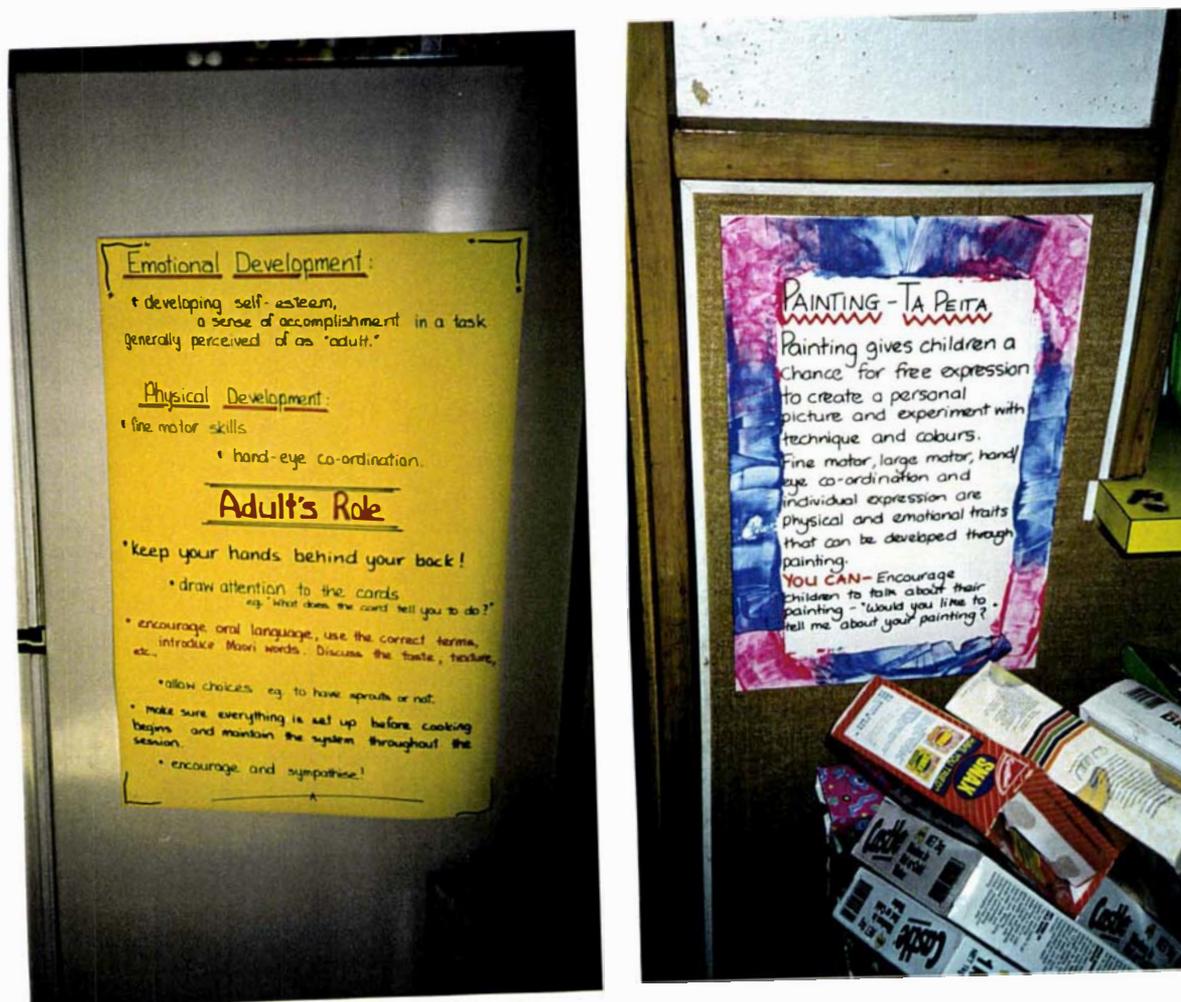


Plate 6.8 : Messages to parents in K5 and K6 about child development and their role in the activity

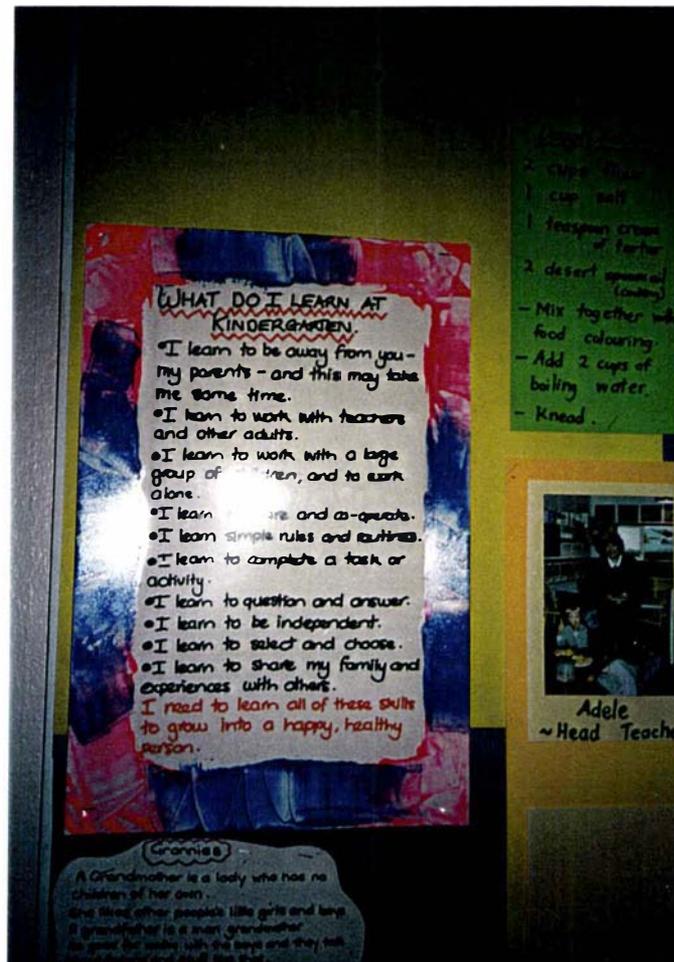


Plate 6.9 : "What do I learn in kindergarten", an example of the message seen in many kindergartens, from K5

Lists.

There were lists in all the kindergartens, although only some of the lists were intended for children. One of the good examples of a list for children was seen in K2. An easel was used at the beginning of the session, in which the teachers discussed what the focus of the session would be and what the highlights of the week would be.

Today is Monday
 Our News
 *Luncheon
 *Trike/bike athon
 *Insects
 *Singing
 *Cart wood
 *Aeroplane display
 *School A
 (K2:2)

More common were the locker lists, donations lists and lists of children in the morning or afternoon programme. Plate 6.10 gives an example of how words and objects are used to code children's lockers, so that a child may find their name and the corresponding object and has the possibility of learning that the word stands for the object. K5 had a list of songs on the wall at the edge of the mat, as follows:

Songlist!
 Skinny marinky
 galumph went the little green frogs
 annabeline
 happiness song
 waddely archer
 ten little gentlemen
 five brown buns
 five little ducks
 five little fish
 wash your dirty face
 this old man
 six little ducks
 ten in the bed
 the wheels on the bus
 incy wincy spider
 row row row your boat
 if you're happy and you know it
 when I was one
 five little elephants balancing
 mister caterpillar
 ram sam sam
 Johnny get your hair cut
 hunk of tin
 I'm a little teapot
 wind the bobbin up
 Lula
 (K5:6)

K5 had a sign up list for the Burger Buggy, a "McDonald's" vehicle used for class trips, but this was at adult height, obviously intended for adults to sign the child's name. Some of the lists were clearly directed at adults, such as previously seen in Plate 6.6 which shows a "Parent Help Roster" for parents to volunteer to assist in the kindergarten. Some

of the lists are directed at both children and adults, such as the washing list and weather list in K6, seen in Plate 6.11. The washing list was sited at child level, and although it had adult writing of names on the list, it did present the possibility of children identifying their family name and crossing off their name as the washing was taken home. Similarly, the weather list was used by the teacher with children at the mat session, to identify the day's weather. During the rest of the session, however, it was replaced on the wall at child's height, so that children could use it. The pictures are labelled with the word in English and Maori, providing opportunities for children to connect the print with the object. As this information was also given at mat sessions, access and mediation of this literacy activity was clearly provided.

Beyond these examples, however, lists are rarely used as means of organising children's activities or for promoting the ability to write a child's name (Strickland and Morrow, 1988; Morrow, 1989a). Kantor, Miller and Fernie (1992) argue that children have an increased interest in literacy when they can claim ownership of it, such as writing their own name. There are too few opportunities in these kindergartens for children to make connections between reading and writing. Getting children to write lists and labels would be an important first step toward promoting literacy in these kindergartens.

Schedules.

Only four of the kindergartens had a written schedule of the curriculum. Schedules were displayed on an inside office window in two kindergartens and on a notice board near the entry in the other two kindergartens. In K2 this was a "weekly focus" in which the activities and purposes of the curriculum were explained. This is a clearly articulated focus with a clear objective; for children to learn about insects and where they live. Long term objectives include increasing children's comfort at handling insects and learning about how they are important in the ecological system. The focus is supported in K2 by provision of books, posters and labelled insects on the nature table, as well as table top activities for children to prepare.

Weekly focus

Insects

Why? As a follow up to Butterflies and Caterpillars. The children loved looking for insects at kindergarten last week.

What do we expect children to learn? That insects can be found in lots of varied places outside and even inside - their breeding habits.

Individual child's learning, as above and not to be scared of insects.

Long term expectations. How to handle and care for insects. How they benefit the living world.

How to introduce focus - group time, parent help areas, informal participation with adults.

Resources - books, puzzles, posters, nature area.

Spiders and web. Spiders pin. Snails x2. Bees am. Honey bee cake. Ladybirds. Apples on string. Worm with eyes. Not trolleys. Family corner. Dishes out. Paints and brushes. (K2:3)

	Morning Children	Afternoon Children		Morning Children	Afternoon Children
	Zoe H.	Lisa	Flower	Michael	Angeline
	Tashah	Ben	Giraffe	Michael	Jayne
	Nichols	Michael	Mouse	Jesse	Giulanni
	Lemise	Trent	Doll	Tiffany	Melissa
	Corey G.	Vincent	Pig	Isiah	
	Joshua T.	Kate	Scooter	Rueben	Delta
	Ameyah	Hayley	Duck	Corey L.	Philip
	Aaron	Laura	Rooster	Erin	Liam E.
	Dallyn W.	Ogla	Caterpillar	John	Shaun E.
	Dylan	Liam W.P.	Apple	Scott W.	Thomas
	Shawn	Brock	Calf	Duncan	Harish
	Shannon B.	Quenton	Mushroom	Dylan	Sonia
	Kelsi	Amie	Bird	Kelly	Laura A.
	Keenan	Chad	Train	Zoe H.	Kari
	Ryan	Grieg	Yacht	Emma	Eshawn
	Darwin	Zacharia	Elephant	Ashon	Stephane
	Matthew	Areona	Teddy	Andrew	
	Daniel H.	Tara	Tricycle	Lee	Nick
	Deepika	Kelsey	Kayak	Richard	John A.
	Jonathan	Jonathan	Tiger	Isiah	Raymond

Plate 6.10 Locker list with corresponding code in K3



Plate 6.11 : The washing and bilingual weather list at child level in K6

In K1, the schedule was presented as a programme board, with the focus for the next two weeks.

Programme board

Focus for the next two weeks

Water boats shapes and colours

Objectives

- a) to increase the children's awareness of their environment
- b) to build children's confidence and self esteem particularly colours and shapes relevant to boats etc.
- c) sharing and cooperation between home and kindergarten e.g. home contact books, collections of pictures etc. toys
- d) songs and games and book/home kindergarten familiarity
- e) to increase children's perceptions of the different shapes and sizes of boats - basic concepts eg big/little, small/large etc.

Language

We will use heaps of books

*tapes

*songs

*games

*chit chat time

*library - books and posters

*kindergarten books

Science

*what floats? Why does it float? etc.

*colours, shapes

*what makes the boat move through the water

We hope parents will join us in our activities

We hope to achieve all this by making boats - large and small through a variety of means e.g. meat tray boats (K1:3)

The programme board described has a complicated focus, as it presents four themes: water, boats, shapes and colours. However, the science focus was clearly on the boats and water part of the focus, "what floats?", "what makes the boat move through the water?". Activities were also focussed on making boats. Colours and shapes as themes seem out of place here; but they may be part of 'holistic' views of learning and integrated curriculum, espoused by Head Teachers (discussed in Chapter Four). It is unclear how knowledge and self esteem are connected in objective (b) "to build children's confidence and self esteem particularly colour and shapes relevant to boats". A clearer focus would have been simply "boats", with the objective of increasing children's knowledge about many aspects of boats. Increased knowledge gained through listening to stories and building boats might lead to increased confidence in discussing this topic, but it debatable whether simply having a theme of boats, water, colours and shapes would increase self esteem and confidence. As this notice was directed at parents, it is questionable whether parents would be convinced of the value of the curriculum either.

K5 presented a focus for the rest of the term, as follows:

The focus of the rest of the term will be "Living things" - fish, insects, birds, farm/zoo/wild animals/ and plants

Our aims :

- children will identify "Living things" around them and become aware of the natural habitat of many living things
 - learn maori names for animals
- What do we expect children to learn?
- care for animals - what do they eat?
 - where do they live? Where do they come from?

- they all need TLC in their environment (TLC - tender loving care) for their environment

What activities do we want to do?

- visit the esplanade with the McDonald's bus, bird aviary and green house (am children)
- farm visit - spring time (am children)
- movement music, group games, songs, books and puzzles ..related to animals (K5: 11)

The location of the schedule in K5 was on the kitchen door at child's level, and out of view of the parents for whom it was probably intended.

K4 had a large schedule regarding the curriculum, as it was four pages long. It was titled Term 3, Week 9 and gave curricular details for all the activities in the kindergarten for that week. It specified that the centre of interest would be "growing plants" and the aim would be to "begin Christmas prep songs and table cloths" (K4:7). It also detailed how the dough, blocks, books, science and maths, cooking, music, dramatic play, water, clay and carpentry activities would be used. In addition it named the times at which "tidy up time" would occur and what children would complete at quiet time. This schedule was on the office window. Another schedule explaining how the music corner would be used was near the musical instruments, by the mat.

Large group music plan (mat area)

Greeting to warm up

one that acknowledges each child
for self esteem

gives them time to join group

Familiar or finger play

sing a few favourites

children feel secure starting with something they know

nursery rhymes

songs or singing

explore the elements of music and through listening and playing

Movement

sitting, movement, instruments

whole body

creative and imaginative work

group or circle game

non competitive games or make one up with children

some emotional release is possible

peer interaction

relaxation songs

Listening or wind down

lullaby

scarves

keep the relaxed mood to allow children to move on focussed

and reassured (K4:10)

Although K6 did not have a weekly or term based curriculum, it did have a poster explaining how all the curricular areas would be used and K3 used the posters at each of the activities to explain the purpose of the activities.

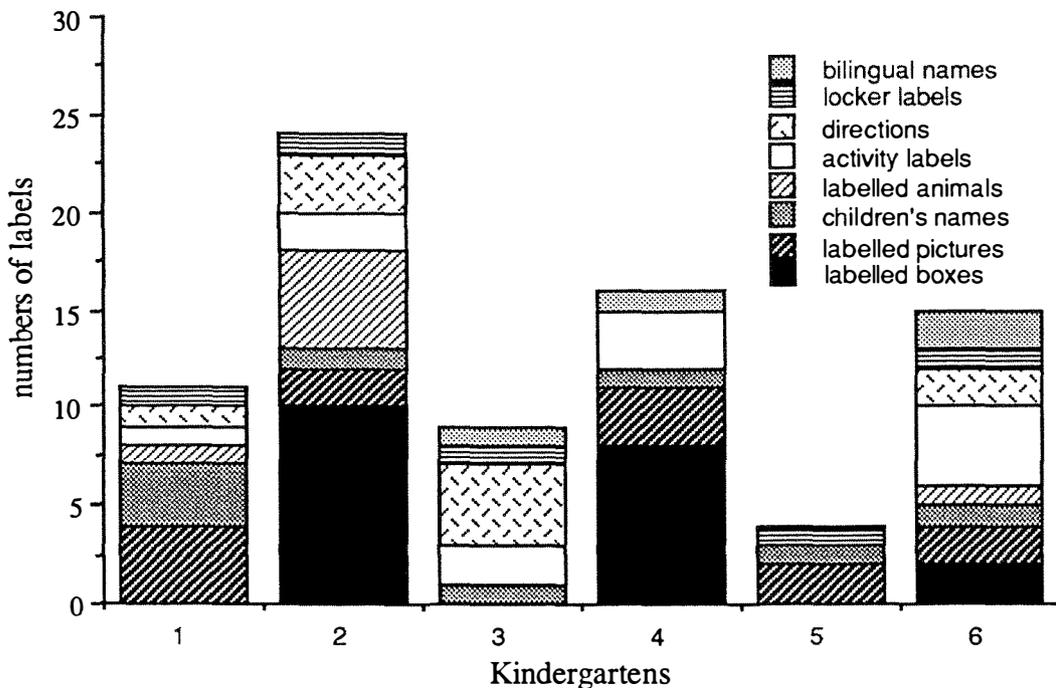
The important point about these schedules is that they are all aimed at adults. There is no sense in which the information is aimed at children. The closest any kindergarten got to giving children a written schedule of activities was the poster on an

easel which was used at the beginning mat session in K2. Children were given a written list of the day's and week's activities in simple words on the easel, which was used to give children information. The same information was given verbally in other centres, but the opportunity to connect the topic (e.g insects) with the word was a real strength in the curriculum in K2. Many of the opportunities for children to make meaningful connections between print and words or events are lost. Inclusion of schedules directed at children would be one of the features of a print rich classroom (Taylor, Blum and Logsdon, 1986; Morrow, 1989c, Sulzby, Teale and Kamberelis, 1989).

Labels.

One of the interesting points about the labels in kindergartens is the different ways in which they are used. As Figure 6.4 indicates, K2 and 4 used labels to identify boxes. In K2 this was boxes of spare clothes in the bathroom (see Plate 6.12). In K4 boxes were used to label the cooking ingredients, such as sugar and rolled oats. Both of these uses of labels provided clear links between the object and the word, and would be meaningful for children cooking or looking for a change of clothing.

Figure 6.4 Use of labels in kindergartens



Few kindergartens extensively labelled activities, apart from the previously discussed communications for parents about the activities. This was noticeable in K3 in which the nature table had a collection of interesting looking things on it, but not a label in sight (see Plate 6.13). This lost a valuable opportunity to connect an object with print and also made it difficult for parents to discuss the contents of the table with their children.

The least number of labels were in K5. As K5 has children from the lowest SES grouping in the sample, this was surprising. The main labels children had access to were their own name. In a group of children who already may come from impoverished home environments, the lack of print available to them in books (see Figure 6.1 and Plate 6.3) or labels seems unfortunate. The lack of labels is strongly contrasted with K6, with a similar population, which provided 15 examples of labels, as well as significantly more books, lists, songs and rhymes, many of them bilingual (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). K2, with one of the highest SES groups in the sample, provides the most opportunities to connect print with objects.

Children's names were available on magnets attached to a metal plate in many kindergartens. Plate 6.14 shows a collection of children's names attached to the side of a refrigerator in K5. This name collection was sited in the collage area, which was a typical place for names to be found. Children were encouraged to locate and take their name to their painting or collage and to copy their name on to their work. This use of labelling provided good opportunities for children to learn to write their own name, although as previously argued, it is unlikely that locating writing materials with the art work materials and getting children to write their name will by itself lead to children making connections between reading and writing.

As with the minimal use of lists in the kindergartens, labels are little used avenue for promoting literacy (Morrow, 1989a). It may be that the teachers' beliefs about what is developmentally appropriate for pre-literate children, mean that they may underestimate children's ability to write and may be denying them opportunities to express their emergent literacy through writing sign up lists, labels and books. Just providing the necessary resources is insufficient (Dyson, 1989, Neuman and Roskos, 1990), as children will also need encouragement or direction on how to write. Children could be routinely asked to label anything which they bring to kindergarten to put on the nature table or to write a short story about it, using their own invented spellings of words. Finding ways to promote writing in all areas of the curriculum is an important issue for consideration in a literacy rich curriculum (Dyson, 1989; Neuman and Roskos, 1990).



Plate 6.12 : Labelled boxes keep spare items organised in K2



Plate 6.13 : Where are the labels at this nature table in K3?

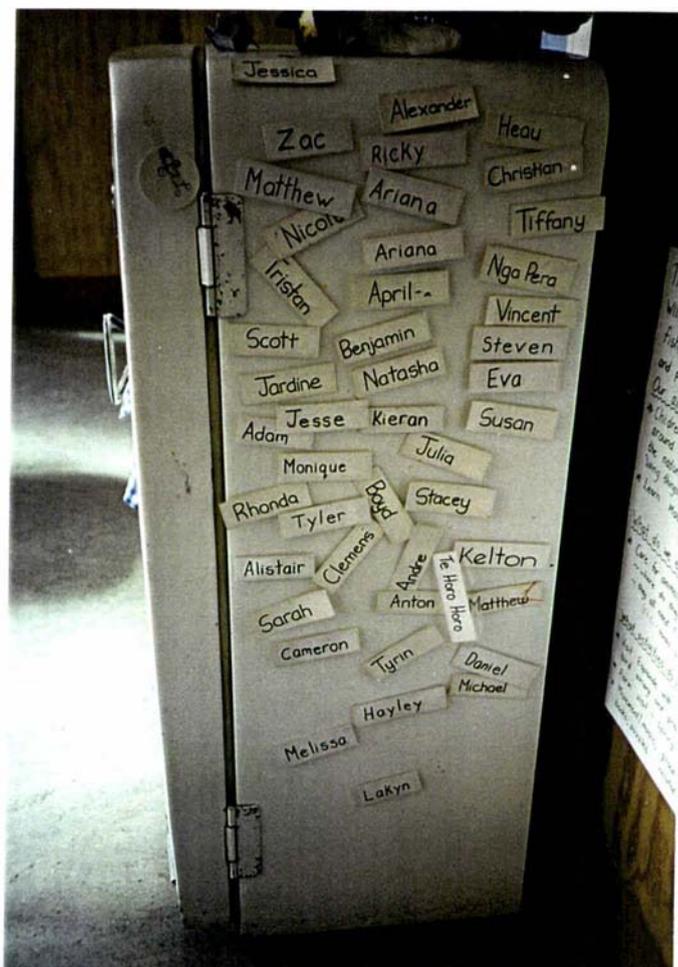


Plate 6.14 : Magnetic name tags in an accessible spot in K5.

Accessible and functional display of children's language products.

Few of the centres displayed many examples of children's artwork, and those that were displayed rarely had examples of children's attempts at writing. Most artwork had an adults' writing on it. One of the problems is the layout of the kindergartens, with very little wall space at child level. K3 had by far the most examples of children's artwork and of children's writing, with displays of self portraits with stories written by adults and often the child's name in their own hand writing. K3 had effectively used strings across the room to displays self portraits. Interestingly, no examples of children's hand writing and little artwork was recorded in K4, apart from some spring blossoms, which was surprising considering that the Head Teacher had said that teaching writing skills was an important part of the curriculum, with the goal of promoting literacy development. Artwork was typically displayed very high above child's level, usually on the wall near the ceiling or attached to the rafters of the kindergartens. K3 had strung a rope across the kindergarten and displayed children's self portraits at a lower level, above the mat, which was much more accessible to children. The lack of display of children's literacy attempts may be because teachers send all artwork home with children, or because the "process" orientation of the curriculum means that teachers do not prize children's writing products. In K2, for example, where children were expected to complete the day's chosen activity, such as making ladybird, quite a lot of artwork was completed, but this work was taken home rather than displayed.

Writing materials and other stimuli for writing

All the kindergartens had writing materials on display on every day of the observations. Writing materials were provided on purpose built round tables (see Plate 6.15) in all but K2, which had a low table with writing materials. A variety of paper was also available for children to write, draw, paint or glue with, which was often provided on a purpose built low table with two shelves for different types of paper or cardboard (see Plate 6.16). A complete list of available materials is included in Appendices 10-15, but generally children had access to pens, crayons, scissors, glue, staplers, a variety of collage materials and paper and plastic letters.

Writing materials were located by the collage materials in all of the kindergartens, which implicitly links writing with artwork rather than reading and writing. In all of the kindergartens, collage materials (such as glue and selections of scrap paper and wool) were located at opposite ends of the classroom from the book shelves, making connections between reading and writing difficult to achieve.



Plate 6.15 : A typical writing material table in K4.

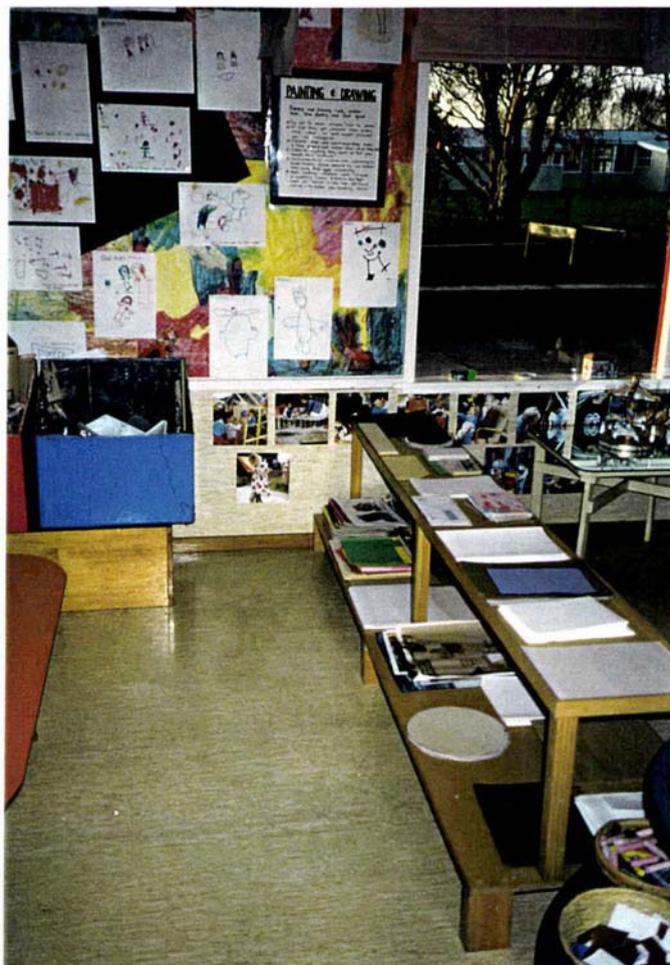


Plate 6.16 : A typical paper table next to examples of children's writing on their self portraits in K3.

In all of the kindergartens, collage is located on a vinyl floor, whereas books are located on a carpet. The only exception to this is K6, who despite having the collage on the vinyl part of the floor and the main supply of books on the carpet, also had selections of books, which related to the dinosaur theme, on tree stumps within the collage area of the classroom.

The children were able to make use of these writing materials during the "free play" periods of the session. Often extra writing resources were put outside for children to use, as they were observed to be in K1 and 4. In K1 there was a table covered with paper and marker pens set outside on the verandah for children to draw or write with. It is important to note that both these kindergartens were observed in either late or early summer, while the others were observed in winter. Writing materials may be used outside more frequently in summer in good weather. Only in K2 were children observed spontaneously making "books", but teachers in all of the kindergartens said that children often like to do this. Children were said to be encouraged to use their magnetic name tag and write their own name in all of the kindergartens, but few incidences of children doing this were observed. The following examples are from K3 and 5:

Children are painting at the easel. Their name has been written by an adult. One child is filling in all available space with red paint. She uses broad vertical and horizontal stripes of colour. Children are also painting at collage tables. They ask the teacher to write their name on the bottom of yoghurt pots. Another child painting at a table, using a variety of colours, carefully painting in available spaces. Another child is painting different colours into an egg box. Child with coloured painting is using a pincer grasp to hold the brush and has good control of the brush. She continues to fill in all available space and tries to avoid touching any other parts of colour. She picks up the painting and walks out the door. The teacher returns and says "Isn't that beautiful. Look at all those neat colours". (K5:17)

Child is at the painting easel. "I want to do my name" she says to the teacher. Teacher puts magnetic name on bulldog clip. He hesitates and asks teacher to do it. (K5:13)

One child is painting pictures at the collage table. She successfully attempts to write her own name with an orange crayon. She walks off to hang up the picture on the drying rack. (K3:11)

Dyson (1989) and Neuman and Roskos (1990) argue that supplying writing materials for children is not enough. They need to be located in various parts of the classroom and promoted through dramatic play, such as in an enriched office environment. Furthermore, children need opportunities to interact with writing materials with more competent peers and adults if they are to learn the range of possibilities that the materials provide. The second section of this chapter will examine some of the few opportunities that children were observed to have for mediation of a writing activity in the kindergarten.

This section has examined the access to print which children had and whether the kindergartens could be considered print rich. It has also highlighted some of the features

of what stimuli for reading and writing were available and how print was integrated into the kindergartens. Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) argue that children learn best when they have access to literacy, which is mediated by more competent adults or peers and that such learning is optimal when children have experiences in language and print rich classrooms. They further argue that some curriculums have more characteristics of a language and print rich classroom than others. These characteristics include stimuli for reading and writing, display of language products and integrative print and routines for interaction. The observations in the kindergartens revealed that at least a third of all available print was directed at adults and because of structural limitations with wall space in the kindergartens, little available print is at child level. Much of the print was communications for parents, although there was also some useful examples of labelled colours, alphabets, greetings and so forth, that were clearly directed at children. Schedules were mainly used for curriculum planning and were also directed at adults. There were few observed examples of print being integrated to daily routines in the kindergartens, with use of an easel and coloured pictures with words of songs, being the noted exceptions. Although there were adult directed lists in the kindergartens, few lists were intended for children's use and none were used for organising activities. Labels were used to good effect in some kindergartens for children's activities, but were virtually absent in others. Many kindergartens had large inventories of books, but few books were readily accessible in some kindergartens. The separation of reading materials from writing materials could mean that children did not have optimal conditions in which to make the connections between reading and writing. Overall, K2 and K6 stand out as the kindergartens which have the most characteristics of Taylor, Blum and Logsdon's definition of print rich classrooms, with the most use of accessible print, labels, lists, books, posters and songs at child's level, and literacy activities linked to a theme or focus.

The next section of this chapter will examine some of the ways that the available print and literacy materials were mediated for children, with regard to the routines used for interaction around literacy activities. It will also examine if the kindergartens possess any of the characteristics of what Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) would define as a language rich classroom.

Domains of literacy : Mediation of the literacy environment

Whereas the first set of domains of literacy examined the access to literacy that children would have in the kindergarten, this section of the domains of literacy examines how children interact with the literacy environment and how literacy is mediated by teachers, parents and other children in the classroom. It also examines the way that literacy is presented to children in interactive formats, through story reading, songs, rhymes and games. The focus of the chapter is on mediation of the literacy environment,

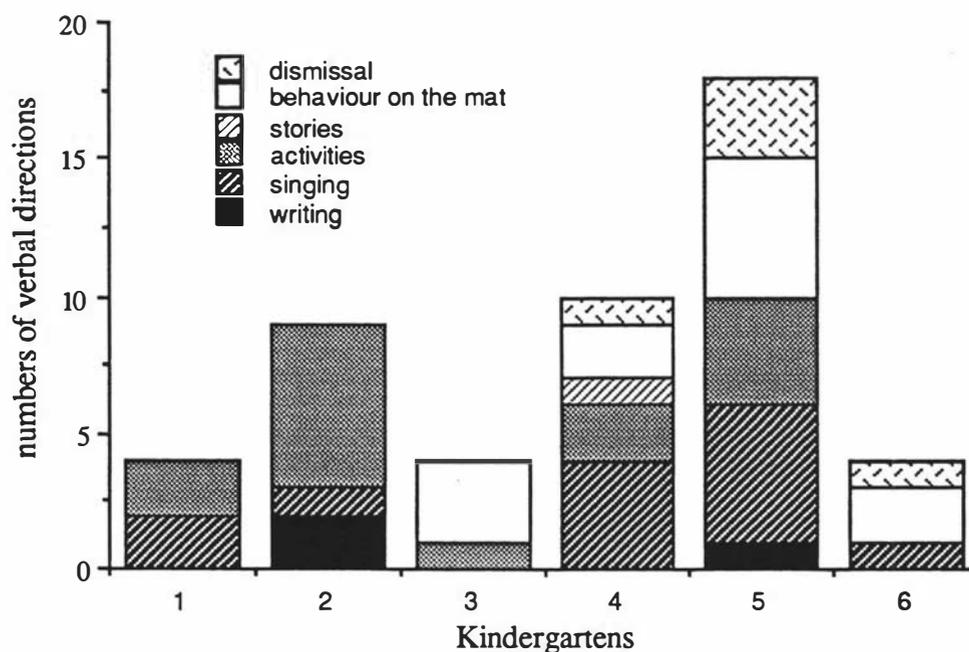
but occasionally examples of mediation of other aspects of the curriculum are also addressed, where the examples illuminate methods of mediation observed.

Directions for activities and use of centres

In interesting contrast to the communications in the kindergartens, which were mainly directed at adults and presented on the walls, the directions for activities and use of centres were largely directed at children and were nearly always verbal. This makes a certain common sense, in that most of the children are between three and a half and five years and cannot read. Many of the directions for activities involve telling and showing a child or children how to do something, so that they can proceed to copy the activity or do it themselves. Verbal directions are a common method of organising children into literacy activity. The directions do not generally invite much of a response, except a change in a child's behaviour or activity.

Figure 6.5 represents the number of times children were observed to be directed in activities, usually in a group situation such as a mat session. Verbal directions were observed most in K5, with almost half of the directions given for behaviour on the mat during group times, for dismissals, and directions on how to leave the large group activity.

Figure 6.5. : Verbal directions for activities



K5 also gave verbal directions on how to take part in activities, singing and writing. It is interesting to note that both K2 and K5 gave the most observed directions for activities, and they were the most experienced teachers in the sample. For K2, two thirds of all verbal directions were for activities, which may be because of the 2:40 teacher:child ratio.

Given the similarity of teacher's experience and the ratio difference between the kindergartens, it is interesting to note the lack of directions regarding behaviour on the mat given in K2. Possibly this is a factor of the SES differences between the two groups, as K2 has one of the highest SES groupings in the city and K5 has one of the lowest. It may be that it is easier to manage a large group situation in a kindergarten with middle class children. K6, however, with a similar SES grouping to K5 had few verbal directions for behaviour on the mat, so it is possibly a teaching style issue, rather than an effect of reacting to children's demands.

Dismissal refers to the way in which children are directed to leave the mat at the end of the mat session. The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate the way in which children are dismissed from one activity and often re-directed into another activity. The excerpts also demonstrate the way in which the activities are directed by the teachers.

"Wake up Mr. Honey Bear someone has stolen your honey". The teachers and children sing and clap to the song. Children run around the outside of the circle, then a second child runs to the centre and hides their face. Children put up their hands and say "me me". Teacher chooses a child "Lie in the middle now", "Who hasn't had a turn?". She makes sure each child has played a part in either game. "This will be the last time". "Wow that was good" The teacher and the children all clap. "You might like to all go and find something to do". (K5:6)

Maori songs are playing on tape. Seven children plus a teacher are using poi. Swinging. "We're going to wiggle our hips to this one"(Tena koe). They sit down. "Stand up again shall we and make some circles". Children don't sing, but put a lot of energy into swinging poi. "Are you ready?". Children follow teacher as she walks around. "Come and put your poi in the box and get a ribbon instead". Children all get ribbons. "Find a space, where you've got room to move". "Let's twist again". Children jump up and down, waving ribbons. "Move around". They move to the tune of "In the mood". Children wave ribbons around. Group moves out the door and outside, through the kindergarten. "Let's go outside" says a girl. "Follow the leader" says the teacher. Group rush out waving ribbons and come back. "Big circles guys". "Crouch down a bit with your ribbon, curl up into a little ball". "Are you crouched down?" She turns the music on again. "Shh, crouch down. We're little a caterpillar in our cocoon. Wake up caterpillar, we've turned into a butterfly, squeeze out, try our wings. Be a beautiful butterfly now. See if we can fly now. Fly in a circle. Off we go. Where shall we go [child's name]?". Group move out door in opposite direction this time. They come in the other door, twirling around low to the ground. "We're getting tired aren't we? All that flying. Roll down onto the ground again. That was a nice flight. Let's put the ribbons in here. You can go now and find something else to do". (K5:12)

These excerpts from K5 show the number of clear verbal directions given to children to participate in activities. The statement "go now and find something else to do" is the children's cue to leave the activity. Both activities were spontaneous events during the session, arising from children's requests and involved a group of at least ten children at any one time (some children came and went). The Head Teacher's focus on social rules reported in Chapter Four is evident in this discussion of which children have not had a turn at the activity.

The following excerpts also demonstrate this relationship between literacy activity in the kindergarten and social rules. There are rules to the ways that children are allowed to participate in singing or story reading sessions, which are clearly articulated by teachers.

"All fall down! I need to talk to you a little bit. Do we bump our friends?" She names children. "What were you angry about? Friends are really special. Stand up and find a friend's hand. I'm going to wait until people are quiet". She sings in Maori. Children stand in a circle holding hands. She says to children "Get down on your hands and knees. See if you can crawl away without touching anyone". (K6:23)

Head Teacher and two children are on sofa on verandah looking at a book of shapes. Discussion follows about names, all the teachers' names and a routine for answering when the teacher mentions the child's names. "Get *The shells at the beach*" Discussion is about going to beach with Mum and Dad. One child is watching a boy do a puzzle and then looking back to the book. Child sitting next to teacher has special needs (diagnosed as severe Attention Deficit Disorder). Teacher carefully shows her where to put the book. She praises the child for putting the book away. A child arrives and requests a story. Another wants a brush and shovel. A boy waits patiently with "*The little yellow digger*" Teacher comes back with two other children, suggesting a story and then some music. There are now six children waiting for a story. Teacher reprimands a child for hitting. "That's unacceptable. What do you say to [child's name]? Kindergarten is a safe place. You don't hit people". Children are clustered around. Teacher asks questions about each page at the end. "What has happened?" "Why do you think they're not going [child's name]?" Child tells teacher about the teacher at school putting up a tennis net. She tells him they'll look at it in a minute. She asks them what hard dry drives are made of. "Concrete" reply the children. "Who can remember what [the other teacher] said she was doing?" "Tip toe in and do some music with [other teacher]". (K4:23)

In these observations of K6 and K4, the verbal directions for activities are interspersed with directions for behaviour, another demonstration of Head Teachers "social rules" from Chapter Four discussed earlier. There is also clear directions for how to leave the activity. "Crawl away" in K6 and "Tip toe in" in K4, tell children how they are to behave at the end of literacy activities.

The issue of behaviour rules arises again in the discussion of routines in the classroom, but learning to behave correctly appears to be also part of the directions given for activities. There is a strong emphasis on sitting, either "on your bottom" or "in a circle" for any activity which requires organisation, as these examples from K5 and K3 demonstrate.

"I want you to sit very quietly on your bottom". She names children one by one, who can go. The door is drawn back and children move off when their name is called. A few children remain on the mat. The teacher talks to the remaining children about how busy it is. One little girl gets on the teacher's lap. The children get another book (6 children remain) and the teacher talks to the student and the approaching parents. (K5:9)

Teacher asks children to get into a circle and tells children that [child's name] has a special treat. Children move into a circle. Child is still sitting on the chair at the front. Mother brings in chips and dip. Tells children to have two chips and dip each. Mother and Head Teacher move around the circle. Children sit patiently and wait in the circle. Low level giggling. Teachers comment on the dressing up clothes that children are wearing. One child wants to wear "Wacky Wednesday" clothes. They

keep moving around the circle. The birthday child joins in offering too. Teacher moves backwards offering "Take a few each". "Take a few in your hand". A smaller child (the younger brother of the birthday child, is the centre of attention) is following the chip and dip around. Children start to get up and move around. They rush up to the empty chip bowl. "Right, sit back down in the circle and I'll come around". Some children rush away to wash their hands. "Right, are you sitting in your circle? [Child] has one more treat" [Child] hands out a lolly to each child. "I think you're very spoilt today". (K3:6)

Directions for singing activities often involve telling children not only what song will be sung, but also how to sing more effectively or modelling how to keep a rhythm. This can be seen in K2, where the Head Teacher tells children to sit up straight to get air into their lungs, in K6 where the teacher tells children to repeat her words and drums the beat on her legs and in K4 where the teacher talks through what sort of pace has been used in the singing they have done.

Head Teacher tells children to "sit up straight, you need all the air to go into your lungs. Air gets into you lungs and comes out in your voice much better. Lets do a spooky one". (K2:16)

Head Teacher says "We're going to do an echo song today. When I say something and you have to say it back to me". She claps her hands on her knee. The children copy and repeat the action.

"Walking through the jungle
If you hear a noise shh
what can it be?
I think it was monkey
I think it was monkey
Looking for his tea". (K6:26)

Music session. There 14 children sitting in a circle with an Assistant Teacher. Each child holds a percussion instrument. The teacher talks to the children about different ways that a song can be sung.

"Play very softly 123 (they repeat this line three times)

Play very softly".

The teacher asks the children "Who can remember how we've done it now?". They discuss having played it "softly".

"Play it really loudly 123

Play it really loudly".

She talks through ways of playing the song. Two more children arrive. "This time we'll play it really slowly 123" she says. In contrast to the morning session, the afternoon session the music is very disorganised and children have difficulty playing their percussion instruments in time with the tune. Children start and stop at appropriate times, but do not keep the rhythm. She goes through how it has been played so far. They decide to do the one "quickly". "We can drive the car quickly or ...?" "Fast" yells a child. Another child comes in with the Head Teacher, who helps her to select an instrument. "Just keep the instrument really quiet for a moment", the Assistant Teacher says to the new child. "Can we think of another song we can sing? I'm thinking of one that has lots of animals in it. When we put our hand up like that it means we stop playing our instruments. You can too". Children decide to use "turkey" for the first round of "Old MacDonald had a farm". "Lets' think of another animal that we have on our farm". "We're going to do this really quietly". The children sing quietly, but the timing is still uneven. Teacher stops to fix a Xylophone. "It's really important when people are talking that you stop playing your instrument, so I can hear what is being said". (K4:23)

There were few examples of teachers helping children to write in this research. In both observed incidences, the teacher focussed on writing the child's name. Writing their name was a feature of all the kindergartens however, as all had a magnetic board with children's names on for children to copy and in many kindergartens there were examples of paintings or drawings with children's attempts at their own name. In K2 the teacher gives clear verbal directions on how the child should write the letters and should practice at home. In K5, the teacher writes the child's name for her, but asks the child what letter her name begins with. Both teachers focus on the first letter of the child's name.

Child drawing at the pasting table - using a variety of coloured felt pens, making a card. Group of five children drawing pictures at a low table next to the writing materials, using scissors and cutting out. Head Teacher asks the child "Do you want to tell me about this one? Would you like to put your name on that? Would you like to put some feelers on your butterfly?" There is little response from the child apart from nods of agreement, but the teacher continues to talk. "Did you use a ruler? What haven't you got on there? What are these things? I'll do this on this piece of paper and you can copy it. Start at the top - good boy. A big stroke like that. You read it to me." A child reads the letters of the alphabet to the teacher. Child says that no one has been teaching her. They discuss writing the child's name, which starts with S. "Do you like it? I think it is delightful. It is hard, you have to practice. Get mummy to write lots of S's and you write over them". Child practices writing "S" all over a page. Child brings stamps and sits down. "Start with a capital R, Richard". Child asks "Which is my name?" and teacher says "R" is for" She asks the children if they have different letters in their name. (K2:16)

Child at next table is drawing a picture of herself and family with marker pens. Teacher talks to her about who it is and what parts of the body they have. Child is holding pen between thumb and two fingers (half pincer, half palmar). Child continues to draw. Teacher asks child where all the people are going. "They're walking to kindergarten to play with playdough" Another child appears and starts to draw. The first child's drawings all have heads, legs, faces and feet, but no arms and series of stripes under feet. She says "I'm going to draw a house". "I'm going to draw on the other side." She flips over the page and begins to draw again. A third child has appeared. She says "You draw my name on here". The teacher asks if she knows the letter that her name starts with. The child on the other side of the table wants to have her name on too. First child dashes off to put picture in her locker, not heeding the teacher's request to fold the picture up. Remaining child continues to draw people in green marker pen. She folds up the painting into a small pile and walks into the locker room. The first child has painted a tricolour painting and has left it on the easel. The children go outside. (K6:18)

There is a certain similarity in all the kindergartens to the way that directions for particular activities are given. The first two excerpts which follow show how both teachers in K2 focus on turn taking and questioning children while teaching children the rules of a game. This emphasis on turn taking is also seen in K4 during a puzzle session. The directions, questioning and turn taking are also seen in K1 when the children are being taught how to make water lilies.

They go to a "Sesame Street" puzzle. The Head Teacher gives directions for use of the puzzle. Seven children are watching. She explains what happens as she does the puzzle. She gets children to take part. "What is it? Where do you use it? Who uses it?" The children make a variety of attempts to which the teacher says "Not always Daddy, sometimes Mummy. People at kindergarten use saws". She encourages turn taking, children having to wait for a turn. "What is it? Do you know what it is called?"

I think it is probably a ...". When the answer is correctly given, the teacher says "Okay, your turn.." (K2:8)

The Assistant Teacher organizes four children into a "Sesame Street" game. She tells the children to turn all the Grover pieces up. She explains the rule of the game. She encourages turn taking "Do you want to play? You pick one up." She encourages children to watch and remember where the disks have been put down. She names the child every time she talks to them. She gives directions "Have a look. You need that one". To another child she says "You've had one turn. You turned up the wrong one. You can't have another turn once you've finished. Do you want to play this one? Do you want to swap? Do you still want to play [child's name]? Do you want another board?". Five children sit nearby. Four play. Two on the periphery do puzzles on their own. Child arrives to say there is a mouse. Teacher establishes that it is a toy, not real. Some of the children move away. She calls out to see if they are coming to finish the game. The instructions to wait and take turns continue. Three extra children hover around. A mother and a child come and sit next to the teacher. (K2:18)

Two girls walk up and are invited into another game by the teacher. She outlines the rules to the new girls. "Put all your cards into the middle and take turns". She explains the rules simply and again initiates the turn taking "Your turn now". The teacher explains how to turn over and place cards onto the board. One boy and two girls continue game. "Watch the person before you. Just one turn at a time. Okay you go after Bradley". Child counts the completed pictures, pointing a finger at the cards. There is discussion among children about their age. "I'm nearly five". "I've got two to go. I've got two to go" says one boy counting carefully. He picks up a card and says "I've got two to go again". He starts to watch children on trolley. "Now I've got one left". The boy reaches to cards. "Are you after [child's name]?" the teacher asks. The boy starts to look around "Yes I've finished". "Play something else now. We must put them away tidily or we'll lose all the bits" the teacher tells the group of children. Children pack the pieces into a box. (K4:15)

Bath with dye in it. Children have white paper with white crayon drawn on it. They put the piece of paper on the floor and fold the four corners in. They have to count the four corners as they fold them in. There are 17 children in the group. Most are sitting in a circle. They put the water lilies on the water, where it soaks up all the water. The teacher asks questions of the children about what is happening. The paper changes colour and the white crayon shows up. "The wings are moving on the water lily. Very gently put it onto the water. The paper was very dry - what is it now?" Children are asking to have a turn. "Is it moving? Do you think it will open up? See how the moisture is travelling though the paper. It turns into a beautiful flower". The teacher continues to give instructions on how to fold up the paper. More children arrive. the teacher begins to organise the end of the activity. "Five more minutes and then tidy up time. Hands on your head. Children who haven't had a turn stand up and move backwards". She asks the children to take turns. The teacher begins to sing "I'm selling lollipops" and children move off to join in the new activity. (K1:11)

Although the observations of story reading in large and small groups will follow in a later part of this section, this example is included here, as it is a good example of how teachers organise children into the accepted behaviour for listening to a story. It is interesting to note how the teacher organises all the children into certain places around her, so all children can see and how she insists on a child returning to hear the end of the story, even though this a spontaneous story reading session.

Assistant teacher moves onto sofa with two children. Two more move up, and a fifth appears, then a sixth. With a mother giving directions for where child should sit, the Head Teacher spends time organising children into places so they can see the book. Another child stands in front. Teacher tells him to talk to children in a minute. She reads the "*Little yellow digger*". All children are watching the story. "What happened to this big one?" Child says "It stuck". "Well done" says the teacher and continues to

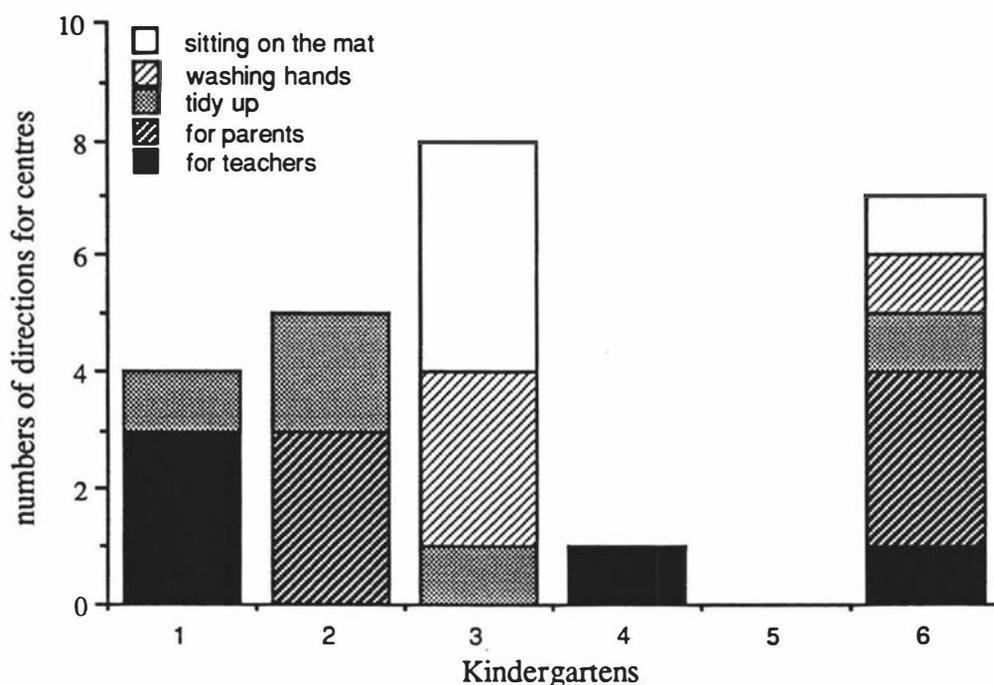
read "What does the sun do to the soil?" "It goes away" says a child "It doesn't go away, but the sun sort of dries it up". Children shout out how to pull out the digger. "Lets see [child's name], you're right. What's this other thing as well as the rope?" A child shouts out what he thinks will happen. There are now 8 children. Two girls have joined the group. A girl moves to the side - looking at puzzles. "What sort of driveway stays hard in the rain? What's the hard stuff?" the teacher asks. "Concrete" says a child. "What colour is the digger?" Teacher moves all the children onto the mat, so they can see the pictures. Two girls appear with prams. Teacher holds the picture book in front of children. "How do worms get away from the crocodile?" "Wriggle" says a girl. "Good girl" the teacher replies. Teacher talks about the word slither and tells the children that is a lovely word. She rolls the word slither off her tongue a few times. There are now 9 children watching/listening to the story. "Just sit down until we've finished the story". She talks to a child with a pram. "You need to watch what you're doing ". "Adam are you watching?" she says in the middle of a page. "What's going to happen?" The story is read by the teacher in an expressive voice. She calls a child back who has wandered off, tells him to wait until story is finished. He returns and leans on cushion. She gets to the end of story, skips words and tells them what has happened. "I think we might read *Fat Cat* first because someone brought it first". Five children remain. "Not only did he eat that one [child's name]" Child's attention is gained. Child with pram pauses and listens to story for a moment before moving on. Teacher makes loud swallowing noise. "He's huge" says one child. "He's pretty pretty big" says another child. "I've never read this story before" says the teacher. "What have they done to cat? What have they done to his tummy? Plaster - you know I put some on you yesterday. Is that a true story? Do cats eat people?" The children chorus "No". "No. It's a make up story. Remember that was the last story." She re-directs children off to climbing a tree. (K7:16)

Verbal directions are used in a variety of ways to enable children to take part in activities. They are used to re-organise children's behaviour, as they take part in literacy activities, but are also used to teach children how to take part in literacy activities, such as story reading, singing and puzzles. Directions given are usually clear and direct, rather than in the form of questions, so children have ready access to the teacher's meaning and new strategies of completing activities. The verbal directions observed in the present study are similar to Anning's (1991) findings in British preschools; that despite constructivist rhetoric of "free play", teachers promote literacy in a very direct and routinised way. The "voice" (Bakhtin, 1981; Gallimore and Tharp, 1990) of the teacher is clear in these situations: literacy is important and has clear rules for behaviour. The message from these teachers regarding literacy is that it is an event with a clear structure and organisation; a beginning and an end, a requirement for attention and formal response. It could be seen as distinct to play. Children undoubtedly do need clear direction in how to take part in literacy activities (Meadows and Cashdan, 1988; Rogoff et al., 1993; Wells, 1985b). It is therefore, reassuring to find that although Head Teachers (in Chapter Four) and Assistant Teachers (in Chapter Five) defined themselves as facilitators of the curriculum, rather than teachers of young children, they are in fact exercising many scaffolding skills; such as modelling literacy behaviour, guiding participation, feeding back, instructing and questioning children (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990; Meadows and Cashdan, 1988; Rogoff et al., 1993).

Whereas directions for activities had concerned how children were told by teachers how to take part in activities, the directions for centres are both verbal and written and

concern the overall management of the centre (see Figure 6.6). It is interesting that directions for use of centres were not observed in K5, which was the kindergarten with the most directions for children in activities. K3 had the most directions for centres of all the kindergartens, with directions for sitting on the mat, washing hands and tidying up. K1 had a lot of written directions for teachers concerning management of the kindergarten. K2 and K6 respectively had the most directions for parents about the use of centres in the kindergarten.

Figure 6.6 : Directions for use of centres



Directions for the teachers in K1 appeared on the cupboard doors of the kitchen. They were as detailed as the curriculum details in K4, which was hung in the kindergarten itself, but they were available for parent helpers to read while they prepared food for snacks or cleaned up the kitchen. Rules of the kindergarten, usually directed at parents were a feature of the directions for use of centres in K2. These included the use of the kindergarten library, rules about the kindergarten for parent helpers and rules about payment and routines of the kindergarten.

Tidying up and keeping the kindergarten in order is a feature of all of the kindergartens. This is also discussed under classroom rules, but the following excerpt gives an indication of the way in which teachers direct children in the use of the centres. Although not all of these examples directly concern literacy activities, they do give an indication of the sort of mediation of events that children are receiving in the large group setting and rules that dictate how equipment and time will be used in the classroom.

Assistant Teacher tells children it is tidy up time. All the children go outside and are given instructions on where things belong. Continuous instruction is given on how much will fit into baskets. Some children continue to play. There is a chorus of "tidy up time". Children are given instruction for the home of the equipment. A child is crying, so the teacher takes child's hand to seek out the "new boy" who hurt him. Instructions are given to a child, by name, to ring the bell. Children again begin to gather on the mat. Mat time is a time for people to "button up lips". Teacher hands out donation envelopes and paintings. They are told that the webs haven't dried. Children are allowed to leave as their parents arrive, as they are told one by one to leave the mat. Teacher says "I'm watching you" to children who are wriggling on the edge of the mat. (K2:22)

It was interesting to note that washing hands occurred strongly as a direction to children in K3, usually when sitting on the mat. This may be because K3 was the only kindergarten in which children brought a morning snack and afternoon children were given a snack and ate it on the mat, rather than having a snack at a special table.

Assistant Teacher is sitting on the chair on the mat, with a bowl of fruit on her lap. Children show her their clean hands. "I'd really like you to wash your hands and sit down on the mat and have fruit with us" Children are offered a piece of fruit "Sit down on your bottom please". "You need to come and sit on your bottom while you're eating, otherwise you might choke" "All those people up at the back are going to miss out. Sit down, hand over your mouth, while you're coughing. Just sit down on your bottom. I think you should just sit on your bottom." (K5:9)

Teaching children how to sit on the mat was seen in all the kindergartens, and it can be seen in the previous example from K3 about the importance of sitting down to eat. "Sitting on your bottom" was a catch cry in many centres, usually reserved for controlling behaviour during literacy activities on the mat.

Mat session is lead by the student teacher. "Is everyone sitting on their bottoms? You could just move back a bit". Sings "Tena koe" using actions. He says "I think you guys can do better than that. We'll do that one again in our best singing voices. Heads, shoulder, knees and toes...". The student teacher and the children sing together. "Do you guys think you can do it any quicker? They sing the song more quickly, which causes much hilarity among the children. "This time we're going to do it really slowly." the student teacher tells the children.

"Has anyone noticed who's here today? Can we all say hello to [child's name]?". children chorus hello to a child in the group. The student teacher continues "[Asst teacher] has something she wants to say to you". Other teacher takes over "I want you to read these pictures. A plate and a cracker. I want you to remember one cracker. What's this here? A knife? One knob of butter and spread it onto a cracker. What do you think is happening here. How many pieces of cheese are you grating? Put that grated cheese on your cracker. There will also be bean sprouts. How do you eat it? Sit down on your butt on your chair. Why do you need to sit down? You don't look very attractive turning blue" Teacher goes back through the cards again. She asks questions of the children like "First you?" and "How many?" and says "Kei pai" as the children respond correctly. "You guys are so clever. After morning tea they'll be down here". (K3:10)

Process cooking was becoming a popular activity in kindergartens at the time of this research. The example from K3 in the previous example, shows the first experience that children were to have with independent cooking in the kindergarten. Process cooking was seen taking place in K3, K4 and K6. It was a permanent fixture in K4, with a

specially equipped area and a variety of recipes available and with children showing a great deal of ease in use of recipes. In K6 it appeared to be a newer activity, as the teacher spent time discussing with children, how they should follow the recipe and only take five sultanas for their muesli. K5 introduced the cards into the kindergarten during the observation period. The Head Teacher in K5 was observed making scones with the children, but it was not process cooking. She mixed the dough and children shaped the scones for baking. K5 also had a dough recipe on the parent notice board. K4 had recipes for cracker treat, porridge, muesli and popcorn on display in the process cooking area and recipes for basic, silky and cornflour dough by the dough table.

It is interesting to note that many of the observations of personal directions, which were not to do with behaviour during a mat session, occurred in K2. Of the eleven recorded codes, eight are from K2. Most of the personal directions involve telling a child or children to do something like put their things in their locker or re-directing a child to another teacher for assistance, although the example previously discussed where the Head Teacher shows a child how to write is a notable exception. By comparison, the only recorded personal directions in K1 were taken during a one-on-one evaluation by teacher of a child. In K4 personal directions were used sparingly, to call a child back to listen to a story and to tell children to be careful with a pram.

Management of centres is a feature of the kindergartens, which is unsurprising, given the ratio of 3 adults to 45 children. As this section on “directions for activities and use of centres” indicates, a lot of the teacher: child interaction which children experience is management oriented; toward time, behaviour and care of equipment. As a model of what the teaching-learning relationship is like, it probably is a realistic introduction to what much of children's education will be like. However, as Wells (1985b) points out, teachers spend too much time on management of classrooms and too little time interacting with children. Although giving children access to literacy is important, it is debatable whether the structure and behaviour management of the mat session is the ideal way in which to introduce children to a meaningful interaction with print. The following section will examine more closely the opportunities which children have for mediation of print in the kindergarten.

Opportunities for interaction with print.

Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) argue that some curriculums are more effective than others at providing opportunities for interaction with print, and that any particularly effective or ineffective aspects of the curriculum should be discussed. As previously discussed, there are few examples of children's writing in the kindergartens, although children were seen to enjoy a book of self portraits in K6 and to enjoy writing books in K2. Writing on self portraits had been effectively displayed in K3. Encouraging children

to write in many play contexts would be a useful way of encouraging children to interact with print in the kindergarten (Dyson, 1989; Kantor, Miller and Fernie, 1992; Neuman and Roskos, 1990). Because of the lack of writing observed, it would seem that the major opportunity that children have to interact with print is through looking at and reading books.

In all kindergartens but K4, many examples of children "flicking" through books were recorded. Flicking behaviour was typically when a child would walk up to a book shelf and pick up a book and rapidly turn over the pages, without really looking at them. Often they would do this to several books in succession, before walking away. Sometimes the flicking behaviour leads into more settled reading behaviour with another child or an adult, such as in the following example:

Puzzle area/book shelves

Five children are playing in this area. Two boys and one girl are squabbling over puzzle pieces. One girl is doing puzzles by herself. No children are near the books. A boy is doing puzzles by himself. No children are going near the bookshelves. One child approaches and says "I'm looking for a space book". Another child approaches. He flicks through the book and then takes it to another child saying "Hey look at this". The other child looks. They turn the pages together. He walks around the bookshelves and sits down and rolls around. He calls to a friend "[Child's name] do you want to look at my space book?" The boy says "No, I want to look at this", indicating a big book lying on the floor. The other boy says "Cool" and puts the space book on the shelf. The second boy turns the pages. They quickly get through one and get another. "The three little piggies" they chorus. They comment on the story, telling the story to each other and commenting on the pictures. Another child [a girl] moves in to listen. They comment on what the characters are saying, and then say "That didn't take very long". They pull another book out, which is "*Wombat stew*". They repeat "*Wombat stew*" as they turn the pages. They comment on the pictures and the feelings of the characters. A teacher approaches and says "Who's reading *Wombat stew*? Do you want me to read *Wombat stew*?" After some discussion a larger group gather saying they want to listen to "*Peter pan*". Several other children run up, until there is seven children grouped around the teacher. The children listen without commenting. Another child walks up and stands by the window. At the end of the page the children all comment loudly on the pictures. One child picks up another big book and walks away from the bigger group. He flicks through the pages quickly. The teacher asks questions of the children. The child walks back and puts the book away and then sits down and goes through the box of big books. The children lie down to listen. The children ask questions of the teacher, such as "Why don't they sink?" The second observed boy picks up another book, still on the edge of the group. There is lot more conversation at the end of every page. The end of the story is reached. Boys chorus "Next one". They get "*Hansel and Gretel*". One child moves away and comes back. Another child moves in. The child on the edge joined the circle at the change of story. There are now nine children sitting listening. The discussion is about mushrooms. One child attempts to turn the page. "Don't" says the teacher. "Have you got window boxes on your house?" "No" say the children. Another child comes inside and sits down next to the teacher. Children are now gathered closely around the big books. Most are lying down. The story finishes and the boys chorus "*Wombat stew*". Some wriggling goes on so all the children can lie down. One child goes outside. Another child walks in, pauses, looks and moves on. In other parts of the kindergarten the other teachers are wiping tables, sweeping floors. The children recite "*Wombat stew*" every time the chorus is reached. Children start to sit up. Another child wanders past and lies on the floor behind the reading group. She moves in as another child approaches. They get two big books and start to flick though them behind the main group. One of the children is the child who paused before. Children are reciting "*Wombat stew, Wombat stew, crunchy munchy for my lunchy, Wombat stew*". They all chorus "Ooh" to the creepy crawlies going into the stew. The teachers say "Shh" shhh". Two little girls move together and "read" the

book together. They argue over which to read and then swap books. A parent helper moves near cleaning up and asks child nearby if she wants to listen to the story. At the end of the story, a boy says "Read this one". The girls leave the group now and the number goes down to six. The Head teacher moves in and says "Bell time now" and the group disperses as a bigger group gathers on the mat. (K2:22)

In this example, the child's flicking behaviour stopped when the boy started to look at the book with his friend. Their enthusiasm encouraged other children to become involved and the event became a prolonged literacy event when the teacher joined in. Children walking past joined in the event without verbal invitation, demonstrating their awareness that story reading is a shared activity which they can take part in. However, sometimes the flicking behaviour does little to prove that children know how books can be used. In the following example from K6, the child is flicking through the book backwards and her attention is readily redirected to puzzles. The next child who arrives seems to know the rules about quietness in the "quiet room", but displays the same distracted "flicking" through books. In the subsequent example from K1, the children are also very readily distracted from their perusal of the book.

Quiet room

One girl is doing puzzles. Two boys are playing with headphones. One other girl is reading a "Spot" book. She flicks the pages over, looking though the book backwards. She moves away to play with a puzzle. The two boys lie together and look through a book and laugh. They point to the pictures and laugh. Another child arrives and starts to flick through a book. A girl comes in and grabs a book and starts to echo the boys forced laughter. She stands in the doorway and flicks through the pages. "No laughing" the girl in pink says. "No laughing eh", she says to the boy next to her, as the first pair of boys repeat the forced laugh. (K6:28)

At 11.30 two girls arrived at the table and started to flick through books. They did not speak to each other. They went through about one book per minute. A boy rushed nearby with a plastic bucket, pushing it around the floor. The two girls jumped up and followed him. (K1:9)

Sometimes children flick through books as they wait for attention by a teacher:

Book corner

Child picks up a book and follows the Head Teacher around with it. Teacher walks to the tape deck. A child stands and waits. Two boys are lying on the floor, playing with puzzles. Teacher comes back, sits on floor with child with her book, picks up some clothes off the floor. A boy walks up and shows her a photo and a girl shows her a card. The boy walks over to a mother and child and shows his photo. Teacher talks to another boy about "How very sad" a funeral was. The child continues to flick through the book. Looks around, then flicks quickly through the pages. She returns to the beginning and turns the pages from the holes in the centre of the page. keeps returning to the beginning of the book and flicking through. She picks up the book and walks away. (K3:15)

One child (who the teacher said was unwell) is sitting with a book. Another boy is flicking through a book. The Head Teacher sits down with the girl to read a story. The teacher asks if the child wants to open the flaps. Another girl hops on the sofa and peers over the child's shoulder. "I've got a blackboard in my play house" says the other child. Sick child responds quietly to teacher's questions. Other child flicks through a book, half listening and watching the story. Teacher says that child is playing with ball looks like her child. "That's got bells, I got these two" says the sick child. "I'm just going to open the door" says the teacher "I'll be back in a minute". Child now alone, continues to read the story. (K5:14)

This section has examined some of the ways in which literacy is mediated in the kindergartens. Children have access to literacy through story book reading, singing, language games and puzzles in the kindergartens. These activities are often mediated in a small or large group situation. This is unsurprising, given the 3:40 adult: child ratio at the time of observation. Individual opportunities for mediation are less frequent. There are some clear examples of literacy being encouraged, such as the peer reading of "*Wombat Stew*", which was expanded upon by a teacher and the directions for writing given in K2. There are also missed opportunities for mediation of literacy, such as the lack of examples of children's writing seen in the kindergartens and the flicking of books which children engaged in, without anyone stopping to ask if they would like to read it. Martinez and Teale (1988) consider that the "flicking" or browsing behaviour with books stops if children are familiar with stories, through experience of having read them. It suggests that linking the books on display with the current theme or topic may assist children's interest in individual or peer reading. Although many of these kindergartens provide literacy materials in the environment, they are not used to the same extent or for the same purposes across kindergartens.

Routines for story reading : Large group.

Many of the examples of behaviour rules regarding literacy in kindergartens are generated from mat sessions, in which there are forty to forty five children sitting on a mat and the teacher is attempting to complete a literacy task and maintain some order. There is a recurrent phrase, heard in every kindergarten at some stage, which was "sitting on your bottom", with phrases about "buttoning" or "zipping" up lips a close second. Learning to take turns during group games, listening to the teacher or to a child whose turn it was to speak while on the mat, were important aspects of routines for literacy. Routines in the classroom are rather like the directions, in that few are written down.

Routines in the large group often involved explaining how to do something, such as how many layers of clothes to wear in cold weather in K3, to directions on how to do the "Hoki Toki" in K5. Some of the large group activities were undertaken in English and Maori, such as greeting new people in Maori in K6 and naming body parts in K5. In addition to the story reading and rhymes and language games used in the large group, a routine was used in three of the kindergartens to celebrate a child's birthday. In K1 a child was turning five and about to start school. In K3 a child was also going to start school, but after a trip the United States. In K4 a child was turning five, but as a special needs child, she was going to continue at the kindergarten for a few more months before starting school. The singing and games which followed were integrally tied to the meaningful event of the child's transition to school.

Teachers reading in front of a large group of children typically held the book out in front of themselves and read the words by glancing over the top of the book. Often they asked questions of children at the end of pages.

"Has anyone seen what we've got over here?" Children reply "Dinosaurs". Head Teacher says "Children sitting on their bottoms". She reads "*There's a dinosaur in the park*". She holds the book out in front of the children. She uses a whispery voice at various parts of the story and asks questions about the character's face. "It's angry and mean" she tells the children. She looks at the children and asks questions on every page. "What do you think his spikes feel like?" Children echo the "Aagh" sound. "What happened to the postman?" A child says "He ran away, he was scared". Teacher says "He is looking a bit kinder now, not as angry. See his big longlegs. He's got cans and rubbish around him. Is he a real dinosaur? That's the end of the story. I've got a song about a dinosaur". She stands up and sings "As I go walking down the street .. heavy, heavy, clump, poor old dinosaur, I bet you find it hard to jump". She talks about [child's name] home contact book and asks child to talk about the picture of a dinosaur. He has traced a picture of a dinosaur. "He's a slow one". The child explains why, and says that the dinosaur eats grass and trees. (K6:9)

Assistant teacher is sitting on the chair in front of a group of sitting children. The picture book is held out in front of the children. Her voice is cheerful and slow. The children are calling out questions. "She was very very busy, wasn't she?" She reads a full page before asking any questions and fields questions from children as she goes. "Do you think she has got a lot of grandchildren? What is Kumara? What are Pipis?" She points to the pictures and asks questions, maintaining an eye contact with the children. (K2:18)

Favourite books are used in different ways in kindergartens. In K5 a favourite story by Eric Carle is recited by children as the teacher reads. In K1 a story which had been read and enjoyed a few days previously is acted out during the mat session, instead of a story being read by the teacher.

"Right, time for our special story. Zip up your lips, I don't want to hear another sound" the Assistant Teacher tells the children. Children must know the story well, as they repeat the story, "So he rubbed his wings together but nothing happened, he didn't make a sound". Teacher makes chirping noises. "What happened [child's name]?" Children at the back of the group start to look out at parents behind the screen. "What's going to happen now?" She uses a quiet voice. Noise comes from the story book. "It's a little cricket talking isn't it? We have to close the book, won't we? I want you to sit very quietly. Zip up your lips. I don't want to be shouted at" the teacher says as the children all begin to ask questions at once. (K5:17)

The Assistant teacher shifts children to the grey mat. She asks for children with strong arms. Calls a small group of children up. They go to get a small table from outside. She turns the table into a boat, which she tells the children is "Mr Gumpy's boat" from *Mr Gumpy's outing*. She tells the children that they are going to act out the story. "Sitting on your bottoms. I need a Mr Gumpy. Who would make a good Mr Gumpy?" She gets a child to act as Mr Gumpy, but the child refuses to sit on the boat, so she then chooses another girl to sit on the boat. She gives the child instructions to sit on the front and drive. "Who do you think came along? Maybe a cow came along." The child who is the cow asks if he can come too. Mr Gumpy starts the boat, drives, comes across some chickens. "A cat comes along. [Child's name], would you like to be a cat?" You might have to stand up so there's room. You have to be sensible, or the boat will tip over. "What happened?" The children all chorus that it tipped over. "The boat tips over and all the animals had to swim". There is lots of excitement from the children. "Because it was a beautiful sunny day, they all lay in the sun. Mr Gumpy invited them all for afternoon tea". At the end of the story, the teacher tells the children "Give yourselves a big clap" and then tells them to put their feet out in front. "Sit down, you're rocking a boat, you're rocking a boat, you're rocking a boat, Sit down" the teacher and the children sing. She then says "Hands on your knees, shut your eyes. Heads down. Just sit, have a wee think about Mr Gumpy. It's down on the book table, you can read it tomorrow. Heads down, stay where you are". The door is pushed open and children are called by name and allowed to move. (K1:10)

The favourite story in K5 enables children to take a part in the story telling, as does acting out a story which had been enjoyed in a previous mat session. This particular episode, involving the boat in *Mr Gumpy's Outing* was one of the few examples in K1 of the week's theme of boats being woven into the literacy opportunities in the kindergarten. These examples show that teachers can achieve effective literacy events in the large group setting, despite the routines for behaviour which are required to maintain order. Cochran-Smith (1985) suggests that this type of literacy event is more passive for the child and requires a lot less effort on the part of the child to make sense of the text. The next section will address small group reading, which Cochran-Smith advocates as a good way for children to actively engage in a joint construction of the meaning of the text.

Routines for story reading : Small group.

Children were read to in all of the kindergartens throughout the session, usually on request. Parents would read to children at the beginning of sessions in many kindergartens to settle them and parent helpers were also seen to read to children in some kindergartens. The most small group reading was observed in K4, where Teacher No.4 had said that emergent literacy was a strong part of the curriculum. This may have been because of the good parental involvement in the kindergarten, the importance placed on reading by the teachers or the presence of special education teachers on a regular basis in the kindergartens. A slow paced, conversational style is more typical of the small group reading session. There are few examples of the behaviour rules, which typify the large group reading sessions, and there is a lot more conversational questioning.

A group of five children and teacher are lying on pillows reading a story on the verandah. The Assistant Teacher asks the children what has popped out of the tummy of the character in the story. They count the groups of items, counting as a group. "What else in his tummy? Can you remember his name?" A child replies with the correct answer. Teacher says "Good thinking. They're hard names to say" There is a slow pace, all children are involved. "Do you want to go and do something else now?" Some children leave. Others go to get a new story while the teacher says "We'll go and put the jug on." A child gets a book and waits. Teacher returns. "Do you know what this one is about?" she asks. They discuss birds and the picture on the front. Another boy arrives. The book is "*The best nest*". They discuss the title page. The teacher sings the "Bird's song" from the story. Another child stands by the group with a bottle and bowl. Teacher suggests that she take it to the water trough. Teacher is lying down on the same plane as the children. "Why does she build a nest?" the teacher asks. "Because she wants a house to live in" says a child. Discussion follows about children's new houses and new garages. Teacher asks questions nearly every page. Child tells her morning tea is ready. She thanks him, says "Just a minute" and continues to read. Her pace continues unaltered. Two girls are lying down, the boy is sitting. "What's another name for mail?" "Letters" children reply. "Is this a good place to live?" she asks, to which the children all reply "yes". "First they build some ..What do we call this stuff?" Children guess nest. Teacher says "Looks like nest, but do you know what it's called?" "Hay" the children answer. "Carrie's on some hay - jersey - knitting - wool -tail stuff -yes tail stuff, called horse hair". Child looking away, looks back as teacher says "...will stay forever". Teacher talks to a new child at

kindergarten about throwing sand. Teacher sings the "nest song". Children predict that rope will be pulled. Another child arrives. (K4:19)

Assistant Teacher says to a child "Would you like me to read a story [child's name]? Would you like to choose a story?. Do you know where they are?" Teacher sits down on the sofa. The girl picks "*The very hungry caterpillar*" Another child sits and listens too. The book is directed to the child the teacher had approached. The other child sits on the edge of the sofa then walks away. Another child arrives with a large handbag. The child being read to says nothing. The teacher looks at her frequently. Another child climbs up and tries to join in. She sits up on the teacher's knee, holding a dinosaur book. She leans back on the teacher's arm. She peers at the book. "Look at the beautiful colours" the teacher says as they get to the end of the story. The girl gets down. Clutching the book, she gets back up. Teacher pulls the other girl more firmly onto her knee and begins to read the dinosaur book. She asks questions of the little girl. The first girl stays next to the teacher, but gazes at the children playing in the family corner. She begins to flick through the caterpillar book again. The teacher focuses her attention on the one child. Another stands in front of her, rolling some gum leaves in a jar up and down. She is ignored and wanders off to the nature table. The first girl listens to the story, without talking. "Probably need a sleep" the second child comments. Teacher notices a child with playdough and says "The play dough needs to be at the playdough table. If we bring it down here on the carpet, it might get stuck. We use it on the play dough table". The child who had the dinosaur book asks another teacher to read her another story. The teacher agrees but says "I'll read you one story, but then you'd better find something else to do". They sit down on the sofa and start to read. Just then, the other teacher walks in and says "I need someone outside please", meaning another adult or a teacher, as she walks in with a child dripping blood from his head. (K6:28)

Four children are sitting at the fruit table, as the Head Teacher chops up fruit. A child is talking about the tooth fairy. A mother walks into the kindergarten with child and goes to the book corner and reads "*Mr Fox*" to her child. The child cuddles up for a story. Another child has taken a small cardboard book to teacher at fruit table. "What's that?" she says pointing to two rabbits on the back of the book. "Two rabbits" says the teacher. Child hugs the book. "You've waited very patiently there. Shall we go and have a look at this book." She moves off to take the fruit knife to kitchen. A child at the painting easel says "I want to do my name". Teacher puts magnetic name on bulldog clip. He hesitates and asks teacher to do it. Teacher sits down in book corner with the first child. Another girl arrives. The teacher reads the story. Both girls peer at the story "Is she inside? I don't know, there's funny pictures in here". The children interrupt frequently to ask questions. Children are smiling a lot. "Do you want to join the end of another story" to another child who comes up. Story finishes. A child quickly jumps up to get another story and then wriggles back into position. They have a conversation about cats. Teacher explains that she has a little black kitten. The conversation then changes to talk about rabbits and what they eat. The two girls either side of the teacher talk, while the other child looks on. Talk changes to brushing hair - likes and dislikes. Another child comes up looking for a painting apron. Teacher asks if there are any outside. He says no, so she suggests that he try and paint carefully. The group return to the story. Lots of talk precedes the story about a new boy at kindergarten. (K5:13)

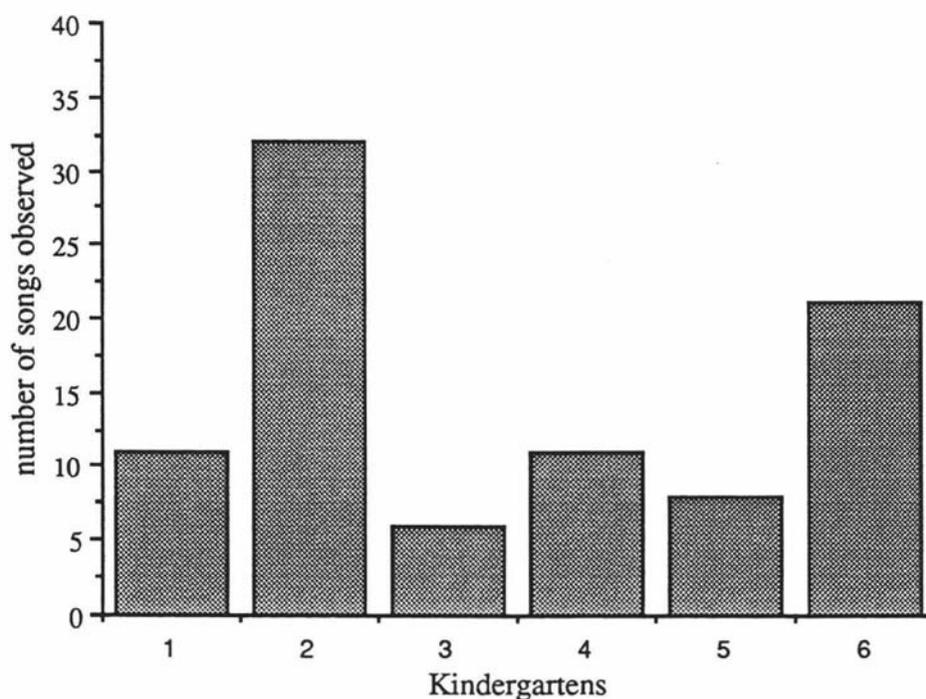
These examples of the small group for reading demonstrate the use of contextual knowledge, which Head Teachers discussed in Chapter Four. There are clear examples of teachers drawing on children's home knowledge and experiences to aid comprehension of the text. The use of favourite books in these examples is used to maintain children's interest (Morrow, 1989b). Favourite books, such as *The very hungry caterpillar*, *The best nest* or the *Little yellow digger* may draw on children's own experiences of caterpillars or birds' nests in the trees at their home or road works on the streets. Routines are also part

of this aspect of mediation of literacy, which focusses on a question - answer format and children's understanding, rather than controlling behaviour.

Routines : songs

Singing in groups was a major site of literacy activity in many of the kindergartens. It was for many children a regular opportunity to sing and learn a variety of songs and rhymes, which were in some cases related to the theme of the week, thus creating opportunities for children to understand the meaning of the song. Figure 6.7 demonstrates that all of the kindergartens gave children some experiences with songs and rhymes. The most songs overall and the highest number of songs in one session were observed in K2. In three mat sessions observed they completed 12, 11 and 9 songs respectively. Usually the songs were accompanied by the Head Teacher on the piano, who was very interested in music and showed an obvious enjoyment in singing with the children. The songs were mainly nursery rhymes and familiar songs, with children participating.

Figure 6.7 : Total number of songs observed during kindergarten sessions



K6 also had a lot of singing at mat sessions, but the songs were more bilingual in nature or were accompanied by music on a tape recorder. Songs were more likely to be related to the story being read at the mat session, such as when Teacher No.6 sang the song about the dinosaur "As I go walking down the street" after reading *Daniel's dinosaurs* as a story. Not a lot of singing was observed in K5, but music was a strong

part of the curriculum. The game "Isn't it funny how a bear likes honey?" was observed on two separate occasions and "One little elephant balancing" on another occasion. Most of the children were encouraged to take part in this singing game, even though it was within the "free play" part of the session. Both games took at least half an hour, as each child had a turn.

"Can we play the honey bear song? They like that one" the Special Education teacher says. Children are asked to sit in a circle. "Who's going to be the honey bear? Are you ready?". A child is selected to run around the group first. "Isn't it funny how a bear likes honey. Wake up someone has stolen your honey. Isn't it funny...buzz buzz buzz. I wonder why he does". The first round of the game is completed and another child is chosen. "Whose turn now? Wake up Mr. honey /Bear someone has stolen your honey". The teachers and children sing and clap to the song. Children run around the outside of the circle, then a second child runs to the centre and hides their face. Children put up their hands and say "me me". Teacher chooses a child and says "Lie in the middle now" and then "Who hasn't had a turn?" She makes sure each child has played a part in either game. "This will be the last time. Wow that was good" Teacher and children all clap. "You might like to all go and find something to do." (K5:5)

Teacher is on the mat with three children playing with instruments, singing and banging /shaking instruments. Another boy and girl calling out suggestions from nearby. "Row row ...". they sing. "Let's do the teachers version." They sing another version of the song. "Row row row your boat under the stream. Ha ha fooled you all, I'm a submarine." A child tries to get into another child's wheelchair and then hops out to get instrument. "Toru wha to start" the teacher calls. "Old McDonald had a farm". They sing about sheep first, accompanied by bangs and shakes and then a cow. Six children are now taking part. "This time let's see if we can go really quiet. We've had a sheep, what about something else?" "A horsey". Children try to participate quietly. A child asks to do it really "Squeaky" They all take part in the squeaky voices. Another child (with a physical disability) joins in and sits on teacher's knees. They choose to sing about dogs, the child's favourite word. A child gets a tissue for the disabled child at the teacher's request. They use deep voices this time. Child smiles happily "You're the lucky last. What sort of voice would you like?" the teacher asks the child. "A loud voice but not shouting" the child replies. "There is a difference, you're right". They do pigs this time with loud banging. The teacher gives them lots of praise for "good beating". (K4:19)

Songs and rhymes are one of the real strengths of mediation of literacy in the kindergarten. Not only do children enjoy playing instruments and joining in the routines of the games, they also become familiar with the sounds of language. Children who were not seen to seek out small group reading opportunities were seen to join in singing or rhyming sessions such as "I'm selling lollipops" and "One little elephant balancing". For children who do not seek out story reading opportunities, the routines of songs and rhymes provide at least one opportunity for children to hear a variety of language forms and to gain new vocabulary. Assistant Teachers (in Chapter Five) outlined using a variety of songs and rhyming games as part of literacy activity, which was confirmed by the observations in centres. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley (1987) have found that early knowledge of nursery rhymes is strongly related to the development of phonological skills and other emergent reading abilities. Therefore, the finding that kindergartens so strongly promote songs and rhymes in the curriculum is a major aspect of the language rich experience children have access to.

Child centred activities.

Under this code, two different types of activity were observed which could be considered to be child centred. The first of these is verbal interaction between an adult, usually a teacher, and a child or small group of children. The second type of child centred observations were those episodes which occurred between children around literacy activities, without the presence of an adult or teacher.

In the interviews with the Head Teachers, teachers had said how important they considered talking with children to be as a way of promoting language and literacy development, but it was interesting to see whether teachers with a 3: 45 staff:child ratio would be able to find time to talk to children during a two and a half hour session. In fact, some rich examples of teachers interacting with children were observed. These interactions encouraged the children to respond to and to expand on their statements.

On one occasion the Head Teacher in K1 was observed completing an individual evaluation of a child during the session.

Four little girls are listening to "Beauty and the Beast", calling out "Have you got this one?" Teacher is in the corner, doing an assessment of a child. She says: "Can you find me the red circle? Can you find me the yellow circle? Can you find me the orange circle? Can you find me the green circle? Can you find me the blue circle? Can you find me the black circle?" The child pulls out the brown one. The teacher pulls it back. She asks her if there is a black one. "That was a tricky one" the teacher says. The four little girls continue to listen to the tape. She gives the girl a piece of paper and asks her to cut it out in a circle. There is discussion of sharing. Two little girls tell the teacher they should be allowed to join in. Teacher explains that they usually share but not at special times. She asks the child to draw a picture of person in a circle. Another child arrives and also wants to join in. She is told "Not at the moment". The child is asked to write her name, so she runs off to get her magnetic name tag. The teacher tells her she doesn't need her name tag. She takes the tag back to the fridge. The teacher turns back to the puzzle. A child tries to push in. "Can you put the purple circle underneath you?" She goes through the colours, asking the child to put them behind, on top, underneath, in front, and beside. Then she asks the child to put the colours back in the correct spaces. Then she moves onto shapes. She asks child to find a square shape. "It's got four sides on it" says the child. She then asks for a circle, which the child does without difficulty. For triangle, the teacher says "How many sides does a triangle have?". "Four" says the child. For oblong the teacher picks up a rectangle and talks about why it isn't a square. "I'm learning how to learn aren't I?" says the child. The teacher agrees and tells her to bring out the shapes. The child says "I'll count them". She counts out eight, putting them out in front of her. She gets lost at eight and recounts from the beginning. They move onto a block puzzle. "What comes after nine?" "Ten" says the child. The teacher ask her to put the blocks down in sizes from big to small. Child puts blocks in a line, reducing in size. She walks her fingers down the line and says there is ten. She counts out loud through this process. The teacher asks her if she knows any of the numbers lettered on the blocks. Teacher talks about her next birthday. "The flower", the child replies, which is correct on number five. The teacher asks her about how old she is now, and she again picks the correct number. Teacher asks about her brother's birthday, again the child is correct with picking number three. Teacher ask the child the number after five. Child correctly picks number six. They then go through all the numbers and the child correctly identifies all the numbers. Teacher says "I can't trick you. You're too clever for me". She then asks her to identify and count the parts of the body. The child does it all correctly: fingers, toes, ears nostrils. Teacher then discusses the child's abilities and preferences with the child. Child likes to play with a few children and would

rather have a small group than mat time. She goes to the toilet by herself and can dress herself. She shows the teacher how she can button. She has shoelaces, and rushes off to get her shoes. She puts them on her feet and correctly ties her shoelaces. She ties the shoelaces again and then gets up and goes to look at a book with another girl.(K1:16)

This one on one assessment is obviously a time consuming method of evaluation, which many teachers stated that they could more readily collect using an observation chart. However, it did provide a ten minute interlude in which the teacher was able to really concentrate on that child's development. The same teacher spent a lot of time simply talking with children as she went about her tasks around the kindergarten. This method of evaluation, although time consuming, provided the teacher with an enormous amount of data about the child's language, spatial, numerical and social abilities and preferences. McNaughton (1995) has argued that too little of this type of intensive assessment of children's literacy ability is conducted on entry to primary school. It could be argued that if kindergarten teachers are collecting this information about children, it would make sense to pass it on to the school, so that the child's literacy and numeracy abilities prior to school are documented. The conversational style between teacher and child was also seen in K5, again with the Head Teacher, as she talked to a group of children at the puzzle table.

The Head Teacher sits at the puzzle table. One child is doing a clock puzzle by herself. Another child is looking at some coloured pictures. Other children watch her. "What number comes after one?" the teacher asks the child doing the clock puzzle. "How old are you? Four? You find number four". The teacher keeps asking questions related to people she knows - herself, friend at school, with regard to how old they are. "What comes after seven?" She says some are missing, so children look on the floor for them. "What do you think it is up on the clock up there? It's quarter past nine, so you put the hands there". The child puts the puzzle back on the shelf and walks out the door. Teacher asks another child if she wants to do a puzzle. Child says no and walks away. Teacher has a conversation with a child about a trip to Auckland. One child nearby joins in the conversation and talks about a grandparent coming to stay and the recent visit of the Crunchie Train. They talk about the smoke on the train. The teacher looks at the child doing a puzzle. The teacher suggests that the child turn all the puzzle pieces over the right way up. She praises the child as the right place is found. "Put his face in. Turn it round the other way. Try the other side. That's right, good." Another little boy walks up and sits on the chair next to the teacher. He has a conversation with the teacher about a fire and fire engines. They have a conversation about the risks of playing with matches. "I did that when I was a baby, cause I didn't know what happened" the child says. The child continues on to say that he played with matches and his mother put the fire out. Child is still struggling with the puzzle. He finishes it and pushes it to the teacher. " Good I knew you could do it" she says. She gets another puzzle from the shelves and begins to stack the knobs of wood. Another child walks up and talks about a broken tooth and how much money the tooth fairy gave him.(K5:12)

K4 was noteworthy with regard to the amount of verbal interaction observed and also the amount of science which made up lots of these interactions. One of the Assistant teachers in K4 was observed teaching children how to make playdough, a Christmas cake, about the composition of concrete and the following example of how to do an experiment with milk, food colouring and dish washing detergent, which promoted a lot of conversation.

The Assistant Teacher and a group of children gather around a table, putting coloured dyes onto a plate. The plate has milk, food colouring and "Sunlight" dishwashing liquid. The teacher squirted dish washing liquid into the middle of the plate. The reaction spreads colours across the plate. Children are amazed by the colours. The children comment on the colours swirling around with delight. "What colours did you start with?" the teacher asks. "Red yellow and blue" the children reply. "You've got other colours now". Children call out different colours and comment on the differences. "It's all mixed up" a child says. "What do we do with it once it 's all mixed up?" the teacher asks. The reaction slows, so the teacher adds some more dish washing liquid and sets the reaction off again. (K4:18)

As discussed under the sections of on story reading, most of these teachers use a questioning technique as they read a story to children in a small group and this is one of the major opportunities for a teacher to talk with children on an individual basis. There are also opportunities as teachers work at various activities during the session.

The other major type of child centred activities was peer mediation of stories and activities. One focus of observations was the way in which children interact with each other with literacy activities. In fact, in some instances, such as the incident described under "flicking", a child did not engage with reading a book until he was joined by his friend to read the big books. In all of the kindergartens, examples of children telling each other how to use materials and what the rules of activities are were observed. On a few occasions, children were seen acting out some of the routines of the classroom, such as the following example from K3:

Two children are at the puzzles table. One is playing with a set of beads on a wire frame. Another girl watches him, pressing two puzzle boards together. The children do not interact. The girl goes back to layering clothes between the puzzle pieces. "We've got one on the back still" says the boy to himself, "We left one out". He flicks the beads around the frame. The girl watches him again, then holds up her puzzle to him. He ignores her and continues to play with his puzzle. A child sits down on the chair on the mat and calls "Mat time" very loudly over and over again. She has a dough ball studded with crayons. The boy wanders over to her. The student teacher says "She's pretending to be the teacher". Four children are now with her. She says loudly "I'm waiting for you guys". She points to the crayons and says "That, that, that". The child at the puzzles continues to play and watches. "I want you all in a circle, all holding hands". Three girls hold hands and stand in a circle. They sing "Happy birthday" to the girl in the chair. The puzzle child takes her puzzle and walks over to stand next to the girl on the chair. "[Child's name], you're the teacher". The girl from the puzzle corner drops the puzzle back in the corner and joins the group on the mat. "We're all teachers" says a boy and a girl who sit on a the chair. A boy walks to the puzzles. "Have you eaten the cracker, [child's name]?", the student says to the child. He talks to the child for a minute or two in a limited fashion. "You sort of got it all together? Where's he now?" The child stands and flicks through a book on the shelf and then looks over at the group who are chanting "Come and sit on the mat". A teacher says "I think all the children who want to sit on the mat are there". They scream "Mat time". The teacher says "That's enough now". Two girls sit on the chair. In a quieter voice they say "Come and sit on the mat". The boy from the books walks towards them and away to a call of "Come and sit on the mat now. We're the teachers. Come and sit down on the mat now". This phrase is chanted over and over again. Five little girls lineup and loudly chant. The teacher says "That's enough now. You've got everyone on the mat now. What are you going to do now, sing your favourite songs?". (K3:11)

In other cases children have learnt how to complete an activity and are able to run the activity themselves and teach it to other children. In an example from K5, children clearly complete the activity and tell a boy joining in what the rules of the activity are:

Music is playing on the stereo. Two children are following the instructions on the tape. "Like this" says the girl laughing. There are five children now. "Skip skip skip" says same girl. Children dance around to the music. Now four are children jumping. They sit on the floor pulling an imaginary rope, lifting legs in time to the music. They confer with each other as to what movement they should make. A child at the table demonstrates movements to the girl. Another tune comes on and children dance around to it. The blonde child runs off calling for the teacher. "Do you want the mousercise?" says the teacher. "You look like you're doing really well on your own". Children jump around waiting for the tape to start again. Teacher joins in "Do you want to do it by yourselves? You don't want me here?" she asks. "No" the children reply and start the exercise again. A dark haired girl hits a boy in the face who is yelling. "Shut your mouth. You don't s'posed to talk" she says. "Push the girls away" he replies, shoving back. A few seconds later they all settle to the floor exercises. One boy knocks over the dark headed girl. They go out the door. "Everybody lets dance outside" a child calls. They run in and out. Boy tackles dark head girl again and then they all do "Heads, shoulders, knees and toes". Boy and dark headed girl wrestle again. Two girls continue rolling exercises on floor, as blonde girl joins the wrestlers on the floor. "I'll tell the teacher" she says and rejoins the floor exercises. Still following instructions for movement from the tape, they sing the words, shake and clap in time to the music. Music stops and three girls sit on top of each other on the chair. They go outside. (K5:14)

The children in this example show a clear familiarity with the routine of the activity and are able to communicate that information to other children. Such familiarity suggests that children regularly have opportunities to experiment with songs, rhymes and games to the extent that they are becoming independent in their activity. This sort of peer collaboration and conflict around literacy activities has been found to be beneficial to children's understanding of a task (Tudge and Winterhoff, 1993a; Neuman and Roskos, 1991). Neuman and Roskos found that enriching the environment in a preschool classroom led to increased collaboration and scaffolding between peers in the classroom. With the difficulties inherent in the 3:45 ratio, increasing peer collaboration on literacy tasks is a valuable step toward promoting children's emergent literacy.

This section has examined the way in which literacy is mediated by teachers, parents and other children in the kindergarten. Overall, many of these kindergartens display aspects of language rich classrooms. Story book sessions in K2, K5 and K6 provided meaningful links to the theme of the week, while a drama session in K1 provided a useful way of extending children's knowledge of a story and an opportunity to link the story to the theme of the week. Small groups were seen to provide the most meaningful interaction around story reading, where teachers in K4, in particular, adopted a slow paced conversational style. Songs provide opportunities for children to learn the sounds of language in many of the kindergartens, although most singing was observed in K2. Children's literacy activities are organised by time and tidying rules in K2 and K4, while routines in large groups provide opportunities for birthday rituals and bilingual language activities. Children were seen to act out some of these routines in K3 and K5. K1, K4,

and K5 provided the richest language environments for children, with the most number of observed opportunities for children to interact in meaningful ways with literacy activities, in one-to-one or small groups with an adult.

Summary and Discussion

The purpose of this part of the research was to identify the domains of literacy activity in six kindergartens, as part of the overall aim of discovering the policy and practices of literacy activity in New Zealand kindergartens. Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) defined a language and print rich classroom as one "providing a rich literate environment sufficient for children to develop necessary hypotheses about print" (p.133). Their research identified some of the variables of a language and print rich environment and recommended methods of organising a classroom to enable the variables to operate dynamically. Literacy clearly is part of the kindergarten curriculum in the kindergartens visited. Interviews with Head teachers had suggested that literacy was an important part of the curriculum for most teachers. It would appear that there is a gap between the rhetoric of literacy in the curriculum, which was explored in the previous two chapters and the observed practice discussed in this chapter. The free play curriculum operating in these kindergartens, means that resources are available for children to work through at their own pace. Structured literacy activities occur mainly during a twenty to thirty minute mat time, in which the whole group (40 to 45 children) take part. Literacy activities, such as story reading, writing and puzzles/games were seen to be more effective in the small group setting. One of the difficulties of the 3:45 or 2:40 ratio seen in these kindergartens is that opportunities for one to one or one to small group interaction are infrequent. Despite the difficulties inherent in the adult:child ratio, many of these kindergartens provide a rich literacy environment. None of the kindergartens provide all of the elements of access and mediation in a language and print rich environment, while K2 and K6 stand out as having the most characteristics of print rich environments and K1, K4 and K5 provide the most language rich experiences for children.

The early part of the observation examined the location of print in the classrooms. Print is a prominent feature of these kindergartens, but a significant proportion of print is directed at adults, not children. With simply taking print directed at parents as a fraction of the total print count, communications for parents accounts for about a third of the total print displayed in most of these kindergartens. Many of the "rules" of the kindergartens, the directions for activities and centres are given verbally in these centres. The exception in terms of directions, are the process cooking charts which were observed in four of the six kindergartens. Personal directions were mostly used in K2, but this is possibly because K2 was the only centre observed with only two teachers. In order to maintain a person supervising inside and outside, it is probably necessary to tell children how to complete a task, rather than show them.

Books also form a large part of the overall print available to children. Martinez and Teale (1988) propose that providing a well designed library in a kindergarten or similar pre-school, with ready access, is an important first step towards encouraging literacy. Such a library should have a healthy collection of stories, fables, poetry and informational books with a sense of multi cultural sensitivity. Strickland and Morrow (1988) similarly claim that creating a "print rich"(p.156) environment is one way of promoting literacy development. They recommend a library centre in pre-school classrooms; with ready access but also a degree of privacy and tranquillity, to accommodate five or six children. Comfortable seating, pillows and tables will provide opportunities for settling and enjoying a library corner. A revolving supply of books, multiple copies of favourites and a library "check out" system may maintain interest. Morrow (1989a) states that well designed classrooms significantly increase the number of children who choose to participate in literacy activities. Morrow advocates a library supply of books of five to eight books per child; all kindergartens in this study, except K5, have well in excess of this number.

It is interesting to examine the location of books in the kindergartens, to note how books are often contained in a book corner in all but three kindergartens. K2, however, keeps a major supply of books in the children's bathroom, which you could argue is in the traffic flow in a preschool! However, it is an inhospitable place to read a book and few children even stopped to look. All of the kindergartens had some books at child level, either on a low table or within a low bookshelf. K3 had all of its inventory on display, but stacked tightly into a bookshelf, so that only the spines were showing. Children were not observed using these books, they focussed more on the "family" theme books on the low table with the puzzles, which were more accessible and had their covers showing. K5 had the poorest selection of books on display, even though it was a quarter of their inventory. The book corner itself was quite cozy, with a bright carpet, a couple of sofas and some cushions, but the scarcity of books made it rather unappealing. Despite this, however, it was well used by parents settling children and in small groups during the session. Not all of the kindergartens used a library system. It was present in K2 and 4, which was observed to be used by many parents. It was also present in K6, but the same degree of use was not observed. At the time of the research K1 was trying to find a new home for the library, instead of the foyer, so it was not operating. There did not seem to be a library system in kindergartens 3 and 5.

Another method of promoting literacy development is proposed by Strickland (1989) who designed a "core experience curriculum". This curriculum integrates language and literacy in a holistic manner using content themes. Strickland suggests that a print rich classroom is essential, with meaningful labels, signs and captions at child level. A strong literature base is a hallmark of this curriculum, as is an environment which invites children to write, read and talk. Teachers said that the selection of books on display changes according to the theme at the time in K2 and 3. In K2 the books were

about insects and other living things on the low table in the centre, where they were about families in K3 in line with their "Whakapapa/ancestors" theme. Learning within a literary theme may become relevant because it creates a context for play. Donaldson and Reid (1985) argue that learning language and literacy skills will be enhanced by the mediation of the text and subsequent activities by the teacher, conducted within the children's group and providing opportunities for social interaction. As Donaldson and Reid (1985, p.15) conclude "children - and indeed adults much of the time - do not interpret the words alone. What they are basically interested in is to understand what people mean, rather than what words mean. They interpret the words in their setting - both the physical and personal setting - to such an extent that we may speak of the language as being embedded in its context". Providing connections between the activities and the literature help children to make these connections. This sort of 'meaning making' was evident in K6, where the theme was dinosaurs and there were books, posters, stories and songs about dinosaurs, as well as a trip to the museum to see a Stegosaurus. In K2 the theme of insects was expressed as books and posters and a set activity for each day, such as making a ladybird on one day and a spider's web on the next.

Communications in English and Maori featured in all of the kindergartens. There were few in K1 and K4, and a quarter of total print in K6. Communications about activities were a noticeable feature of kindergartens 3, 5 and 6. Lists play a very limited role in these classrooms, as they are used for organisation of the kindergarten, not children's activities. Lists are primarily for lockers, donations, children's names and for songs (in K5). Directions are similarly for factual things only, like "wash your hands" and fire and earthquake procedures. Labels were also primarily intended for organisation of centres, like labelled boxes of clothes, but were sometimes used to label activities to good effect, such as the labelled measurements of a tomato plant in K4. Strickland and Morrow (1988) propose that children can be involved in the functional aspects of labelling objects and areas, which will help them to make the connection between print and the object and will also help them to recognize the functional usefulness of print. Strickland and Morrow consider it to be useful to identify learning areas and children's lockers and to post daily routines, helper charts, attendance charts, news bulletin boards for classroom events, calendars and thermometers.

The design of a classroom can play a significant role in the success of an emergent literacy programme, as positioning of literacy activities and provision of appropriate materials are particularly important. Sulzby, Teale and Kamberelis (1989) found that an emergent literacy curriculum should provide opportunities for multimedia construction - putting painting and writing areas side by side. Children can be encouraged to publish their own books or exhibitions. Likewise, children should be encouraged to write "stories" before formal writing is achieved, and to share these stories within a small group. Sulzby, Teale and Kamberelis (1989) conclude that classroom libraries, letter writing, name writing and artwork should be encouraged. Writing materials are universally

available in the kindergartens, and they are all situated near to the collage materials, rather than the books. Writing is implicitly connected with artwork in these kindergartens, rather than reading, although magnetic name tags are used to encourage writing names on paintings. Children were observed making books in K2, where teacher involvement with children's writing attempts was also observed. Writing books has been found to encourage children's interest in literacy, as booklets are based on their own interests and activities (Dyson, 1989). Dyson's (1989) research at the writing table presented evidence that children express their fused interests and classroom experience in action and writing, through their dramatic play and their imaginative drawings. Writing books can also help to reinforce the child's understanding of the connection between reading and writing (Van Lierop, 1985; Hall, 1976). Children learn concepts of author and audience within a supportive writing environment and through dialogue (Rowe, 1989). It is significant that the most writing activity was seen in K2 where teachers discussed how to form letters with children. K2 provided a language and print rich environment in terms of writing, as teachers provided the opportunities for children to receive instruction and modelling of writing skills, which they were able to practice and appropriate as their own (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990; Rogoff et al., 1993).

Children were also observed to be very interested in a book of self portraits in K6, which the teacher had bound into a book and had placed in the bookshelves. Kantor, Fernie and Miller (1992) argue that children have a heightened interest in engaging in a literacy activity, when they can claim ownership of it, such as seeing their own name on it. For this reason, use of lists, notes and signs in the programme can give children access to functional concepts of print while encouraging writing. As Kantor, Fernie and Miller (1992) state, teachers can help children to make connections between reading and writing and "that these connections are best made as literacy is woven in and through the fabric of classroom life, its school culture and peer culture activities. Literacy takes on shape, pattern, and texture as it is constructed to meet individual and group needs"(p.200).

One of the surprising observations in the kindergartens was the low priority placed on displaying children's attempts at writing or artwork. This could be because kindergarten is currently a process rather than product oriented movement (Carr and May, 1991), or because there is an emphasis on children taking home their "work" to their families. The second surprising finding was the amount of "flicking" through books that children did, once they were in a "book corner". Little sustained interaction with books occurred, unless an adult was present to mediate the activity. This finding is consistent with the results of the Child Health and Education Study (CHES) in Britain (cited in Meadows and Cashdan, 1988, p.94), in which centres considered that provision of materials and story reading was "good practice", yet the equipment was universally little used, with little spontaneity. As Meadows and Cashdan (1988) conclude, books are traditionally found at the periphery of the curriculum. Story reading is a quiet, passive activity and book corners are often used as areas to quieten distressed children. Increasing

opportunities for children to have literacy materials mediated by teachers, parents or peers is an important issue for a curriculum which would promote the development of emergent literacy.

Martinez and Teale (1988) call the "flicking" phenomenon "browsing", in which a child flips rapidly through all or part of a book. Browsing requires the least sustained attention of all book related behaviours. They observed "browsing" to take up 31% of literacy activity in Kindergartners (Martinez and Teale, 1988, p.570). Martinez and Teale suggest that children will spend less time browsing if the books available to them are familiar to them, such as books which have been read to them. This was seen in K2 in which a child flicking through a book settled down to more attentive reading with a friend, when they found *Wombat Stew*, a story which had been read to them often as a favourite book in the kindergarten. As story reading has been found to be one of the most important promoters of emergent literacy (Elley, 1989; Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Bus, van Ijzendoorn and Pellegrini, 1995), it would make sense for teachers to seek out such "flicking" or browsing behaviour and offer to read the child a story. Alternatively, teachers could be encouraging peer collaboration (Tudge and Winterhoff, 1993a) of story reading, such as the observed reading of *Wombat Stew*.

Anning (1991) states that the layout of preschool classrooms proclaim what teachers think are important in children's learning. "The practical areas are there because teachers believe that children learn by doing" and that the "displays are there because they are what are currently "turning the children on" (p.74). Anning suggests that the areas of the preschool are probably not used the ways that rhetoric would suggest.

It is likely that the book corner is rarely used by the children as a space for quiet and sustained reading (Southgate, 1981). Instead the comfortable carpet is likely to provide the boundaries of wriggling children at storytimes or the ubiquitous "mat time" (p.74).

Literacy does form a significant part of large group activity in the kindergartens, comprised of story reading, songs, rhymes and dramatic play based on stories or rhymes. The large group interactions are very different to the small group, in that they are punctuated by "crowd control" rules by teacher to maintain the attention of the group. Behaviour rules, such as "sitting on your bottom" and "zip up your lips" are common in these settings. Story reading is more formal in this setting, with questions mainly occurring briefly at the ends of pages. In contrast, small group interactions around stories or other literacy activities, such as writing or puzzles are more personal and involve more response from children. Anning (1991) argues that this formal approach to literacy with a large group of children is also common in Britain, as she states

Many infant teachers claim that they prefer to adopt a 'progressive' approach to education and espouse a non-interventionist stance towards promoting young children's learning. They prefer children to find things out for themselves, preferably through first hand practical play activities. Their role is simply to structure the learning environment so that children can take advantage of the opportunities to learn that are provided within the school day. Yet at the same time they feel compelled to intervene in children's learning in a very direct way in the teaching of literacy and numeracy (p.48).

However, the mat session serves a useful purpose of providing at least one opportunity per day in which children hear a range of rhymes and rhythms in language, which may provide the foundations for phonological awareness. The mat session provides an opportunity in which teachers could be deliberately using language games, chants and rhymes which would encourage the letter name knowledge and phonemic awareness which plays a critical role in successful reading achievement (Ball and Blachman, 1991). For children who come from homes in which nursery rhymes are a common feature, this may be simply reinforcement, but it may be the only access that some children have to such activity. Maclean, Bryant and Bradley (1987) state

Adults play a direct role in fostering the growth of phonological awareness in children with the help of informal linguistic routines. Nursery rhymes are one example of the informal way in which parents, for the most part unwittingly, draw their attention to the fact that words have separable component sounds (p.280).

The other thing the mat session does is provide another opportunity for children to hear the teacher's voice as she mediates the literacy event. Children may use the memory of the teacher's voice during literacy on the mat or in the small group to appropriate her literacy behaviour at a later date (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990; Rogoff et al., 1993).

Clay (1991) states that much of the research on emergent literacy has been completed in middle class homes in which children have been exposed to wealth of literacy activities. Clay (1991) contends "there is nothing exciting to write about the millions of children who are not getting the opportunities to do these things" (p.273). Cochran-Smith (1985) makes the distinction between performance oriented and interaction oriented story time. In a performance session, children sit and listen, although Cochran-Smith contends that here is passive and active listening. Interactive story sessions involve teacher-student interaction, so that the reading and meaning of a text is jointly constructed. In this way the child is required to make sense of the story. Several researchers have advocated small group story reading as the most beneficial to children, in terms of enabling this sort of interaction (Brown, Weinberg and Cromer, 1986; Morrow, 1989b; Morrow and Smith, 1990; Peters, 1993). Small group story reading was seen in all of the kindergartens, but most in K4. The number of extra adults in K4 may have been a factor in this. This interaction around literacy is a more powerful means of scaffolding literacy, as the teacher is able to guide the child's participation and the child gets to practice new skills which are appropriated in the within the small group setting (Rogoff et al., 1993).

Kindergartens in the present study have been found to have some of the attributes of what Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) have called a language and print rich classroom. Many kindergartens have a lot of available print, but over a third of it is directed at adults. The structure of the kindergarten makes displaying print at child level difficult, and the layout of many of the kindergartens would not promote in children a

ready recognition of the connections between reading and writing. Structured literacy events occur primarily in a large group mat session, although literacy activities such as story reading, writing and puzzles/games were seen to be more effective in the small group setting. One of the difficulties of the 3:45 or 2:40 ratio seen in these kindergartens is that finding opportunities for one to one or one to small group interaction is a major difficulty, so the large group setting provides at least one valuable opportunity to provide literacy experiences for children, which all kindergartens were observed to be committed to. Two of the kindergartens were seen to provide a print rich environment for children, while three kindergartens provided children with a language rich environment. Finding ways in which to bring the strengths of current kindergarten practice into a curriculum which would further promote emergent literacy will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

This chapter will examine how the data collections fulfilled the aims of the research and what conclusions can be drawn. The implications of the present study for designing a literacy centred curriculum will be discussed, then the implications for future research will be explored.

Summary and Discussion

Views of cognition and emergent literacy in kindergartens

The first aim of the present study was to identify the prevailing theoretical orientation regarding cognitive development and emergent literacy in New Zealand Kindergartens. In addition to reviewing the history of curriculum in New Zealand kindergartens through the literature, interviews were conducted with Head Teachers of kindergartens in the local urban area, to examine their prevailing theory and practice regarding children's cognitive and literacy development. One of the research questions considered within this aim was what teachers considered to be "normal" or "expected" development for preschoolers in New Zealand, particularly with regard to literacy development. The research also examined if teachers' current theory of child development had any similarities to the Vygotskian notion of a "zone of proximal development".

Kindergarten education in New Zealand was based originally on the romantic ideals of Froebel, who considered that children learn best through play, in a natural environment. The idea that play is the ideal way for children to learn in kindergarten was also influenced by the development of Playcentre. The "free play" philosophy in Playcentre was based on the work of Freud, who argued that "play is the child's work", and through the educational ideas of Susan Isaacs, who considered that play enabled children to resolve their inner conflicts. Kindergarten was also based on notions of Christian and charitable intervention and originally conceptualised as a way of providing care, socialisation and education for poor children. Kindergarten thus began with ideas of rescuing deprived children. Women were seen to be the natural teachers of young children, because of their perceived nurturant qualities with young children and dominant ideologies of appropriate career choices for women. Socialisation was the task of women with children in New Zealand, like many other western countries in

the last century; with a focus on learning how to behave, how to eat properly and to stay healthy.

Froebel's romantic ideas, along with Freud's psychoanalytic theory of powerful inner forces, and Isaacs' ideas of resolving inner conflict through play, combined into a powerful theory of early education. Such valuing of play may have stayed at a romantic, semi mystic level, if the "free play" movement hadn't found support in the theories of cognitive development proposed by Jean Piaget. The "implicit" theory of teachers then involved notions of unfolding inner virtues from Froebel, resolution of powerful stage driven conflicts from Freud, the need to resolve inner conflict through dramatic play from Isaacs and the individual, maturational, stage driven, cognitive structure theory of Piaget, where children would learn through experimentation with the environment and social conflict with their peers. Kindergarten education moved into a new realm, providing a professional approach to early education, which was recognised and financially supported by the New Zealand government in the 1947 Bailey Report.

Teachers in the present study were seen to embrace a similarly eclectic view of cognitive development, which is also influenced by some behaviourist and social learning theory principles of reinforcement and modelling. Despite their rhetoric of providing a stimulating free play environment, teachers discussed using intervention skills with children who were not engaging in free play or who showed signs of learning deficits or deprivation. Given the kindergarten movement's early focus on providing for deprived working class children, this approach to meeting children's needs seems to be consistent with the kindergarten's history, rather than current constructivist rhetoric. Teachers considered that many working class parents do not provide appropriate home learning environments for children's language and cognitive development. Despite their contention that they provide opportunities to make up for such deficits through literacy opportunities, observations of meaningful interactions between teachers and children were rarely seen. Literacy was often presented in a large group format, which was punctuated by behaviour control routines. Meaningful interaction was only seen in small group situations; often a story book reading session.

A constructivist view of cognitive development, in which children are seen as active learners who learn through experience of the environment, is espoused by both Head teachers and Assistant teachers. Teachers also believe in waiting for the "teachable moment" or believe that children will learn best when they are "ready". The "free play" curriculum is child centred, meeting Kohlberg and Mayer's (1972) criteria for a "progressive" curriculum.

The strongest theoretical orientation displayed by these teachers is Piagetian. This is seen in teacher's beliefs that development is stage driven, maturational and best achieved when children engage in hands on experimentation with the environment. Social conflict through working with other children, rather than teachers is promoted.

The Piagetian approach to development and education is endorsed by “Te Whariki” (Ministry of Education, 1993), the early childhood guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice.

Expectations of child development were often recounted by these teachers in terms of what children are missing in their development, probably a feature of their developmental check listing. Teachers use Piagetian terminology to discuss these expectations; stating that children should know “basic concepts” such as colours, shapes, animals, letters of the alphabet, numbers and be able to recognise their own name. There are also expectations of what literacy experiences children will have had at home, as teachers are surprised when children don't know how to use the available writing or collage materials. One teacher explained that she has an expectation that parents will read to their child as an infant, but often believes that it has not happened. Another teacher held similar expectations that children will know about reading and writing before school, as she said that she tells parents how to write the child's name on the top left hand corner of the child's art work, thus displaying an assumption that the child already knows the purpose of print and will begin to read from encouragement of literate behaviour.

Despite these expectations of child development, teachers often refrain from actively teaching children, because of beliefs about maturational readiness; that they should just wait for the teachable moment or that children will come to learn concepts in their own time. Providing the right stimulus in the environment is seen to encourage the child's interest enough to make the moment occur. Two of the teachers interviewed had wrestled with waiting and had decided that intervention with some children was appropriate. They were actively using a method of instruction which parallels Vygotsky's notion of mediation, where teachers are working with a child through their zone of proximal development on a new task, such as learning how to write their name or complete a puzzle.

Aims for cognitive growth reflected in the Charter Handbook (Department of Education, 1989) parallel teachers' beliefs; that children are active constructors of knowledge and that teachers should provide a sufficiently stimulating environment to encourage active thinking. Teachers commented that “all kindergartens are the same” and that it was relatively easy to shift between Charters as they are so similar and so broad, that they reflect teacher practice at a general level. Teachers reported using a similar range of skills to promote cognitive and literacy development in children; which involved talking with children, using body language and questioning. They also talked about the need to intervene with children who are unable to free play and be active constructors of meaning in the kindergarten environment.

Literacy is an important aspect of the curriculum for many teachers. A story is often read to children at mat sessions and songs, rhymes and chants take up the majority

of the group mat time in many kindergartens. A few teachers actively teach children Clay's (1982) "concepts of print"; of print carrying the message, directionality and prediction skills. Some encourage story writing, while all encourage use of a magnetic name board so that children will learn to write their own name. There is an uneven use of library systems in kindergartens, with a noticeable lack of libraries in low SES areas.

Although promoting literacy through story reading, language games, book corners and writing materials is considered "good practice" by all of these teachers, few teachers were clearly able to articulate knowledge of emergent literacy theory and research. Although teachers encouraged knowledge of alphabet and experience with language, they did not clearly articulate that they were seeking to encourage the predictors of reading achievement such as letter knowledge and phonological awareness and knowledge of the concepts about print. Given that being able to read will affect all children's future pathways in education (Stanovich, 1986), this lack of awareness about the predictors of reading achievement seems unfortunate. Teacher training in the future must seek to provide kindergarten teachers with a thorough subject knowledge of the teaching of literacy before school.

The role of the parent and the teacher in literacy development

The second aim of the research was to identify the role of the parent and teacher in the child's literacy development. Assistant Teacher's and parent's responses to a structured interview regarding children's literacy experiences were sought. The interview protocol also examined how they perceived their role in children's learning. Using the same questionnaire for both parents and teachers provided an interesting comparison of beliefs about how children learn, how children learn literacy, what sort of literacy environment children are being exposed to and how teachers and parents see the role of the kindergarten in children's development.

Part of this aim was to find out what sort of literacy experiences children are receiving before entering compulsory schooling. Clay's (1982) research had established that children learn the pre-requisite skills to reading, long before commencing formal instruction. Few parents set about actively "teaching" their preschoolers, but something in their daily interaction has been shown to have a beneficial effect for later reading. This study has demonstrated that the children of parents interviewed are experiencing a lot of literacy activity in the home environment, which is reinforced and furthered in the kindergarten. Children have access to literacy activities both at home and at kindergarten, although it may be offered in quite different formats. At home, children receive more one on one literacy opportunities, while at kindergarten children may learn more language games and be part of more structured literacy activities.

Parents interviewed in the present study represented a diverse sample of the population, in terms of educational background, family structure and income. The interesting commonality between these parents was their interest in promoting their child's literacy development and securing a good education for their child. Although parents had picked kindergarten as an early childhood setting for their child largely for socialisation purposes, parents consider that teachers could be giving more guidance and more teaching of literacy skills than they currently do. There is not a clear sense that parents are wanting to increase the academic nature of the curriculum, as NAEYC (1991) warn against, more that they would like children to have more opportunities to talk to teachers one to one. Increasing the number of teachers in the classroom increases opportunities for children to talk to teachers, as the amount of small group discussion in one kindergarten demonstrated. It is unlikely that such an improvement in adult:child ratios would be achieved without more government funding or parental fees to the kindergarten, but it could be achieved with more parent involvement. Alternatively, increasing opportunities for peer collaboration in literacy enriched activity settings, as advocated by Gallimore and Tharp (1990), Neuman and Roskos (1990) and Tudge and Winterhoff (1993a) could create more opportunities for peer scaffolding, where numbers of available adults are limited.

One of the research questions was to examine parent's and teacher's views of themselves as teachers and how they see the role of the kindergarten in children's development. Parents and teachers have similar views of how children learn in general at home and in the kindergarten, although they have differing opinions on how literacy is learnt and what the most important types of learning are. Parents and teachers both describe children as possessing a range of literate behaviours and already displaying many of the understandings about print, which will lead to later reading achievement. Overall, all children discussed in this study have access to story reading and discussion, regardless of parents' educational or economic status. Despite parents' desire for children to succeed later on informal schooling, their primary motivation for sending the child to kindergarten is to be socialised into the local community.

Assistant Teachers, like the Head Teachers, are constructivist teachers, who believe that children learn most often through free play in the kindergarten, although they consider that children learn literacy through talking with other children. The most important type of learning for these teachers is free play. There is an interesting gap here in terms of philosophy; teachers consider in general that children learn best on their own through free play and yet consider that children learn literacy through talking with others. Parents, in contrast, have an interactive view of children's learning and consider that "input is vital" in all areas of children's learning, although they do consider that children needs lots of experiences and opportunities to free play. From this study it does seem that children are more likely to receive conscious "scaffolding"

from parents at home in a range of activities, although teachers will use interactive strategies for small group literacy activities in the kindergartens. Parents have clearly given themselves an instructive role in their children's learning and consider that kindergarten gives the child opportunity to learn to socialise with other children. Teachers are not seen by parents to talk to children often enough, to provide enough extension or guidance. Most parents recognise that this is difficult with forty five children in one session, but accept the limitation because socialisation is their desired outcome for their child. Teachers have given themselves a more passive, supportive role than parents in children's learning, which is probably a reflection of their constructivist philosophy, that children learn best through their own experience. However, the passive role teachers have adopted may simply be a response to the reality of three teachers and forty to forty five children in one session.

Given the de-skilling and job intensification (Apple, 1986) that teachers had experienced since the government intervention of chartering and bulk funding (Farquhar, 1991), and more recently the emergence of national curriculum guidelines for early childhood, it is unlikely that teachers are capable of stretching themselves further to provide a scaffolded literacy environment for kindergarten children. The free play environment is "common sense" to coping with forty five children in one session. If the government were really interested in educational outcomes for early childhood, they would insist on lower adult: child ratios for kindergarten, and be willing to fund accordingly. Given the current lack of interest in early childhood education, it is more likely that a scaffolded literacy environment is best achieved through parent involvement in the kindergarten classroom.

Although increasing opportunities for scaffolding children is probably difficult to do, enriching the literacy environment would not be. One kindergarten demonstrated in this study that the kindergarten can be re-organised in an afternoon. Teachers could probably use existing resources in different ways to enrich the literacy environment. Morrow (1989c) argues that any extra resources can be donated or bought cheaply at garage sales. Children do not need to have big plastic equipment; resources such as letter boxes, bean bags, typewriters, easels and children's books would probably be donated to the kindergarten if fliers were posted in the wider community.

The intriguing question which arises from results of the present study is that if children are receiving the sort of interactive one on one teaching at home that these parents describe, then why are teachers describing children as having learning deficits and describing parents as providing children with deprived home backgrounds? It may be that the parents interviewed, despite their diverse range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds, were selected by teachers because of their interest in children's learning and this is the reason why these parents describe such an interactive role with their children. There is certainly nothing to suggest that parents were chosen

because their children are considered deprived by teachers, although some of the parents described themselves as having limited literacy skills. The other, more troubling, possibility is that teachers are not recognising the learning which is occurring in the home and making use of it in the kindergarten. In terms of making sense for children, the basic concepts which teachers consider that children are missing may not be the information that parents are giving to children at home, although parents in this study were undoubtedly teaching children letters, numbers and concepts about print as part of overall literacy activity. The question of what and how children are learning at home is worthy of further examination with the larger sample of all children attending a kindergarten at one time.

Domains of literacy activity in six kindergartens

The third aim of the present study was to identify the domains of literacy activity in six kindergartens, as part of the overall aim of discovering the policy and practices of literacy activity in New Zealand kindergartens. Literacy clearly is part of the kindergarten curriculum in the kindergartens visited. The impression formed while completing the interviews with Head Teachers was that literacy was an important part of the curriculum for most teachers, although it would appear that there is a gap between the rhetoric of literacy in the curriculum and the observed practice. Literacy activity is apparent in these kindergartens, but it is unevenly spread across and within centres.

Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986) defined a language and print rich classroom as one "providing a rich literate environment sufficient for children to develop necessary hypotheses about print" (p.133). Their research identified some of the variables of a language and print rich environment and recommended methods of organising a classroom to enable the variables to operate dynamically. The free play curriculum operating in these kindergartens means that resources are available for children to work through at their own pace. Structured literacy activities occur mainly during a twenty to thirty minute mat time, in which the whole group (40 to 45 children) take part. Literacy activities, such as story reading, writing and puzzles/games were seen to be more effective in the small group setting.

Some of these kindergartens could be considered to be "print rich", as there is an enormous amount of print on the walls and numerous books. One aspect of the print rich environment in kindergartens which is cause for concern is the amount of print that is directed at adults rather than children. The walls in many kindergartens are covered with print, but little of it is accessible or directed at children. As Anning (1991) points out, the amount of print on walls can be visually overwhelming, especially if it is completely meaningless to children. In terms of encouraging literacy, it is important to

carefully examine whether available print is used in any way in the curriculum and makes any sense for children. If the environment is designed to stimulate children's development, then the classroom should reflect that focus. Much information for parents could be readily included in a parent handbook. After all, if they can read it on the wall, they could read it in a small booklet. Most of the adult directed print assumes a high level of literacy and concepts about child development, which parents may not have. The expense of publication of a booklet may make teachers reflect on what parents really need to know and what is superfluous. The kindergarten which was print rich and used well by children in this study, had lists, songs and books at child level, which were tied to real activities in the kindergarten.

Some of the kindergartens, could be considered "language rich", as examples of language rich, meaningful interaction was observed in these kindergartens in particular. These interactions most often occurred in the small group reading session or around a small group activity. The teacher's "voice" (Bakhtin, 1981; Gallimore and Tharp, 1990) is clearly heard in the small group setting, providing children with opportunities to model the teacher and to practice the literacy skills the teacher uses.

One of the difficulties of the 3:45 or 2:40 ratio seen in these kindergartens is that opportunities for one to one or one to small group interaction are infrequent. Despite the difficulties inherent in the adult:child ratio, most of these kindergartens provide many aspects of a rich literacy environment. In terms of providing literacy opportunities for children, addressing the adult child ratio is a real concern. The obvious solution is to increase the number of teachers in the kindergartens. However, given the present Government focus on bulk funding centres, it is unlikely that Kindergarten Associations could afford to employ any more teachers. It is probably also unlikely that the Government will increase bulk funding so teacher : child ratios could be improved, as they have been actively moving away from the quality ratio stance adopted by the last Labour government with the "Before Five" (Department of Education, 1988b) changes. One way to reduce the adult : child ratio and to make the curriculum meaningful for children, would be to look for increased ways to involve parents in the kindergarten. Obviously limited time, other commitments and younger children to care for all work against parent involvement in the kindergarten, but parents may be more willing to take part in the kindergarten if they are given some training as parent helpers and get some sort of certification for involvement, as Playcentres do. It would be a good way of promoting parent education and recognising the involvement of parents in the classroom. Such evidence of involvement during child rearing years can be a useful addition to job applications. It would also be useful to look closely at how one very experienced teacher, in one of the lowest socio-economic areas in the city, was able to describe a high level of ongoing interest and parental involvement in the Charter process. As children in low SES areas have been found to benefit from

parental involvement in school, it seems an important issue to follow up such accounts of successful parent involvement. It may be that the whole notion of parent involvement in the kindergarten being someone to prepare the snack and to sweep the floors needs to be challenged and that the expert/novice relationship between teachers and parents needs to ^{be} actively dismantled.

None of the kindergartens provide all of the characteristics of the language and print classrooms, defined by Taylor, Blum and Logsdon (1986), which would promote emergent literacy in young children. Yet many kindergartens, with simple changes to the kindergarten environment, curriculum and role of the teachers, could readily achieve this. To a certain extent, if teachers from kindergartens simply pooled their methods of promoting literacy, to combine both language and print rich classrooms, the curriculums would be a long way toward effective promotion of literacy for young children. The next section of this chapter will explore some of the ways that literacy could be promoted in a kindergarten curriculum.

Toward a literacy centred curriculum for kindergarten

The fourth aim of the present study was to consider the implications for designing a literacy centred curriculum, based upon the Vygotskian model of a "zone of proximal development" and a "scaffolded" learning environment, incorporating research findings on the development of emergent literacy and integrating results of the present study. Although going into great depth on this aim is beyond the scope of the present study, the research does give some interesting findings which would need to be considered in developing such a curriculum, which will be briefly considered here.

The present study indicates that parents spend a significant proportion of their time with their preschoolers engaged in a variety of functional literacy activities, in addition to the times in which parents and children engage in recognised activities to promote literacy development, such as story reading or teaching the child the alphabet. There is now ample support to recognise that many children, regardless of cultural and socio-economic status, experience a language rich home environment (Heath, 1983; Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1985a; Hughes, 1989). It is important for kindergartens to increasingly recognise the diversity of experience that children bring to kindergarten and to design curricula which build on children's knowledge and experience, rather than conceptualising some children as deprived, because they do not have the same experiences as middle class children. Dyson's (1993) argument that teachers need to recognise a range of cultural and social literacy pathways and to develop a range of teaching strategies to meet those pathways is of obvious relevance in a multicultural country such as New Zealand.

Although many teachers are aware of the diversity of children's home backgrounds, it can be difficult to find ways to validate and integrate those experiences in the classroom. It may be that the "free play" classroom is overwhelming for some children and a smaller selection of activities, presented in a more direct way would be a more appropriate introduction to school life. Teachers may have to work more closely with parents to find out what it is that interests and excites children, and use this information as the basis for curriculum planning, even if it doesn't seem to be a natural choice for early childhood topic. Although the introduction of Te Whariki (Ministry of Education, 1993) may increase teacher's concern to be developmentally appropriate in their practice, it seems crucial that teachers focus on being primarily individually and culturally appropriate, to meet the diverse literacy and learning pathways of their students. As Spodek (1988) has pointed out, in his critique of the NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice, it is important for teachers to recognise the developmental dimension to children's learning in a centre, but they cannot ignore the importance of the cultural and knowledge dimensions. In a country as culturally diverse as New Zealand, working with parents to find out what is culturally appropriate and what knowledge parents know their children possess or want them to possess seems crucial. It does seem possible to make curriculum individually, socially and culturally appropriate to increase the quality of education that children receive.

The research on emergent literacy indicates that before entering school children are able to understand and use a variety of literacy behaviours. The Piagetian conception of the child as pre-logical does not adequately recognise the abilities that children have. The free play curriculum does not in any real sense build on the strengths that children already have, it simply provides an opportunity for children to expand and extend their experiences. If a curriculum were designed to promote literacy development it would include some of the following features:

Identification and assessment

Identification of child's level of emergent literacy on entry to Kindergarten is a crucial aspect of curriculum design. This could include the teachers' current impressions of the home background gained from home visiting, but also needs to include some diagnostic measures of letter knowledge, phonological awareness and familiarity with concepts about print. Information gained from parents in the present study provides a wealth of information about how literacy is practiced in the home. Some similar questionnaire could be completed with parents on the child's pre-entry session at Kindergarten, which if collected in an interview format, would open up pathways for teachers and parents to discuss the role of literacy in children's development. Information gained from personal observation, parent information and

assessment of the child's emergent literacy (probably among other developmental issues) would then enable teacher's to make well founded decisions about the individual developmental pathway of the child.

Assessment is not currently a strong part of teachers' skills in New Zealand, nor are appropriate assessment procedures clearly articulated in Te Whariki (Cullen, 1996). Wilks (1993) found that only 41 percent of centres in New Zealand use any form of written assessment and that observation procedures tend to be aimed at identifying problems with particular children, rather than routinely observing all children. Although Head Teachers discussed using a developmental checklist to identify children's strengths and weaknesses, only in one kindergarten was intensive assessment of a child observed. It seems crucial that teachers receive training concerning emergent literacy, so that their understandings of child development are based on current theory and research, rather than develop superficial understandings of emergent literacy which then overlay their normative, constructivist views of child development. Furthermore, early childhood teachers desperately need to learn a range of assessment procedures for identifying emergent literacy. The use of a normative developmental checklist is unlikely to identify the range of developmental and cultural pathways to literacy which Clay (1991), Dyson (1993) and McNaughton (1995) have identified.

There are obviously a range of assessment techniques which are currently used in emergent literacy research (e.g. the battery of tests used by Tunmer, Herriman and Nesdale, 1988), but there is a real need for a range of accessible assessment methods to be designed for use in the early childhood setting in New Zealand. One of the real weaknesses of Te Whariki is that assessment and evaluation procedures are directed at the programme rather than the individual child, thereby avoiding the issue of how teachers should gain accurate knowledge of each child's learning needs and abilities. Assessment, like curriculum, is seen to be something of a dirty word in early childhood settings in New Zealand, but if early childhood education is ever to be seen as more than "just putting out the playdough" or "babysitting" then it must develop sound methods of educational assessment which are applicable between settings. It currently makes little sense that knowledge of children gained in the kindergarten setting is not formally transferred on the child's entry to school.

Enrichment of the literacy environment

Inclusion of opportunities to increase emergent literacy behaviour in the curriculum is another key element in the curriculum design. This would include activities designed to promote the specific predictors of reading achievement; such as phonemic awareness, ready recognition of letter names, syllable splitting, oddity tasks, blending tasks, along with other specific cognitive abilities from other disciplines which

predict reading achievement, such as classification, seriation and conservation tasks. These sound rather dry activities to include in a kindergarten curriculum, but they could be achieved through careful promotion of small group games in the book or block corner, for example, or language and rhyming games during mat sessions. It is more than possible that many of the games currently available in kindergartens would fulfill these functions, but their use could be highlighted and encouraged within the curriculum. Careful consideration of the relevance of available print on walls has been discussed previously in this chapter, but it is of vital importance. Careful consideration of how to enrich literacy areas in the curriculum and what involvement of adults are implicated is also crucial.

There is ample evidence that enriching the literacy environment in preschool can lead to increased real play with literacy activities (Neuman and Roskos, 1990). There is also evidence that organising the classroom environment so that reading and writing materials are arranged together can facilitate children's awareness and learning of literacy concepts. Kindergartens would need to discard some of the "children might draw on the books" ideas and allow children to openly handle books and use them in meaningful ways. Preventing children from making connections between reading and writing, by placing books as far away from writing materials as possible, does not encourage them to become comfortable with them. Re-organising literacy materials into other areas of the kindergarten such as dramatic play areas, may open up other ways for children to engage with literacy, other than sitting quietly flicking through a book. Designing well equipped office space for children to play symbolically with literacy is one useful way of promoting literacy (Neuman and Roskos, 1990). Teachers need to be aware of the amount of unsustained interaction with literacy that is occurring in the kindergartens and think carefully about where books are placed and how they are presented. Large bookcases in rarely frequented parts of the kindergarten do not invite children to use them. More use of existing low book tables and a revolving supply of books, linked to the current theme or focus, is worth considering.

In many ways literacy is too routinised in the kindergartens. It occurs mainly through formal mat session or small group story reading. It would be helpful to encourage children's writing of their own stories, which could then be used in the larger group, if so desired. Kindergarten libraries revealed little material made by children themselves. Valuing and keeping children's writing in the classroom would give other children a model of what could be done, as well as providing meaningful print for children. Similarly not displaying children's artwork and attempts at writing display a lack of interest in children's endeavours. A lot could be learnt from Katz' (1991) discussion of the Emilio Reggio preschools in Italy, where children's artwork is completed over several days or weeks and then is shown to parents at an opening ceremony. Photographs of children completing the project are displayed, thereby

increasing opportunities for discussion with children of their role in the process. Sending children's work home everyday, where it may not be valued, could give children the understanding that their efforts are not worthwhile. Reconsidering the role of children's art and print in the kindergartens is necessary and important.

Increase literacy activity

Increasing the volume of story reading opportunities is clearly a way to promote literacy achievement. This may help to recognise Stanovich's (1986) link between the volume of reading and vocabulary acquisition, whereby the rich get richer in terms of reading achievement. This is especially important for those children who are identified by the assessment at kindergarten entry as "at risk" of being deprived of literacy opportunities. As learning to read will affect every other aspect of the child's achievement in school (Stanovich, 1986; Clay, 1991), promoting literacy at every stage of the child's education is imperative. Story reading will give children a foundation in many of the skills required for reading achievement, such as concepts about print (Clay, 1982), vocabulary acquisition (Elley, 1989), a story schema (Snow, 1983), book handling skills (Mason and Allen, 1986), oral skill (Wells, 1985a), writing skills (Dyson, 1989) construction of personal meanings and experiences (McNaughton, 1995; Heath, 1986; Morrow, 1988) and positive experiences with reading (Dombey, 1988). Furthermore, experience of story reading strongly predicts reading achievement (Bus, van Ijzendoorn and Pellegrini, 1995).

Story reading has been identified in the present study as being available to all children in most kindergartens in a routinised format at mat sessions. Ways to increase the opportunities to read to and with children need to be found. Instead of teachers reading a story to children if the child shows interest, teachers need to become proactive about introducing story reading to children who may not show interest. It is possible that those children who currently seek out story reading are already among Stanovich's "rich". Literacy activity can also be increased by introducing many more opportunities for questioning and discussing the content of stories or items of interest, drama or acting out stories, writing stories about art work or making books, singing nursery rhymes and chants and playing language and number games with children.

Children can be made responsible for their role in literacy activities, such as signing up on lists for certain activities, making notices, recording scores in games and so forth. Peer collaboration and scaffolding in literacy activities could be promoted through having small group activities with child leaders, such as designing a story book, playing a board game, organising a "buzz" group and so forth. Activities could be short term or long term. A child leader could train the next in organising activities, so that children get opportunities to be both experts and novices in the peer interaction.

It is this way that the child can “appropriate” literacy behaviour, by observing, interacting with and scaffolding others (Bakhtin, 1981; Rogoff et al., 1993; Gallimore and Tharp, 1990).

Appropriating the literate “voice”

One of the most important implications of the present study for curriculum design is re-conceptualisation of the role of teachers. This chapter has already argued that enriching the literacy environment of the kindergarten is important, as is increasing the amount and type of parent involvement in the kindergartens. It has also argued that scaffolding children may be difficult in current teacher : child ratios. However, despite the difficulties of finding time to do so, teachers do need to carefully re-examine their conceptions of their role in children's learning. Although children have been seen to have their life chances increased by attending a constructivist preschool programme (Weikart, Schweinhart and Lerner, 1986), teachers could also be increasing children's chances of becoming literate if they consider that their role in children's learning is to not only provide a stimulating environment, but to take the time to talk with children and to find opportunities to teach from children's interests, understandings and background experiences. It may be that time for scaffolding increases if teachers re-focus their role in such a way and find ways to increase peer collaboration of activities as well.

Re-training of teachers in current conceptions of child development is an obvious and crucial first step toward a literacy centred curriculum. Unless teachers are thoroughly trained, they are likely to simply pick up the terms, such as ‘scaffolding’ and redefine current practice within the new terms. In New Zealand, the prevailing conception of children as being experiential learners seems to have handicapped teachers' ability to see themselves as the teachers or instructors of young children. This can deny children access to the expert-novice apprenticeship, which is characteristic of many cultures (Rogoff et al., 1993). Teachers need to get over their fear of teaching and provide real opportunities for children to see them actively involved in literacy activity and provide children with access to the procedures involved in being competently literate.

It is important to recognise that skilled kindergarten teachers already provide the “voice” in children's learning and recognise that their influence on children's literacy achievement may be profound. However, teachers' constructivist conceptions of the pre-logical child may have denied children's ability to comprehend and to learn within guided relationships. Recognising the importance that the teacher's instructing voice in new activities has on the child's developing conceptual structures is a crucial aspect of a literacy centred curriculum. The child's knowledge and skills, developed within a

guided or scaffolded relationship, will reflect the teacher's instruction and will be shaped and moulded by other experiences with peers, parents and community. It is in this sense that children appropriate the "voice" of their many instructors; through an active participation or observation of the literacy event and a transformation of the event to other contexts. Teachers obviously need to be aware of the scope of experiences the child has beyond the classroom and to integrate the meanings and understandings that the child brings to the literacy event. Models such as the KEEP project in Hawaii (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990) provide a useful model in which the child's contextual experiences can be made relevant through choice of text and literacy can be "co-constructed" within the layers of the child's experiences, the textual relevance and guiding participation of the teacher. What this could mean in the kindergarten curriculum would mean identifying the characteristics of the children through assessment, interviews with parents and home visiting, then choosing books for the classroom which encompass some of the child's home experiences and then finding opportunities to use tutorial dialogue (Meadows and Cashdan, 1988) to construct a meaning of the text for the child. Although, this process has been explained using a single child as an example, there is no reason why groups of children couldn't be identified who could work together on a book. It would probably be easier for teachers to divide the large mat session into smaller groups which worked with one teacher. Smaller groups have been found to be more conducive to child involvement in the present study and elsewhere.

Implications for future research

One of the obvious implications of the research is to use the data presented to develop a literacy centred curriculum for kindergarten. Using Carr and Kemmis' (1983) principles of action research, curriculum change can be best achieved when teachers are able to reflect on their own practice and examine how they are presenting curricular materials. Carr and Kemmis argue that real change only occurs when teachers are centrally involved in decision making. Such change involves a change of "interpretation" (Graue, 1993), which requires the support and involvement of teachers, children and parents. Simply enriching the literacy environment (Neuman and Roskos, 1992) may be part of the process, but re-training on the importance of interactive teaching styles such as instructional questioning, expanding and clarifying would also be required (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990; Meadows and Cashdan, 1988). Re-organising the kindergarten classroom, so that there is clearer links between reading and writing activities would also be important (Morrow, 1989a). A study of children as they move from kindergarten into the first years of schooling, at least until the "Concepts about print" test (used to assess need for Reading recovery) had been administered in primary

school, would yield information about the possible outcomes of an enriched literacy environment in kindergarten.

Another implication of the current research is the need to explore more intensively the nature of the literacy experience of children at home in New Zealand. There was a noted gap between the rhetoric of literacy promotion by Head Teachers and the observed practice. It is possible that the same gap exists between parents' beliefs and good intentions and actual literacy practice. Research which involved observation of families in homes would be a useful further study.

In the United States, accreditation through the NAEYC is a desired and sought after certification, requiring evidence that teachers are using the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice. In order to maintain accreditation, teachers must teach within the guidelines for practice. The guidelines are also used in teacher training courses. A similar situation could arise in New Zealand with the advent of National curriculum guidelines, especially if the government ever decides to link licensing to use of the curriculum guidelines. It would be interesting to explore if teachers had changed their practice as a result of the new guidelines and what effect curriculum guidelines have had on literacy practice in the kindergartens. One of the strengths of NAEYC is that they disseminate current research and the implications for practice to all accredited early childhood centres and actively maintain a professional development programme for accredited teachers. In New Zealand, there is currently little dissemination of current research and little advice on curriculum issues available. Establishing a body to organise and distribute information and to educate early childhood teachers throughout their careers is vitally important. If teachers are ever going to be recognised for the importance of the education they provide for children, then they have to coordinate a professional accrediting body.

Conclusion

The present study has involved a variety of methods aimed at discovering how literacy is practiced and promoted by teachers and parents with children attending kindergarten in New Zealand. Results have indicated that literacy is promoted by both parents and teachers of children, although the way in which literacy is practised differs between the home and the kindergarten. Parents believe in more one to one teaching, while teachers believe in providing opportunities through the environment.

There is much to celebrate in these results. Children are receiving a variety of literacy experiences at home and at kindergarten. They are also not receiving a bombardment of photocopied, publisher produced literacy activities. Children do have real and meaningful opportunities to interact with print in the classroom, although these opportunities may undoubtedly be increased if there were more teachers or other adults

in the classroom, more careful consideration of what is on the walls, enrichment of the literacy environment and a stronger emphasis on promoting emergent literacy development.

Overall, children in New Zealand are fortunate to have access to affordable, government subsidized early childhood education. They are also fortunate to have teachers who are dedicated to providing a quality educational programme, despite low salaries, status and increasingly intensified working conditions. Finally, children are fortunate to have parents who value literacy achievement and try to find ways to promote their children's life chances.

References

- Acker, S. (1983). Women and teaching : a semi detached sociology of a semi-profession. In S. Walker & L. Barton (Eds.), *Gender, class and education*. Barcombe, Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Allen, J. (1985). Inferential comprehensions: The effects of text source, decoding ability, and mode. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20 (5), 603-615.
- Almy, M. (1975). *The early childhood educator at work*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Almy, M. C. and Snyder, A. (1947). The staff and its preparation. *Early Childhood Education 46th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 2*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Altwerger, B., Diehl-Faxon, J. and Dockstader-Anderson, K. (1985). Read aloud events as meaning constructors. *Language Arts*, 62 (5), 476-484.
- American Education Research Association (1983). The effects of preschool on educationally advanced children: First phases of a longitudinal study. *Early Education and Child Development*, 8 (2).
- Anning, A. (1991). *The first years at school: Education 4 to 8*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Apple, M. (1986). *Teachers and texts*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Apple, M. W. and King, N. R. (1977). What do teachers teach? *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6 , 341-351.
- Arlin, P. (1981). Piagetian tasks as predictors of reading and math readiness in grades K-1. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73 , 712-721.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (Ed.). (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin* . Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Ball, S. (1984). *Conflict and change in education: A sociological introduction*. Milton Keynes: OVP.
- Ball, E.W. and Blachman, B.A. (1991). Does phoneme awareness training in kindergarten make a difference in early word recognition and developmental spelling? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 26, 1, 49-66.
- Beilin, H. (1992). Piaget's enduring contribution to developmental psychology. *Developmental Psychology*, 28 , 191-204.
- Berlyne, D. (1960). *Conflict, arousal and curiosity*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Berstein, B. (1975). *Class and pedagogies: Visible and invisible*. Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Biddell, T. (1988). Vygotsky, Piaget and the dialectic of development. *Human development*, 31 , 329-348.

- Biddell, T. R. and Fisher, K. W. (1992). Cognitive development in educational contexts : Implications of skill theory. In A. Demetriou, M. Shayer, & A. Efklides (Eds.), *Neo-Piagetian theories of cognitive development* . London: Routledge.
- Biemiller, A. (1977). Relationships between oral reading rates for letters, words, and simple text in the development of reading achievement. *Reading research quarterly*, 13 , 223-253.
- Blachman, B. (1984). Relationships of rapid naming ability and language analysis skills to kindergarten and first-grade reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76 , 610-622.
- Blank, M. (1973). *Teaching learning in the preschool: A dialogue approach*. Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill.
- Bloom, D. (1985). Reading as a social process. *Language Arts*, 62 , 134-142.
- Boden, M. (1982). Is equilibration important? A view from artificial intelligence. *British Journal of Psychology*, 73 , 165-173.
- Bond, G. L. and Dykstra, R. (1967). The cooperative research program in first-grade reading instruction. *Reading research quarterly*, 2 , 5-142.
- Bradley, L. and Bryant, P. E. (1983). Categorising sounds and learning to read - a causal connection. *Nature*, 301 , 419-421.
- Braine, M. (1963). The ontogeny of english phrase structure : the first phase. *Language*, 39 , 1-13.
- Braine, M. D. S. and Romain, B. (1983). Logical reasoning. In J. H. Flavell & E. Markham (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology* (Vol. 3). New York: Wiley.
- Brainerd, C. J. (1983). Modifiability of cognitive development. In S. Meadows (Ed.), *Developing thinking*. London: Methuen.
- Braithwaite, J. (1983). *Explorations in early childhood education: the Mount druitt early childhood project* . Hawthorn, Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research and Social Policy.
- Brophy, J. E. (1990). Effective schooling for disadvantaged students. In M. S. Knapp & P. M. Shields (Eds.), *Better schooling for the children of poverty : Alternatives conventional wisdom* (Vol. 2). Washington, D.C.
- Brown, A. L and Ferrara, R. (1985). Diagnosing zones of proximal development. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *Culture, communication and cognition: Vygotskian perspectives* . New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, A. L and French, L. A. (1979). The zone of potential development: Implications for intelligence testing in the year 2000. *Intelligence*, 3 , 255-277.
- Brown, M., Weinberg, S. and Cromer, P. (1986). Kindergarten Children coming to Literacy. *Educational Leadership Journal*, 44 (3), 54-56.
- Brown, R. (1973). *A first language : the early stages*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

- Bruner, J. (1978). Learning how to do things with words. In J. S. Bruner & R. A. Garton (Eds.), *Human growth and development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. and Haste, H. (Eds.). (1987). *Making sense*. London: Methuen.
- Burberry, R. (1980). *An observational study of child and adult behaviour in preschool groups*. MEd dissertation, University of Bristol.
- Bus, A. and van Ijzendoorn, M. (1988). Mother-child interaction, attachment, and emergent literacy. *Child Development*, 59, 1262-1272.
- Bus, A. G., van Ijzendoorn, M. H. and Pellegrini, A. D. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 65 (1), 1-21.
- Butler, D. (1988). *Babies need books*. (2nd ed.). London: Penguin.
- Caldwell, B. (1984). From the president: Growth and development. *Young Children*, 39 (6), 47-48.
- Calfee, R. C. and Calfee, K. H. (1981). *Interactive reading assessment system (IRAS)*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University.
- Carr, M. (1991). *Developing a curriculum for early childhood*. Paper presented at the NZARE Conference, Dunedin.
- Carr, M. and May, H. (1991). *National curriculum guidelines for early childhood in Aotearoa/New Zealand: a philosophical framework for development*. Paper presented at the 5th Early Childhood Convention, Dunedin.
- Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1983). *Becoming critical : knowing through action research*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Chall, J. (1967). *Learning to read: The great debate*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Chall, J. S, Jacobs, V. A. and Baldwin, L. E. (1990). *The reading crisis: Why poor children fall behind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chomsky, C. (1972). Stages in language development and reading exposure. *Harvard Educational Review*, 42, 1-33.
- Chomsky, N. (1986). *Knowledge of language*. New York: Praeger.
- Clark, K. and Holquist, M. (1984). *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Clark, M. M. (1976). *Young fluent readers*. London: Heinemann.
- Clarke-Stewart, A. (1982). *Day care*. Glasgow: Fontana/Collins.
- Clay, M. (1979). *Reading: the patterning of complex behaviour* (2nd ed.). Heinemann: Auckland.

- Clay, M. (1982). *Observing young readers : selected papers*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Clay, M. (1985). *The early detection of reading difficulties*. (3rd ed.). Auckland: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. (1991). Developmental learning puzzles me. *Australian Journal of Reading*, 14 (4), 263-276.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (1984). *The making of a reader*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (1985). Looking like readers, talking like readers. *Theory into practice*, 24, 21-31.
- Cole, M. (1985). The zone of proximal development: Where culture and cognition create each other. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *Culture, communication and cognition: Vygotskian perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cook, H. M. (1985). *Mind that child : childcare as a social and political issue in New Zealand*. Wellington: Blackberry Press.
- Crago, H. and Crago, M. (1976). The untrained eye? A preschool child explores Felix Hoffman's *Rapunzel*. *Children's Literature in Education*, 22, 135-151.
- Cross, T. G. (1978). Mother's speech and its association with rate of linguistic development in young children. In N. Waterson & C. Snow (Eds.), *The development of communication*. London: Wiley.
- Cullen, J. (1994). Why retain a developmental focus in early education. In E. J. Mellor & K. M. Coombe (Eds.), *Issues in early childhood services : Australian perspectives*. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm.C. Brown.
- Cullen, J. (1996). The challenge of Te Whaariki for future developments in early childhood education. *Delta*, 48. In press.
- Davey, J. (1993). *From Birth to Death III*. Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies.
- Day, J.D., Cordon, L.A. and Kerwin, M.L. (1989). Informal instruction and development of cognitive skills: A review and critique of research. In C.B. McCormick, G.E. Miller and M. Pressley (eds.). *Cognitive strategy research: From basic research to educational applications*. New York: Springer -Verlag.
- Department of Education (1988a). *Education to be more*. Wellington: Government Print.
- Department of Education (1988b). *Before five: Early Childhood Care and Education in New Zealand*. Wellington: Government Print.
- Department of Education (1989). *Early childhood management handbook*. Wellington: Government Print.
- Desforges, C. W. (1989). Teachers' perspectives on classroom interaction. In C. W. Desforges (Ed.), *British Journal of Educational Psychology Monograph Series No.4 Early Childhood Education*. Edinburgh: Academic Press.

- Dickinson, D. and Moreton, J. (1991). *Predicting specific kindergarten literacy skills from three-year-olds' preschool experiences*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle.
- Dombey, H. (1988). *Partners in the telling*. In M. Meek & C. Mills (Eds.), *Language and literacy in the primary school*. London: Falmer Press.
- Donaldson, M. (1978). *Children's minds*. London: Fontana.
- Donaldson, M. (1987). The origins of inference. In J. Bruner & H. Haste (Eds.), *Making sense: the child's construction of the world*. New York: Methuen.
- Donaldson, M. and Reid, J. F. (1985). Language skills and reading : a developmental perspective. In M. Clark (Ed.), *New directions in the study of reading*. East Sussex: Falmer Press.
- Dornbusch, S. and Ritter, P. (1988). Parents of high school students : A neglected resource. *Educational horizons*, 66 , 75-77.
- Durkin, D. (1966). *Children who read early*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dyson, A. (1983). The role of oral language in early writing processes. *Research in the teaching of English*, 17 , 1-30.
- Dyson, A. H. (1989). *Multiple worlds of child writers: Friends learning to write*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dyson, A. H. (1993). From invention to social action in early childhood literacy: A reconceptualization through dialogue about difference. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 8 (4), 409-425.
- Edelsky, C., Altwerger, B. and Flores, B. (1991). *Whole language: What's the difference*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Ehri, L. C. (1980). The development of orthographic images. In U. Frith (Ed.), *Cognitive processes in spelling*. New York: Academic Press.
- Eisner, E. W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York: McMillan.
- Elley, W. B. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading research quarterly* , 174-187.
- Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D. and McCormack Steinmetz, A. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: circles within circles*. London: Falmer Press.
- Epstein, J. L. (1987). Parent involvement : What research says to administrators. *Education and urban society*, 19 (2), 119-136.
- Epstein, J. L. (1991). Paths to partnership : What we can learn from federal, state, district and school initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72 , 344-349.
- Epstein, J. L. and Dauber, S. L. (1989). *Teacher's attitudes and practices of parent involvement in inner city elementary and middle schools* (Report 32). Baltimore, MD: Center for research on Elementary and Middle schools.
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and Society*. New York: Norton.

- Esbensen, S. (1985). *The effects of day care on children, families and communities: A review of the research findings* . : Canadian Task Force on Child Care.
- Farquhar, S.-E. (1991). A "purple people-eater" or quality assurance mechanism? *The 1989/90 early childhood centre charter requirements*. Paper presented at the 5th Early Childhood Convention, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Fein, G. and Schwartz, P. M. (1982). Developmental theories in early education. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research in early childhood education* . New York: Free Press.
- Feitelson, D. and Goldstein, Z. (1986). Patterns of book ownership and reading to children in Israeli school-oriented and nonschool-oriented families. *The Reading Teacher*, 39 , 924-929.
- Finkelstein, B. (1988). The revolt against selfishness : women and the dilemmas of professionalism in early childhood education. In B. Spodek, O.Saracho, & D. Peters (Eds.), *Professionalism and the early childhood practitioner* . New York: Teachers College Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish*. London: Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H. L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. London: Harvester Press.
- Fox, B. J. (1990). Antecedents of illiteracy. *Social Policy Report*. *Society for Research in Child Development*, iv (4).
- Franklin, E. A. (1988). Reading and writing stories : children creating meaning. *Reading teacher* , 184-190.
- Galda, L., Pellegrini, A. D. and Cox, S. (1989). Preschoolers' Emergent Literacy: A Short-term Longitudinal Study. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 23 , 292-310.
- Gallimore, R. and Tharp, R. (1990). Teaching mind in society: Teaching, schooling, and literate discourse. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1987). Interpretive Anthropology. In H. Applebaum (Ed.), *Perspectives in Cultural Anthropology* . Albany, New York: SUNY Press.
- Gelman, R. and Baillargeon, R. (1983). A review of some Piagetian concepts. In J. H. Flavell & E. Markham (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (Vol. 3). New York: Wiley.
- Genishi, C. (1992). Looking forward : toward stories of theory and practice. In C. Genishi (Ed.), *Ways of assessing children and curriculum: stories of early childhood practice* . New York: Teachers College Press.

- Gibson, L. (1989). *Literacy learning in the early years : through children's eyes*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Goetz, J. P and LeCompte, M. D (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Goldfield, B. A. and Snow, C. E. (1984). Reading books with children : The mechanics of parental influences on children's reading achievement. In J. Flood (Ed.), *Understanding reading comprehension*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Goodman, Y. (1986). Children coming to know literacy. In W. Teale & E. Sulzby (Eds.), *Emergent literacy: writing and reading*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Graham, A. T. (1994). *Statistics*. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group.
- Graue, M. E. (1993). *Ready for What? Constructing Meanings of Readiness for Kindergarten*. Albany, New York: SUNY Press.
- Greene, M. (1988). *The dialectic of freedom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational communication and technology journal*, 30 , 233-252.
- Hall, M. (1976). *Teaching reading as a language experience*. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill.
- Halliwell, G. (1983). Current curriculum practice in early childhood education in Australia. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 8 (1), 6-13.
- Halliwell, G. L. (1980). *Kindergarten teachers and curriculum construct systems*, University of Illinois.
- Harris, S. (1986). Evaluation of a curriculum to support literacy growth in young children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 1 (4), 333-348.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways With Words. Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, S.B. (1986). Separating "things of the imagination" from life: Learning to read and write. In W. H. Teale & E. Sulzby (Eds.), *Emergent literacy : writing and reading*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Hendricks, A., Meade, A. and Wiley, C. (1993). *Competent children: influences of early childhood experiences*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Hewison, J. (1988). The long term effectiveness of parental involvement in reading: a follow-up to the Haringey Reading Project. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 58 , 184-190.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Bassler, O. C. and Brissie, J. S. (1992). Explorations in Parent-School Relations. *Journal of Educational Research*, 85 (5), 287-294.

- Hughes, B. (1989). *Flags and building blocks, formality and fun : one hundred years of free Kindergarten in New Zealand*. Wellington: New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union Inc.
- Hughes, M. (1989). The child as a learner: the contrasting views of developmental psychology and early education. In C.W.Desforges (Ed.), *British Journal of Educational Psychology Monograph Series No.4 Early Childhood Education*_. Edinburgh: Academic Press.
- Iveson, B. (1981). Parent-teacher contact and student learning. *Journal of Educational Research*, 74 (6).
- Johns, J. L. (1984). First graders' concepts about print. *Reading research quarterly*, 15 , 529-549.
- Jones, S. (1985). Depth interviewing. In R. Walker (Ed.). *Doing research: a handbook for teachers*. London : Methuen.
- Kantor, R., Miller, S. M. and Fernie, D. E. (1992). Diverse Paths to Literacy in a Preschool Classroom: A Sociocultural Perspective. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 27 (3), 185-201.
- Katz, L. G. (1984). The professional preschool teacher. In L. G. Katz (Ed.), *More talks with teachers*. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- Katz, L. (1991). *The teacher's role in the social development of young children*. Keynote address to the Fifth Early Childhood Convention, September, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Kearins, J. M. (1981). Visual spatial memory in Australian Aboriginal children of desert regions. *Cognitive Psychology*, 13 , 434-460.
- Kearins, J. M. (1986). Visual spatial memory in Aboriginal and white Australian children. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 38 (3), 203-214.
- Kelly, G. A. (1955). *The psychology of personal constructs*. New York: Norton.
- Kelly, G. A. (1963). *A theory of personality*. New York: Norton.
- Kiefer, B. (1988). Picture books as contexts for literary, aesthetic and real world understandings. *Language arts*, 65 , 260-271.
- Klausmeier, H. J. and Sipple, T.S. (1982). Factor structure of the Piagetian stage of concrete operations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 7 , 161-80.
- Kohlberg, L. and Mayer, R. (1972). Development as the aim of education. *Harvard education review*, 42 (4), 449-463.
- Kohn, M.L. (1977). *Social Competence, symptoms and underachievement in childhood: A longitudinal perspective*. New York: Wiley.
- Kohn, M. L. (1969). *Class and conformity: A study in values*. Homewood, Ill: Dorsey.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition (1983). Culture and cognitive development. In W. Kessen (Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (Vol. 1). New York: Wiley.
- Lareau, A. (1989). *Home advantage: Social class and parental intervention in elementary education*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer.
- Lather, P. (1989). *Deconstructing/deconstructive inquiry: the politics of knowing and being known*. Paper presented at the of the NZARE Conference, Wellington.
- Lazar, I. (1983). *Early childhood education in New Zealand*. Paper presented at the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers Association Annual Conference, Hamilton.
- Lazar, I. and Darlington, R. (1982). Lasting Effects of Early Education: A Report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 47 (2-3).
- Leeper, S. H. (1968). *Nursery School and Kindergarten*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.
- Lieberman, I. Y., Shankweiler, D., Liberman, A. M., Fowler, C. and Fischer, F. W. (1978). Phonetic segmentation and recoding in the beginning reader. In A. S. Reber & D. L. Scarborough (Eds.), *Towards a psychology of reading*. New York: Erlbaum.
- Lock, A., Service, V., Brito, A. and Chandler, P. (1989). The social structuring of infant cognition. In A. Slater & G. Bremner (Eds.), *Infant development*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lunzer, R., Dolan, T. and Wilkinson, J. (1976). The effectiveness of measures of operativity, language and short term memory in the prediction fo reading and mathematical understanding. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 46 , 295-305.
- Luria, A. R. (1976). *Cognitive development: Its cultural and social foundations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Maclean, M., Bryant, P. E. and Bradley, L. (1987). Rhymes, nursery rhymes and reading in early childhood. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 33 , 255-282.
- Martinez, M. and Roser, N (1985). Read it again: The value of repeated readings during storytime. *The Reading Teacher*, 38 , 782-786.
- Martinez, M. and Teale, W. H. (1988). Reading in a kindergarten classroom library. *Reading teacher* , 568-573.
- Mason, J. M. and Allen, J. (1986). A review of emergent literacy with implications for research and practice in reading. *Review of research in education*, 13 , 3-47.
- McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. New York: Van Nostrand.

- McClelland, D. C. (1982). What behavioural scientists have learned about how children acquire values. In D. C. McClelland (Ed.), *The development of social maturity*. New York: Irvington Press.
- McCormick, S. (1977). Should you read aloud to your children? *Language Arts*, 54, 139-143.
- McGill-Franzen, A. (1992). Early Literacy: What does "developmentally appropriate mean? *The Reading Teacher*, 46 (1), 56-58.
- McGillicuddy-DeLisi, A. V. (1982). The relationship between parents' beliefs about child development and family constellation, socioeconomic status, and parents' teaching strategies. In T. M. Laosa & I. E. Sigel (Eds.), *Families as learning environments for children*. New York: Plenum.
- McMillan, J. H. and Schumacher, S. (1984). *Research in education : a conceptual introduction*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- McNaughton, S. (1987). *Being skilled: The socializations of learning to read*. London: Methuen.
- McNaughton, S. (1991). The faces of instruction: models of how children learn from tutors. In J. Morss & T. Linzey (Eds.), *Growing up: The politics of human learning*. Auckland: Longman.
- McNaughton, S. (1995). *Patterns of emergent literacy: processes development and transition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McNaughton, S. and Ka'ai, T. (1990). *Two studies of transitions: socializations of literacy and Te hiringa take take: Mai i Te Kohanga Reo ki te kura*. Education Department, University of Auckland: New Zealand Ministry of Education.
- Meade, A. (1985). *The children can choose : a study of early childhood programmes in New Zealand*. Wellington: New Zealand council for Educational Research.
- Meade, A. (1991). *Boffins in early childhood services*. Paper presented at the Fifth Early Childhood Convention, September 8-12, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Meadows, S. (1975). *The development of concrete operations : A short term longitudinal study*, University of London.
- Meadows, S. (1993). *The child as thinker: The development and acquisition of cognition in childhood*. London: Routledge.
- Meadows, S. and Cashdan, A. (1988). *Helping children learn : contributions to a cognitive curriculum*. London: David Fulton.
- Merton, R. (1968). The Matthew effect in science. *Science*, 56-63.
- Meyer, L. A., Wardrop, J. L., Hastings, C. N. and Linn, R. L. (1993). Effects of ability and settings on Kindergartners' reading performance. *Journal of Educational Research*, 86 (3), 142-160.
- Mindes, G. (1990). Kindergarten in our nation. In C. Seefeldt (Ed.), *Continuing issues in early childhood education*. New York: Merrill.

- Ministry of Education (1993). *Te Whariki*. Wellington: Government Print.
- Mischel, T. (Ed.). (1971). *Cognitive development and epistemology*. New York: Academic Press.
- Morais, J., Cary, L., Alegria, J. and Bertelson, P. (1979). Does awareness of speech as a sequence of phones arise spontaneously? *Cognition*, 24, 45-64.
- Morrow, L.M. (1988). Young children's responses to one-to-one story reading in school settings. *Reading research quarterly*, 23, 89-107.
- Morrow, L. (1989a). Designing the classroom to promote literacy development. In D. S. Strickland & L. S. Morrow (Eds.), *Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write*. Newark: Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Morrow, L. (1989b). *The Effect of Small Group Reading on Children's Questions and Comments*.
- Morrow, L. (1989c). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Morrow, L. and Smith, J. (1990). The Effects of Group Size on Interactive Storybook Reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 25, 213-231.
- Morrow, L. M. (1990). Preparing the classroom environment to promote literacy during play. *Early Childhood Reading Quarterly*, 5 (4), 537-554.
- Morrow, L. M. (1992). The impact of literature-based program on literacy achievement, use of literature, and attitudes of children from minority backgrounds. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 27 (3), 250-275.
- Murrow, K. (1995). *Early childhood workers' opinions on the draft document Te Whariki*. Research Section Report No. 5. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (1991). Guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment in programs serving children ages 3 through 8. *Young children*, March, 21-38.
- National Institute of Education (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers*. Washington, DC: Commission on Reading. US Department of Education.
- Neuman, S.B. and Roskos, K. (1990). Play, print and purpose: Enriching play environments for literacy development. *The Reading Teacher*, 44, 214-221.
- Neuman, S. B. and Roskos, K. (1991). Peers as literacy informants: A description of young children's literacy conversations in play. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 6, 233-248.
- Neuman, S. B. and Roskos, K. (1992). Literacy objects as cultural tools: Effects on children's literacy behaviours in play. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 27 (3), 202-225.
- Neuman, S. B. and Roskos, K. (1993). Access to print for children of poverty: Differential effects for adult mediation and literacy-enriched play settings on

- environmental and functional print tasks. *American Educational Research Journal*, 30 (1), 95-122.
- Ninio, A. (1980). Picture book reading in mother-infant dyads belonging to two sub groups in Israel. *Child Development*, 51 , 587-590.
- Ninio, A. (1983). Joint book reading as a multiple vocabulary acquisition device. *Developmental psychology*, 19 (3), 445-451.
- Ninio, A. and Bruner, J. (1978). The achievement and antecedents of labelling. *Journal of child language*, 5 , 5-15.
- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing feminist research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Osborne, A. F. and Millbank, J. E. (1987). *The effects of early education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parker, I. (1989). Discourse and power. In J. Shotter & K. Gergen (Eds.), *Texts of identity*. London: Sage.
- Parr, J., McNaughton, S., Timperley, H. and Robinson, V. (1991). *Making contact in the junior school: practices of collaboration between parents and school*. Paper presented at the Fifth Early Childhood Convention, Dunedin.
- Pellegrini, A. D. (1982). The construction of cohesive text by preschoolers in two play contexts. *Discourse Processes*, 5 , 101-108.
- Pellegrini, A. D. (1983). Sociolinguistic contexts of the preschool. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 4 , 389-397.
- Pellegrini, A. D. (1984a). The effects of dramatic play on children's generation of cohesive text. *Discourse Processes*, 7 , 57-67.
- Pellegrini, A. D. (1984b). Identifying causal elements in the thematic-fantasy play paradigm. *American Educational Research Journal*, 21 , 691-703.
- Pellegrini, A. D., Brody, G. H. and Sigel, I. E. (1985). Parents book-reading habits with their children. *Journal of educational psychology*, 77 (3), 332-340.
- Pellegrini, A. D. and Galda, L. (1993). Ten Years After: A Reexamination of Symbolic Play and Literacy Research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 28 (2), 163-174.
- Pellegrini, A. D., Galda, L., Dresden, J. and Cox, S. (1991). A Longitudinal Study of the Predictive Relations among Symbolic Play, Linguistic Verbs, and Early Literacy. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 25 , 215-235.
- Perfetti, C. A., Beck, I., Bell, L. C. and Hughes, C. (1987). Phonemic knowledge and learning to read are reciprocal : A longitudinal study of first-grade children. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 33 (3), 283-319.
- Peters, S. J. (1993). Where have the Children gone? Storyreading in Kindergarten and Prekindergarten Classes. *Early Child Development and Care*, 88 , 1-15.
- Philips, D., McCartney, K. and Scarr, S. (1987). Childcare Quality and Children's Social Development. *Developmental Psychology*, 23 (4).

- Phillips, G. and McNaughton, S. (1990). The practice of storybook reading to preschool children in mainstream New Zealand families. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 25 (3), 196-212.
- Piaget, J. (1966). Response to Brian Sutton-Smith. *Psychological Review*, 73 , 111-112.
- Piaget, J. (1978). *The development of thought: Equilibration of cognitive structures*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Piaget, J. and Inhelder, B. (1969). *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Pramling, I. and Williams-Graneld, P. (1993). *Starting compulsory school: Pre-school teachers' conceptions and children's experience*. Paper presented at the NZARE Conference, Hamilton, New Zealand.
- Prout, A. and James, A. (1990). A new paradigm for the Sociology of childhood. In A. James & A. Prout (Eds.), *Contemporary Issues in the sociological study of childhood* . London: Falmer.
- Ramey, C., MacPhee, D. and Yeates, K. (1982). Preventing Developmental Retardation: A General System Mode. In L. Bond & J. Joffe (Eds.), *Facilitating Infant and Early Childhood Development* . Hanover: University Press of New England.
- Rasinski, T. V. and Fredericks, A. D. (1988). Sharing literacy: Guiding principles and practices for parent involvement. *The Reading Teacher* (February), 508-512.
- Rescorla, L. and Zigler, E. (1981). The Yale Child Welfare Research Program: Implications for Social Policy. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 3 (6).
- Robinson, S. S. (1990). *A Survey of Literacy Programs among Preschools*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Boston.
- Rogoff, B. (1988). Commentary. *Human Development*, 31 , 346-348.
- Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rogoff, B. (1991). U.S. children and their families: Current conditions and recent trends. *Society for Research in Child Development Newsletter* (winter), 1-3.
- Rogoff, B., Mosier, C., Mistry, J. and Göncü, A. (1993). Toddlers' guided participation with their caregivers in cultural activity. In E. A. Forman, N. Minick, & C. A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rogoff, B. and Wertsch, J. V. (1984). Children's learning in the "zone of proximal development" (no. 23). In B. Rogoff & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *New directions for child development* . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Roser, N. and Martinez, M. (1985). Roles adults play in pre-schoolers response to literature. *Language Arts*, 62 (5), 485-491.

- Roskos, K. and Neuman, S. B. (1993). Descriptive observations of adults' facilitation of literacy in young children's play. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 8 (1), 77-97.
- Rowe, D. W. (1989). Author/Audience Interaction in the Preschool: The Role of Social Interaction in Literacy Lessons. *Journal of Reading Behaviour*, 21 (4), 311-349.
- Russell, J. (1978). *The acquisition of knowledge*. London: Macmillan.
- Saracho, O. N. and Spodek, B. (1993). Professionalism and the Preparation of Early Childhood Education Practitioners. *Early Child Development and Care*, 89 , 1-17.
- Schweinhart, L. J., Weikart, D. P. and Larner, M. B. (1986). Consequences of three preschool curriculum models through age 15. *Early childhood research quarterly*, 1 , 15-45.
- Scribner, S. (1985). Vygotsky's uses of history. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *Culture, communication and cognition: Vygotskian perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Scribner, S. and Cole, M. (1981). *The psychology of literacy*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Seacoh Training Institute (1990). SEACOH :A unique New Zealand philosophy. *Prospectus of the Institute of Seacoh training ECE*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Seacoh Training Institute.
- Share, D. L., Jorm, A. F., Maclean, R. and Matthews, R. (1984). Sources of individual differences. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76 , 1309-1324.
- Sigel, I. (1992). The belief-behavior connection: A resolvable dilemma. In Sigel, I., McGillicuddy -DeLisi, A. and Goodnow, J. (Eds.). *Parental belief systems: The psychological consequences for children..* 2nd ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Sigel, I. E. (1986). Early social experience and the development of representational competence. *New Directions for Child Development*, 32 , 49-65.
- Sigel, I. E. and McGillicuddy, A. (1984). Parents as teachers of their children: A distancing behavior model. In A. Pellegrini & T. Yawkey (Eds.), *The development of oral and written language in social contexts*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Slyfield, H. (1992). *An overview of equal employment opportunities in the teaching services* . Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Smith, A. and Hubbard, P. (1988). The relationship between parent/staff communication and children's behaviour in early childhood settings. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 35 , 13-28.
- Smith, A. B. and Swain, D. A. (1988). *Childcare in New Zealand : people, programmes, politics*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press.

- Smith, F. (1984). Reading like a writer. In J. Jensen (Ed.) *Composing and comprehending*. Urbana, IL: National conference on Research in English.(ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and communications skills, Document No. 08024).
- Smith, L. (1989). Changing perspectives in developmental psychology. In C.W.Desforges (Ed.), *British Journal of Educational Psychology Monograph Series No.4 Early Childhood Education* . Edinburgh: Academic Press.
- Smith, M. L. and Shepard, L. A. (1988). Kindergarten readiness and retention: a qualitative study of teachers' beliefs and practices. *American Educational Research Journal*, 25 (3), 307-333.
- Snow, C. and Goldfield, B. (1982). Building stories: The emergence of information structure from conversation and narrative. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Analyzing discourse: Text and talk* . Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Snow, C. E. (1977). The development of conversation between mothers and babies. *Journal of child language*, 4 , 1-22.
- Snow, C. E. (1983). Literacy and language : relationships during the pre-school years. *Harvard educational review*, 53 (2), 165-189.
- Snow, C. E. and Goldfield, B. A. (1983). Turn the page please: situation specific language acquisition. *Child language*, 10 , 551-569.
- Speer, O. B. and Lamb, G. S. (1976). First grade reading ability and fluency in naming verbal symbols. *The reading teacher*, 26 , 572-576.
- Spiegel, M. R. (1994). *Theory and Problems of Statistics*. (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Spodek, B. (1986). Development, values and knowledge in the Kindergarten curriculum. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Today's Kindergarten: exploring the knowledge base, expanding the curriculum* . New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spodek, B. (1988). Implicit theories of early childhood teachers: foundations for professional behaviour. In B. Spodek, O. N. Saracho, & D. L. Peters (Eds.), *Professionalism and the early childhood practitioner* . New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spodek, B. and Saracho, O. N. (1990). Early childhood curriculum construction and classroom practice. *Early childhood development and care*, 61 , 1-9.
- Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading : Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading research quarterly*, 21 (4), 360-406.
- Stanovich, K. E., Cunningham, A. E. and Cramer, B. (1984). Assessing phonological awareness in kindergarten children : Issues of task comparability. *Journal of experimental child psychology*, 38 , 175-190.

- Stanovich, K. E., Cunningham, A. E. and Feeman, D. J. (1984). Assessing phonological awareness in kindergarten children : Issues of task comparability. *Reading research quarterly*, 19 , 278-303.
- Stewart, J. (1992). Kindergarten students' awareness of reading at home and in school. *Journal of Educational Research*, 86 (2), 95-104.
- Strickland, D. C. and Cullinan, B. (1990). Afterword. In M. J. Adams (Ed.), *Beginning to read : Thinking and learning about print* . Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Strickland, D. S. (1989). A model for change: Framework for an emergent literacy curriculum. In D. S. Strickland & L. S. Morrow (Eds.), *Emerging literacy : Young children learn to read and write* . Newark: International Reading Association.
- Strickland, D. S. and Morrow, L. M. (1989). *Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Strickland, D. S. and Morrow, L. S. (1988). Creating a print rich environment. *The Reading Teacher* (November), 156-157.
- Sulzby, E. (1985). Children's emergent reading of favorite storybooks : developmental study. *Reading research quarterly* , 458-481.
- Sulzby, E. (1986). Writing and reading: Signs of oral and written language organisation in the young child. In W. H. Teale & E. Sulzby (Eds.), *Emergent Literacy: Writing and Reading* . New Jersey: Ablex.
- Sulzby, E., Branz, C. M. and Buhle, R. (1993). Repeated readings of literature and low socio-economic status Black kindergartners and first graders. *Reading and Writing Quarterly Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, 9 (2), 183-196.
- Sulzby, E., Teale, W. H. and Kamberelis, G. (1989). Emergent writing in the classroom: home and school connections. In D. S. Strickland & L. S. Morrow (Eds.), *Emerging literacy : Young children learn to read and write*. Newark: International Reading Association.
- Sylva, K., Roy, C. and Painter, M. (1980). *Childwatching at playgroup and nursery school*. London: Grant McIntyre.
- Taylor, N. E., Blum, I. H. and Logsdon, D. M. (1986). The Development of Written Language Awareness: Environmental Aspects and Program Characteristics. *Reading Research Quarterly*, Spring , 132-149.
- Teale, W. (1984). Reading to young children: Its significance for literacy development. In H. Goelman, A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.), *Awakening to literacy* . Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Teale, W. and Sulzby, E. (1989). Emergent literacy: new perspectives. In D.S.Strickland & L. S. Morrow (Eds.), *Emerging literacy : young children learn to read and write* . Newark: International Reading Association.

- Teale, W. H. (1986). Home background and young children's literacy development. In W. H. Teale & E. Sulzby (Eds.), *Emergent literacy: Writing and reading*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Teale, W. H. and Sulzby, E. (Eds.). (1986). *Emergent literacy: Writing and reading*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Teale, W. H. and Sulzby, E. (1987). Literacy acquisition in early childhood : the roles of access and mediation in story book reading. In D. A. Wagner (Ed.), *The future of literacy in a changing world*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Thackery, S., Syme, K. and Hendry, D. (1992). *A survey of school entry practices: How schools gather information on new entrants*. Wellington: Learning Media, Ministry of Education.
- Tharp, R. G. and Gallimore, R. (1988). *Rousing minds to life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Thomas, K. F. (1985). Early reading as a social interaction process. *Language Arts*, 62, 5, 469-475. .
- Tizard, B., Blatchford, P., Burke, J., Farquhar, C. and Plewis, I. (1988). *Young children at school in the inner city*. Hove: Erlbaum.
- Tizard, B. and Hughes, M. (1984). *Young children learning : talking and thinking at home and at school*. London: Fontana.
- Treasury (1987). *Government Management : brief to the incoming government : Education Issues* (2). Wellington: Treasury.
- Tudge, J. and Winterhoff, P. A. (1993a). Can young children benefit from collaborative problem solving? Tracing the effects of partner competence and feedback. *Social Development*, 2 (3), 242-259.
- Tudge, J. R. and Winterhoff, P. A. (1993b). Vygotsky, Piaget and Bandura: Perspectives on the relations between the social world and cognitive development. *Human Development*, 36 (2), 61-81.
- Tunmer, W.E. and Chapman, J.W. (in press). *Whole language or whole nonsense? A review essay of Learning to read in New Zealand*. John W.A. Smith and Warwick B. Elley. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1994.
- Tunmer, W.E., Herriman, M.L. and Nesdale, A.R. (1988). Metalinguistic abilities and beginning reading. *Reading research quarterly*, 23 (2), 135-158.
- Tunmer, W. E. and Nesdale, A. R. (1985). Phonemic segmentation skill and beginning reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77 , 417-427.
- Urwin, C. (1985). Constructing motherhood: the persuasion of normal development. In C. Steedman (Ed.), *Language, Gender and Childhood*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Valsiner, J. (1994). Culture and human development: a co-constructivist perspective. In P. Van Geert and L. Mos (Eds.). *Annals of theoretical psychology*, vol 10. New York: Plenum.
- Valsiner, J. and van der Veer, R. (1993). The encoding of distance: the concept of the "zone of proxiaml development" and its interpretations. In R. R. Cocking and K. A. Renninger (eds.). *The development and meaning of psychological distance*. Hillsdale, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum.
- van der Veer, R. I and van Ijzendoorn, M. H. (1985). Vygotsky's theory of the higher psychological processes: Some criticism. *Human Development*, 28 , 1-9.
- van Lierop, M. (1985). Predisposing Factors in Early Literacy: A Case Study. In M. Clark (Ed.), *New Directions in the Study of Reading*. East Sussex: Falmer Press.
- Vuyk, R. (1981). *Overview and critique of Piaget's genetic epistemology, 1965-1980* (Vol. 1 and 2). London: Academic Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (Ed.). (1978). *Mind in society : the development of higher psychological processes* . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Thinking and speech*. New York: Plenum.
- Wagner, R. K. and Torgesen, J. K. (1987). The nature of phonological processing and its causal role in the acquisition of reading skills. *Psychological Bulletin*, 101 , 192-212.
- Walberg, H. J., Strykowski, B. F., Rovai, E. and Hung, S. S. (1984). Exceptional performance. *Review of Educational Research*, 54 , 87-112.
- Walberg, H. J. and Tsai, S. (1983). Matthew effects in education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 20 , 359-373.
- Walkerline, V. (1984). Developmental psychology and the child-centred pedagogy: The insertion of Piaget into early education. In J. Henriques (Ed.), *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. London: Methuen.
- Wallach, L., Wallach, M. A., Dozier, M. G. and Kaplan, N. E. (1977). Poor children learning to read do not have trouble with auditory discrimination but do have trouble with phoneme recognition. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 69 , 36-39.
- Walsh, D. J. (1989). Changes in the Kindergarten: Why here? Why now? *Early childhood research quarterly*, 4 , 377-391.
- Walsh, D. J., Price, G. G. and Gillingham, M. G. (1988). The critical but transitory importance of letter naming. *Reading research quarterly*, 23 , 108-122.
- Wason, P. C. (Ed.). (1977). *On the failure to eliminate hypotheses* . Cambridge: Cambridge Univesity Press.

- Weikart, D. (1982). *The Cost Effectiveness of High Quality Early Education Programmes*. Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope Educational Foundation.
- Weikart, D., Epstein, A.S., Schweinhart, L. and Bond, L.T. (1978). *The Ypsilanti Preschool Curriculum Demonstration Project: Preschool Years and Longitudinal Results*. Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.
- Wells, G. (1980). *Some antecedents of early educational achievement*. Edinburgh: British Psychological Society.
- Wells, G. (1981). Learning through interaction: The study of language development. In A. Davies (Ed.), *Language and learning at school and home*. London: SSRC/Heinemann.
- Wells, G. (1985a). *Language development in the pre-school years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wells, G. (1985b). Preschool literacy-related activities and success in school. In D. Olson, N. Torrance, & A. Hildyard (Eds.), *Literacy, language and learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wells, G. (1987). Apprenticeship in literacy. *Interchange*, 18, 190-123.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociological approach to mediated action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Whitehurst, G. J., Falco, F. L., Lonigan, C. J., Fischel, J. E., DeBaryshe, B. D., Valdez-Menchaca, M. C. and Caulfield, M. (1988). Accelerating language development through picture book reading. *Developmental psychology*, 24 (4), 552-559.
- Wilks, A. (1993). *Assessment of children in kindergartens and childcare centres*. Report to the Ministry of Education. Palmerston North College of Education.
- Wood, D. (1988). *How children think and learn*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Woodhead, M. (1987). Some Lessons from Research into Pre-school Effectiveness. *Concern*, 63 (Summer).
- Woodhead, M. (1989). Is early education effective. In C. W. Desforges (Ed.), *British Journal of Educational Psychology Monograph Series No.4 Early Childhood Education*. Edinburgh: Academic Press.
- Yaden, D. (1988). Understanding stories through repeated read-alouds : how many does it take? *Reading teacher*, 556-560.
- Yaden, D., Smolkin, L. B. and Conlon, A. (1989). Preschoolers' questions about pictures, print conventions and story text during read aloud at home. *Reading research quarterly*, 24, 188-214.
- Zifcak, M. (1981). Phonological awareness and reading acquisition. *Contemporary Educational Psychological*, 6, 117-126.

Appendix 1: Research proposal sent to Head Teachers

Claire McLachlan-Smith - Ph.D proposal, 1991.

Emergent literacy in New Zealand : an examination of policy and practices in New Zealand early childhood centres

For many years, the preschool years in New Zealand were seen as the period for getting children "ready" for formal instruction upon starting school at the age of five. Many early childhood centres, particularly the Playcentre movement, have espoused the notion of a "free play curriculum" as a reflection of their philosophy of child centred, active learning through play (Meade, 1985). The influence of "free play" is reflected in the curriculum of many New Zealand Kindergartens and childcare centres to various degrees.

Research in recent years has highlighted the importance of these years for learning the concepts and functions of reading and writing, skills which are built upon during formal education. Many centres encouraged "pre-reading" activities, such as group story book sessions, as a way to promote the easy transition to school. However, recent research into emergent literacy suggests that children develop literacy skills long before they reach school, and that this emergent literacy is an integral part of later literacy (Teale and Sulzby, 1987). Clay (1982) states that children come to school armed with a functional knowledge of literacy, which she terms a knowledge of the "concepts of print". There is little research in New Zealand which explores how our children are developing these "concepts of print" or how a knowledge of literacy is being encouraged.

The present research will set out to examine what the policy and practices of parents and teachers towards emergent literacy are in New Zealand early childhood centres, probably around the Palmerston North area. It will involve exploring the understanding that parents and teachers have of their children's cognitive development, and how this influences their literacy practices. A "literacy-rich" (Morrow, 1989) and "scaffolded" (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1986) learning environment in early childhood centres are proposed as the ideal context in which to develop a knowledge of literacy in a culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate manner. Finally the research will involve designing a "literacy centred curriculum" for New Zealand early childhood centres, and will conduct a small scale trial of this curriculum.

Aims of the research

1) The primary aim of this research is to collaboratively develop a literacy centred curriculum, based upon the Vygotskian model of a "zone of proximal development" and a "scaffolded" learning environment, and incorporating research findings on the development of emergent literacy. Trial the literacy centred curriculum and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses.

In order to achieve the primary aim of the research , the following aims will have to be fulfilled :

2) Identify the prevailing theoretical orientation regarding cognitive development and emergent literacy in N.Z. Kindergartens, through the relevant literature and Charters in centres.

3) Explore the roots of this theoretical tradition and examine how it has contributed to understandings of what is considered to be "normal" or "expected" development for preschoolers in N.Z., particularly with regard to literacy development. Consider the relationship of a Vygotskian "zone of proximal development" to the N.Z. understanding of how development is thought to proceed.

- 4) Identify the domains of literacy activity in six Kindergartens.
- 5) Identify recent and relevant research on emergent literacy. Collect data on the role of the parent and teacher in the child's literacy development.
- 6) Examine parent's and teacher's views of themselves as teachers and how they see the role of the Kindergarten in children's development.

Data Collection

The data for this research will be collected in two distinct, but inter-related parts. The first part of the collection process will involve six case studies of Kindergartens in the urban Palmerston North area. Although the range of early childhood centres in Palmerston North is considerably wider than the chosen centre, the Kindergarten movement has an easily identifiable history and literature associated with it and it has been developed by New Zealanders for the New Zealand context, as opposed to Rudolf Steiner or Montessori preschools. It would be interesting to examine the other major New Zealand preschool movements, such as Childcare, Playcentre and Te Kohanga Reo, but it would be impossible to select a representative range of centres, and to keep the data collection manageable. I also feel it is inappropriate for me, as a Pakeha researcher, to be attempting to examine Te Kohanga Reo and their approach to literacy. Another difficulty is the lack of available literature on the rationale, policy and practices of Te Kohanga Reo.

Methodology for Part 1

Stage 1

Interview of Head Teacher of each Kindergarten in the urban Palmerston North area (12 centres in total), regarding their beliefs about the type of service they are providing, early child development and education, literacy practices and the contents of their Charter. I would also ask teacher's about their intake of children, to establish an SES profile for the Kindergarten.

I would write up the interview, and send a copy to the Teachers' for corroboration, and seek their comments. If necessary, another interview could be undertaken if there was major disagreement of the content, or if a Teacher had changed her mind upon reflection. Such reflection would be a useful addition to the data. At the end of Stage 1, I would examine the SES profiles, and hopefully find about six centres, which would provide a representative sample of population for the Palmerston North area.

Stage 2

Stage 1 will be followed by an interview with a small number of parents (between six and ten) to complete a Questionnaire, regarding beliefs about development, their role in children's learning and their literacy practices. A similar interview, with the questions slanted toward an early childhood setting, will be conducted with teachers, in order to be able to compare the similarities and differences in beliefs between parents and teachers.

Stage 3

Stage 3 will involve collection of case study data, to identify the domains of literacy activity in the participant Kindergartens. To summarise, Stage 3 will involve the following data collection techniques :

- 1) Observation of centres for at least three complete sessions (or as long as it takes). Perhaps a follow up observation, about a month after the first data collection.
- 2) A written account of observations, following Taylor, Blum and Logsdon's (1986) steps for defining a language and print rich classroom.

- 3) A floor plan of the centre and available literacy activities, to be drawn at each session of observation.
- 4) Video and/or audio recordings of interactions during literacy activities, such as during story reading sessions, in the book corner, at writing tables.

Methodology for Part 2

The second part of this research will be a small scale action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1983). In one of the above willing centres, I will take in the data collected in Part 1 of the research and from the discussion generated, introduce the notion of emergent literacy, Vygotsky's theory of zone of proximal development, access and mediation and scaffolding, and some of the suggestions from the literature for curriculum intervention for emergent literacy. From there I will observe how the existing curriculum and the theoretical material are picked up by the teachers and incorporated into their practice. I envisage that this process will take 6 weeks to 2 months, and will be collaborative. I will collect similar observation data to Part 1, but I will also be keeping a running account of teachers and children's reactions during the trial period and I will encourage feedback from the teachers and parents (if possible) after the trial is over.

Ethical Considerations

- 1) To properly inform participants of the nature and focus of the research.
- 2) To ensure anonymity of parents, children, teachers, and centres observed or interviewed during the research.
- 3) To formally invite centres and parents to be involved and to obtain written consent to collect ethnographic data, interview or completed questionnaires.
- 4) To provide "feedback" to participants of any results and invite comments.

References

- Bruner, J. (1986) Actual minds, possible worlds. Cambridge, Mass : Harvard University Press.
- Carr, W. and S. Kemmis (1983) Becoming critical : knowing through action research. Victoria : Deakin University Press.
- Clay, M. (1982) Observing young readers : selected papers. London : Heinemann Educational Books.
- Meade, A. (1985) The children can choose : a study of early childhood programmes in New Zealand. Wellington : New Zealand council for Educational Research.
- Morrow, L.S. (1989) Designing the classroom to promote literacy development. In D.S. Strickland and L.S. Morrow (Eds.) Emerging literacy : Young children learn to read and write. Newark : Delaware : International Reading Association.
- Taylor, N., Blum, I., Logsdon, D. (1986) The development of written language awareness : environmental aspects and program characteristics. Reading research quarterly. Spring, 132- 149.
- Teale, W.H. and E. Sulzby (Eds.) (1986) Emergent literacy as a perspective for examining how young children become writers and readers. In Emergent literacy : writing and reading. Norwood, N.J. : Ablex.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978) Mind in society : the development of higher psychological processes. Edited by M.Cole et al. Cambridge, Mass : Harvard University Press.
- Yaden, D., Smolkin, L., Conlon, A. (1989) Preschooler's questions about pictures, print conventions, and story text during reading aloud at home. Reading research quarterly. Spring, 188-214.

Appendix 2 : Ethical approval

**MASSEY
UNIVERSITY**

Private Bag
Palmerston North
New Zealand
Telephone 0-6-356 9090
Facsimile 0-6-350 5603

**RESEARCH
OFFICE**

6 April 1992

Mrs C McLachlan-Smith
EDUCATION

Dear Claire

re: Application "Emergent literacy in New Zealand:
an examination of policy and practices in
early childhood centres" (HEC 92/21)

Thank you for attending the Human Ethics Committee meeting on Friday 27 March 1992.

We note that the video and audio tapes will be carefully stored at the University and destroyed at the end of the research. We note that the transcripts of the audio tapes are to be verified by the participants.

We require that an information sheet for the participants be provided which makes it clear that the children will be recorded and filmed and that the term 'emergent literacy' will be defined in terms that the parents can understand.

We note that you have received the approval of the kindergarten association and will pursue the matter of further approvals.

We drew your attention to the need to amend the consent form, to remove references to reasons that participants may have for withdrawing.

We would urge that you make it possible for both parents to be informed before final consent is secured.

We request that the consent form and the information sheet be separated.

The application is approved.

Yours sincerely

Ivan Snook

Ivan Snook
Convenor
Human Ethics Committee

c.c. Professor W Tunmer

Appendix 3 : Interview consent form

Interview Consent Form

Emergent literacy in New Zealand: an examination of policy and practices in early childhood centres

Emergent literacy is a term used to describe the beginnings of reading ability in young children. The present research will set out to examine what the policy and practices of parents and teachers toward emergent literacy are in New Zealand early childhood centres, around the Palmerston North urban area. Research in recent years has highlighted the importance of the early childhood years for learning the concepts and functions of reading and writing, skills which are built upon during formal education. These early literacy skills have been termed "emergent literacy" (Clay, 1982), and they are an integral part of later literacy development. There is little research in New Zealand which explores how our children are developing emergent literacy or how this literacy is being encouraged.

The present research will involve exploring the understanding that parents and teachers have of their children's cognitive development, and how this influences their literacy practices. Finally, the research will involve collaboratively designing a "literacy centred curriculum" for New Zealand early childhood centres, and will conduct a small scale trial of this curriculum.

Please read carefully the following :

I understand that any information provided in this interview will be used as data in this research project, but that my privacy will be protected by the omission of names or any details which could identify me in any accounts of the research.

I also understand that I am free to refuse to answer any questions, that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice, and that I may request to read notes taken at the interview. Furthermore, I understand that I will be given a copy of this interview and the case study generated, which I will be invited to comment on, and to seek a further interview regarding the case study if I so wish.

Please contact me at the phone number below if you have any comments or concerns regarding this research at any time.

Claire McLachlan-Smith
Assistant Lecturer in Education
Education Department
Massey University

(Phone 356-9099, Ext 8596, or messages to Ext 7477)

I herewith consent to participate in this research.

Signature of participant

Date

Name and address (voluntary)

Signature of researcher

Date

Claire McLachlan-Smith
Assistant Lecturer in Education
Education Department
Massey University

(Phone 356-9099, Ext 8596, or messages to Ext 7477)

Appendix 4: Interview questions

Interview questions

(1) Tell me something about your background in the Kindergarten movement - years of service, training, reasons for choosing this early childhood service.

(2) Can you tell me about the population of children at this Kindergarten - number of children, ethnic groups, parental income, parental occupation etc.

The following questions are concerned with some of the kinds of knowledge which teachers have and use in their work.

(3) Common sense knowledge about practice - e.g. assumptions, opinions, for example, knowing that students need discipline.

(4) Folk wisdom of teachers - e.g. like ideas that students get restless on windy days, or that Fridays are difficult in the classroom.

(5) Skill knowledge that teachers use - e.g. how to get student to line up, or how to prevent them speaking when a task is being explained.

(6) Contextual knowledge - about this class, this community, this student, providing a background against which the relevance of tasks can be evaluated.

(7) Professional knowledge about teaching strategies and curriculum - their potential, their forms, their substance and their effects.

(8) Ideas about educational theory - ideas about the development of individuals or about the role of education in society.

(9) Ideas about social and moral theories and general philosophical outlooks - about how people can and should interact, the development and reproduction of social classes, the uses of knowledge in society, or about truth and justice.

(10) The role of the Charter in your centre - does it shape your practices?

Appendix 5: Case study sent to Teacher 11

Case Study No.11 17 June 1992

Teacher No.11 trained in Dunedin in 1970-71. She chose Kindergarten because it was the only available early childhood training. Playcentre was new to Southland and she didn't have children, so there were no other training routes. She taught for three years in a state Kindergarten before shifting with her husband. She then worked voluntarily in a private Kindergarten until the birth of her daughter. She worked intermittently for the next six to seven years as a reliever, on a day to day basis. She did not do long term relieving during these years. She then did four years of long term relieving, and has been in Kindergarten No.11 for the past three and a half years. Teacher No.11 gave the following explanation of why she chose Kindergarten training:

The fact that it is the most vital fact. I trained very young, I was sixteen when I went to College, and there was as you can imagine a great deal of opposition to doing that, and I felt really strongly. I am the top end of a large family, so I had a lot of young siblings, and I could just see how vital all those early bits were. And also how interesting, I really enjoyed the kids, and doing things with my younger siblings. And another influence was a negative influence in that if you do well at school you were really discouraged from going into early childhood, and it was like a stubbornness too, when people would say "you can't do that!", it made me want to do it more.

Kindergarten No. 11 has 83 children currently on the roll, and there are three teachers. There are children from a number of different ethnic groups at this Kindergarten, including 7 Khmer refugee children, several Maori children, Chinese, a child from Hong Kong, and several Pakeha children. There has been aboriginal and samoan children in the recent past. In November of 1991, 48% of the families were on benefits. Teacher No. 11 commented that this changes rapidly, as 29 children went to school between May and August. Parents draw from a professional area, a state housing area and a few from the surrounding rural area. Teacher No. 11 does not ask parents about their occupations, because of the high level of unemployment. she thinks that parents socio-economic status is spread across the socio-economic range, but that the tone is often of a lower SES group. She gave the example that more families responded to a trip to McDonald's than to Book Week. However, she had put up a notice about the changes to Special Education and had eighteen parents turn up to a meeting. She commented that the Kindergarten never has difficulty in getting a management committee and that they have a good level of parental support. Teacher No. 11 lives in the area, and finds it an advantage to have her children in the local schools:

I find that really helps. The communication process is so much easier. So they are not threatened in lots of ways, often lower socio-economic groups are threatened by professional people, and I find that being involved in the Khmer refugee movement, a lot of those families trust me, because I have been to those meetings and they know who [Teacher No11] is and that really helps.

Teacher No.11 considers that her common sense knowledge and her ability as a teacher improved after she had had children. As she says:

Because I knew what it felt like to have children who bit, or children who misbehave when you really wanted them to be good, or children who wake up fifty times during the night, or children who are wonderful and you are worried about them being too good. I think those parental aspects of coping with those things...and that was good.

Another aspect of her common sense knowledge is that society has a low expectation of preschoolers, whereas she has high expectations. She thinks T.V. has deprived children of experiencing things for themselves, and that children can get great excitement from

experimenting with things like batteries. Observing what children do and extending upon children's interests is an important element of common sense to the planning process for Teacher No.11. children in this Kindergarten love surprises, and Teacher No.11 tries to relate the surprises to things that the children are interested in. She gave an example of the children's favourite song at the moment, "walking in the jungle". Sometimes a group of children will all decide that one song is a favourite:

It doesn't happen often, but this jungle song has really sort of caught them all, so today we dramatized it with face paint and masks, it was really good because you had to choose, you could only be one of three animals, and you had to remain that animal, you couldn't change half way through, and normally when you sing the song you all become whatever is current but in this one you had to be quiet, like if it was crocodiles and you were a tiger, well too bad. And I thought "how will they react?", and I couldn't believe it - first time through no one sang out of turn, and they had obviously captured the whole feeling that tigers don't snap when it is the crocodile's turn sort of thing.

Teacher No.11 also considers it to be common sense to give these children a variety of experiences in the community, using a "Burger Buggy", which is offered free of charge. Every Thursday morning a small group of children are taken to the schools, parks, museums, library or the Science Centre. An important aspect of Teacher No.11's common sense is to allow children to excel at something or to be bad at something, not to insist that all children become good all rounders. Teacher No.11 states "That I learnt from my own children, not from Kindergarten, but because I was aware of that I am quite determined that I will promote that area of special interest in children". She gave an example of a little boy who helped to open all the children's lunches and appeared to be a "natural leader", so Teacher No.11 encouraged him to organise the other children into games.

Kindergarten teaching has its own folk wisdom, according to Teacher No.11, in the form of solutions. As she explains:

Quite horrendous things can happen in Kindergarten, out of the blue. And I think the folk wisdom that goes with it is that you are never phased, teachers don't get phased. And you have this absolute store of automatic responses to deal with it. Things like when panic hits when someone is raising a hammer really high, and you say "goodness gracious!" and it goes back down, it is like an automatic response to things.

Sometimes Teacher No.11 worries later when she thinks about what could happen. This "unphased" attitude is used a lot when dealing with parents to say "hey this has happened before" to reassure them.

Teacher No.11 uses a broad range of skills. She explained that whispering is the only assured way to reduce the noise, because some people will want to know what is being said and will quieten the others. Rhythms or chants are used to settle children, or doing the unexpected:

The other thing that I find is rhythms can solve, like boisterous children and children who are not settling to anything. That if you chant something at them, if directions are given either in a rhythms or a chant or a song, children are not aware that they are directions, and they are inclined to respond to them. Whereas if you say to children, get in a circle please, some will look at you as if they don't want to do it. But if you start chanting "are you in a circle" people can't resist, and I find that a really good solver.

Another tactic she has used of children who have said they don't want to do something, is to tell the child to "lie down and look at the ceiling instead". Children respond well to knowing they don't have to listen or become involved. Teacher No.11 uses agreement to divert children, like agreeing with a child who says something disagreeable or telling a grumpy child "I felt really grumpy when I got up today". Teacher No.11 commented that pre-school teachers develop a "great list of skill knowledge that is used constantly and we take for granted, we often don't respect it as skill or knowledge". She said that she only realises how important that knowledge is when she sees someone trying to cope without it.

In terms of contextual knowledge, Teacher No.11 knows that many in the community have no transport, so excursions are an important part of the programme. Multicultural education which reflects the community is also important. She explains the relationship between the Kindergarten and the community:

Sometimes families are not aware of the resources within the community, and we find that by taking the Kindergarten children to resources within this immediate community we get the parents to use them more. Like there is a branch of the Library here, there is ... Park and two wonderful children's playgrounds. If we organise walks and outings to those areas, then the parents become aware that they are there, and they will use them too. And another one that the children absolutely loved was the library bus, but it doesn't seem to stop here, I must get another...it used to stop by the dairy here and it was lovely because they were there for half an hour and we could take two different groups up to get a book off the library bus, and that was really quite special, and lots of families started to use it then. Some parents feel a bit threatened by things like that because they don't have the information about it.

Having had seven years involvement in this community, Teacher No.11 considers that she has a wealth of knowledge about families. The knowledge "just builds on itself" and Teacher No.11 thinks that parents trust her. She said that the general feeling is that a long period in one Kindergarten is disadvantageous, because she might become stale. However, Teacher No.11 finds that the programme alters every year, according to the interests of the children attending. Observations of children are used to aid her contextual knowledge of what is appropriate to the programme. The observations cover children's knowledge, skills, feelings and disposition. Information about disposition is particularly useful to Teacher No.11.

Another aspect of contextual knowledge is gained from observation of different areas in the Kindergarten, during changes of climate and also to observe whether boys or girls are frequenting the area, and to record the name of the child. She finds it very useful to work out why an area is popular, rather than unpopular. Her theory is that if it is being used to leave it alone, not to keep changing things. When use starts to wear off, then she changes it. Sometimes she has a "wonderful idea" for an area on hold, because the area is already being used well.

Curriculum planning for 83 children has to be "really diverse" according to Teacher No.11. Kindergarten has a "sort of free play curriculum", so that children can choose where to play. However, Teacher No.11 has noticed that when children start Kindergarten they will stay with one activity, and that she may need to persuade them to try other activities. She prefers an integrated curriculum, where maths, language and science are all integral to many parts of the programme. Teacher No.11 considers that her initial philosophy of curriculum came from her training, but that she now actively adopts strategies from other people or from her reading. Teacher No.11 admitted that she reads prolifically, across a wide variety of material, from anecdotal to academic literature. Teacher No.11 uses this sort of curriculum to "meet the special needs of all children". She explained that she would like a written curriculum, for the following reasons:

When people suggest curriculum it is considered a bit of a dirty word, but we as a teaching team we have decided that we would enjoy having a curriculum as a guideline, not to be bound by, like in a sense it is our responsibility to ensure that we are covering all areas adequately, and at present we are confident we are. So that we have talked quite at length the three of us about how "wouldn't it be lovely" especially in things like Maori, that the variance of the Maori that is offered from one Kindergarten to another is dramatic and it's not usually because of the parents, it is not what the parents have written in the Charter and it is not what they want. It is the interest and knowledge of the teachers that seem to decide that sort of area. And we would really enjoy having a curriculum so that we can say "right, we will do that and that and that".

She considers that some guidelines would be helpful for the contentious issues of early childhood education, like how to integrate bi-culturalism to the Kindergarten, and to make all early childhood teachers obliged to meet these guidelines.

Teacher No.11 discussed three factors that are important in children's development. First, that children learn by example and experience:

I don't believe that children can learn to read if they haven't heard the words, I don't think that children can learn to play if they have never been allowed to make a mess.

Second, that she needs to provide a safe environment, so that children "feel totally safe". Valuing parental input and equity issues are the final factors. she considers that she has had success in teaching children when she has supported parents rather than threatened them. As she explains:

The other aspect that is really important is that parents can learn with their children, so that parents who have missed out haven't missed out for ever....The parents come to me and say "hey I didn't know, isn't this neat", are actually learning with their children and that learning is much more valuable for their learning because they are sharing it. I find here that even children who do not get on well with their parents, children who have that natural antagonism, as some children do, demand that we approve of their parents, which is really neat, that is really good.

Teacher No.11 believes that there are stages in children's development, but that children never reveal all, nor are they consistent. She gave the following example:

Like children for instance who are at the two year old telescopic language stage, children revert to telescopic language right till they are nine or ten, as suits them, and it just depends when you happen to be listening, what you are going to hear. Like we had two really good examples at the moment with children who fairly constantly speak in two word sentences, and then startling the boots of you by saying "I hate dinosaurs when I am by myself", those sorts of things. And I get concerned that some educationalists are inclined to put dividing lines between the stages.

Providing a safe place away from family pressure and having their own place are the important roles of Kindergarten for children, according to Teacher No.11. Children refer to the centre as "my Kindergarten" not "our". Teacher No.11 said that primary school teachers notice a significant difference between Kindergarten children and other children upon starting school. These teachers applaud the compulsory mat time in Kindergarten, as children know how to sit down, a fact that Teacher No.11 thinks is really sad. She has also been told that any head start these children have upon starting school has levelled out by the age of nine. She explains the possible reason for this levelling effect:

To me it is because their expectations are different. They are looking at achievement, they don't look at social skills and they don't even look at modes of thinking, I mean that really concerns me. One of the advantages I see in children who have been to Kindergarten, is that they have learnt to think, and that a lot of children who don't have early pre-school experiences, not just Kindergarten incidentally, actually miss out on the learning to think because answers are given, or answers are never given so you stop asking. Whereas at pre-school children are taught "why do you think", "what happened when", all of that....

One of the important aspects of Teacher No.11's social and moral philosophies is "that everyone is responsible for our own actions". She considers they have a responsibility to provide information and support to parents, but also to consult with the community. Consultation takes many forms; including talking at sessions and playgroups, talking with parent helpers or out on outings or by sending newsletters, questionnaires. Problems with knowledge sharing because of language difficulties has been solved by using contacts in the community, and literacy problems are overcome with a phone tree. The final philosophy that Teacher No.11 discussed was that "information is power", in that parents are often amazed that they have a choice of schools and that they can look before they choose.

The Charter plays a significant role in Kindergarten No.11, as there was a great deal of parental input. Teacher No.11 said that it took work to get them involved, but

then the whole community got involved. There were 69 parents at one meeting, with strong feelings about what should be in the Charter. The process ended in some ill feeling, as the draft Charter sent to the Ministry came back in a significantly altered form. On investigation, it appeared that the Association had made the changes. The committee of parents refused to sign the Charter, so the Association signed on their behalf. Teacher No.11 does not know what the Association didn't like about the Charter, as she says:

We actually don't know , I thought they all looked the same until I read tow recently and there was not comparison between those and ours, so that was really good, the management plan part of ours, and it is quite different and probably quite local, which is nice to know. Because I know the input that went into it, it was hours and hours for lots of people. The basic role of our Charter in our centre is that yes, it does shape our practices significantly, in that our observations of the children and the records we make of those observations are actually based on the ideals our Charter set up.

the community had wanted broad aspects defined, as they wanted some guidelines, but the Association considered this would be too difficult to live up to.

Appendix 6: Transcript sent to Teacher 11

Tape No. 11

17/6/92

- Q. The first question asks you about your involvement in the kindergarten movement, how many years you have been teaching, where you trained and why you trained in kindergarten rather than any other childservice professions?
- A. I trained in 70/71 in Dunedin, one of the reasons for choosing this early childhood service was that it was actually the only one available. Playcentre was very very new in Southland, and I didn't have children, and people who train in playcentre usually train there because they have children. Two years training - I then taught 3 years in a government kindergarten, and moved to Te ----, they didn't have a government kindergarten there, so I worked voluntarily in a private kindergarten there until I had my daughter. And then I only worked intermittantly as a reliever for about six or seven years, and that was just day to day relieving, I never did a full term or anything like that. I have been in this kindergarten full-time for the last three and a half years. The four previous to that I did a lot of longer term type relieving, as my children got older. My children range from 9-15.
- Q. And as a profession why did you choose kindergarten training?
- A. The fact that it is the most vital fact. I trained very young, I was sixteen when I went to College, and there was as you can imagine a great deal of opposition to doing that, and I felt really strongly. I am the top end of a large family, so I had a lot of young siblings, and I could just see how vital all those early bits were. And also how interesting, I really enjoyed the kids, and doing things with my younger siblings. And another influence was a negative influence in that if you do well at school you were really discouraged from going into early childhood, and it was like a stubborness too, when people would say "you can't do that!" it made me want to do it more.
- Q. The theme of it being "not a good enough thing to go into" is quite strong, particularly for people who did primary training first and then went into early childhood, they got a lot of flack trying to get into the training. It has improved though. The second question asks you about the children at this kindergarten, I think I explained to Sherree that I want to find out what children are where in Palmerston North, because it is such a messy city. I want to find out what group of children are attending kindergarten. So could you tell me about the children here, how many, what ethnic groups they come from and if you have any ideas of parental incomes and occupations?
- A. I don't have like this week's figures, but late last year we did quite an interesting survey on those sorts of areas. I can tell you that at the moment there are 83 children that attend, at some part of each day. Of those there are 7 Khmer refugees, we had a review last November and it was very interesting that parents spoke to the review committee people very openly, and we learnt lots from that that we didn't know. We were lucky that the two officers on the committee were really neat out-going people who just established a rapport with the community. We had at that stage an Aboriginal child, we have several Maori children, today we don't have Samoan children but we do in the community and have had. Chinese - I am not sure if they are actually New Zealand Chinese, he doesn't speak english so I don't know if he was born in NZ or not. We have a little boy from Hong Kong, and in November last year 48% of our families were on benefits. That varies, you know how children move in an out of kindergarten, we have a really high turnover, we lose - 29 families between the May holidays and the August holidays, so that is really high, but that is what is happening at the moment. So that gives you an idea how difficult it is to keep up with... Because we have families from the hospital area from Kelvin Grove and from the State housing community, we have a really broad cross section. We have a few rural families, from Bunnythorpe and Roberts Line area, they are inclined to come here too.
- Q. Do you have any idea about occupations?
- A. We generally don't have data on it because of the high unemployment, it is an ambarassing question to have.

- Q. So if you had a scale of high SES to low SES, where would they be or would they be spread evenly through?
- A. I think they are probably spread fairly evenly. The tone often is of a low socio-economic group, when I think of the parental response to events and functions that we organise, and things that I find interesting are like we celebrate book week, and we have a far lower parental response than we do to a trip to McDonalds. That is sort of an indication. Yes it is a hard thing to track and it is not consistent. As an example there is a consultation process going on with regards to changes to special Ed. Merely by hanging up a notice and welcoming any interest by parents to come and discuss this with us, we had a meeting of eighteen parents, and we were absolutely shocked by that. We have several special needs children in the centre at the moment, and that no doubt influenced what is at home and what they have become aware of really.
- Q. So you do have quite a high level of parental support for what goes on?
- A. Yes, in most areas we do. We never have trouble raising a management committee or anything like that.
- Q. It is interesting to get that. Some centres have no input at all, and the thing that struck me the most is that it is not an area as you would have predicted it to be in. The chartering process in the very low socio-economic areas had very high parental involvement, and vice-versa in the high socio-economic areas.
- A. I live in this area, and that is a real advantage, and it is on-going, you know, my older children go to school here, I find that really helps. The communication process is so much easier. So they are not threatened in lots of ways, often lower socio-economic groups are threatened by professional people, and I find that being involved in the khmer refugee movement, a lot of those families trust me, because I have been to those meetings and they know who Nora is and that really helps.
- Q. These question 3-9 come simply from the methodology, and it says that teachers bring several sorts of knowledge to their teaching practice. So the first asks you about your common-sense knowledge about practice, do you think there is a sort of common-sense knowledge that comes into kindergarten teaching?
- A. Now or initially? I find it really important, one thing I really notice, that when I went back teaching after I had had children, I think I was a much better teacher, so that is one quite definite are
- A. Because I knew what it felt like to have children who bit, or children who misbehave when you really wanted them to be good, or children who wake up fifty times during the night, or children who are wonderful and you are worried about them being too good. I think those parental aspects of coping with those things... and that was good. There are some sort of assumptions and opinions that you have, like one opinion that I hold really strongly is that society has very low expectations of pre-schoolers, and that definitely colours how I teach. I have higher expectations of them. I really good example that occurred just recently, the children were using batteries to make and operate a motor, and a parent came in and said "hey, I did that in the fifth form, will he be bored in the fifth form?", those sorts of aspects... I believe quite strongly that we have to provide really exciting experiences, for two reasons. One - because television brings a lot of things to children, but they don't experience it, they have a sort of a base familiarity with it, and parents assume that because a child knows that is a battery that is it, that lots of the excitement is lost. I was brought up without a television, and the joy of it was that all those things I found were new, like I didn't have this in-built picture of what it was and of what other people did, and I think that we can capture some of that excitement by providing the experience of all these things. And the other thing is that the children actually tell us what they want to learn about, or what they want to experience, our curriculum is very much an extension of where they are at now, anyway. Our planning is very much based around observing what the children are choosing to do, and how they are doing it, so it is really just an extension.
- Q. How ^{do} they react when you bring in something new, will they take to anything new?

- A. Oh yes. I think they expect us to bring in something new, I think... occasionally we have...like last week we had a goat arrive unannounced, and those sorts of quite exciting things, and this morning we had a wonderful idea - the children really love this song "walking in the jungle", I don't know if you are aware, but kindergarten children go through phases of getting hooked on certain... and we have a favourite song mat time, every wednesday where people say "my favourite is this and that", and every now and then you will get a run where ten children in a row will say "my favourite song is the Dinosaur song" and you will sing it once and the next child will say "well my favourite song is the Dinosaur song too". It doesn't happen often, but this jungle song has really sort of caught them all, so today we dramatized it with face paint and masks, it was really good because you had to choose, you could only be one of three animals, and you had to remain that animal, you couldn't change half way through, and normally when you sing the song you all become whatever is current, but in this one you had to be quiet, like if it was crocodiles and you were a tiger, well too bad. And I thought "how will they react?", and I couldn't believe it - first time through no one sang out of turn, and they had obviously captured the whole feeling that tigers don't snap when it is the crocodiles' turn sort of thing. We do a lot of community visitation, we visit the schools the parks, the museum, the library, the science centre - it is opening soon, I have been and seen the things they do have. That will be wonderful. We have just established this wonderful system with McDonald's restaurant who have a burger buggy, and free of charge they will take anyone anywhere. We were just amazed, they offered this service to parents in the beginning of the year, they can seat seven people, and no one wanted to go... they would take you to the supermarket, get your groceries and drop you back to kindly, and I couldn't believe that no one from here used it. We have a lot of parents who don't have transport, so we said we would use it. "Will you come every thursday morning and take one of us and a few children somewhere?" so that is what we are currently doing, once a week we go on an outing. The children just take turns according to where their main interest lie. Another thing that I should mention, I don't know if it is common sense, but I have this... this came after I had my own children and they were going through the school system, that there is a lot of emphasis on good all-rounders, and there is a wonderful little fable about teaching a duck to run fast and not letting him swim until he can run, but it is very interesting. And I get concerned a lot that in education...the emphasis is on what you are not particularly good at. For instance the children who can read well don't need to spend time reading, we had better give them maths. That sort of mentality a little bit. I am really concerned that children accept that what they are good at and that it is fine to keep doing, that there are basic life skills that we all need to learn, but none of us are ever going to be a mathematician and a linguist. And it is really important that children are allowed to be not good in a certain are
- A. That I learnt from my own children, not from kindergarten, but because I was aware of that I am quite determined that I will promote that area of special interest in children. And it is so much more enjoyable for those who work with you, and we had a wee boy go to school this morning, and he was one of those quite intelligent busy children, who was capable, totally capable, and we have children bring their lunch on a Wednesday and share it, and we were noticing this morning that anyone who had chippies or muesli bars or any of those sealed packages that you need to pull this way, without a word they would just walk up to Matthew and hand it to him and he would just go flick and they would say "thanks Matt" and sit down. And he spent the first eight or nine minutes going -----. There was never any verbalizing of it before, they would just arrive and say "thanks Matt". And those sorts of things, and he was a born natural leader of a child, so we promoted that, we would say to him "you take a game" and no problems, he would masterfully encourage them all to take a turn, and play reasonably. And they would, because he was that sort of a child. Those sorts of children are too rare, it is very very sad when they go to school. I always feel we train them up and then they take them from us.
- Q. The next one is very much along the same line, and in some ways is an extension of it, it asks you about the folk wisdom of teachers, is there sort of a folk wisdom to kindergarten teaching?
- A. Yes, not specifically to this kindergarten, but definitely to kindergarten teaching. It is more in the form of solutions. Quite horrendous things can happen in kindergartens, out of the blue. And I think the folk wisdom that goes with it is that you are never phased, teachers don't get phased. And you have this absolute store of automatic responses to deal with it. Things like when panic hits when someone is raising a hammer really high, and you say "goodness gracious!" and it goes back down, it is like a automatic response to things. Sometimes I feel

you phase later, when you realise some of the dangerous things that could have come out of certain behaviour, like children climbing fences, and the fear that you have...when I was first teaching I had this inordinate fear that some child would escape, and I wouldn't know they had gone, because there were always children playing, and would you really miss one? and that sort of thing. It is not exactly blase, it is that I will do what I can so that it doesn't happen, but if it does happen it has happened, I will deal with the fact that it has happened, not that... is that clear?

- Q. What about when there really is something serious, do you still feel automatic about it? say you found out that a child has been sexually abused, would that still feel...would you get phased by that?
- A. I think my initial reaction no, I mean I would, I would be totally phased. But I think my outward reaction would definitely not be, I think that you learn that there is no point, if you have a violent reaction to things, people never open up to you, you never get it solved. I feel that a lot in dealing with parents, that I need to say to parents "hey, this has happened before", the fear of most parents is that they are different. And I think that constant reassurance is what works.
- Q. It is almost like a guard isn't it, you put up a front. Is there anything else?
- A. I think that folk wisdom and common sense are a bit tied up.
- Q. The next one asks you about the skill knowledge that teachers use, is there a range of skills that you use with kindergarten children, teachers or parents?
- A. There is quite a broad range of skills. Like the only assured way of reducing the noise is to whisper, and it works every single time because at least some people in the room will want to know what you are saying and they will all go hush, and it works brilliantly, it is like this little magic wand that floats around a group. The other thing that I find is rhythm can solve, like boisterous children and children who are not settling to anything. That if you chant something at them, if directions are given either in a rhythm or a chant or a song, children are not aware that they are directions, and they are inclined to respond to them. Whereas if you say to children, get in a circle please, some will look at you as if they don't want to do it. But if you start chanting "are you in a circle" people can't resist, and I find that a really good solver. The other thing is, I think it is an experience sort of strategy, is that if you accept when someone says no, I don't want to, in a large group I mean, one thing that I actually picked up from someone years ago who was dealing with my son, was when he said "I don't like this story, I am not going to listen to the story" and she said "well lie down and look at the ceiling instead", and it was brilliant and I have used it for years really successfully, because I think the children are sort of floored "my goodness I don't have to listen", I have used that a lot. There are probably lots of others, it is really hard to call to mind, like I think that that is what pre-school teachers do develop, is this great list of skill knowledge that is used constantly and we take for granted, we often don't respect it as skills or knowledge. I think it is though, you only have to see someone trying to cope without that bit of skilled knowledge and realise how useful and important it really is. The other one is agreeing with children who say disagreeable things, like in a sense reversing them. Sometimes I find...in a sense it is lying, but children who for instance arrive really grumpy and unreasonable, and whatever the parent or caregiver says it is the wrong thing, and there is this "no I don't want to do this!" and it goes on continually, and I often find that if I go up and say "I feel really grumpy when I got up today", they will say "did you, what made you feel grumpy?" it takes the emphasis off how grumpy they are feeling, and the same who constantly or bite...they aren't alone, if you accept that they really don't want to do it, but it happens, you can bring them round to controlling it. I think negatives never work with children, and it has to be agreement, even if it is basically conning agreement.
- Q. There are definitely some common themes. One that comes through a lot is body language, eye contact especially.
- A. Yes, my mother in law, her threat to her children which I find really amusing, is that if they misbehaved in public, she would stand up and sing "God save the Queen", and she had six children and she said they never ever once embarrassed her in public. And Martin tells me he wouldn't have risked the thought of his mother standing up and singing... and they believed

that all their lives, so they never misbehaved. I tried it with mine and they said "well you will feel foolish", so...

Q. Next one is about contextual knowledge, which is your knowledge about this group of children and this community, or even a particular child, and how you use that knowledge when you are programming or when you are thinking about what activities will be relevant. Can you tell me a bit about that?

A. I am not sure that I totally understand... Starting with the community, there is a large number without transport so excursions are really important. It is a very multicultural community, so all multicultural education is really important. Sometimes families are not aware of the resources within the community, and we find that by taking the kindergarten children to resources within this immediate community we get the parents to use them more. Like there is a branch of the library here, there is Memorial Park, and two wonderful children's playgrounds. If we organise walks and outings to those areas, then the parents become aware that they are there, and they will use them too. And another one that the children absolutely loved was the library bus, but it doesn't seem to stop here, I must get another... it used to stop by the dairy here and it was lovely because they were there for half an hour and we could take two different groups up to get a book off the library bus, and that was really quite special, and lots of families started to use it then. Some parents feel a bit threatened by things like that because they don't have the information about it. The other one on the children, people say that there is a real disadvantage to staying in a kindergarten community for the length of time, and I really strongly disagree. My younger children came here, that is just over seven years of involvement with this kindergarten that I had, and I think that that has given me a wealth of individual knowledge on the families and children and having taught older siblings. For two reasons, one because parents know me well enough to trust me, when they may not trust a new teacher, and the knowledge just builds on itself as time progresses, and I find that really really useful, and I can share that.

Q. Is it discouraged, being involved with one kindergarten over time?

A. I don't know that it is openly discouraged, but in every discussion I have been in where it has been brought up the general feeling is that there aren't advantages. And I think... the reason being that you become stale and stagnant and you always teach the same way, whereas my belief is that no-one could stay in teaching teaching the same way. People do suggest for instance that because all of the children who come here are aged between three and a half and five, that... like I sit down and write a programme of plans, and then I can use those year after year after year, which theoretically could be true, but because we work on individual children it is never... there are topics like Dinosaurs and Space, we would definitely have that every single year, because that is what four year olds demand, it is their thing really. We actually do quite intricate observations on each of our children, and we have recently redefined this, so included in our observations, we cover the basic things - their knowledge, their skills, their feelings and their disposition, which we didn't used to do. As an example children who culturally might find it difficult to do some of the things we do, or there are children who are just indisposed to doing it. Like not because of... children will tell you if they feel unhappy doing it, and other children will say "I don't want to", that is disposition. And the other things that you notice under disposition is that children are disposed to storing knowledge or indisposed to gaining knowledge... like there are children who have an absolute disposition for storing up every bit of knowledge they pick up in the day and flowing it back parrot-wise, right to... like you will say to someone "I wonder if that dinosaur liked eating leaves?" and some child will chant back at you "of course not, why would it eat leaves with great big teeth like that?" that to me is disposition. There are children who come with a temperamental disposition, and always maintain that sort of a disposition. And I find that unless you actually record these little things, you can miss really important learning areas for those children, especially temperamental children, they are often the ones who can sidle off and successfully miss out. The other knowledge that is really important is the knowledge we get from observing areas and the use of areas, and an interesting one is... we always observe the use of areas in different kinds of weather, probably because PN has such changeable weather. We used to record for instance the number of children in an area, we counted the number of boys and the number of girls, and what they were using and whether there was an adult present, and that was our standard line. But we have since changed it and we record the name of the child because it was interesting to note the first time, just for the experience of doing it, that when we did this recording, it was that there may have been eight girls during the morning, but five

of them could have been the same child, because we hadn't recorded the name. And that is something that I learnt with time. And the results always read as eight different boys, whereas it could have actually read thirty-three boys. By using that... I think it is really important to know why children do, people often spend a lot of time working out why children don't an area, and I find it a lot more useful to work out why they do, and why certain areas are constantly popular. And to accept the fact that if an area is popular, you don't need to change, this on-going thought that you have to keep changing everything to keep it stimulating... my thought is that if an area is being used - leave it alone, that they like it that way. And when the use of it wears down then change it, and that is why our planning is very flexible, because although we may have this wonderful idea to do such and such with that area, later in the term we may vary that, we may do it sooner or later, just because that area is being used well. I have never actually managed to get to the stage where I have twelve months of it and it will work all year, I haven't hit that wonderful...

- Q. Well you have different groups of students. Like this year we had a particularly good lot of 100 students, they are brilliant, we really enjoyed them. Last year we had a dreadful group, that you couldn't motivate to do anything, and we felt it across the board. All of us had this sort of... the lethargic students. And yet this year it is lots of fun. So I can relate to that.
- Q. The next one asks you about your professional knowledge, about teaching strategies and curriculum. What curriculum are you using, why are you using it, and what do you think the outcomes or the benefits or the effects are?
- A. Curriculum with kindergarten is different, because our curriculum is based on the needs of these current 83 children. The basis of it is that we cover all developmental areas. This is just a thought from the changing things or leaving things, is that even like providing for a specific area of development, it has to be really diverse, because the children may not respond to what you consider the ideal equipment, setup or whatever for developing say, gross motor control, that diversity in the curriculum is really vital to meet the needs of all the different children. We have a basic sort of free play curriculum, so that where the children play is their own priority. There are some examples - I often find that when children start kindergarten they will stay, because they feel confident. For instance with playdo^{vis} that is a really good starting point, and they will stay and stay there, and I often find that what I need to do then is, rather than take them out of the playdo^{vis} area, to take something else in there, to persuade them out, and that sort of thing. To me the curriculum has to be really integrated, unlike school and that there isn't a science area, a maths area, a language area, all of those need to be integrated really well together, and it was what we strive to do really. As for knowledge, professional knowledge about strategies and curriculum, it is quite a personal area, because initially you do your training but, I found with me, I think because I read, it is really helpful with keeping up with new strategies and new curriculum ideas, but children inspire me to look for something else. I think you always come to areas in the curriculum where you feel that Joe Bloggs is missing out, there is something missing, and that is where this sort of quest for something new. And you not only develop new strategies, but you actually adopt strategies that you get from other people or literature or research of your own to find out what might work.
- Q. What sorts of things would you read?
- A. I read everything, if someone said to me what do you read? I would say that I read words, because I read them all. The library is great, but most of the things that I read are things from publications like Score magazines from Australia I find really intriguing. But... printouts, photocopies from for example "c--- Educational Research", just reading research by other educationalists. I have read a lot of information from parents who have taken home schooling as their viable option, simply because I feel that a lot of people who have chosen home-schooling have put a lot of thought into why, a lot of parents don't put in any thought now, because kindergarten is at the corner, and local primary school is down the road. Parents are not putting in that much thought into what sort of education they actually want for their own child, in a sense does their child have the right to something different to what is generally offered? I like to think that we have got alternatives, that as a teaching team that we have got alternatives up our sleeve to meet those kids that aren't going to fit in and conform and learn despite the odds virtually. I think home-schooling is the ideal for lots of children.
- Q. Just think of the amount of time you would have to put in to making sure that you gave children the sort of variety and keeping up the children's interest.

- A. In many respects I think it would be easier than school, just because of the emphasis on what the children are good at and what they like doing, and that is important. I say now that if I had my time over again I wouldn't, I would not send my kids to Primary School.
- Q. Now what do you think the benefits are of choosing this sort of integrated approach, of looking for alternatives for different children?
- A. The ultimate benefit is that we can meet the special needs of all the children, and I see that all of these children have special needs. When people suggest curriculum it is considered a bit of a dirty word but we as a teaching team we have decided that we would enjoy having a curriculum as a guideline, not to be bound by, like in a sense it is our responsibility to ensure that we are covering all areas adequately, and at present we are confident we are. But it does take energy and effort to find out if you are. So that we have talked quite at length the three of us about how "wouldn't it be lovely" especially in things like Maori, that the variance of the Maori that is offered from one kindergarten to another is dramatic and it's not usually because of the parents, it is not what the parents have written in the charter and it is not what they want. It is the interest and knowledge of the teachers that seem to decide that sort of are
- A. And we would really enjoy having a curriculum there so that we can say "right, we will do that and that and that".
- Q. Have you seen anything of the national early childhood curriculum project?
- A. No.
- A. I sit on one of their advisory committees, and it looks that it will have those sorts of elements because it has been written to be able to incorporate the major early childhood services including the kohanga reo and the Pacific Trust, so it sort of has a theme.
- Q. We would be very interested in any information that you would like to share.
- A. It is difficult because I don't know which papers are public, but I know that some of them are public because they were presented at the early childhood convention last year, so I could send you some of them. But some of those things are still in draught form, so I am not sure what their status is.
- Q. One of the contentious issues is, I will use Maori as an example, because when in '89 we started to write the charters, there was this commitment to biculturalism, and that was fine except that nobody in this kindergarten had Maori. We were all totally receptive which was fortunate because there are areas where teachers have not been, and we worked really hard for two years to create some sort of Maori type curriculum, and I think successfully, it was well received by our parents, it was what they wanted and we did very well. But we felt really resentful of other areas where staff had the right to say "sorry I don't speak it", that sort of... and we felt that if there were a national sort of guideline then you wouldn't have that option. You would have to do something rather than nothing. That is just one area, you could take science as an example, and say "no sorry we don't take an interest in science, so we can't promote it, we don't know very much about" so it is all areas.
- Q. The next one asks you about educational theory, and this is really asking you about how you think children develop and what role kindergarten has in their development?
- A. It does send shivers down my spine a little bit, because the theorists are never totally right, well I don't mean that. I mean that I take a little bit from a lot of theorists.
- Q. What is your personal belief about how children develop?
- A. I think personally the biggest learning thing is example, I think that is vital. Example and experience would be my sort of catchwords. I don't believe that children can learn to read if they haven't heard the words, I don't think that children can learn to play if they have never been allowed to make a mess, that sort of thing. I find this really difficult because the words sort of fail me a little bit. I think that in order for the children that I am caring for and responsible for to learn, that I have to provide first of all that they have a safe place, that they

feel totally safe. And that their parental input is really valued, that I must never be at odds with their parents, it mustn't be a battle of adults. And equity probably, equity would be... so they would be the three most important issues to me. The most difficult one is not being at odds with parents, because it is really easy to look at children and say "how unfortunate that you are like that because your mother of father didn't..." we are compensating for all of that, so for any bad or difficult or limiting factors in their previous environment, we are going to compensate.

Q. It must be difficult occasionally...

A. Yes, it is, but to me it is really important that I feel that... one of the reasons that children don't learn is that is that their families feel ostracized, and that I know that I have had my success in teaching children when I have supported their families, rather than threatened them. The other aspect that is really important is that parents can learn with their children, so that parents who missed out haven't missed out for ever, like they can... The parents come to me and say "hey I didn't know, isn't this neat", are actually learning with their children, and that learning is much more valuable for their learning because they are sharing it. I find here that even children who do not get on well with their parents, children who have that natural antagonism, as some children do, demand that we approve of their parents, which is really neat, that is really good. I accept that there are very definite stages of development, but with the proviso that none of us can decide exactly where on those stages a child is, simply because the child never reveals all to us. Like in my observations of the children here at the moment, it is really interesting that their behaviour at one particular time can sort of guarantee that they are right at this level of development today, and two minutes later, there is something that would say "no, they are not". So I find that the stages are definitely overlapping, would be the best way of putting it.

Q. So what sort of stages would you use?

A. Like children for instance who are at the two-year-old telescopic language stage, children revert to telescopic language right till they are nine or ten, as suits them, and it just depends when you happen to be listening, what you are going to hear. Like we had two really good examples at the moment with children who fairly constantly speak in two word sentences, and then startling the boots of you by saying "I hate dinosaurs when I am by myself", those sorts of things. And I get concerned that some educationalists are inclined to put dividing lines between the stages.

Q. I was going to ask you about what you think kindergarten does for children's development?

A. One - it provides them with a safe place away from family pressure, and the second reason that it is important to me is that it is their own place. All of the children here call this place "my kindergarten", like individually "my", not "our". We are not limited as teachers by child rearing problems of the child, I think we can rejoice in all the good things without having the sleepless nights and the potty training, the irritable aspects of them.

Q. Do you think kindergarten has long-term effects?

A. Most definitely. I have absolutely no doubt whatsoever that children... I am intrigued by the number of primary school teachers that talk about the catch-up period, and apparently all of the local primary schools that accept our children in the infant rooms, five schools, they all acknowledge a significant... a difference but more than a difference. A significant advantage for children who have attended any pre-school but especially kindergarten. One of the reasons they suggest is that we have a compulsory mat time, which is opposed by lots of places but we every morning have a compulsory mat time when we must sit down and greet each other before we go and play, and they say that that to them is a breakthrough, because children will sit down. And I really feel sad that that is the one thing they acknowledge that we are helping with. The often acknowledge other aspects, but that is universally acknowledged. I don't think they have necessarily learnt how to concentrate, I think children will concentrate on what they are interested in, full stop. I think it is the fact that children have learnt to sit in a group for a few minutes, which is really sad.

Q. Makes you wonder what they want in the children doesn't it?

- A. The other thing is that a lot of these teachers suggest that while children seem to have a bit of a head-start at school when they have been to kindergarten, that by age 9 this has invariably leveled out. To me it is because their expectations are different. They are looking at achievement, they don't look at social skills and they don't even look at modes of thinking, I mean that really concerns me. One of the advantages I see in children who have been to kindergarten, is that they have learnt to think, and that a lot of children who don't have early pre-school experiences, not just kindergarten incidentally, actually miss out on the learning to think because answers are given, or answers are never given so you stop asking. Whereas at early pre-school children are taught "why do you think" "what happened when", all of that, so they are... Not so much with pre-schoolers, because I think there is an element of delight that they are thinking, but when children get to nine or ten and they are still constantly saying "how does this go and where does this come from?", I feel an overwhelming urge to say "shut up please", because I just can't cope anymore. But with young children who spend most of their time at home before school, unless parents have an educational background, the children are far less likely to be directed at things like "what do you think" "what will happen now" those questioning techniques.
- Q. Number 9 asks you about social and moral theories and general philosophies. Is there a general or social philosophy that you have in this kindergarten?
- A. Yes, I think one of the philosophies that is really important is that everyone is important, and that each of us is responsible for our own actions. In the kindergarten I have this real tie-up with "it is never only the children", we always have parents here, but we also have a commitment to provide information and knowledge and support for those people as well. So when we speak of everyone being important in everyone is responsible, I mean both parents families and children, I don't just mean children enrolled in the centre, it is very much a community education system. We do a lot of consulting, one because that is the only acceptable way of knowing what our parents want, and we are obliged to give them what they want, and secondly because by consulting and sharing in groups what different people have said, there comes a sort of community awareness, and that builds a sort of respect for the different in our community.
- Q. How would you normally consult?
- A. It is a real "come visit" sort of thing. What we do is that every 15-18 months we send home this wonderful little note that says "how do you like to be consulted, are you happy with newsletters, do you like public meetings, would you like to ring me up, would you like us to ring you up?" that whole list of options. What is most interesting is that the most favourable is, nearly every time, is the questionnaire. And so that is one means, the other means is that there is an awful lot of communication in and out, as children are greeted and dropped off, and with things like playgroup, being a community playgroup that is open to whoever don't want to send their children to kindergarten but need something before they go to another preschool of their choice, that is a really good communication centre. A lot of consultation can be done on outings, when you have parent helpers, things like that. And we are advantaged in having three staff members, because that makes the load a little bit lighter in making sure that all parents get the opportunity to talk to one of us. And there are invariably parents who choose a particular one of us, the sort of pattern forms.
- Q. How do you get on with consultation- when you send a note home do have confidence that the parents will be able to read that note?
- A. Mostly yes. We have incidents where parents have told us or we know that they are illiterate, and we have a phone tree that solves that. The other area of concern is the language, you know with families where english is the second language. This is where personal knowledge of the community really helps, because I have two Khmer friends who speak fluent english, so they can talk to our Khmer families for us. Chinese families are quite difficult, except that one of the dads speaks english, so we use him as the interpreter for the other Chinese families. They are both the same dialects because the children communicate with each other in their own language. So we have never ever hit... before I was really involved with the Khmer families, I had a lot of trouble, I used to relieve here, and they had terrible trouble, they had 12 children in their morning session who were Khmer children, and no support. Special Ed. didn't deal in ESL children, there was nowhere where they could go and say "hey what do we do?" but that has solved itself with time and knowing the community.

- Q. Is there any other things there in terms of philosophies?
- A. Apart from the fact that information is power, we persuade our parents to go and look at the school before they send their child, and we really get amazed at the parents who didn't realise they had that choice, that you send child to the local school, you don't have a choice where they go, and being in this area there are five schools within reasonable distance, it is not a contentious issue. And little things like that, that I feel a real moral obligation to inform parents here. With all the Ministry of Education changes and such, it is really hard for parents to know where they stand, like they read in the paper "bulk-funding mean kindergarten will no longer receive funds", but no-one offered them information in their own everyday... and it was all this political jargon thrown in, and we found it necessary that they publish things that parents could understand. Suddenly children aren't arriving and I ring and up and they say "we can't afford to pay fees, we read in the paper that kindergartens have to pay fees now" and things like that, so there is lots of misinformation as well. I don't really have anything to say about truth and justice, I find that a bit bamboozly.
- Q. One kindergarten I went to.... in that kindergarten was a first start to give those children an opportunity, so that we talked a great deal then about illiteracy, and the fact there were cases where mum and dad couldn't write and that there were no books, no writing materials, and no encouragement for education. So for her that was the biggie, to say that "these children have got a chance, if we grab it and make them interested in learning, off they might go", it was sort of like a last shot if you like. Because otherwise they get into the school system and they have had it, right from jump, and I thought that was immensely sad but I could see here point there, that if she encouraged children to learn they might just carry on that joy for learning through and that might be the thing that gets them out of the m---. Most of the parents were unemployed or whatever, so... and others we talked about truth and justice.
- Q. The last one is about the role of the charter, does it shape your practice or have you shaped it, and what role does it have now?
- A. I think it plays quite a high role in the sense that our... we had great parental input to our charter, it took a bit of work initially to get people interested, but once they got interested, the whole community got involved, one meeting 69 came, so we had very good input into the charter and very strong feelings from parents about what they wanted from their kindergarten, and we had... it sort of ended up with a lot of ill feeling, our parents put this enormous amount of work into the charter, it was presented to the Ministry as a draft charter and was sent back in its final form significantly altered. According to us by the Ministry, but when our parents consulted the Ministry and said "hey we are not prepared to sign this, you have changed it" they said "we have changed nothing", and the story of what had happened was that it was sent to the Ministry who notated changes required, sent it to the Association who changed it, when it went back to us the Association said "well they told us to change it" and the Ministry said "we have changed nothing", with the result that at the signing of our charter our committee parents refused to sign and said no, they would sign their own document but not this document, so the Association signed on behalf of this kindergarten.
- Q. So you now have a charter that is not a reflection of...
- A. A lot of it is a reflection of our community, but our community had inserted different aspects, basically in relation to equity, special needs and Treaty of Waitangi, I would say were the three areas where there had been some inserts that were just disallowed.
- Q. Why were the Ministry opposed to them?
- A. Well they weren't responsible for removing them so they couldn't be opposed to them.
- Q. Which brings me to the question - why wouldn't the Association accept what you wanted?
- A. We actually don't know, I thought they all looked the same until I read two recently and there was not comparison between those and ours, so that was really good, the management plan part of it is ours, and it is quite different and probably quite local, which is nice to know. Because I know the input that went into it, it was hours and hours for lots of people. The basic role of our charter in our centre is that yes, it does shape our practices significantly, in that our

observations of the children and the records we make of those observations are actually based on the ideals our charter set up.

Q. Which were things like children being safe...?

A. No those sorts of ideals were set up by the government, they were the desirable objectives and practices, so we have to live by all of those. There are other observances in ours - that special needs children will be well catered for, that for instance Maori rules will always be observed, little special aspects that go into it too.

Q. I mean these ones here I would be surprised if the Ministry turned them, you would think that the Ministry would be trying to promote...

A. Only originally, not by the signing of the charters, not by that stage, it was a national government by then. And our consultation showed that within our community some of the terms that were suggested were too broad for our community and they wanted things defined a little. And it was interesting that from the Association we were advised - keep it broad, keep it broad, it is too hard to live up to if it is narrow, but the feeling of the community in general was that in order to cater for everyone you didn't want it too broad, or that just meant that there were no guidelines, so they did in some respects narrow things down. I find the charter really important, I invite parents to read it, and I am surprised that a lot of them choose not to, it is always on the parent library shelf available to read, and I think they would have really good ideas, despite the work and the workload I... for the first time parents had think about what they really wanted in early childhood for their kids.

Q. What sort of status would it have with your management committee? Do they use it?

A. It is sort of a difficult one in the sense that ... you are aware of the setup, our management committee? - not a lot, because they basically raise the money and spend it, that would be a fair indication, they are not responsible, they don't have any direct input into curriculum areas or...

Q. Do they not want to or not encouraged to?

A. I don't think they don't have time or energy to, rather than don't want to. Our consultation on those matters is with a broader spectrum, and the management committee is a group of hard workers who paint the place and keep it nice and tidy and buy new equipment on demand, they are really a wonderful group of people, but lots of their concerns would definitely be the more mundane.... The Association - they can be effective, but the point I am making is that it is like having two bodies, officially the Association are our Board of Trustees, except that yes they are elected by parents in the sense that every kindergarten has one vote, that is how they get to be on the Board.

Q. So the structure of it intrigues me, initially when they told me about the structure of the Board it struck me that it was a representative from each kindergarten meaning a teacher, but in actual fact that isn't the case is it?

A. It is not from each kindergarten, there are not teachers on the Board at all, they are not eligible to stand for the Board. So they are people from the community who stand for the Board, and it is divided into areas, for instance the Eastern area is either six or seven kindergartens and they have three representatives, so there is never a representative from every kindergarten. It is a very unusual system, and it may not last very long.

Appendix 7: Information sheet given to parents

Emergent literacy in New Zealand: an examination of policy and practices in early childhood centres

Information for parents/guardians

Emergent literacy means the beginnings of reading ability in young children. This research will look at the literacy practices of parents and teachers of Kindergarten children, in Palmerston North city. Research has shown that the early childhood years are an important time for learning about language, reading and writing. These skills are built upon later at school. There is little research in New Zealand which looks at how our children are learning literacy skills before going to school. The aim of this research is to design a programme to help children develop literacy skills at Kindergarten.

The interview I have asked you to do with me will look at the reading experiences that your child has at home and at Kindergarten. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am only looking for honest answers. Your name will not be used in the results.

This research will be used as part of a thesis for a Ph.D. in Education at Massey University. I am currently employed by the Education Department as a Lecturer, and I teach Human Development and Early Childhood Education courses.

Claire McLachlan-Smith
Lecturer in Education
Education Department
Massey University
(Phone 356-9099, Ext 8596, or messages to Ext 7477)

Please read carefully :

I understand that any information provided in this interview will be used as data in this research project, but that my name will not be used.

I also understand that I can refuse to answer any questions, that I can withdraw my consent and stop the interview at any time, and that I can ask to read notes taken at the interview.

Please contact me at the above phone number if you have any comments or concerns regarding this research at any time.

Appendix 8: Structured interview protocol for parents

Emergent literacy in New Zealand : an examination of policy and practices in early childhood centres.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. Emergent literacy means the beginning of reading in young children. I'm doing this research for the degree of Ph.D in Education at Massey University. This questionnaire will look at the reading experiences that our children have in their homes and early childhood centres. The research is being carried out in Kindergartens. However, it is useful to know what reading experiences children have at home. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, so please give honest answers.

You don't have to complete the name section, but it would be useful if any follow up research is done. The page with your name on it will be taken off. Your answers will not have your name on them. I am happy to explain what any questions mean. Thank you for your help.

Claire McLachlan-Smith
Lecturer in Education
Massey University

I hereby agree to having my anonymous responses to this questionnaire included in the results of this research.

Signature of participant

Date

Name and Address (voluntary)

Signature of researcher

Date

Claire McLachlan-Smith

Lecturer in Education

Education Department

Massey University

Phone (06) 356-9099, Ext 8596 or messages to Ext 7477

Part 1 : Personal and family details

1.	What year were you born? (please put the year in the boxes provided)	self	<input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	4
		partner	<input type="text" value="1"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	8
2.	Sex	male ... 1	<input type="text"/>	9
		female ... 2		
3.	Highest secondary qualification	none ... 1	<input type="text"/>	10
		school cert. ... 2		
		U. E. ... 3		
		H. S. C. ... 4		
		Bursary ... 5		
		Scholarship ... 6		
4.	Highest University qualification (if applicable)	Bachelors ... 1	<input type="text"/>	11
		Honours ... 2		
		Masters ... 3		
		PhD ... 4		
5.	Please list any professional qualifications gained (please specify in writing below. Do not use the boxes provided).		<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	15
6.	Occupation - please list below. Do not use boxes.		<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	19
7.	Do you identify yourself as:	European ... 1	<input type="text"/>	20
		Maori ... 2		
		Pacific islander ... 3		
		Chinese ... 4		
		Other ethnic group ... 5 (please specify)	<input type="text"/>	21
8.	Number of children in your family - sex of children (number of each sex)	male	<input type="text"/>	22
		female	<input type="text"/>	23
			<input type="text"/>	24
9.	Position of your preschool child in family	1st ... 1	<input type="text"/>	25
		2nd ... 2		
		3rd ... 3		
		4th ... 4		
		other (specify)	<input type="text"/>	26
10.	Family income (approximate)	less than 20,000 ... 1	<input type="text"/>	27
		20 - 30,000 ... 2		
		30 - 40,000 ... 3		
		40 - 60,000 ... 4		
		60 - 80,000 ... 5		
		over 80,000 ... 6		

c) when learning ideas about literacy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	74
20 What is the most important type of learning from those listed in Q. 17 and why?	<input type="checkbox"/>	75
	<input type="checkbox"/>	79
21 What do you think the teacher should do helping your child learn?	<input type="checkbox"/>	83
22 How does the teacher help your child learn language and reading?	<input type="checkbox"/>	87
23 What do you think you should do in helping your child learn?	<input type="checkbox"/>	91
24 Is what you do more important than what the teacher does?	<input type="checkbox"/>	92
more ... 1 the same ... 2 less ... 3		
25 Where is your child learning to read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	93
at home ... 1 at Kindergarten ... 2 both ... 3 other(specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	97
26 What has been the main thing that makes you think the way you do about helping your child to develop? Please answer this question thinking particularly about language and literacy development. You may choose more than one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	98
being a parent ... 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	99
my own childhood ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	100
education ... 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	101
reading on the subject ... 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	102
partners beliefs ... 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	103
other parents ... 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	104
other ... 7	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(please specify)		
27 How do children develop at this age (3 : 6 to 5 years) Please pick the most important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	105
through a series of stages ... 1		
as part of cultural or family group ... 2		
through outside experiences ... 3		
other (specify)..4		

- how often does he/she request them to be read? (approximate number of times per week)		<input type="text"/>	136
- does your child try to read them him/herself?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	137
- has your child ever said why the book is liked so well?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	138
- reasons if any (please list below)		<input type="text"/>	142
<hr/>			
35 Does your child ever ask questions while you are reading to him/her?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	143
- About what kinds of things does he/she ask? (you can choose more than one)	the pictures ... 1 characters in the books ... 2 names of letters ... 3 sounds of letters ... 4 written form of words ... 5 meanings of words ... 6 content of stories ... 7 other (specify)...8	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151
- will he/she ever ask the same question over and over again?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	152
- Does the same question ever occur in the same place in a book?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	153
- do you ever ask your child to just sit still and listen to the story?	never ... 1 sometimes ... 2 often ... 3	<input type="text"/>	154
- does he/she request books to be re-read during the same session?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	155
- how many times have you re-read one book in one session? Approximate number of times.		<input type="text"/>	157
36 Does your child ask questions about books at other times when you are not reading to him/her?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	158
- when? (please specify below)		<input type="text"/>	162
<hr/>			
- how often?	frequently ... 1 sometimes ... 2 seldom ... 3	<input type="text"/>	163
- do you try and answer as many as you can?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	164

37	Does your child ever copy/trace titles of books or attempt to draw a picture related to stories that have been read?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	165
	- aspects of books that are traced/copied (specify below)		<input type="text"/>	169
	- kinds of pictures drawn (specify below)		<input type="text"/>	173
38	Have you ever heard your child use words that you feel come from the books that you have read?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	174
	- examples (please list below)		<input type="text"/>	178
39	Have you ever heard your child use language in play that sounds like it comes from a book?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	179
	- examples (please list below)		<input type="text"/>	183
40	When you are reading to your child, do you feel like she/he knows you are saying the written words?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	184
	- Do you ever make up parts of the story as you are reading such as voices of the characters talking to each other?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	185
	- Do you think that your child knows it is made up?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	186
41	What do you feel that story reading does most for your child? (please specify below)		<input type="text"/>	190
42	Do you read ABC books with your child?	yes ...1 no ...2	<input type="text"/>	191
43	Do you read or sing nursery rhymes with your child?	yes...1 no...2	<input type="text"/>	192
44	Can your child recite any nursery rhymes?	yes ...1 no ...2	<input type="text"/>	193
	- Can you name any your child recites?		<input type="text"/>	197

Appendix 9: Structured interview protocol for teachers

Emergent literacy in New Zealand : an examination of policy and practices in early childhood centres.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. Emergent literacy means the beginning of literacy ability in young children. I'm doing this research for the degree of Ph.D in Education at Massey University. This questionnaire will look at the reading experiences that our children have in their homes and early childhood centres. Although the research is being carried out in Kindergartens, it is extremely useful to know what literacy experiences the children are bringing with them to centres, and how the programmes and curriculum offered complement that experience. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, so please give honest answers.

You don't have to complete the name section, although I would appreciate knowing which Kindergarten you work for, if any follow up research is done. The page with your name on it will be taken off. Your answers will not have your name on them. I am happy to explain what any questions mean. Thank you for your help.

Claire McLachlan-Smith
Lecturer in Education
Massey University

I hereby agree to having my anonymous responses to this questionnaire included in the results of this research.

Signature of participant

Date

Name and Address (voluntary)

Signature of researcher

Date

Claire McLachlan-Smith

Lecturer in Education

Education Department

Massey University

Phone (06) 356-9099, Ext 8596 or messages to Ext 7477

Part 1 : Personal and family details

1. What year were you born? (please put the year in the boxes provided)	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px; text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>	1	9			4			
1	9								
2. Sex	male ... 1 female ... 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		5					
3. Highest secondary qualification	none ... 1 school cert. ... 2 U. E. ... 3 H. S. C. ... 4 Bursary ... 5 Scholarship ... 6	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		6					
4. Highest University qualification (if applicable)	Bachelors ... 1 Honours ... 2 Masters ... 3 PhD ... 4	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		7					
5. Please list any professional qualifications gained (please specify in writing below. Do not use the boxes provided).		<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>					11		
6. Qualifications for present position. Do not use boxes.		<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>				14			
7. Do you identify yourself as:	European ... 1 Maori ... 2 Pacific islander ... 3 Chinese ... 4 Other ethnic group ... 5 (specify in writing)	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		15					
		<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		16					
8. Number of children in your family (if applicable) - sex of children (number of each sex)	male female	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>							18 20 22
9. Income from present position (approximate)	less than 20,000 ... 1 20 - 30,000 ... 2 30 - 40,000 ... 3 40 - 60,000 ... 4	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		23					

Part 2 : Experience of early childhood education

10. Time spent in teaching in early childhood education in years and months	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>					25 27	
11. How long have you been teaching Kindergarten? - please list any other types of centres that you have taught in	years (specify) months (specify)	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>					29 31
		<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>					35

12	Please give your reason for choosing this early childhood service (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 39																				
13	What do children gain from attending this Kindergarten? (Please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 43																				
14	What is expected of you in this Kindergarten?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 47																				
15	What is expected of parents in this Kindergarten?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 51																				
16	How do children learn in this Kindergarten? Please pick appropriate number(s)	<table border="1"> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>52</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>53</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>54</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>55</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>56</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>57</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>58</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>59</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>60</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>61</td></tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	52	<input type="checkbox"/>	53	<input type="checkbox"/>	54	<input type="checkbox"/>	55	<input type="checkbox"/>	56	<input type="checkbox"/>	57	<input type="checkbox"/>	58	<input type="checkbox"/>	59	<input type="checkbox"/>	60	<input type="checkbox"/>	61
<input type="checkbox"/>	52																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	53																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	54																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	55																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	56																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	57																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	58																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	59																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	60																					
<input type="checkbox"/>	61																					
17	What is the most common type of learning (from Q. 16) that children use?																					
	a) in the home (if known)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 65																				
	b) in the Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 69																				
	c) when learning ideas about literacy?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 73																				
18	What is the most important type of learning from those listed in Q. 16 and why?	<input type="checkbox"/> 74																				
		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 78																				
19	What do you think you should do in helping children learn?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 82																				

20	How do you help children learn language and reading?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	86
21	What do you think parents should do in helping children learn?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	90
22	Is what you do more important than what the parents do?	more ... 1 the same ... 2 less ... 3	<input type="checkbox"/>				91
23	Where do children learn to read?	at home ... 1 at Kindergarten ... 2 other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>				92
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	96
24	What has been the main thing that makes you think ? the way you do about helping children to develop language and literacy development. Please answer this question thinking particularly about Here are a list of possibilities. You may choose more than one.	being a parent ... 1 my own childhood ... 2 education ... 3 reading on the subject ... 4 partners beliefs ... 5 parents ... 6 other (specify) .7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	97
			<input type="checkbox"/>				98
			<input type="checkbox"/>				99
			<input type="checkbox"/>				100
			<input type="checkbox"/>				101
			<input type="checkbox"/>				102
			<input type="checkbox"/>				103
25	How do children develop at this age (3 : 6 to 5 years) Please pick the most important.	through a series of stages ... 1 as part of cultural or family group ... 2 through outside experiences ... 3 other (specify)..4	<input type="checkbox"/>				104
26	How do children learn their language and culture? Please pick most important method.	by watching and listening ... 1 by praise or punishment ... 2 talking with others ... 3 inherited from their parents 4	<input type="checkbox"/>				105

Part 3 : Story reading experience

27	Does anyone read to children in your Kindergarten?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>				106
	- who does the reading?	self ... 1 another teacher ... 2 parent ... 3	<input type="checkbox"/>				107

	other ... 4 (please specify)	<input type="text"/>	111
<hr/>			
- how often?. Approximate times per week		<input type="text"/>	113
<hr/>			
- at what time? (please specify)	morning afternoon	<input type="text"/>	115
		<input type="text"/>	117
<hr/>			
		<input type="text"/>	121
<hr/>			
- how long do the sessions last? Time in minutes		<input type="text"/>	125
<hr/>			
- who selects the book(s)?	teacher... 1 child ... 2 parent 3	<input type="text"/>	126
<hr/>			
28 Where does your Kindergarten get its books?	Own library ... 1 Public library ... 2 homes ... 3 donations 4	<input type="text"/>	127
<hr/>			
29 How many books does your Kindergarten have? Approximate number	less than 20 ... 1 20 - 50 ... 2 50 - 100 ... 3 100 - 200 ... 4 200 -500... 5 more than 500 6	<input type="text"/>	128
<hr/>			
30 Does your Kindergarten have a library system	yes 1 no 2	<input type="text"/>	129
<hr/>			
31 How often are books checked out from the library? (approximate times per month)		<input type="text"/>	131
- who selects the books to be checked out?	teacher 1 child ... 2 parent ... 3	<input type="text"/>	132
- do children have any favourite books?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	133
<hr/>			
32 Give the titles of a few favourites (list below)		<input type="text"/>	139
<hr/>			
		<input type="text"/>	142
- how often do they request them to be read? (approximate number of times per week)		<input type="text"/>	142
- do children ever try to read them themselves?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="text"/>	143
- have children ever said why the book	yes ... 1	<input type="text"/>	144

	is liked so well?	no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	- reasons if any (please list below)		<input type="checkbox"/>	148
<hr/>				
33	Do children ever ask questions while you are reading to them?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	149
	- About what kinds of things does they ask? (you can choose more than one)	the pictures ... 1 characters in the books ... 2 names of letters ... 3 sounds of letters ... 4 written form of words ... 5 meanings of words ... 6 content of stories ... 7 other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157
	- will they ever ask the same question over and over again?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	158
	- Does the same question ever occur in the same place in a book?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	159
	- do you ever ask children to just sit still and listen to the story?	never ... 1 sometimes ... 2 often ... 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	160
	- does they request books to be re-read during the same session?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	161
	- how many times have you re-read one book in one session? Approximate number of times.		<input type="checkbox"/>	163
34	Do children ask questions about books at other times when you are not reading to them?	yes 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	164
	- when? (please specify below)		<input type="checkbox"/>	167
<hr/>				
	- how often?	frequently ... 1 sometimes ... 2 seldom ... 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	168
	- do you try and answer as many as you can?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	169
35	Do children ever copy/trace titles of books or attempt to draw a picture related to stories that have been read?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	170
	- aspects of books that are traced/copied (specify below)		<input type="checkbox"/>	174
<hr/>				
<hr/>				

	- kinds of pictures drawn (specify below)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	178
36	Have you ever heard children use words that you feel come from the books that you have read?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>				179
	- examples (please list below)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	183
37	Have you ever heard children use language in play that sounds like it comes from a book?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>				184
	- examples (please list below)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	188
38	When you are reading to children, do you feel like they know you are saying the written words?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>				189
	- Do you ever make up parts of the story as you are reading such as voices of the characters talking to each other?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>				190
	- Do you think that children know it is made up?	yes ... 1 no ... 2	<input type="checkbox"/>				191
39	What do you feel that story reading does most for children? (Please specify below)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	195
40	Do you ever read ABC books with children?	yes ...1 no ...2	<input type="checkbox"/>				196
41	Do you read or sing nursery rhymes with children?	yes ...1 no ...2	<input type="checkbox"/>				197
42	Can children in your Kindergarten recite any nursery rhymes?	yes ...1 no ...2	<input type="checkbox"/>				198
43	Can you name any that you have heard children recite recently?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	202
44	Do you ever play language games with the children?	yes ...1 no ...2	<input type="checkbox"/>				203
	Please give some examples:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	207
45	Does your Kindergarten have any plastic letters?	yes ...1	<input type="checkbox"/>				208

	no ...2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
-Can children recognise the letters of the alphabet?	yes ...1	<input type="checkbox"/>	209
	no ...2		
-Do children ever attempt to spell with these letters?	yes ...1	<input type="checkbox"/>	210
	no ...2		
-Do children ever attempt to write anything that looks like words/	yes ...1	<input type="checkbox"/>	211
	no ...2		
46 Do children ever recognise signs or labels?	yes ...1	<input type="checkbox"/>	212
	no ...2		
Please name any signs that children often "read"			
<hr/>			
47 Are there any other language and reading activities that you do with children? (please specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>	216
		<input type="checkbox"/>	220
<hr/>			
48 Do you ever use any of the following reading items in your Kindergarten?			
	newspapers...1	<input type="checkbox"/>	221
	magazines...2	<input type="checkbox"/>	222
	recipe books...3	<input type="checkbox"/>	223
	instructions...4	<input type="checkbox"/>	224
	bible....5	<input type="checkbox"/>	225
	cheque books...6	<input type="checkbox"/>	226
	toy packets...7	<input type="checkbox"/>	227
	food packets...8	<input type="checkbox"/>	228
	grocery lists...9	<input type="checkbox"/>	229
	other (specify)10	<input type="checkbox"/>	230
<hr/>			
49 Do children like to help you use any of the above items (from Q.47)?		<input type="checkbox"/>	240

Appendix 10 : Available print in K1

Books	900 books in inventory 50 books for parents on shelves 38 books on shelf -nature, nursery rhyme and stories 15 books about boats on low table 5 books on ocean life at nature table
Communications	adult authored messages for teachers adult authored messages for parent helpers adult authored messages for adults - fire and earthquake drills adult authored messages for parents - value of activities, notice boards adult authored bilingual songs adult authored songs and rhymes adult authored stories on children's artwork adult authored bilingual messages for parents - proverbs child hand written name on artwork
Lists	Sign up : Burger buggy Summary : "the keeper of the aviary gave us these feathers" Reference : alphabet list maori number list morning children name list locker lists with pictures to correspond to lockers
Directions	"Wash your hands"
Schedules	Programme board - focus for next two weeks
Labels	Identification: musical instruments board with shapes fish tank labelled "Tom" labelled seabirds in English and maori "Scott cut out these pictures" Organisation: afternoon children's names on wall morning/afternoon boxes for paintings magnetic names of children on fridge
Writing materials	plastic letters staples hole punches crayons marker pens cloth (curtaining) sewing needles scissors collage materials - food boxes, cardboard packages, container lids, magazines, newspapers computer paper paper stapled to a tale with marker pens

Appendix 11 : Available print in K2

Books	parents - 50 on the shelf 162 books on shelves -traditional stories, translations into maori, some nature 22 insect and nature books 5 new books on the piano
Communications	adult hand written songs adult authored bilingual posters adult written bilingual songs adult authored messages for parents - philosophy of Kindergarten, notice boards, strategic plan and outlines of activities
Lists	Sign up - rosters for animals, parent help, picking up children Reference - bilingual adult authored alphabet/number lists, locker lists
Directions	process cooking recipes directions for use of process cooking "Look under the leaves" on the nature table book club rules personal directions "Wash your hands"
Schedules	daily notice board weekly focus
Labels	Identification : labelled bilingual number puzzles labelled pictures of insects and birds big books labelled boxes of clothes in bathroom lost property name labels on animal cages Organization: children's names on magnetic board shapes of blocks on shelf name labelled pockets for library cards morning/afternoon box for paintings
Writing materials	coloured pencils erasers marker pens thick crayons stamps scissors needles hole punch cardboard coloured card rolls of paper glue pots recycled materials - boxes, fabric, tinfoil envelopes

Appendix 12 : Available print in K3

Books	25 books on books/puzzles table about families 450 books on bookshelf
Communications	adult written stories on children's artwork child authored paintings child or adult written self portraits adult authored messages to parents - about value of activities, notice boards, philosophy adult authored bilingual songs adult authored songs/rhymes adult authored bilingual greetings
Lists	Sign up: bird roster parent help Reference: maori number list maori alphabet list
Directions	Fire and earthquake drills process cooking charts
Schedules	
Labels	"please close the door" fire exit lost property adult's toilet "Roland our bird" labelled picture of tree with whakapapa, ancestors, our roots, cultures, our heritage attached
Writing materials	pots of paint crayons (for writing names on paintings) large crayons small crayons pencils acrylic paints pots of glue pallets of paint sponge paints scissors chalk sellotape container (empty) stapler collage materials

Appendix 13: Available print in K4

Books	26 on outside shelf 68 on bookshelf by sofa 63 in Home library 3 on piano 50 on parent shelf (778 in inventory)
Communications	adult authored messages for parents - value of activities, notice boards adult authored bilingual songs adult authored songs child paintings with child's writing
Lists	parent help name tags on magnetic board
Directions	Process cooking charts -popcorn, cracker treat, muesli, porridge, Recipes - basic dough, silky dough, cornflour dough "look at our spring blossoms" Fire instructions
Schedules	Weekly plan Music plan
Labels	labelled boxes of process cooking ingredients labelled information on tomato plant labelled tree 'Our Kindergarten tree - our roots, our heritage, our culture' "whakapapa = ancestors" Parent information Parent help Home visiting Staff Fire exit When I'm a child these are the things I can do Welcome to our Kindergarten weekly plan If you have any constructive comments please share them with us
Writing materials	marker pens fat crayons, thin crayons, pastels fluoro paints, pallet paints, pots of paint glue scissors staplers coloured pencils rulers snips big brushes A3 paper and cardboard stamps computer paper black and coloured paper rolls of paper banking forms collage materials

Appendix 14 : Available print in K5

Books	43 books 15 parent books 200 in inventory
Communications	adult authored messages to parents - value of activities, notice board, philosophy adult authored bilingual songs adult authored songs/rhymes
Lists	Record: song list - 26 songs on list Reference: maori number list locker list donation board with children's names
Directions	Play dough recipe
Schedules	"focus of the rest of the term will be living things"
Labels	"welcome to Kindergarten" (multi lingual greeting) labelled pictures of dinosaurs picture of the body, labelled in maori labelled pictures of NZ insects and moths "how a runner bean grows" "What can you see?" labelled lens with a bug underneath blocks = poro rakau nature = paptuanuku clay = uku books = korero pukapuka painting = ta peita puzzles = raruraru
Writing materials	marker pens coloured chalk hole punch coloured pencils crayons string rolled paper coloured shapes collage materials

Appendix 15 : Available print in K6

Books	<p>book of child authored self portraits 412 books on book shelf 19 books on display in puzzle area/music corner 8 dinosaur books 2 big books by parents' library 46 parent books 10 books in the quiet room 1 amazing dinosaur book</p>
Communications	<p>adult authored songs adult authored bilingual songs adult authored messages for parents - value of activities, notice boards</p>
Lists	<p>Sign up : washing list Reference : maori/English vocab list donation list labelled with children's names coloured code for library book type - eg green = nature/science bilingual weather list bilingual greeting list maori number list maori alphabet list</p>
Directions	<p>parent library fire earthquake instructions use of library "Look at these pictures. Do you know what these reptiles are called?" process cooking recipe chart guidelines for outside teacher</p>
Schedules	<p>outlines of activities - art and craft, cooking, dough, cooking, dough, outside, language, music, songs, science and maths</p>
Labels	<p>ta = paint pepa = paper pa katio = fridge heketua = toilet magnetic name tags on a table labelled boxes of resources eg pallet paints welcome what do we do voluntary donations parent library lost property tree with labels - examples of good behaviour labels of nice behaviour from children hanging from wheel on ceiling "Our budgie's name is Paul" "Your next meeting is .." "Committee notes"</p>
Writing materials	<p>scissors chalk crayons pastels hole punches sieves 14 different types of paper collage materials in baskets</p>