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Kindergarten **Bulk Funding**

**Teacher and parent perceptions of
Salary Bulk Funding and its effects
on the quality of care and education
provided by kindergartens.**

A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education at Massey
University.

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ABSTRACT

Bulk Funding of teachers' salaries was introduced into the New Zealand kindergarten system on 1 March 1992. This thesis focusses on the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding this new government policy, and its effects on the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens. This case study documents the experiences of parents and teachers of five kindergartens during the first 18 months following the introduction of Bulk Funding. The purpose has been to gather high validity, qualitative data. Most of the data was gathered by interviewing, but a Likert rating scale was also used to measure changes in factors that contribute to "quality" in the centres.

Overall, Bulk Funding has produced a range of effects — some negative and some positive. In order to maintain quality, the workload of some teachers and some mothers has increased. These women hold misgivings about the present and future level of funding for kindergartens, and about the on-going commitment and support from the state towards kindergartens. In an effort to retain their present level of quality some centres are asking for increased funding from their parents. This response may lead to differences in quality between centres, with those in low socio-economic areas disadvantaged.

The findings are discussed in light of previous literature and research; and within a socialist feminist perspective, and suggestions made for future research within this gendered area of the education system.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On Budget night 1991, the National Government announced its intention to introduce bulk funding to New Zealand Free Kindergartens from 1 February 1992.

This thesis sets out to document people's perception of the policy of Bulk Funding and evaluate its effects on the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens. It is a qualitative study concentrating on the experiences of a small number of kindergartens. The aim of the research is to gather information at the "grassroots" level - from kindergarten parents and teachers and to examine the relationship of funding to the level of quality in early childhood care and education within a socialist feminist theoretical framework.

What is Bulk Funding?

Bulk Funding is a new way of delivering teachers' salaries. It was officially introduced to the kindergarten service on 1 March 1993. Traditionally kindergarten teachers have been paid directly by the Ministry of Education through a central payroll system with each board of management (or "association" in the case of many kindergarten boards) receiving an operational grant to help with the running expenses of kindergartens. Under Bulk Funding each kindergarten association receives "grant-in-aid" which is managed solely by that association and intended to cover both the wages and operational costs. The funding incorporates "the National Appointments Scheme Grant to the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union (NZFKU), the former Operational grant paid to associations, the funding for kindergarten teachers' salaries, the funding for Senior Teachers' salaries and also the special funding for Mobile Pre-School Units." (NZFKU,1993,p.5). Staffing costs in early childhood account for approximately 80% of the overall budget (NZFKU Memorandum,1991).

Background to Bulk Funding

Bulk Funding is an outcome of a host of government reviews, reports and educational reforms that began with the 1988 *Education to be More Report* (the Meade Report) followed by the 1988 *Before Five* policy document. The fourth Labour government (1984-1990) intended these policies to standardise government funding arrangements and establish quality standards for all early childhood service providers. Kindergartens have traditionally received more government funding than other services and to a certain extent were held as a benchmark of quality. As the Meade Report stated:

"Since kindergarten is currently funded at a higher level than other services, and given the criteria for quality that the working party has agreed on, it follows that the level of Bulk Funding should be set at a higher rate still. This will provide for the necessary improvements in the kindergarten service as well as establishing an adequate funding base for other services." (p.vii)

For this reason the Meade report recommended a Bulk Funding rate of \$3.50 per child per hour to maintain kindergartens' level of income and quality. Any rate below this, if maintained, would be a backward step in early childhood care and education. Even \$3.50 per child hour was seen as insufficient to improve staffing ratios - identified as essential to attain the level of quality the Meade report saw as "necessary" for early childhood education. But when Bulk Funding was introduced it was far below the recommended rate, at an average rate of \$2.86 per child hour. The state referred to Bulk Funding as a positive step. For example a Ministry of Education circular (14 February 1992) contended it was "part of a policy direction which seeks to improve the operating environment of educational institutions leading to improved opportunities for children" and that these "new opportunities offered by self-management will assist the overall enhancement of educational achievement."

These are indeed worthy aims, and will be evaluated in the discussion of this thesis. In the light of the clear warnings about the dangers of reducing overall funding, it is important to identify what has actually happened since the introduction of Bulk Funding. The purpose of this research is to identify the effects of the policy on the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens, as measured against the literature, and to establish the perception of the Bulk Funding policy by parents and teachers.

Because kindergartens are grounded in the work of women - as teachers and as mothers - a socialist feminist framework is used to discuss the impact of the policy itself, and its likely effects on these women. For example, given that many women are already rendered subordinate within a gendered capitalist society, Bulk Funding may serve to consolidate these women's position as unpaid or low paid workers within the sexual division of labour. Chapter Two explains the concepts of socialist feminism and applies them within a contextual background of the whole issue of Bulk Funding.

Another concept underpinning this research is "quality". In particular, has kindergarten quality changed in any way since the introduction of Bulk Funding and can this be attributed to Bulk Funding? An operational definition of "quality", as documented in the literature, is developed in Chapter Three, and factors which are seen to contribute to a quality preschool programme, such as ratios, group size, the kindergarten programme and staff working conditions, are discussed.

Chapter Four outlines the methodology of the research. As yet there is little knowledge about the effects of Bulk Funding on the kindergarten system in New Zealand, which makes the case study approach an appropriate method of exploring "new ground". Qualitative data (Dixon, et. al.,1987) can be gathered which, while providing valuable information in itself, can also generate ideas for further research (Herbert,1990,p.19).

Chapter Five presents the overall findings of the research. A summary of the data gathered is made at the end of each section. Chapter Six analyses and discusses this data in light of New Right ideology and socialist feminism. The last chapter concludes the thesis and suggests ideas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to provide a context for and conceptual background to the issue of salary Bulk Funding. Socialist feminist theory is used to discuss the New Right ideological and political direction of the state since 1984, and to explore the impact of government policies on kindergarten teachers and mothers. The experiences of this group of women are discussed within a gendered, class-based societal framework.

Firstly the position and experiences of women within kindergartens in New Zealand is discussed. Secondly the theory and concepts of socialist feminism are explained. Thirdly the ideological and political direction of the state regarding early childhood education and particularly the kindergarten service is explored. Fourthly the effects of Bulk Funding are discussed in light of the experiences of women working in kindergartens, and the recent educational reforms.

Women, Kindergartens and Change

The provision of cheap and accessible quality early childhood education is an important issue for many women in New Zealand. As Alison Jaggar (1983,p.318) contends struggles for "the control over and in what circumstances women bear and rear children" are part of the process of women regaining control over their lives. The availability of cheap and accessible early childhood education enables women to make choices about their own lives, rather than be continually controlled by the physical and emotional needs of their children. For example they may want to work in the paid workforce or simply need "time-out" from the demands of child-rearing. Because of the expansion of industrial capitalism in the twentieth century, leading to urbanisation and the breakdown of the extended family, Jaggar believes (1983,p.312) that motherhood for many women has become a demanding, isolating and lonely experience. At the same time, she sees these women are under increasing pressure to be "good" mothers. For example, to be kind and nurturing and to use

child-rearing practices appropriate to the times. The role of the early childhood teacher has evolved as an extension of this nurturing and caring role of mothers. (Finkelstein,1988)

Kindergartens are the largest provider of early childhood services in New Zealand. 1991 statistics (Ministry of Education,1992) show there are 578 kindergartens catering for 44,363 children. This accounts for over a third of all early childhood enrolments. As well as providing care and education for many of our 3 and 4 year olds, kindergartens give affordable respite for many mothers from the stress and responsibilities of parenting. For parents, it is cheap compared to many other early childhood services. Although a voluntary donation is asked of about \$1 per 3 hour session (Wylie,1993,p.12) it has traditionally been a "free" service that doesn't demand fees from parents and caregivers. Kindergartens can also provide a very female and supportive environment for mothers to meet and help each other. Teachers are employed to promote children's development and to provide support to families. The kindergarten system has always been noticeably "female" — 99% of kindergarten teachers are women (Slyfield,1990,p.4) and mothers have been an integral part of the service since it was established over a hundred years ago. Over that time the kindergarten movement has been "the work of committee ladies, of teachers and students, all of whom until fairly recently were women, the work of mothers." (Hughes,1989,p.39)

The range of early childhood services in New Zealand has traditionally been fragmented. For example, childcare was under the jurisdiction of the Social Welfare Department, where the emphasis was on care and welfare of children rather than education. In contrast kindergartens were part of the "educational" system under the Ministry of Education. In 1988 state policy decisions (*Education to be More Report*, 1988, *Before Five*, 1988) directed at early childhood brought all the service providers under the one "umbrella" of the Ministry of Education. At this time there was also increasing recognition of early childhood as a valuable service which has a positive effect on young children and their development. The government supported and promoted this shift in attitude by establishing quality assurance standards (*Early Childhood Standards*,1990) and providing resources to allow service providers to meet these standards. The newly established Educational Review Office performed the function of monitoring these standards, which were required for all centres receiving government funding.

Yet contradictions emerged amid these seemingly positive policies. Throughout the Labour term of office (1984-1990), and with the election of the National government in 1990, government policy was influenced strongly by "New Right" ideology. The New Right advocated less state expenditure and responsibility in education and increased privatisation and competition between educational institutions (Lauder,1991, Snook,1991). The National government's commitment to the level of support and responsibility for young children was steadily reduced through policy changes. For example the *Economic and Social Initiative* in December 1990 announced seventeen reviews of education - four of these specifically in early childhood education and with the aim of identifying savings that could be made in areas such as staffing levels, funding and qualifications of staff.

For kindergartens, one of the outcomes of this New Right approach has been the introduction of Bulk Funding of teachers' salaries. As outlined in the introductory chapter, the government has promoted Bulk Funding as "part of a policy direction which seeks to improve the operating environment of educational institutions leading to improved opportunities for children" (Ministry of Education circular, 14 February 1992). But it is questionable whether Bulk Funding will deliver these improvements when funding of \$2.86 per child per hour is far below the 1988 minimum recommended level of \$3.50 per child per hour (1988, *Education to be More Report*) needed to maintain existing quality in kindergartens.

For kindergartens, the level of funding impinges on a variety of factors. For example it determines the qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff that can be employed, the amount of voluntary labour that is needed, the development and maintenance of the physical environment and the daily resourcing of the programme. These factors combine to affect the day to day experiences of not only children, but the women who are such a large part of this educational sector. For it is, by and large, the mothers in kindergartens who are required to provide their unpaid labour, or to fundraise for services or improvements. It is the teachers who are required to work for lowest wages of any educational group. As Finkelstein so aptly describes it: "the guardians of children under five are among the lowest paid, least valued, lowest-status workers in the social structure" (1988,p.10).

The socialist feminist view provides a conceptual framework to understand and explain this "lowly" position of women in society. These concepts are also useful to illuminate the results of the research, particularly in relation to the work of women in kindergartens.

Socialist Feminism Theory

Socialist feminism provides a framework which explains how unequal relationships based on social class, gender and race are maintained and reproduced in society. It builds on the ideas of Marxism, (inequalities between social classes based on capitalist relations of production) with those of radical feminism, (oppression and exploitation of women caused by the patriarchal structure of society). The dimension of race is often included in this combination resulting in a rather complex intersection of class, patriarchy and race¹.

Socialist feminism has an emancipatory focus. As Kathleen Weiler points out (1988,p.5-6) socialist feminism "rests on a critical view of the existing society, arguing that the society is both exploitative and oppressive, but also capable of being changed. "Change is based on "the need for both individual empowerment and social transformation."

The following section explains and clarifies different aspects of socialist feminism. Firstly the theory of Karl Marx will be briefly outlined before introducing Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Socialist feminism draws upon this Marxist perspective in its approach to the concept of patriarchy, and to develop the concepts of the sexual division of labour and the reserve army of labour - concepts that explain how gendered inequalities are created and reproduced so effectively, and how they continue to disadvantage women in society.

Marxism

Marx analysed the social inequalities of capitalist, industrial societies. His theory was based on the concept of historical materialism (Johnson,1990,p.305). Marx positioned the "material" existence of all individuals in society into one of two social classes, depending on their relationship to the "means of production" - either the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) who own the means of production and whose wealth is made from the profits of this production, or the proletariat (working class) who provide their labour to the capitalists in return for a wage (Middleton,1989,p.177)

1 Race and ethnicity has not been developed as a component of this research so are not addressed in this discussion.

Marx contended that the relationship between these classes is essentially antagonistic and based on conflict (Giddens,1989,p.10). He argued that capitalists hold the means to create power and wealth while the workers are comparatively powerless and vulnerable to the economic exploitation of their labour by the capitalists. The capitalists use their economic power and wealth to reinforce and expand their position - always trying to extract surplus value from the worker. Because of their wealth and power the bourgeoisie also have control of the institutions of society - political, social and ideological - which can be manipulated to reinforce their own position and to dominate and exploit the working class.

Marx also developed the concept of the reserve army of labour (Johnson,1990,p.307). He saw this as a pool of workers without paid employment who could be called upon to fill a need in the paid labour market at any time. For example, unemployed workers fill this role - being available to fill short term labour requirements such as casual or seasonal work or meet the needs of employers for longer-term contract employment. Having a reserve army of labour is in the interests of the capitalists as they have a "ready" supply of workers to use when necessary, but whose work can also be terminated when they are no longer required. This fits capitalists' needs for a responsive and flexible workforce.

This description of Marxism is brief and paints a rather simplistic picture of a class of workers passively accepting their exploitation from the capitalists. But this isn't so. Society and the interrelations within it are dynamic and complex. The Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci attempted to understand why the workers "consciousness" allowed them to be exploited like this. He developed the concept of hegemony to explain how the "ruling class" or capitalist class legitimatised and maintained their dominant position.

Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony

Gramsci maintained that a dominant social class can control society in two ways. Firstly by using external, obvious methods of control such as the physical force of the police or military, and secondly and much more subtly, by using internal methods of control. It is this latter method which constitutes "hegemony". Nicola Armstrong (1989,p.3) describes this as the process by which the "consent to state power" can be fostered and the "way in which groups representing particular interests seek to bring other groups and individuals over to their way of thinking and then create the new unity through sharing a common world view". Joseph Femia explains how hegemony is maintained.

"through the myriad of ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly or indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures whereby men perceive and evaluate problematic reality. Moreover this ideological superiority must have solid economic roots: 'if hegemony is ethico-political, it must also be economic, it must also have its foundation in the decisive function that the leading group exercised in the decisive nucleus of economic activity'." (1981,p.24)

So while institutions of society are used by the ruling class to disseminate ideology, their economic policy and practice must also appear solid and credible.

Hegemony is a form of ideological persuasion. Ideology refers to the "system of ideas, beliefs, fundamental commitments, or values" (Apple,1979,p.20) that groups of people have about their world and which gives them a framework, or an epistemological base to help them understand and interpret their world in a meaningful way. Everyone has their own mental view of society and how it fits together. This includes how it functions economically, socially and politically. Ideologies guide all aspects of people's lives influencing such things as what to wear, what to eat, how to behave and what to believe. Ideologies are "part of our everyday life and embodied in the communal modes of living and acting" (Simon,1985,p.79). They are also institutionalised within organisations in society, for example the church, the media and schools. The state has a major role in the institutionalisation of ideology. It controls many of the major institutions such as the health service, the education system and social welfare and it uses its planning and decision-making power to determine state policy which is implemented by the state's institutions. The policies of the state are largely determined by the ideology of the dominant group in society. The dominant class in society uses its economic, social and political power plus its control over the ideas of society to maintain its position and its hegemonic power. Hegemony is a domination by consent - occurring in a persuasive, civilised, rather indirect and unconscious way.

Gramsci noted the way different people assimilate new ideas into their world view. Some people readily adopt the ideas articulated by influential spokespeople. As Kathleen Weiler (1988) points out

"Gramsci argues that in any society certain individuals will serve what is essentially an ideological function of articulating and transmitting the dominant ideas that justify the social, economic, and political structure of that society." (p.13)

But many individuals and groups will not automatically adopt new ideas. They will resist and contest the dominant ideology. As Weiler explains (1988,p.12) "a closer reading reveals an insistence in Gramsci's work on the power of individuals to contest hegemonic control and the resultant need for dominant classes to struggle and reimpose a hegemony in constant danger of being resisted and contested by subordinate classes". Connell (1993) sees hegemony as "ascendancy achieved within a balance of forces, that is, a state of play. Other groups are subordinated rather than eliminated" (p.184).

Hegemonic ideas are used by the ruling class to bind the society together into a cohesive whole, attempting to achieve a state of consensus. Yet hegemony is not static, but continually changing to meet the challenges of the society. Gramsci sees every person as shaped and moulded by hegemonic ideas. But as Raymond Williams (1976) contends

"We have to emphasise that hegemony is not singular; indeed that its own internal structures are highly complex and have continually to be renewed, recreated and defended; and by the same token, that they can be continually challenged and in certain respects modified." (p.204-206)

Given the need by the ruling class for support and legitimation of its ideas and policies, this thesis will be looking at the perception of teachers and parents to the policy of Bulk Funding. In particular it will be relevant to identify and examine any process of resistance and contestation, as the respondents are confronted with a new funding system. It will also be appropriate to note if individual parents and teachers have accepted Bulk Funding and incorporated it into their own ideological and epistemological framework.

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism draws on Marxism to develop a theoretical framework which addresses the specific experiences of women in society. Many feminists argue (Johnson,1990,p.304) that Marxism has failed to understand the specific experiences of women in capitalist societies. While Marxism regards the oppression of women, or the power of patriarchy, as the result of class conflict within a capitalist society, in reality it occurs in both non-capitalist and capitalist societies. Alison Jagger (1983) describes the material basis of socialist feminism:

"In investigating the fundamental causes of women's oppression, socialist feminists have developed a conception of material base as that set of relations which structures the production and reproduction of the necessities of daily life, the production of people, including the production of sexuality, as well as the production of goods and services. In the socialist feminist view, these relations are simultaneously capitalist and male-dominant, and both aspects must be changed to liberate women." (p.136)

Socialist feminists are concerned with the relationship of women to production - mainly women's position in the paid and unpaid workforce and their reproduction of the workforce by the bearing and rearing of children. For example women are overwhelmingly concentrated in the low status and low paid positions in the workforce and in the unpaid work of rearing children in the home. The nurturing and care of children (the future paid workers of society) has also become women's role. This, socialist feminists say, has little to do with any innate biological ability, rather it is an ascribed gendered role. It is argued that the biological differences between men and women, in essence women's child-bearing ability, have been used by men to develop an ideological and social construct about gender differences. These ideas keep women in a subordinate and comparatively powerless position. Because it is only women who can carry and breastfeed the young, an ideology of the female archetype has been constructed. Catherine MacKinnon (1982) describes the feminine stereotype thus:

"Contemporary industrial society's version of her is docile, soft, passive, nurturant, vulnerable, weak, narcissistic, childlike, incompetent, masochistic, and domestic, made for child care, home care, and husband care." (p.16)

Heterosexuality and the institution of marriage add to this position for women, contributing to the ideas that women are there to service and meet the needs of men.

Socialist feminists see a clear link between the oppression of women and the needs of the capitalist society. For example the sexual division of labour, where women remain over-represented in lower paid and unpaid jobs, works to maintain and reproduce a capitalist society. As Rosemary Deem (1978) points out:

"the role of women in doing the unpaid labour of nurturing, feeding, and caring for the material needs of children is not a reflection of some innate "women's nature", but is part of the existing social division of labour in capitalism. This arrangement may

not be inevitable in capitalist societies, but in the present organisation of capitalism, it is central to the reproduction of the workforce." (cited by Weiler,1988,p.35)

The reproduction of the sexual division of labour is propped up ideologically by the dominant social class. This is Marx's "capitalist class" or Gramsci's "ruling class" which is characterised by power and wealth. It is commonly men, rather than women, who occupy such positions. Ideologically, the male is seen as an active member of the paid workforce, dynamic and powerful, while the female belongs in the unpaid workforce, in a more passive role in the home, supporting and nurturing children and husband. Emphasis on paid work in capitalist societies ignores the value of unpaid labour in the home and the community, for example of women in kindergartens. The terms "public" and "private" are used (Cox & James,1987) to describe the division separating men and women's worlds.

"The production of goods, on which a capitalist economy rests, takes place in the public sphere; the provision of food, shelter and human maintenance - without which the capitalist production cannot continue - takes place in the private sphere.....It is widely accepted that men belong primarily to the public and women to the private sphere." (Cox & James,1987,p.1)

Underpinning the public and private division is an ideology of the cult of domesticity, as Katherine Saville-Smith (1987) explains:

"The state vests in women the guardianship of social morality by virtue of their mother-wife role, the ability 'to raise well-adjusted children and manage efficient households'. Women's moral authority is founded on women's 'natural' purity and selflessness. These in turn are associated with, first, sexual continence and, secondly, with a subordination of women's individual desires to those of their husbands and children." (p.204)

Within patriarchal social relations it is women, more than men, who have to link the public and private spheres. Rosemary Novitz (1988,p.25) asserts it is women who adjust their hours of paid work to fit in with the children, the school, the kindergarten. "They link their households to the local community through Plunket, playcentre and kindergarten committees and their voluntary work in schools." The over-representation of women as early childhood and primary school teachers can be seen as a continuity of women's work as mothers, nurturers and carers. These roles of womanhood also model acceptable career

futures for them. What Dale Spender in her book "Invisible Women: the Schooling Scandal" (1982) identifies as ideas perpetuating images of marriage, domesticity and child-rearing as fulfilling for girls.

Women also make up a convenient reserve army of labour for the capitalist class. They are a pool of labour power which can be "called up" or utilised when the market needs them and similarly pushed back into the domestic sphere of the home when they are no longer needed. They fill the labour market needs by providing part-time, short-term and seasonal work. In the kindergarten system the reserve army of labour is essentially filled by mothers. They provide the cheapest labour of all - as voluntary workers. They traditionally support their kindergartens for no wages, working mainly at committee level, during the session-time with children and fund raising. Mothers are a readily accessible workforce with a vested interest in the welfare of their children and their kindergarten.

This thesis will be examining the changes teachers and parents feel have occurred since the introduction of Bulk Funding. Socialist feminism provides a framework to examine the position of these women, as both paid and unpaid workers, in the sexual division of labour. In light of the availability of mothers as a reserve army of labour, this concept will also be explored.

The State

Central to the lives of these women, but often unrecognised, is the powerful role of the state. The state has the public mandate and the power to decide the economic and social direction of our society. It has control over many of the processes and institutions of society, through making laws in Parliament, running government ministries and departments and the judicial system (Armstrong, 1989, p.2). In essence the state is the "ruling class" in New Zealand situated somewhere between the capitalist elites (in New Zealand represented by groups such as the Business Roundtable and Employers Federation) and its own relative autonomy. However Gerald Grace (1987) warns of the danger of oversimplifying the state, for example as an "omniscient planner and controller" or as a "single power entity" (p.196). He describes the complexities of relations within the state regarding education:

"If the state in education is understood not as a single and unified entity but as a set of 'agencies, departments, tiers and levels, each with their own rules and resources

and often with varying purposes', then it becomes possible not only to avoid conspiratorial explanations but also to trace the dynamics of state action in different historical periods." (p.196)

By the same token, women as a group cannot simply be viewed as a unified and cohesive group, for example, they are made up of different social classes, racial groups, occupations, and religions. Their life experiences are diverse and varied. So even though an analysis at this level requires a certain amount of generalisation about women as a group, in reality they are not homogeneous. They do not collectively react and respond to government policy in a unified way. Paid workers with a shared union, such as the Combined Early Childhood Workers of Aotearoa (CECUA) have an avenue to voice their opinion. but mothers in the home are generally unrepresented at state policy level.

Government policies are also finely balanced between advantaging and disadvantaging women. As Nicola Armstrong (1989) argues, the state has a dual and contradictory role regarding women. On the one hand it tends to reflect the "interests of capital and men" and continues in the subordination of women. On the other hand Sharp and Broomhill (1988) see that the state gives women the means to

"achieve equality of opportunity through the state's welfare provisions, education and employment policies. The state thus maintains women's dependency within the family and reinforces their position as unpaid workers and providers of welfare services to the family and community, at the same time as it erodes the basis of the dependency of women on men, through, for example, the provision of an alternative source of income." (p1, cited in Nicola Armstrong,1989,p.4)

This balancing act by the state, to meet the needs of women on the one hand and yet also to exploit women's position as unpaid and low paid workers, is part of the process of hegemonic control by the dominant decision-makers in the state. Above all though, the state is a powerful shaping force for women. As Saville-Smith (1988) says:

"The policies of the state impinge on our everyday lives and consequently we are all engaged in 'coping' with the state. To do this consciously or unconsciously we analyse the state, we try to make 'sense' of it" (p.193)

This thesis now discusses the state restructuring of early childhood education to provide a contextual backdrop to the whole issue of Bulk Funding. It is important to see Bulk Funding not just as an isolated policy, but as part of the process of the institutionalisation of a "New Right" ideology by dominant ruling groups. The next section uses a socialist feminist perspective to discuss the dominant state ideology and a range of state policies regarding early childhood education of which Bulk Funding is a part.

New Right Ideology

The Fourth Labour government was elected to power in 1984. They brought a new ideological framework for New Zealand, called the "New Right" which was seen as the answer to the economic woes of the nation. Although claiming to be fair and equitable to all members of society, in essence the ideas of the New Right reflect the interests of men of the capitalist class. This new ideology, which drives the state politically, socially and economically is based on male experiences and values generally associated with male capitalism.

Anne-Marie O'Neill (1992,p.46) identifies the New Right ideology as "a restatement of the basic tenets of classical political and economic liberalism. The belief in individual competition, a reduced and controlled role for the state and the maximisation of the market." Also known as libertarianism or neoliberalism, the New Right is characterised firstly by policy and ideology that discourages government intervention. Secondly it believes "the superiority of market mechanisms to ensure economic prosperity and the maximisation of individual freedom. Market forces should be allowed to operate as widely as possible within a social order that is understood to be capable of almost total self-regulation." (O'Neill,1992,p.46) This ideology was supported strongly by the Minister of Finance, Treasury, the State Services Commission and the powerful Business Roundtable. It characterised the whole term of the Labour reign (1984-90) and the following National government (1990 -).

The New Right has all the ingredients of a capitalist economic philosophy - a free market approach leading to increased competition, leading in turn to increased efficiency and standards resulting in greater success and profit. This approach has been extended into the educational arena. The New Right, as articulated by the Treasury's 1987 Brief to the Incoming Government Papers argues that past government intervention into education has resulted in "the system's capture by its teachers, its massive inefficiency, its facilitation of

middle class success and its failure to provide equality of educational opportunity" (O'Neill,1992,p.46) A market-driven education system, it was argued, would more fairly represent the needs of the community (including those of women and racial minorities). For example, parents would have more choice of schools, these schools would then become competitive to attract students, and this competition would improve standards. Education under the New Right, is seen to be of benefit to the individual (rather than for the well-being of society) so therefore students or their parents should pay a cost for their education. Treasury (1987) made it clear that the cost for early childhood education should not be with the state but with the parents whom they saw primarily benefit from it.

It was also clear that the state wanted a cheap labour source of teachers to care for the nations young. For example Treasury (1987) challenged the rationale behind early childhood care and education services, and questioned the validity of training for preschool teachers. As Lauder (1991) pointed out Treasury saw the "improved training of early childhood workers will simply lead to their "professionalisation" thus bidding up the price of their services" (1991,p.12)

The ideas of the New Right, such as competition, choice, efficiency, and profit are based on male experiences. They are descriptors associated with men's careers and business in the public sphere of the paid workforce (Evetts,1994). They are part of the cult of male "success" in society, where men are portrayed as powerful, dynamic and rational. Children, under this New Right regime, are openly referred to in economic terms. For example, in questioning the assumption that the state has a responsibility to subsidise childcare Treasury (1987) talked of having children as "an irrational desire" and a "net loss". Sue Middleton comments that

“The desire to have children is irrational in terms to Treasury’s market-liberal assumptions about the nature of humanity. Having children can deny (patriarchal nuclear) families greater income ‘and the material benefits that can provide’. In other words, social and personal worth is measured by the acquisitive individual’s production and consumption of wealth. Giving this up for dependency would therefore be irrational.” (Middleton,1990,p.86-7.

Early childhood teachers and mothers are effectively disadvantaged and isolated by such a New Right model. As socialist feminism proposes, the idea of "success" for women still revolves around the needs of children and families (MacKinnon,1982) which is an

extension of their gendered role as society's nurturers and carers associated with the private sphere of the home. Within the New Right model the work of these women is rendered invisible. After all, in the view of Treasury, having and rearing children is irrational (Middleton,1990). There is no financial reward or profit for a efficient mother and housewife. The networks between women, whether in the home or in kindergartens, have necessarily developed as supportive and cooperative.

Kindergartens in New Zealand are grounded in the tradition of women working selflessly and responsibly together for the good of children (Hughes,1989). This model is contradictory to the New Right which seems to be based on capitalistic economic theory rather than any educational rationale. From 1984 Treasury had an increasing say in the ideological direction of the country, including the future of education, as Lauder, Wylie & Parker-Taunoa (1990) explain.

"In education, as in other spheres of policy making, the major New Right intellectual impetus for change was coming from Treasury which established a blueprint for the future of New Zealand education at the end of 1987. It embraced all the shibboleths of the New Right: a reduction in state expenditure on education, increased privatisation of education and increased competition between educational institutions. The subtlety of the Treasury's argument lay in its use of radical research in the sociology of education to demonstrate the inequities in education and to claim that increased competition would promote equality of opportunity. Given the highly influential position of Treasury in relation to the Labour government, this New Right posed a major threat to standards, equality and democracy in education." (p.1)

This thesis explores the effect of the Government's New Right policies on kindergartens by asking parents and teachers how they have been affected.

Educational Reforms and Bulk Funding

During 1988 education experienced a brief and exciting period of reform. It seemed that, with the 1988 Meade Report (*Education to be More Report*) followed by the *Before Five* (1988) policy document, the state had started to decisively address the question of their responsibility in the arena of early childhood care and education. In these documents, developed after extensive community consultation, the state accepted a leading role in providing affordable, quality, accessible and equitable early childhood care and education.

The *Before Five* reforms included:

- bringing all the early childhood service providers under the one umbrella of the Ministry of Education to be administered and funded;
- implementing a staged increase in funding to all these service providers who met the minimum standards set out in *The Early Childhood Management Handbook* (1989);
- establishing the Educational Review Office to ensure quality standards and Charter objectives are met;
- addressing the issues of biculturalism, gender equity and special needs;
- establishing a 3 year training course for early childhood teachers. This seemed to affirm teachers' role as both educators of young children and as professionals in education.

These reforms appeared to reflect an ideological shift by the state towards valuing quality early childhood education and care. They also gave indications of some state acknowledgement that early childhood care and education was an educational area that was not just the responsibility of families or to be used as a remedial service for children of the poor. As David Lange stated in *Before Five*:

"Research shows that resources put into early childhood care and education have proven results. Not only do they enhance the individual child's learning, the advantages gained help create success in later life. Improvements in this sector are an investment in the future." (1988:p.iii)

A component of *Before Five* and *Tomorrow's Schools* was salary Bulk Funding for teachers. Traditionally salaries for teachers of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools have been paid through central payroll system administered by the Ministry of Education. Under Salary Bulk Funding it was proposed that each school's Board of Trustees would receive this money to pay their own teaching staff. This new system was advocated by the government as a way of creating "flexibility", "responsiveness" and "efficiency" in managing schools. It embodies the ideology of the New Right and is part of the process of developing a market driven education system with minimal intervention from the state.

The policy of Bulk Funding has been the subject of criticism and debate. John Codd (1990:204) warned that the major effects of this type of policy would be to give the central agencies of the state more economic and political control over schools, but at the same time

would shift the focus of legitimation problems away from central government. It is the local boards of trustees who will end up facing all the problems and fronting up to the community. Ivan Snook (1990) predicted that future difficulties for local boards of trustees, under Bulk Funding could include: having to choose between employing teachers and meeting other school needs; being tempted to employ cheap staff to save money in this area; dividing boards from staff as they work in opposition rather than together for the welfare of children and coping with reduced government grants. This would mean having to increase fees and increase fundraising.

Specifically focussing on early childhood, Joce Nuttall (1991) had two major concerns with Bulk Funding. Firstly, with the way the bulk funding is calculated. She felt it would not be in the economic interests of a management board to employ highly trained and qualified staff, even though this is an important component in delivering a quality early childhood programme (Travers et al.,1979; Snider & Lee,1990; Powell & Stremmel,1989; NSEYC,1993). She predicted that Boards of Trustees would be rewarded with extra money for accommodating as many children as their license would allow and that this could compromise the quality of education provided - adult:child ratios and the size of the preschool group are recognised quality factors. (Howes, Phillip, & Whitebrook,1992, Travers, et. al.,1980). Further, Nuttall identified the accountability for government funds as an issue. She saw that there are no systems to ensure that bulk funding is spent on "operational costs". There is no accountability to ensure that funding is spent on wages for trained staff and no guidelines as to an acceptable level of fees for parents.

As Hugh Lauder (1990) asserts this system supports those who have the means to afford and pay for their children's education. It is these children who will be advantaged as they gain the educational credentials necessary for success in the paid workplace and in the pursuit of self-interest. Lauder likened parts of the New Right ideology to nineteenth century Social Darwinist ideas, based on the "survival of the fittest" concept. He saw it as an approach that it is biased in favour of the powerful and rich and allowing them to use schools to perpetuate and reproduce their own class. This legitimates inequality in society. Under such a model women and racial minority groups are disadvantaged. It allows the "capture" of the education system by those deemed to be the "fittest" and by the powerful elites in society, who in New Zealand are predominantly Pakeha and male and belong to the professional or capitalist class.

Although salary Bulk Funding was a component of the *Meade Report* and *Before Five* reforms, it was not initially perceived as a threat to the kindergarten service because the level of funding advocated by the *Meade Report* was high at \$3.50 per child hour which reflected the government's commitment to quality. As the *Meade Report* stated:

"Since kindergarten is currently funded at a level higher than other services, and given the criteria for quality that the working party has agreed on, it follows that the level of bulk funding should be set at a higher rate still. This will provide for necessary improvements in the kindergarten service as well as establishing an adequate funding base for other services." (1988:p.vii)

The 1989 *Budget* also established the PSU scheme which enabled "kindergartens to progressively employ more kindergarten teachers between 1990 and 1994." It also stated that Kindergarten Associations will no longer have to lobby for more teachers at the beginning of every year" (1989 Budget). For kindergartens, more teachers signalled a steady reduction in staff:child ratios and thus an improvement in learning conditions for children and working conditions for teachers. The reforms looked optimistic.

From Progression to Regression for Kindergartens?

Suspicious about the intentions behind the Bulk Funding policy grew through the late 1980s. Many saw Bulk Funding as a cost-cutting measure rather than an educational advance (Snook,1990; Lauder,1990) and there was increasing concern over the unknown effects of salary Bulk Funding (CECUA,1991). It is evident that the hegemonic power of Treasury and their New Right allies grew during the late 1980s as gains made for early childhood slowed down. Joce Nuttal comments: "Treasury may have lost the battle at the policy level but it is in the implementation of Before Five that the New Right may ultimately control the swing" (1991:p.23). Gains made for early childhood actually started reversing with the election of the National Government in late 1990.

From that time, what had only been ideas from Treasury started to be embedded in government policy. Questioning the degree of state funding in the whole area of early childhood education, the new National government's *Economic and Social Initiative* (December 1990):

- terminated the staged funding programme of all early childhood services;
- ended the staged increased of kindergarten teachers under the PSU scheme;
- reduced the state subsidy to under 2 year olds in childcare;
- legislated to allow kindergarten to charge fees with the *Education Amendment Bill*;
- announced educational reviews - 4 out of these 17 reviews were to be in the early childhood area;
- reintroduced the idea of salary Bulk Funding of educational institutions.

It is important to note that these 4 reviews, which concentrated on funding, staffing and regulations, were dominated by representatives from Treasury and the State Services commission. This membership was reflected in the policy. Helen May (1992) described the new order of policy-making.

"In an extraordinary rapid turnaround, an early childhood review team was established which would meet in secret; would report to the prime ministerial review committee and not the Minister of Education; was comprised mainly of government officials with minimal background knowledge of early childhood, and was driven by a Treasury agenda of user-pays and selective economic targeting." (p.347)

For example, the *Early Childhood Care and Funding Review* (1991) team specifically set out to identify where savings could be made for government in the early childhood sector. Under "existing policy so long as a child is attending a recognised service he or she is entitled to a subsidy set by government" (1991:p.20). Therefore the state thought it "essential to develop mechanisms to allow the capping of expenditure" (1991:p.20).

In the end this review team had no early childhood professionals and educationalists left on it. The original convener M. Renwick withdrew and the reconstituted team was led by Marijke Robinson of the State Services Commission. The report of an independent member of the review team from Waikato University, C.W. Gardiner, was not presented. (This report was published independently in the end.) The state appeared to selectively exclude or alienate those who challenged its hegemony.

Gardiner evaluated 4 proposed models of targeting of funds to ECE. Kindergartens, Gardiner concluded, were very vulnerable service providers under all these models:

"The most significant impact politically of all the models would be in the Kindergarten field, where all the models predict a decrease in funding, as a result of the desire to achieve equity. Kindergartens have been accused by (among others) the Minister of Finance for their rigidity and unwillingness to change their ways. Particular complaints have been

- i) The need to be on a waiting list for some time. This tends to penalise the mobile, even though waiting lists are transferable.
- ii) The rigid 4 morning session, 3 afternoon session structure, with no provision for all day attendance.

Against this is the fact that they are the largest single EC provider in the country, and have large waiting lists because they are popular. There was staunch support from kindergarten parents for the existing system.

However, the case for an essentially fully funded system which does not provide for all kinds of families is difficult to make. In order to implement a fair funding policy, these models have been forced to cut Kindergarten funding. In contrast the current policy provided for a staged plan to increase funding to other services until it eventually reached the Kindergarten level.

A major problem in all but the first model would be that the Kindergarten bulk funding would no longer cover the wages for Kindergartens, and the direct payment of salaries for the payment of staff would become difficult. The implementation of a system where local associations would pay wages, and collect fees from parents would require a major increase in administration. Kindergarten representatives indicated that there would be a substantial drop in voluntary labour in local committees and at Association level, if parents were required to pay fees." (Gardiner;1991,p.55)

When the government announced Bulk Funding for kindergartens it implied that the aim was to achieve equity with other services. For example the 1991 Budget announced:

“To bring kindergarten funding and self-management systems in line with those of all other early childhood services, they will be bulk-funded, at their average existing rate, from 1 February 1992.” (p.16)

But it selectively excluded the key information from the Meade Report; that to achieve quality early childhood care and education other early childhood services needed to rise to the kindergarten funding level and beyond . By **reducing** kindergartens to the funding level of the other service providers, so called "equity" has been achieved at the expense of the "oldest and best known providers of preschool" (Picot,1988,p.11) in New Zealand - namely kindergartens.

The 1991 budget also reduced some standards within the early childhood regulations. For example:

- registration of kindergarten teachers was no longer compulsory.
- a lower teaching qualification level of 100 points replaced the existing 120 points three-year equivalent training, as the goal for supervisors in 1995.
- building regulations and practices were eased.

Lockwood Smith has stated that the state

“was concerned that the regulations for property and for staffing ratios, training, and qualifications were too strict and made it unnecessarily difficult for providers to offer early childhood education at a reasonable cost. In making the necessary changes, the government has been careful to secure the quality of early childhood education, and the health and safety of children.” (1991,p.18)

Although the rhetoric of quality is employed it is clear that compromises were being made to save state spending in early childhood education, resulting in a reduction in factors that influence quality, such as staffing ratios and qualifications.

Research on Bulk Funding of Kindergartens

Bulk Funding was officially introduced to the kindergarten system on 1 March 1992. The likely impact of the policy was largely unresearched and unknown. In a report outlining 3 years of educational reforms (1989 -1992) Dr Maris O'Rourke lists as one of her Ministry of Education's achievements that "Bulk Funding of kindergarten associations for teachers'

salaries introduced in 1992, has given them increased autonomy." (1993,p.13) But Dr. ORourke fails to point out that kindergartens didn't seek this type of autonomy and that it is questionable, given the funding restrictions, whether this autonomy has had a positive effect on the quality of education provided. Bulk Funding was introduced with no trialling or evaluation. Its effects are still very much unknown. The "fast-track" approach appears at odds with the ethos of rationality and accountability that the state advocates. As Hugh Lauder (1991) points out

"It is after all the future generation that will have to suffer the consequences of policies that have been adopted without the rational procedures that could have been expected. At best pilot studies of market policies should have been undertaken and evaluated by independent assessors." (p.24)

Independent research on the effects of Bulk Funding was started soon after its implementation. Cathy Wylie, from New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), surveyed kindergartens soon after the introduction of salary Bulk Funding. Commissioned by the Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa (CECUA) and the Auckland Kindergarten Association, this survey tried to assess the early effects of teacher salary Bulk Funding on kindergartens. Wylie identified changes occurring at the association and kindergarten level in 1992, mainly concerned with rationalising economic procedures. For example:

"Most of these changes were concerned with ensuring that the association could manage its new responsibilities (such as improving banking arrangements to gain as much investment as possible), trying to ensure that as much government income could be raised through increasing or keeping rolls at a maximum, or with prioritising and cost-cutting to ensure that kindergarten provision could be maintained." (1992,p.32)

Overall Wylie found "little sign of positive improvement or innovation to what was actually happening in kindergartens, for children" (1992,p.33) and that only "one aim of the Government's Bulk Funding policy has been partially realised: kindergartens have been brought 'into line' with other early childhood education institutions as far as their funding mechanism goes." (1992,p.33)

A follow-up study a year later by Wylie (1993) showed further effects of Bulk Funding emerging. These effects included an increase in the workload and stress levels of staff and parents and an increase in roll numbers to generate extra funding. Parents and teachers were "dubious" about the changes forced upon them and felt it was harder to maintain previous levels of quality in their centres. There was also increased dependency on parents' financial contributions and a widening gap between kindergartens in low and high income areas and others. Kindergartens which weren't economically viable "stand alone" units were liable to closure. The future for some kindergartens under Bulk Funding did not look positive.

Women in Kindergartens

As has been demonstrated in the previous sections, government education policies since 1988 have reflected a strong move to the political right. This economically based policy has resulted in a reduction of state responsibility for early childhood education, placing more responsibility on teachers and parents. For example:

- legislation enabling kindergartens to **charge fees** heralds an end to "free" access to kindergartens;
- **Bulk Funding**, if used to systematically withdraw state money, may mean the responsibility of maintaining the quality of the kindergarten service will fall increasingly on the parents and kindergarten teachers. This need for more resourcing could be met by a range of strategies - raising the voluntary donation, charging compulsory fees, increased voluntary labour and fundraising.

Given the predominance of women in the kindergarten service, it is likely these policies will consolidate their role as low or unpaid nurturers. Parents who volunteer to help already form a gendered reserve army of labour. The ideology of the "cult of domesticity" (Saville-Smith, 1988, p.204) influences mothers to work altruistically and selflessly to raise "well-adjusted children". Such expectations place even more burden on the mothers who work primarily in the home. This imposition on mothers' good-will benefits both the kindergartens and the state, who receive "free" labour from this group of women. The work of these women, though, is invisible to society. As Armstrong comments:

"The energy, creativity, and skills such work requires are rendered either invisible or irrational, despite the enormous contribution they make to society's well-being."
(1989, p.15)

Bulk Funding is likely to impact on teachers. A stretched payroll budget is likely to mean reduced salaries, or that teachers will have to work harder and longer hours. Being a predominantly female workforce and also given the influence of the cult of domesticity, it is also likely their goodwill will prevail here for the "good of the kids". Wylie's 1993 research has already identified an increasing workload for teachers, as well as volunteer parents. Marian Court believes (1993) the Employment Contracts Act (1991) compounds what is happening to women in this position. Already at the low end of the sexual division of labour, and at the lowest position within the educational sector, the Kindergarten Teachers Union have struggled to maintain conditions and salaries in their award negotiations. This is because the Employment Contracts Act is grounded in:

"legal liberalism which assumes that the law provides a neutral mechanism (free from values and particular sets of interests) to support the exercise of individual 'choice' and 'freedom' in market bargaining and negotiation. However, the idea that this kind of free enterprise is the most appropriate for the efficacy of the market and the promoting of a general 'social good' masks the inequalities it both supports and produces - inequalities of gender, ethnicity and class." (Court,1993,p.108)

If as Wylie (1993) maintains, teachers are working harder and conditions of work are deteriorating, then it seems likely a process of intensification is occurring. Michael Apple (1986) uses the term "intensification" to refer to

"..'one of the most tangible ways in which the work privileges of educational workers are eroded'. It has many symptoms from the trivial to the more complex - ranging from being allowed no time at all even to go to the bathroom, have a cup of tea to relax, to having a total absence of time to keep up with one's field. We can see intensification most visibly in mental labour in the chronic sense of work overload that has escalated over time." (p.41)

One of the most significant effects of intensification, Apple maintains (1986,p.42), may be the reduction in the quality (not the quantity) of the service offered. For kindergartens then, these changing working conditions for teachers may signal a reduction in the quality of service provided for children and their families. Lauder (1991,p.9) also sees a "strong

tendency within market theory to de-professionalise and hence deskill educational workers". This means teachers will increasingly be "workers" controlled by management, rather than responsible and semi-autonomous professionals .

As shown in these first chapters, there is enough concern about the future quality of care and education provided by kindergartens to justify this research. This thesis uses the concepts explored in this chapter as a basis for understanding the changes caused by the introduction of Bulk Funding. In particular the concepts of the reserve army of labour and the sexual division of labour with women's positioning in the low status and unpaid positions in the labour market, are used. These reflect the general subordinate position of women in relation to men in society. These are useful concepts in light of the low (or no) pay rates of kindergarten teachers and mothers. Gramsci's notion of hegemony provides an explanation of the process of legitimation and consent for state policy. From this concept the idea of consent and support for the Bulk Funding policy, by parents and teachers, is addressed.

Overall, the policy of Bulk Funding may have the potential to seriously affect the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens which will in turn effect the learning experiences of many 3 and 4 year olds in New Zealand. The following chapter examines the factors indicated by research that constitute a quality preschool programme for children. These factors form the basis for much of the data gathering of this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

QUALITY IN KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMES

"Quality" is a term which has been widely cited by government to justify the recent changes in education (*Meade Report*, 1988; *Before Five*, 1988; *Budget*, 1991). Given that the Bulk Funding grant was introduced at a level below the amount recommended and that there is a relationship between funding and the quality of a service, there are genuine concerns about whether kindergartens have been able to maintain their quality of service. In the introduction to "Reaching the Full Cost of Quality" Barbara Willer points out:

"The aspects that most influence a programme's ability to provide high quality services revolve around staff – number, ability, dispositions, and stability – and characteristics of the environment. Each aspect is associated with costs, and the lack of resources that has characterised the early childhood field has led too often to compromising on these characteristics. As a result, we have compromised quality for children." (1990, p.1)

Cathy Wylies's recent survey examining the impact of Bulk Funding on New Zealand kindergartens suggests that staff and parents (54% of head teachers and 34% of chairpersons) are finding it harder to maintain previous levels of quality on their centres (1993).

The purpose of this research was not to analyse the level of quality at any particular kindergarten, but rather to assess the extent to which quality has changed in kindergartens since the introduction of Bulk Funding. In view of this it is still important to have an understanding of "quality". In particular, what constitutes quality in relation to kindergartens.

This chapter firstly discusses the definition of quality, then clarifies how this concept will be used in this study. In particular it identifies particular factors that are seen to contribute to the quality of care and education in kindergartens and discusses these with reference to national and international research.

Operational Definition of Quality

There is no universal definition of quality. Quality is a subjective concept based on a whole host of diverse ideas and expectations.

For example both the previous Labour and current National government's New Right ideology openly reflects a "market forces" perspective. If one looks for a definition of quality under this model, it is likely to relate to the needs of the user - how the service lives up to the user's needs and expectations. For example J.M. Juran, a specialist in industrial quality, notes that

“human institutions (industrial companies, schools, hospitals, churches, governments) are engaged in providing products or services to human beings. This relationship is constructive only if the goods and services respond to the overall needs of the user in price, delivery date and fitness for use.” (1974, pp.2-2)

The “price” aspect of quality - that is, the emphasis on ensuring the product or service is provided efficiently, and at a level of cost acceptable to the consumer, is at the heart of the government's Bulk Funding policy. In effect, quality now has to be delivered by kindergartens with less state funding. The state argues that increased self-management, as advocated in the Before Five restructuring, will ensure greater efficiency (Codd,1990,p.200) and that this efficiency is a key component in the quality of the service.

The state's focus on the efficiency aspect of quality developed from a need to reduce state expenditure in education. As Codd (1990,p.200) explained, the level of state expenditure in education had steadily increased from 1986 and “in fiscal terms” (Codd,1990,p.200) the state felt it couldn't sustain this. Codd (1990) pointed out

"The monetarist agenda called for policies that would effectively reduce educational expenditure and fragment existing structures and patterns of interest representation."(p.200)

The "fitness for use" concept is fundamental to any discussion of quality. Any service must meet the needs of the consumer. We see elements of this concept in the *Before Five* reforms where parents can now articulate their needs and expectations through their Boards of Trustees and Charters. For some parents quality in kindergartens may be seen in terms of their low cost. For others it may be in the opportunities it gives their children to socialise and develop independence. For others it may be kindergarten's role in preparing children for school.

Although important for providing a service, the "fitness for use" aspect of quality has some limitations with respect to the kindergarten service. Firstly the principle users are 3 and 4 year old children who are clearly unable to articulate their needs and expectations. Secondly there are other interested sectors who act as "advocates" for children to receive "quality" education. This includes the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Association (NZFKA) which represents many kindergartens and whose aim is to "maintain the provision of an effective, high quality early childhood service that is both affordable and accessible to all who want to use it" (1993, p.1). In addition the government sets standards by providing quality assurance, established with the Early Childhood Regulations 1990 (commonly known as *Minimum Standards*) ensuring a benchmark of standards in all preschool services across the country through a review and audit process. Thirdly there is a strong professional body of "educationalists" who have concentrated on developing a clear understanding and knowledge of educational theory and practice for young children. This body consists largely of practitioners and researchers. The practitioners are mainly teachers who plan and deliver the learning programme and whose educational ideas are traditionally represented at state level largely through their workers' union, CECUA. The researchers on the other hand are more academic and tend to be involved in examining "isolated aspects of early childhood centres which have a positive effect on various measures of children's development and to investigate centre variables that can be regulated" (Farquhar, 1991).

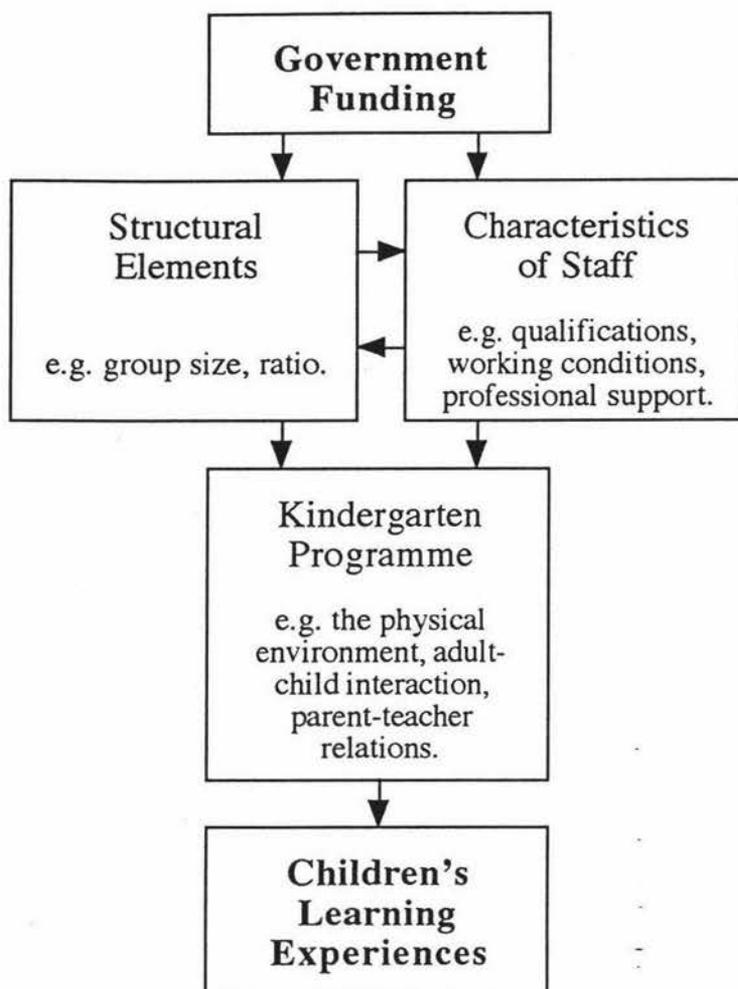
For this thesis, the operational definition of quality is drawn from the body of knowledge of researchers, who identify factors or practices that are seen to contribute, directly or indirectly, to positive experiences and learning outcomes for children. Sue Bredekamp

(1990, pp.41) uses the phrase "developmentally appropriate practice" to describe early childhood programmes which successfully incorporate these factors within a child development framework. This phrase is used by the United States organisation National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and more recently by the New Zealand draft guidelines for early childhood programmes, Te Wariki (1993). It therefore seems relevant to use the phrase "developmentally appropriate practice" for the purposes of this research as a definition of "quality".

So what factors do researchers see as essential features of developmentally appropriate practice? They can be categorised into three broad areas:

- 1) Structural elements such as adult-child ratio and group size.
- 2) Characteristics of staffing such as qualifications, professional support and development, the working environment and the workload.
- 3) The kindergarten programme itself, which encompasses a huge range of factors. It is impossible to capture all the elements of a programme in any one study but an effort has been made in this instance to capture as many variables as possible, in an effort to identify where change in the programme is occurring. The factors measured in the kindergarten programme for this research are – the learning environment, teacher-child interactive opportunities, responses to individual needs and parent-teacher relations.

Although the factors that contribute to quality, such as adult-child ratio, group size, staff characteristics and the kindergarten programme, have been compartmentalised for the purposes of this study, they have a dynamic and inter-related relationship on which funding has a vital influence. For example, funding influences ratios, group size and characteristics of staff. These are important contributors to a developmentally appropriate programme which in turn affects the experiences of children at kindergartens, as the following diagram illustrates. These factors are discussed in more depth following this diagram.



Structural Factors

Staff:child Ratio

Studies (Smith, McMillan, Kennedy & Ratcliffe, 1989; Phillip & Whitebrook, 1992) continually emphasize the importance of having low staff-child ratios in a preschool. The number of children per adult is clearly linked to the quality of the preschools programme (Howes, Phillip & Whitebrook, 1992). Having a fewer number of children per adult allows teachers to work closely, to interact and assess the children's needs. With this knowledge of their children, teachers are better able to create an effective learning environment to enhance children's learning.

Research by Howes, Phillip & Whitebrook (1992) found that children in centres with lower ratios (fewer children per adult) receive more developmentally appropriate caregiving and quality learning experiences. Conversely children in centres with higher ratios are less likely to receive developmentally appropriate caregiving and quality learning experiences. They also found that children in centres with lower ratios, who received quality learning experiences showed better social competence with their peers.

A New Zealand study by Smith, McMillan, Kennedy & Ratcliffe (1989) supports these findings. They found that in kindergartens moving from a 1:20 to a 1:13.3 ratio (with the addition of a third teacher), the children "played more positively with peers, talked more and interacted more with the teachers"(p.123). The teachers were also more involved in children's play and interrelated more with other adults, such as parents and teachers. Teachers found themselves just as busy as before the addition of a third teacher mainly because they were attempting to do more.

The recommended 'quality' ratio when working with 3 and 4 year olds is 1:10. This is advocated by NAEYC (1993) and the 1990 *Minimum Standards*, but kindergartens in New Zealand have traditionally had ratios as high as 1:20. Hence the State's aim in the 1989 *Budget* to steadily employ more kindergarten teachers between 1990 and 1994. This aim was terminated in late 1990 before it had barely begun, and since the introduction of Bulk Funding there have been changes to both group size and staff ratio, to generate sufficient funding to pay teachers salaries and other associated costs.

Group Size

The United States National Daycare study (Travers, et al., 1980) found that group size was a crucial factor when it came to determining quality.

"...the smaller the group in which children are placed, the more they tend to engage in creative, verbal/intellectual and cooperative activity. Also, children in small groups make more rapid gains in certain standardised tests than do their peers in larger groups. When groups are larger, individual children tend to 'get lost', i.e., to wander aimlessly and to be uninvolved in the ongoing activity of the group." (p.xxv)

In a 1985 New Zealand study examining different early childhood programmes, Anne Meade's results confirmed the importance of group size. She found that large rolls in centres resulted in less adult-child contact, even when the ratio of adults to children was the same.

Cathy Wylie's 1993 survey of New Zealand kindergartens has identified a general increase of child numbers and group size around the country. Since the introduction of Bulk Funding this increase in group size has been initiated by associations to increase the level of funding from government. It has also been in response to licensing regulations. "Kindergartens now have until March 1995 to meet the 1:15 ratio if they are to remain licensed and thus eligible for Government funding" (Wylie, 1993, p.5). Given what research says about the effects of group size on the quality of a preschool programme, the recent changes in New Zealand kindergartens must give cause for concern.

Staff Characteristics

There is a range of factors concerning the staff of early childhood centres that contribute to the quality of a kindergarten programme. Factors such as staff qualifications, wages and working conditions influence staff stability and teacher performance and thus the quality of the programme they plan and deliver.

Qualifications

Qualifications of staff are seen as the most crucial element in determining a quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood programme (Travers et al., 1979; Snider & Lee, 1990; Powell & Stremmel, 1989; NAEYC, 1993). Ongoing professional support and development is also regarded as a component of quality (*Minimum Standards* 1990). It is adults who are trained in child development and early childhood education who can recognise and plan for children's needs. In their 1993 review of research on "The Effects of Group Size, Ratios and Staff Training on Child Care Quality" the NAEYC "*Young Children*" journal linked the importance of relevant staff training and level of education with:

- More social interaction between teacher and children.
- Increased intellectual stimulation of children in their care.

- Higher scores in cognitive tests.
- More cooperation among children.
- More "on task" behaviour among children.
- Social competence among children.
- Better program quality – which in turn positively effects language and representational skills among preschoolers.
- Improved observational skills by teachers (1993,p.67).

One of the fears about Bulk Funding has been that local boards of management will not have adequate funds to employ trained and experienced teachers (Snook, 1990), and that boards of management will not be required to employ trained teachers. This fear has been fuelled by recent government policy which has downgraded the qualifications necessary for kindergarten staff. In the 1991 Review of Early Childhood Staffing Regulations and Training and Qualifications the State Services Commission and Treasury participants identified "fiscal risks" associated with setting staff qualifications at too high a level. In other words if your staff are too qualified they are going to cost too much. The 1991 Budget which followed this review officially downgraded requirements of qualifications for staff. Registration of kindergarten teachers was no longer deemed compulsory and the 1995 qualification level set for people in responsibility in early childhood centres, was eased from 120 points (or a 3 year equivalent training) to 100 points.

Underlying this whole issue is the gendered nature of early childhood teaching. Kindergarten teaching is traditionally "women's work", an extension of women's role as the nurturers and carers in society. It is also a major avenue in the paid workforce which has allowed women to further develop specific knowledge and skills relating to young children. However it is of concern that teachers who act as "advocates" for the early childhood education process have increasingly been excluded from the policy-making process regarding early childhood education (May,1993) and as such have been targeted by what Codd identified as the monetarist driven agenda of interest fragmentation (Codd,1990). In the process of gaining legitimation and support for their policies, the state

is able to use its control of the processes and systems of the country to undermine opposition. By not including "experts" in the field of early childhood education in the policy-making process, the state is effectively acting to block and fragment opposition, and supporting its own hegemonic power. The increasing alienation of women from the decision-making process also acts to further devalue their work and entrench them into subordinate and vulnerable positions.

Salary and Working Conditions

Another government policy, the 1991 Employment Contracts Act has also been seen by many as a mechanism enabling employers to reduce salaries and working conditions of staff (CECUA, 1991) who have traditionally been sited at the low end of the sexual division of labour. This Act raises serious questions about the future level of wages, as well as of qualifications, of kindergarten staff. Given that among adult work environment variables staff wages are probably the most important predictor of quality early childhood education (Gardiner, 1991), this is a concern.

Salaries are also seen to affect job satisfaction. A 1991 review of literature by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in Ontario suggests that salaries at the higher rather than the lower end of the continuum have been associated with higher job commitment and lower staff turnover rates. High job commitment and low staff turnover in a centre are seen to contribute to the quality of early childhood care and education. In a review of literature by D Phillips & C Howes (1987) the importance of a low staff turnover and staff stability to give children opportunities to develop secure attachments and receive interactive experiences with their caregiver is emphasised.

Another factor which affects the operating environment of teachers is staff working conditions. In their research, Stemmell, Benson & Power (1993) suggest that dissatisfaction with the level of working conditions and the work itself leads to increased emotional exhaustion. In her New Zealand research, Cathy Wylie (1993) has already found a considerable increase in staff and voluntary workloads since the introduction of Bulk Funding. She found that this has led to an increase in stress for most staff and many parents serving on kindergarten committees.

Opportunities for staff to meet together as a group to discuss the individual needs of children is also seen as important for the maintenance of a quality programme (Stemmel, Benson & Powell, 1993). This allows for programme planning and resource preparation specifically to meet children's learning needs. At the time of the introduction of Bulk Funding teachers in kindergartens were supported with two half days non-contact time each week. A 1992 workload survey of kindergarten teachers by CECUA identified this non-contact time as an important time for teachers to plan and evaluate their programme, evaluate children's development, meet together as staff, prepare resources plus general cleaning and administration. To generate more funding under Bulk Funding, however kindergartens may be instructed to relinquish non-contact time to run more sessions for children. This will reduce the opportunities teachers have to meet as a group for the planning, evaluation and preparation of their programme which may effect the quality of this programme.

The Kindergarten Programme

The word programme as used in this study incorporates the factors that impact on the children as part of their everyday experiences at kindergarten. There are so many interrelated factors that contribute to a kindergarten programme it is impossible to capture them, or their dynamic nature, with any precision. But four broad areas have been isolated, in keeping with the particular purpose of this study. These are: the physical learning environment, adult-child interaction, equity issues and practices, and parent-teacher relations.

The Physical Environment

The physical environment in a kindergarten provides the "context" for children's play. Although heavily influenced by its setting and size, the resources and equipment of the physical learning environment are seen as important in that they offer children a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities which motivate and challenge children's play (Smith, 1988). The idea of an enriched environment in which children can actively explore, experiment and challenge themselves developed from the work of early educationalists such as Froebel and has been reinforced over the years with the work of theorists, especially Jean Piaget (Anning, 1991).

New Zealand kindergartens' commitment to free play as an appropriate way for children to learn grew from about 1947 (Hughes, 1989) and is increasingly supported by research findings (Smith, 1988). Play allows children to be self-motivated, self-initiated, self-directive and interactive – all important for children's development.

"Without question, there is significant weight in the proliferation of studies in young children's socio-dramatic play that supports the notion that play contributes to the development of language, social competence, cognitive skills, and imaginative fluency (creativity)" (Fromberg, in Klugman and Smilansky, 1990, p.237).

Adult-Child Interaction

Research increasingly indicates the value of meaningful interaction between the adult and child, to advance cognitive skills in children. The work of Vygotsky is gaining increased recognition and credibility among early childhood educators (Lambert, 1992). Vygotsky emphasises the value of quality adult-child interaction to promote children's cognitive learning, with adults actively intervening to help children move from their "actual" level of development to their "potential" level of development. Contrasting the Piagetian approach with the Vygotskian, Flear states:

"The focus moves from the child engaging with the environment to the teacher and the child interacting and working together on the learning tasks. This mode of interaction encourages the child to take on more responsibility for the task and for the teacher to slowly withdraw support." (Flear, in Lambert, 1992, p.143).

For teachers, part of this process is knowing the individual needs of children. This is often done through evaluation and assessment procedures so that teachers can plan for "scaffolding" of learning. But for all this to occur teachers must have time to spend with individual children. In other words, the group size and staff:child ratio must enable teachers the opportunities to interact meaningfully with the children.

Equity issues

Equity issues in relation to early childhood education were brought into the open, after 1984, by the fourth Labour government who officially acknowledged the rights and needs of all children, regardless of gender or race or special need, to an equal opportunity in the education system. These rights became embedded in Charter documents, and for special

needs children the 1987 *Amendment to the Education Act* gave them the same rights as any other children to enrol and receive education at the school of their choice. Called "mainstreaming" in early childhood, the structures and funding to allow this to happen occurred within the *Before Five* reforms. For example extra funding was allocated to allow for the modification of the physical environment, to provide for extra resources and to hire support staff. For all the kindergartens in this study mainstreaming has become an accepted part of the programme so it has been considered here, along with the equity issues of gender and race, to highlight changes since the introduction of Bulk Funding.

Teacher–parent relations

The importance of home and family has also received increasing attention. Parents are seen as the primary caregivers of children with the role of early childhood centres being to work in partnership with them (Meade, 1988). A New Zealand study by Smith and Hubbard (1988) suggests that warm, reciprocal and balanced relationships between parents and staff are a component of quality childcare. They also point out that some New Zealand early childhood centres, most often kindergartens, are working with a large group size and inadequate teacher:child ratios, which limits their availability to parents.

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

The literature on "quality" in early childhood care and education suggests then that a study aiming to measure changes in quality needs to consider a range of characteristics such as staff qualifications, wages and working conditions plus the kindergarten programme itself which directly affects children's learning experiences. This includes: the physical environment, adult–child interactive opportunities, parent–teacher relations and the centre's commitment and support of equity issues.

The factors of quality developed here also exist within a wider political and social context which may influence the level of "quality" an early childhood service provider can delivered. Policy shifts by government referred to in this chapter include the 1991 Early Childhood Staffing Regulations and Training a Qualifications Review, the 1991 Employment Contracts Act, the 1987 Amendment to the Education Act, and the 1990 Early

Childhood Regulations. All of these policies affect certain aspects of an early childhood service and may influence the effectiveness of kindergartens to provide a quality service. Although it is the introduction of the Bulk Funding policy that has motivated this particular study, it is essential to remember it co-exists with other policy changes within a New Right political and ideological framework.

The evaluation of the effects of Bulk Funding on the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens is the major goal of this study. The following chapter presents the methodology used to gather information for this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the method and process used to gather and analyse information for this thesis. Firstly the research problem and research questions are stated followed by a discussion of the case study approach. Then a full description of the information-gathering process is given.

The Research Problem and Questions

As argued in the previous chapters, the policy of Bulk Funding was introduced with no obvious public mandate. Given the lowered level of funding and the relationship of funding to the quality of service (Meade Report,1988,p.vii; Willer,1990,p.1), there were serious doubts as to whether kindergartens could continue, under Bulk Funding, to maintain their quality of care and education.

The provision of quality care and education is an important issue, not only for the children's learning experiences, but for the teachers and parents who work to provide a developmentally appropriate preschool environment. It is the perceptions of these parents and teachers which form the focus of this study.

This research aims to be both comparative and evaluative. It is comparative in the sense that it seeks to compare the quality of education and care provided by kindergartens, before and after Bulk Funding was introduced. The research relies heavily on people's perception of the Bulk Funding policy and the changes that have occurred in their own kindergartens - before 1 March 1992 (introduction date of Bulk Funding) compared to a year and a half later. It is evaluative in the sense that it judges the effects of a government policy on a small group of five kindergartens. The value of this type of information is highlighted by Stenhouse:

"a single case or a collection of cases is studied in depth with the purpose of providing educational actors or decision makers (administrators, teachers, parents, pupils, etc) with information that will help them to judge the merit and worth of policies, programmes or institutions." (Stenhouse,1988,p.50)

Bulk Funding is certainly a topic worthy of evaluation. With no previous trialling, there is still very little knowledge about its effect on kindergartens.

Research questions

Overall this research sets out to uncover parents and teachers perception of the policy of Bulk Funding and its effects on their kindergartens.

Specific research questions in this study were:

1. Do teachers and parents feel that there has been a change in the quality of care and education provided by their kindergartens since the beginning of 1992?
2. If so, how has the introduction of Bulk Funding contributed to this change?
3. Has this change improved or reduced the quality of education and care provided by kindergartens?
4. What do teachers and parents feel about the policy of Bulk Funding for kindergartens - when it was introduced? eighteen months later? for the future?
5. How can we understand these changes in terms of broader issues such as the relationship between the state, educational workers and the position of women?

Research Approach: a Case Study

The case study has developed as a research approach from the interpretative theoretical tradition, which emphasises the gathering of real-life, meaningful qualitative information about people and their lives. As Patton (1990) contends, case studies

"become particularly useful where one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information - rich in the sense that a great deal can be learnt from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question." (p.54)

The motivation for this research and research approach came primarily from the researcher's personal experience as a kindergarten teacher. It seemed that Wylies' kindergarten surveys (1992,1993) had not reached the "grassroots" level of kindergarten activity, and that teachers and parents had rich knowledge and experiences about the effects of Bulk Funding which could be "tapped". Information was sought from kindergarten teachers and parents under "natural" conditions (Stake,1988) where the researcher went to the "territory" of the respondents to gather information. For this research, data was gathered at each of the kindergartens with the aim of uncovering some of the complexity of human behaviour, social processes and structures. As Stake advocates

"The case is deemed worthy of close watch. It has character, it has boundaries. It is not something we want to represent by a score.....It is a complex, dynamic system. We want to understand its complexity."(1988,p.256)

A case study has very clear boundaries of study. Only one entity or group is focussed on (Stake,1988,p.255). In this research the "case", or "bounded system" is five kindergartens within one kindergarten association in New Zealand. And the "study" focuses on the experiences of the teachers and some of the parents in these kindergartens. It highlights their perceptions of the new government policy of Bulk Funding and how they feel it has affected the quality of care and education provided.

Case studies can also incorporate a variety of research methods such as interviewing, observation and surveys. For example, in this study, interviewing is combined with a questionnaire. A case study is usually a descriptive study allowing the researcher to explore new ground, "to gather information, so that a description of what is going on can be made" (Dixon et al,1987,p.108). Given the relatively "new territory" of Bulk Funding and the absence of any trial before its implementation, this study really has to be regarded as exploratory research. A major purpose of exploratory research "is the development and clarification of ideas, and the formulation of questions and hypotheses, for more precise subsequent investigation" (Herbert,1990,p.19).

The validity of a case study depends, to a large degree, on the use to which the study is put. For example, Stake (1988,p.263) notes that the case study traditionally does not seem to have the political "clout" associated with statistical research. On the other hand case

studies are becoming more popular as they are more easily understood and interpreted (Stake,1988,p.263). As Patton contends (1990) their value is becoming more fully recognised, for example by international development agencies. As he comments:

"Case studies are manageable, and it is more desirable to have a few carefully done case studies with results one can trust than to aim for large, probabilistic, and generalizable samples with results that are dubious because of the multitude of technical, logistic, and management problems....." (p.99)

Manageability was a very relevant consideration for this research design. As a lone researcher with a limited time frame, it was appropriate to stay within the manageable boundaries of the five centres.

Throughout a case study, patterns and regularities within the data are looked for (Stake,1988,p259). At the conclusion of the research, it may be possible to make generalisations from the information gathered. Firstly about the particular case, and secondly if the case studied is seen as a "typical" example, then generalisations can be made to describe other similar situations. But as Stake (1988,261) comments generalisations tend to be "naturalistic" rather than "scientific" and in the end it is usually "left to the reader to decide" if the case is representative of other cases.

Sample Selection

The participants for this research were drawn from five kindergartens within one New Zealand Kindergarten Association. This number of centres allowed the gathering of data in a specific "area" and within the available timeframe. Consent was firstly sought from their board of management before any individual kindergartens were contacted. The kindergartens were then selected on two criteria:

- staff stability - two out of three teachers of the centre had to have been teaching at that kindergarten for at least the last two years. Because low staff turnover has such a positive effect on the quality of a preschool programme (Phillips and Howes,1987), it was important to avoid centres which were going through any turmoil caused by staff changes. In these cases it would have proved difficult to relating any changes in the programme to Bulk Funding.
- staff:child ratio - at the time of the study all centres were operating the new 1:15 ratios needed to remain licensed. These new licensing standards were being used in

kindergartens since the introduction of Bulk Funding (Wylie,1993,p.5) For two centres in the study this meant an increase in rolls to generate more funding for their association, for two other centres it meant a decrease from ratios of 1.20 plus the addition of a third teacher, and for one centre there was no change in ratios.

Because the researcher had been employed as a teacher in this association she knew many of the respondents. This she felt would put the respondents more at ease and reduce any suspicion of researchers and their research. Centres were contacted initially by phone when a brief explanation of the research, and the time needed for the information gathering process was described. This was important because it was proposed that observations², a small survey and interviewing take place over three mornings and during the teachers' lunchtime. The teacher who had spoken with the researcher consulted with the teaching team and returned an answer. All five centres contacted consented to participate in the study. A letter of confirmation was subsequently sent out which included an outline of the data gathering procedures to be used and an assurance of confidentiality (Appendix 1).

It was also proposed to teachers that parents be interviewed by the researcher in the kindergarten. Teachers helped by identifying knowledgeable participants who had been involved in the centre prior to, and since, the introduction of Bulk Funding. When meeting the parents for the first time at the centre, the researcher established the parents' level of knowledge by asking general questions about Bulk Funding and its implications for their kindergarten. For example, "Bulk Funding was introduced to kindergartens near the beginning of last year. Are you aware of the implications of this for kindergartens?" As it happened, the parents interviewed had been actively involved at committee level and displayed understanding and knowledge of both their own kindergarten and the issue of Bulk Funding.

Across the five centres, 14 teachers and 8 parents were involved in the study. The researcher saw the parents and teachers as "well-informed informants" which Werner and Schoepfle (1987,183) identify as an important factor in choosing respondents. As it happened, and not surprisingly considering the tradition of women's involvement in kindergartens (Hughes, 1989,39), all the participants in the study, both teachers and parents, were women. The kindergartens were mixed socioeconomically and ethnically (Appendix 8)

2 The information gathered through observation was not included in the results of this research because the researcher considered it did not address the research questions.

Data Collection Techniques

Both quantitative and qualitative data was obtained in this research, but there was a strong emphasis on the interview method to gather information. This is appropriate given the topic of the project and the time-frame. As Stenhouse (1988) comments:

"Evaluative case studies are caught in the time scale of the programmes they are evaluating and the decisions they are forming and this has led to the development of "condensed fieldwork" in which the interview typically dominates participant observation, since the latter is essentially a long-term, in-depth technique." (p.50)

Discussing interview techniques for data-gathering, Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander (1991) see interviewing as "aimed at gaining access to the perspective of the informant" where the interviewer "tries to elicit an honest account of how the informants see themselves and their experiences." (p.128)

The interviews in this study were largely centred around more specific information-gathering schedules. For example the "information sheet" (Appendix 2) provided baseline information for the interviewer to ask open-ended questions. Initial questions assessed changes in structural elements of the centre since the introduction of Bulk Funding. For example looking into changes in such factors as roll numbers, the average age of entry, the number of teachers employed and their qualifications. From these questions the interviewer would ask an open-ended question such as "and how have you found this has affected you?" and "do you think this has been influenced by the introduction of Bulk Funding?"

Most of the interviews were carried out in a teaching team situation at lunchtimes, but the researcher was present throughout the morning teaching session and often found that teachers would pass by and volunteer information. For example while taking a child with special needs to the toilet a teacher might say: "another thing we have noticed is that the Special Education Service expect a lot more from us.". Because it was established from the first moment of contact that the researcher was there to assess changes in their centres since the introduction of Bulk Funding, the teachers seemed only too willing to volunteer information - during the session, at morning tea, washing paints, at lunch-time, anytime - which was recorded by the researcher. In general, the researcher tried to elicit information from the teachers as a team so that there was consensus about the information given.

Recording the interviews was an ongoing problem. Initially the researcher planned to tape the interviews, and transcribe the conversations. It became clear that this was not a practical approach - technical problems with the machine, ongoing problems with availability of equipment, the need to tape "on the job" voluntary comments and some negative participant response to the technology, resulted in a mixture of taped and untaped data.

Quantitative information was also sought from respondents, mainly to assess the degree of change in a particular area since the introduction of Bulk Funding. In two areas, "teachers' work environment" [assessed by a written questionnaire (Appendix 3)] and the "kindergarten's programme" [using an interview (Appendix 4)], a Likert scale was used to measure variation in perceptions of the respondents towards changes in their centres. Respondents were given a 5 point range from "reduced significantly" to "improved significantly", to gauge the changes in their kindergartens since the beginning of 1992. In the "kindergarten programme" interview the researcher "talked" the team through the options. This proved an effective way of finding about changes in aspects of the kindergarten environment.

Data Collection Procedures

There were three phases to the data gathering:

Phase One

Settling in and gathering initial information by:

- posting the survey on "working environment" (Appendix 3) to staff before the researcher's arrival. Staff had the opportunity to talk about any of the points as part of the interview process during the first lunchtime.
- gathering demographic information using the "information sheet" (Appendix 2) This was done with the teaching team during the first lunchtime. Base-line information was gathered about changes in areas such as license numbers, roll numbers, entry age, level of voluntary donation, fees, the sessional structure, the number of permanent teachers and the qualifications of the teachers. From this information, open-ended questions were used by the researcher to encourage the respondents to develop ideas about any changes in their centre. For example, questions were asked such as "I

notice that you have an extra teacher since the introduction of Bulk Funding - how do you think this has effected your kindergarten programme?"

- identifying parents, who had been involved in the kindergarten since the beginning of 1992, for interviewing. Because of their extensive knowledge of their centre, teachers were able to point out parents who had been involved in the kindergarten since before the introduction of Bulk Funding. Most of those had worked, or were working, on the kindergarten committee. The researcher then introduced herself and explained her purpose as a Massey Research Affiliate "trying to identify any changes that they may have noticed in their centres since the introduction of Bulk Funding." The researcher talked of the importance of them consenting to participate and ensured confidentiality. A mutually convenient time and place for the interview was established. As it turned out all parent interviews took place in their kindergarten.

Phase Two

Continuing to gather information:

- interviewing of parents usually took place during session-time on the second day, in a quiet area of the centre. Sometimes it was done individually and sometimes in pairs, depending on the parent's wishes and circumstances. Structures were developed to guide the interview (Appendix 5 and 6). Questions were asked firstly about changes they had perceived in the kindergarten since the beginning of 1992 (Appendix 5) and focussed on the kindergarten environment, the programme, the general atmosphere of the centre and relations with staff. For example parents of a centre which had just had a third teacher appointed commented on the increased availability of staff to talk with parents. Subsequent questions (Appendix 6) asked for their perception about the effects of Bulk Funding on their centre and their perception of the policy itself.
- the staff was interviewed through another lunchtime, this time about changes in the quality of their programme since the beginning of 1992. (Appendix 4) The "schedule" for this interview was constructed (and extensively modified) from the Early Childhood Rating Scale which had been developed by Harms and Clifford (1980) as a tool to measure the level of quality in early childhood centres. Questions focussed quite specifically on learning opportunities for children in centres, for example with questions about changes in such things as block play, gross-motor activities, free play and adult interaction. A Likert scale measured those answers on a scale.

Phase Three

- the last interview was with staff asking specific questions about their perception of the policy of Bulk Funding. Staff were free to talk among themselves and comment on the policy throughout the interview.

ANALYSING AND ORGANISING DATA

Analysis and organisation of the information was carried out at the end of each day by the researcher. This allowed reflection on the data so the researcher could return to the centre with any follow up questions. The responses were organised into categories, typed up and posted out to each centre for verification. No centres returned these summaries so the researcher contacted the centres by phone to check the information written up was agreeable to them. No changes had to be made.

The final categorisation of data was planned to occur after the information gathering stage so that the respondent could describe "what is meaningful and salient without being pigeonholed into standardised categories." (Patton,1987). In the end the structure of the interviews defined the presentation of the results. For example, the following sections reflect the order of the interviewing and the structure of the questions to teachers and parents. In the case of the qualitative data some minor editing has been carried out by the researcher to clarify the point being made.

The results are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

The information gathered from the five kindergartens in this case study is presented in this chapter. Data was organised into categories after all the kindergartens were visited. In some instances the organisation of data has simply followed the order of the interview schedule or questionnaire. This is most evident in the section on "Staff Characteristics". In other instances the information given by the parents and teachers themselves ordered the presentation of the results, for example in the section on "Perceptions" to Bulk Funding.

The results are presented in four sections. The first section looks at changes in the centres caused mainly by increases in the children's group size and changing adult:child ratios. The second section documents changes occurring within the kindergarten teachers working environment. The third section highlights changes that have occurred within the kindergarten programme itself. Finally the perceptions of teachers and parents to the policy of Bulk Funding are looked at. A summary of the results are presented at the end of each section..

SECTION ONE – RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE

At the time of this study:

- All five of the participating kindergartens had a ratio of 1:15. (See Appendix 6 for a profile of these kindergartens.)
- Four of the kindergartens were licensed to have rolls of 45/45³ and had three teachers – they had experienced roll increases since the introduction of Bulk Funding.
- One kindergarten had two teachers and 30/30 rolls. Physical space had restricted them from increasing their rolls to 45/45.

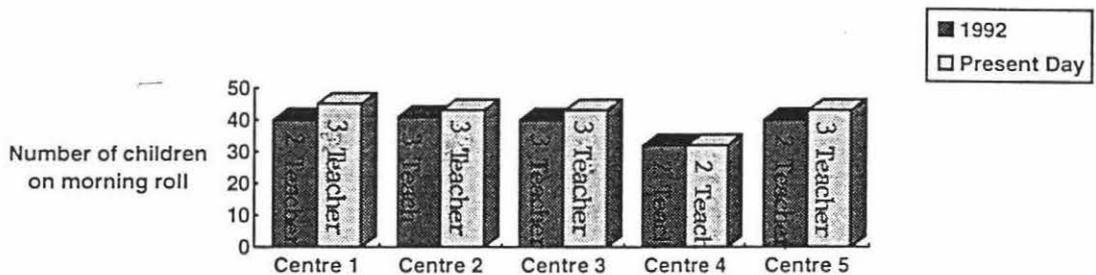


Figure 1: Changes in roll numbers and teachers

Decreased Ratios

For two of the kindergartens in this study, ratios had improved since the introduction of Bulk Funding because although their rolls have increased to 45/45, a third teacher has been appointed. They have moved from a staff:child ratio of 1:20 to 1:15. They have welcomed their new third teacher as they had been lobbying for this for years. Overall there is a feeling that the third teacher has been of benefit to themselves and their programme. For example, the teachers feel they cope better during the day to day running of the programme. As one teachers tells it:

"The association ... granted us a third teacher about October/November last year...that was a plus for quality because now there are three people in the place, not two burnt

³ Kindergartens in New Zealand generally have two separate groups of children attending their centres. The older children usually come every morning during the week while the younger children attend for three afternoons. When roll numbers are referred to, the morning roll number is stated, then the afternoon roll number. Hence 45/30 means there are 45 children on the morning roll and 30 children on the afternoon roll at this particular kindergarten.

out teachers who are frazzled. When I think of the beginning of that year to when we got our third teacher, we were under extreme stress." (teacher)

And parents have noticed an improvement in teacher stress levels too.

"I used to feel sorry for the teachers when there were only two of them. I used to think, how do you stand it?" (parent)

"Last year our teachers were getting really stressed because of the ratio of children. But last year (later in the year) we got a grant for our third teacher. But prior to that special needs children were dipping out. We had three children who needed a lot of extra care and attention and that wasn't happening. And they (the teachers) knew it wasn't happening. They were just coping with the day to day. They were just keeping it ticking over with nothing really extra ... and they wanted to do things." (parent)

But there is also a feeling among these teachers that nothing has really changed since the appointment of the new teacher because they are just so busy. The new third teacher is fully utilised:

"We find that the resource person actually is the busiest of all – because we've got the child with special needs that we've got to toilet, then school visits ... you make morning tea, the fruit for the children, accidents, crying, upset children ... it's like being a two teacher. The other two are hanging the programme together while the third teacher is rushing around doing all these other things." (teacher)

And these teachers are finding the overall workload has increased.

"We used to have two teachers and used to work really hard. But I haven't really noticed a great change even though we now have got three ... we are not really achieving any more. There are still a lot of things to do that we haven't got time for. because of all the extra administration, accountability to parents and parents with social problems or whatever" (teacher)

Overall these teaching teams who have gained an extra teacher, since the introduction of Bulk Funding, feel they have more opportunity to offer a greater range of activities for the children, plus they feel they have more time to interact with the children to extend them.

"You're challenged to improve your teaching ability, also extending the children more. And the more you extend them the more we have to work to keep ahead of them." (teacher)

Increased Ratios

For the two kindergartens in this study who already had 3 teachers before Bulk Funding was introduced, increasing their rolls to 45/45 and having to go from a ratio of 1:13.3 to 1:15 was a far less favourable outcome.

Teachers and parents of these centres felt under increasing pressure from their association to increase their rolls so they could generate the Bulk Funding to pay their own teachers salaries. They also felt increasingly aware that experienced teachers were expensive teachers and they should be generating maximum funds to pay their own way.

It was also made clear to parents and teachers, by their association, that if their kindergarten didn't generate enough funding to meet their own teachers salaries, it was their committees' responsibility to meet the fiscal shortfall. Some teachers and committees felt caught in a dilemma of quality. They also felt a responsibility as professionals and parents to provide the best educational experiences they could for the children. They felt going to 45/45 would compromise the quality of care and education their kindergarten provided. As one parent said:

"We feel our children's time here is important and 45 children, especially in the afternoon, is too many ... especially with them starting so young. The children are suffering ... they're not getting enough attention from teachers." (parent)

One of the kindergartens also had 4 special needs children who required extra attention. This needed to be taken into consideration. Teachers and the committees spent a lot of time together discussing their options. This is how one of the kindergartens responded to the dilemma. A parent explains:

"As part of our charter requirements we needed community consultation. So we sent out a questionnaire (at the time licensing went up to 45:45) saying we had a shortfall and outlining options. We could either go to 45:45 or stay at 40:40 but the parents (if they chose 40:40) had to pick up the shortfall with a rise in voluntary donations and increased fund-raising. We got 26 replies from 90 sent out, and a majority of these didn't want to increase the number of children. So we compromised. We increased the roll slightly and voluntary donations went up slightly to \$1.20. So since the beginning of term two this year voluntary donations have increased from \$1 per child per session to \$1.20. An increase in donations has occurred previously at the centre ... but this rise can be directly attributed to the introduction of Bulk Funding and the shortfall." (parent)

Pressure to find extra funding

For three of the kindergartens who were resisting going to the full 45:45 rolls, the issue of funding has become a real concern. Parents and teachers of these kindergartens seem to be putting a lot of thought into how to meet any shortfall in their centres at the end of this year. Funding for kindergartens comes from 2 sources:

- The government grant-in-aid which covers salaries and operational costs and other associated running costs.
- Parents who fundraise and give voluntary donations (none of the kindergartens in this study charge compulsory fees yet although government has legislated to allow this to happen).

When the government reduces funding, then the parents have to pick up the shortfall. Evidence suggests that some kindergartens are picking up increased costs passed on from their association.

"There's pressure to meet all those things the association say you have to pay and this is money that is not going to the children now. We've had things added to our budget throughout the year. The insurance levy is going up. The association have got an

extra insurance that they are doing this year ... for teachers sick leave and that. They've put into an insurance policy, where after 29 total sick days from one centre, the insurance company will start paying the relieving teachers' cost." (parent)

Also at the time of the study the committees' operational grant was under threat for a second year in a row, as the association was running into deficit and needed some of the operational grant to pay teachers salaries. This concerns kindergartens as it makes it more financially difficult for them. As a parent and teacher from one centre commented:

"I don't think we are going to meet our budget, especially with not getting this other money." (parent)

"It means the committees will get less, so they're going to have to fundraise more. And in the end it is going to mean less equipment for children, less art supplies, less new equipment ... which will effect the quality." (teacher)

Those kindergartens resisting going to full 45/45 rolls identified four alternative methods to raise more money:

- To put more pressure on parents to pay by making people pay. There were a wide range of views on this idea. Comments include:

"Some people don't pay and get away with it. Others subsidise them. I'd be happy for a compulsory fee." (parent)

"Our donations have increased because we have 10 extra people paying plus they are all better payers – our chairperson puts out reminder notices." (teacher)

However, there was also an awareness that many families cannot contribute because of poverty.

"The kindergarten donations are definitely low on the priority list when you have to meet the cost of power and phone ... which you can understand." (parent)

- To increase the voluntary donations. This has happened in two of these three centres since the introduction of Bulk Funding – from \$1.00 to \$1.20 and from \$0.90 to

\$1.00 per session. These parents and teachers have chosen to think through the issue of raising rolls versus raising donations. By raising donations, to a certain extent it reflects the value parents put on early childhood education for their children.

As the parents pointed out:

"With user-pays I'm in a category I pay for everything, doctors, education...it gets a bit hard ... but I'd rather have the best teachers and pay for it." (parent)

"Parents can see that they get darn good value for \$1.20 a day and they prefer to have smaller numbers." (parent)

The other centre is seriously discussing increasing donations. As they said:

"We are going to see at the end of the year what shortfall we'll get – we may have to put the donations up. But on the other hand keeping the donations lower often means a better response rate of parents paying." (parent)

- To increase fundraising for the centre. For example:

"Like last night at our committee meeting our committee have decided to do an extra fundraising thing this term to cover that money that they are not going to get from operational grant. It won't cover it but it will help. We know some families are feeling really stressed out about this fundraising but ... that's what we have to do to make ends meet." (parent)

- Dip into their kindergarten's savings (accumulated funds) which traditionally are spent on major expenditure such as building extension, maintenance, playground construction. One of the centres in the study was contemplating this option. Others may have to spend this money on extensions to accommodate the larger group size more comfortably. As a teacher comments:

"Now you see, we've got to spend money on the building. We've got to put some money into extending the verandah so that the children can at least get out under the verandah on a wet day. Because 45 children inside on a wet day!" (teacher)

There is genuine concern in all the kindergartens that the government is trying to withdraw from its commitment to kindergartens and pass the responsibility over to communities.

"It's user-pays in the long-term. Because who supplies the money in the fundraising? Usually the people who use the kindergarten. And that's the thing eh? That's all the government wanted to do – is lose responsibility for early childhood education." (teacher)

And another strong concern that comes through is that funding difficulties are going to increase in the future.

"I have this nagging concern that it is too easy for the government to lower the funding" (parent)

"We're on a cycle. They say every year the funding is going to be cut. We're still working through that cycle." (teacher)

Group Size

All the centres in this study now licensed for 45/45 have noticed the negative effects of the larger group size. A group size as big as 45 seems to pose new difficulties. Some of the problems arise from the lack of physical space, but others are linked to the dynamics of the group interactive processes. As a teacher points out:

"You're stretched ... it's not necessarily the ratio of adult to child, it's the building, the space ... you've got the dynamics of the group." (teacher)

Many of the comments focused on the size of the building and the large number of children.

"It's very hard with 45 children to make a circle ... like the "Honey Pot". Our children love the "Honey Pot". But you can't play that at mat time and they're always asking can we play at mat time. You just can't because there's just too many children.... It's a space thing when you think about it because a child can't move around the outside of the circle because the circle goes right around the mat right to the wall." (teacher)

"It is always a factor here when it is a wet yucky day ... squeezing in an extra five ... because your average attendance now is 39 or 40 whereas it used to be 35. So you are really squeezing in an extra five." (teacher)

"Because of the numbers we try to get as many children outside as possible. We extend the activities outside and get as many activities as possible going outside." (teacher)

"Another thing we have noticed with our increased roll is the coat area in the front porch. There isn't enough room for all the coats and people. We're going to have to look at an extension. This winter has just been diabolical. Another thing, with the extra teacher, is that the office is too small. We can't all fit in together. We often have to move into the art area to do work ... it was too small even for two teachers ... I think the offices are being built far too small especially with the extra administration." (teacher)

Other comments focused on the dynamics of mat times or large group time.

"It is only really during mat times that it becomes a problem. You can't have as much interaction because of size ... you can teach but you're not sure what they're picking up." (teacher)

"The big mat times, oh boy ... they're getting worse. We discussed it a while ago. We threw the idea forward that perhaps now that the weather has improved we'll split the group in the end and we'll have two teachers involved, with two groups. So we'll have smaller groups for our story at the end. And then we'll come back together to

hand out our art-work. But I think even that will be unsettling because you're bringing another new group in and settling them down. Well we will give it a go. Otherwise when we think of mat time, we get really stressed about it." (teacher)

Some centres have noted increased conflict emerging between children and children working less purposively. Comments from teachers relating to this include:

"We're finding we're getting little bits of picky behaviour coming through. Intimidation from children who are picking on the slightly quieter children, or the ones who can't stick up for themselves." (teacher)

"Children don't seem to be working as constructively so we seem to have had group time on wet days ... more than ever before." (teacher)

Pressure to keep rolls full

Going hand in hand with the large group size is the increased pressure on teachers to continually keep rolls as high as possible to generate as much funding as possible. By having an overall increase of up to 10 children, kindergartens in this study have found themselves working through their waiting lists much faster than before. Before the introduction of Bulk Funding children used to be 'staggered' slowly into the centres, settling the previous children before bringing in the next few. This system seems to have been compromised under Bulk Funding. As one parent bluntly pointed out: "You can't settle children under Bulk Funding. If your child is not on the roll you're not paid" (parent).

Settling children into the afternoon sessions is causing major problems in some instances. For example at the beginning of term 2 of this year staff in one kindergarten had 7 new children to bring into the afternoon session⁴ at once. They find if one child is upset it often makes the others upset. Five of their children have continued to be upset and crying throughout the term. Some parents have stayed to help, sometimes a new child will

4. All the kindergartens in this study operate the same sessional programme where the younger children attend 3 afternoons a week (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 12.45pm to 3.15pm). And the older children come every morning (Monday to Friday – 8.45am to 11.45am). Wednesday and Thursday afternoons are non-contact time for staff when they do administrative work, programme planning, have a staff meeting, prepare resources and activity areas, attend courses, and so on.

'shadow' a teacher. The remaining children in the session are luckily happy and self-involved.

Another centre had brought in 67 new children in the first 25 weeks of the year. They are having similar difficulties. As a teacher from this centre comments:

"You can only settle two children at a time can't you? And even the older ones, the ones that have been there for a while – still in the afternoon they will have a cry when their mother leaves. And its really because we've got so many children that we're probably not spending the necessary settling in time with them. Like if they don't settle in the first couple of days, then they can go on crying for four months."
(teacher)

Children arriving at kindergarten younger is also causing difficulty in some centres as the entry age has decreased.

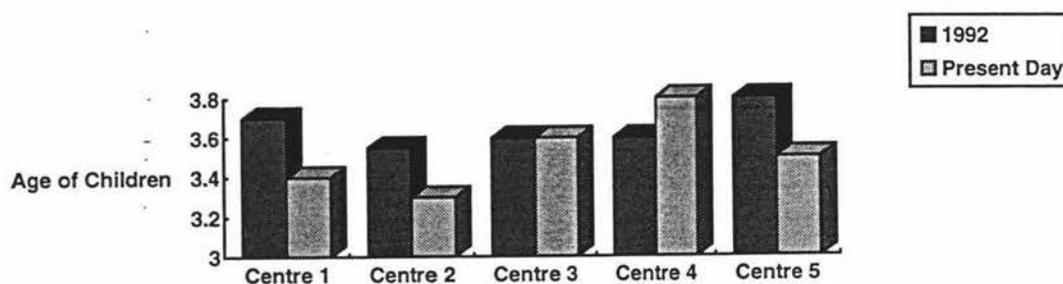


Figure 2: Changes to the entry age

Some comments include:

"Come October we will have children at 3 years to 3 years 2 months coming in. Parents are not pushing for their children to come ... they're happy to stay at home till their children are 3 years 6 months." (teacher)

"My daughter started at 3 years and 2 months and it was much too young! It took her ages to get her settled. Some are ready for it at this age but some aren't." (parent)

One of the kindergartens in the study is getting children so young they have had to modify and simplify their programme for the afternoon children. For example, some equipment is

put away e.g. harder puzzles, some art activities. Teachers concentrate more on "teaching" the child how to operate in a free play environment. For example, they have recently introduced a "skills" table in the art area where a teacher shows and guides new children in how to use a glue pot, brush and scissors.

Pre-entries

Many centres, depending on their existing systems, are having difficulties keeping up with the children and their parents needs. Pre-entry sessions are traditionally held, during non-contact time by many kindergartens as a formal "introduction" to the centre for parents and their children. Many things such as the programme, expectations and routines are explained to parents, and teachers have time to meet the children and spend time with the parents answering their queries and concerns. But this system appears to have broken down in some centres. As teachers comment:

"It is more prevalent now that we haven't met the mother or children before they start attending. We get them off the waiting list and they arrive." (teacher)

"We do pre-entries individually now rather than as a group because the children come in so quickly now." (teacher)

"We have to do pre-entries at the start of the session on their first day. It doesn't really give the child a fair go because we have to take their mother into the office to explain everything." (teacher)

Example of how one of the kindergartens has handled the changing situation:

Before the increase in rolls one kindergarten orientated new families and children by a combination of home visiting and holding pre-entry sessions at the kindergarten, on a Wednesday or Friday afternoon, in groups of 6 – 8 children and their parents. Teachers would then introduce children into the afternoon session gradually in ones and twos. But because of the rate of children coming into the session and having to continually keep their rolls high, children come into the centre now at a rate to meet the needs of the roll (rather than the roll reflecting the needs of the children). The previous pre-entry system just hadn't been able to keep up and the new group of children is more unsettled. In the old days, if the group is not settled, teachers gave time before bringing in new ones. This has changed under Bulk Funding. Staff found it difficult talking to new parents during session time and there was a lot more explaining as they went, for example about routines, notices, and consent forms. Staff also felt time was needed just making new parents and children feel comfortable with the centre and introducing them to everyone. Staff thought it was tough on families not having a pre-entry because the pre-entry gave them a chance to meet other parents and develop a bond. If they didn't have that they could feel really isolated.

So this Kindergarten has recently introduced a 'new families evening'. They wait now until about 15 children have started then have an evening for the new families. This is usually 4–6 weeks after the child has started kindergarten. This evening is an information sharing time, e.g. about the kindergarten, the charter, the child's developmental booklet and gives parents a chance to meet each other, ask questions, discuss issues, etc. So far staff feel this new system is meeting the needs of new children and their families.

Summary of main points in Section One

Since the introduction of Bulk Funding:

- All the kindergartens in this study share the same ratios of 1:15 which allows them to be fully licensed and to generate sufficient funds to pay teachers salaries.
- Where physical space permits the group size has been increased from 40 to 45 children in each session.

- For the three kindergartens resisting going to the full 45/45 rolls, the issue of funding has become a real concern because these centres have to meet any financial shortfall in their teachers' salaries. Two centres have raised the level of their voluntary donations, the third is contemplating it.
- In all centres there is concern that the government is trying to back out of its financial commitment to kindergartens and pass the responsibility over to communities.
- The kindergartens who had a third teacher appointed felt this was of benefit to their programme. For example they now have time to do more with the children. On the other hand they are not noticing any change in their workload with the increased number of activities set up for the children and additional tasks such as increased administration.
- The larger group size of up to 45 children seems to pose new problems. For example fitting comfortably into the building, onto the "mat" and finding space to accommodate coats and bags. There are also signs that children are playing less constructively and cooperatively in some centres.
- The pace of entry into the session has increased considerably in an attempt to continually keep the rolls as high as possible. Settling the children has become difficult in some centres, especially where children are entering kindergarten earlier. This problem is aggravated in some centres which can't keep up with "pre-entry" procedures which introduce new children and their families to the kindergarten.

SECTION TWO – STAFF

This section mainly presents the results of a small survey given to individual staff about their working conditions. (See Appendix 3) Teachers were asked to assess changes in their work environment on a Likert scale and to write comments if they so wished. Many staff also took the opportunity to talk more fully later about some of the issues raised.

Qualifications

All the teachers in this study, including staff appointed since the introduction of Bulk Funding, had their New Zealand Free Kindergarten Diploma and/or a Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education). There has been no change in the level of staff qualifications since the beginning of 1992.

Staff Stability

In this study all the kindergartens were selected because they had a stable staff. But many of the teachers interviewed acknowledged this as a factor contributing to the quality in their centres.

"When you're looking at quality one of the most important things is staff stability. If you haven't got it ... things start falling apart." (teacher)

"I think stability of staff and stability of committees have a lot to do with the way a kindergarten functions. Our committee chairperson and treasurer have stayed on another year ... we have long-term goals we've discussed together ... we get a little bit of new equipment each year ... we don't let it slide." (teacher)

Wages

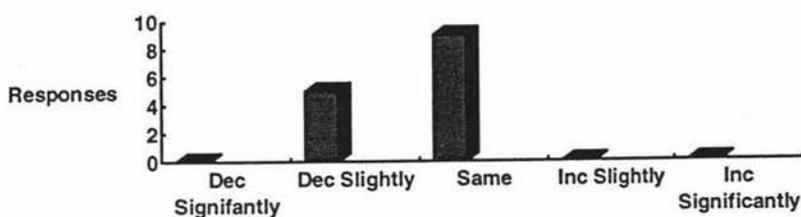


Figure 3: Changes in Wages

Since the beginning of 1992, staff say that their wages (excluding annual service increments) have either stayed the same or decreased slightly due to salary staying the same but increased levels of CECUA levy, inflation and ACC levy.

Benefits

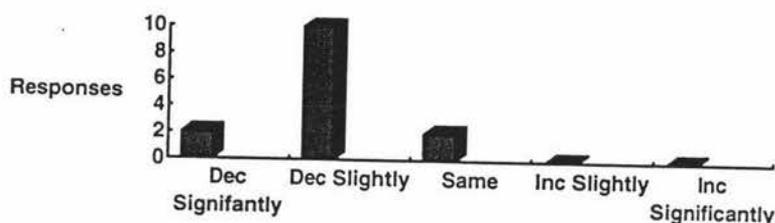


Figure 4: Changes to Benefits

Staff did not note any improvements in work benefits. The majority of teachers saw their benefits had decreased slightly. There was general confusion about the new sick leave provisions negotiated in the last contract settlement. Comments by teachers about reductions in benefits included:

"We are no longer able to employ relievers on Wednesday and Friday afternoons."

"Travel claims are not now as available and travel reimbursement rates have gone down."

"The loss of a preparation day at the beginning of the year is a direct result of Bulk Funding. The pressure to get as much funding as possible means the association can't afford to let the teachers have extra non-contact time."

"I feel less secure that I will maintain the holidays that we have currently have access to. I am sure that next year we will only have 2 guaranteed weeks during August."

"Staff feel more obliged to go to work when they are sick to help keep relievers costs down and I personally do not claim travel allowances I am entitled to, to try and help the association keep costs lower."

Working Conditions

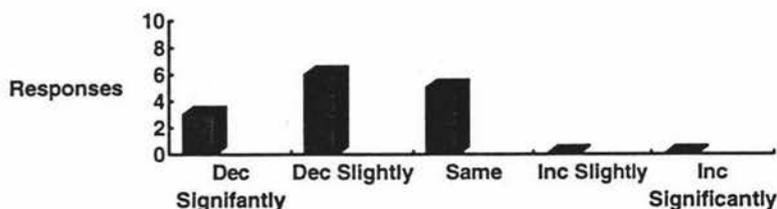


Figure 5: Changes in Working Conditions

Staff thought that working conditions had either stayed the same or deteriorated. 75% of respondents from kindergartens licensed for 45/45 noticed an increased noise level, especially on wet days. Some of the comments included:

"With 45:45 rolls the building is crowded with little floor space to play and not enough room for art and craft. Children's noise levels are higher, especially on wet days when we are confined to inside. There is also a cramped feeling when we are confined inside with 45 children."

Another factor which emerged was the working constraints caused by increased financial awareness of teachers. For example:

"I am a lot more conscious of the running costs of the kindergarten, knowing that parents will ultimately be the ones who need to make up any deficit in operating costs. We are continuously aware of budgeting to save money for our kindergarten funds."

Opportunities for Professional Development

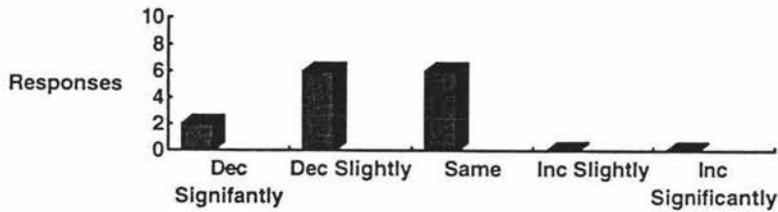


Figure 6: Opportunities for Professional Development

Many staff noted a slight or significant decrease in opportunities for professional development. Comments include:

"We have lost our in-service day and we almost lost our teacher only day. As it is, it is on Wednesday in order that we lose only one sessions funding. This means that teachers lose another non-contact day. I also pay for my own professional development, that is, Massey study."

"Our in-service is not now as accessible and usually only one person per centre can attend."

"We no longer have the opportunity to attend ECDU courses. We are expected to be loyal to the association and the senior teachers and what they can supply. Staff have taken professional development into their own hands and are doing more extra-mural studies, etc."

"Several courses are run in weekends, after work or holidays. Expenses are high and other commitments interfere with the opportunity to attend."

"Because of our increased workload we do not have time to take up as many opportunities for professional development. Relievers are also not paid to relieve staff on non-contact days."

Quality of Professional Development

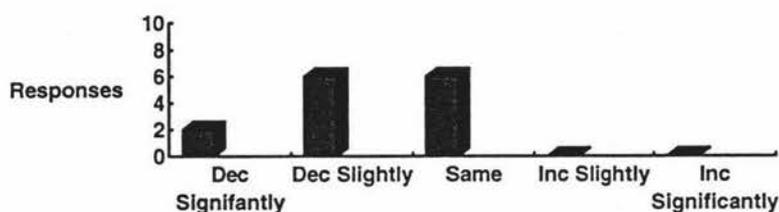


Figure 7: Quality of Professional Development

43% of respondents thought the quality of professional development had stayed the same. The others felt there had been a deterioration. Comments by teachers questioned the rationale behind some of the existing courses:

"I feel courses are often being held because of pressure from Ministry, ERO, and the Association to meet their requirements rather than to meet teachers' needs."

"I feel some courses are run now to fulfil requirements of Senior Teachers' workload."

"Some courses seem to be irrelevant to pre-school areas."

Stress Level

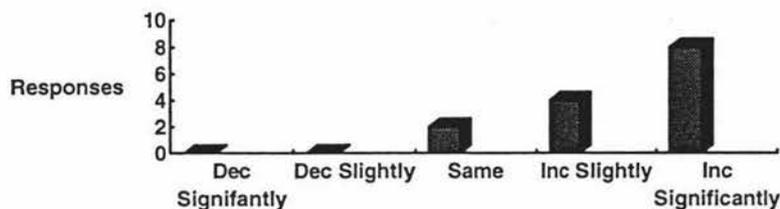


Figure 8: Changes in Stress Level

86% of teachers thought the stress level at work had increased, a large proportion of these respondents feeling stress had increased significantly. Comments included:

"The need to maintain numbers for funding is stressful, especially knowing that funding doesn't cover salaries unless rolls are kept at 45:45 and knowing that families don't have extra money to pay for the shortfall."

"We have more children and families to work with and we have to keep the rolls full at all times."

"There is a lot more planning and evaluation required by ERO and Ministry."

"Parents expect more input and we have put a greater emphasis on parent education."

"I feel have to spend a lot more time explaining, justifying and reassuring families about ECE and its future. This is stressful."

(Not all the stress was negative. With the appointment of their third teacher, one team pointed out the positive stress involved in melding a three teacher team.)

Workload

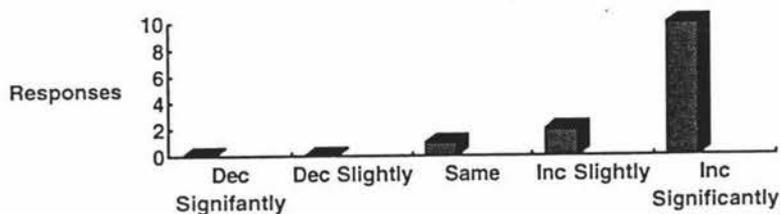


Figure 9: Changes to the Workload

Teachers overwhelmingly felt their workload had increased – 77% of respondents found their workload increased significantly and 14% found a slight increase. Reasons cited for this included:

"Due to increased roll numbers there are more children and parents to relate to. It is a challenge to provide a flexible programme to meet a variety of needs."

"Ten extra families require more work."

"Because support services of all kinds are less available, we are required to do more work with children and families ourselves."

"There is extra workload for staff who are representing teachers and liaising with the Board of Management."

"There are more expectations to uphold charter requirements, with proof. All these extra consultative processes require extra work."

"I feel parent and committee pressures have increased due to family stress, redundancies etc. I spend more time helping these people."

Staff stated that they were spending more time at work:

"I stay late on Friday and the other staff come in on weekends. We shouldn't have to, but we seem to have more to do."

"Due to increased office work from the association and government, etc, we are often taking work home or coming back after hours and at weekends."

Administration

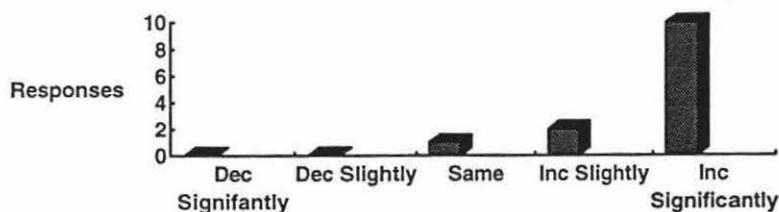


Figure 10: Changes to the Administrative Workload

Since the introduction of Bulk Funding all teachers stated that there has been a noticeable increase in the amount of administration. 79% of teachers thought the administrative workload had increased significantly.

Reasons for this included:

- Maintaining roll numbers.
- Starting children individually means that getting forms filled in by parents and showing parents the ropes, has to be done one case at a time instead of in a group.
- Getting rolls signed.
- Arranging transfer cards.
- Programme planning has to be more detailed.
- Children are evaluated and recorded more.
- Keeping parents and the committee up to date with changes.
- Getting forms filled in for the Health Department.
- Employing teacher aides

Staff feel there has been an encroachment into their non-contact time by other responsibilities such as:

- Association staff meetings
- Attending courses (so that the association doesn't lose any Bulk Funding or need to employ a reliever).

Some staff feel this has reduced their time to:

- Plan and evaluate their programme using accountable procedures. Some are falling back on verbal planning a lot more.
- Undertake home visits to parents and their children.

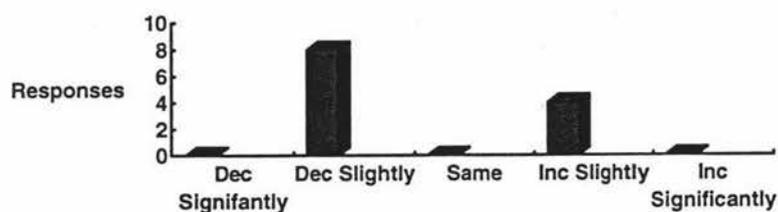
Job Satisfaction

Figure 11: Overall Job Satisfaction

Staff who experienced increased job satisfaction came from centres who have recently gained their third teacher. For example, they were able to do more work with individuals and small groups and were able to follow up special interest areas. But 67% of teachers noted a slight decrease in job satisfaction.

"I feel that teaching in kindergartens now has an underlying agenda to produce funds for our associations. Quality time with children appears to have become secondary."

"I feel sad that because of a lack of money we can no longer give children, their parents and the community the service that they deserve."

"I often feel frustrated as time that should be spent working with or for children is now spent with administrative tasks."

"I feel frustrated – the job I have been trained to do is to work with parents and children – not fill in endless forms etc to justify someone else's job!"

"I tend to feel we spend less time with children (which is our job) and more time with administration and counselling."

"Pressure from the association has decreased job satisfaction. Taking away relievers, teacher only days, etc."

This section could aptly be concluded with a quote from a parent:

"I think eventually Bulk Funding is going to affect the quality of our children's education because teachers are going to become disillusioned with the lack of pay rises. In our Association the funding has still got to go down by another 2 or 3 cents per operational hour. So there is going to be no pay rises for quite some years. This means eventually it is going to effect the morale. I think kindergarten teaching is a job of love, but you will get a percentage, for their own personal and financial reasons, who will have to leave. But it truly is a job of love." (parent)

Summary of main points in Section Two

Since the introduction of Bulk Funding:

- There has been no change in the qualifications held by staff but the majority of teachers felt the quality of, and opportunity for, professional development had decreased.
- Wages have remained the same, but increased inflation and increased ACC, CECUA levies has reduced teachers take-home wage slightly.
- The majority of teachers feel their working conditions have deteriorated. For example with increased noise levels brought about by the higher number of children.
- Teachers note significant increase in both workload and stress level.
- A significant increase in the administrative workload has been noted. More meetings and courses are being scheduled in non-contact time reducing the time teachers have to spend on administrative tasks.
- Teachers' overall job satisfaction has increased slightly in centres who have had a third teacher appointed. Other kindergarten staff express a slight reduction in overall job satisfaction.

SECTION THREE – THE PROGRAMME

This section presents the results of information gathered mainly by interviewing teaching teams and parents. A modified version of the Harms and Clifford (1980) Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) provided a framework for data gathering from teachers. (See Appendix 4.) But teachers also had opportunities to discuss about areas of interest.

The Physical Environment

Asked a sequence of questions about changes in the resources and equipment in their centres, teachers stated that they had either stayed the same or improved. The questions covered areas such as basic equipment, art and block opportunities for children and resources for children's fine and gross motor experiences. (Further graphs are presented in Appendix 7.)

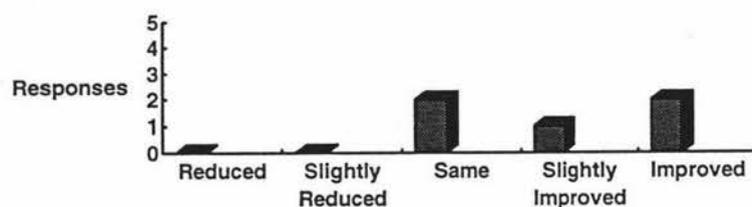


Figure 12: Furnishings (e.g. tables)

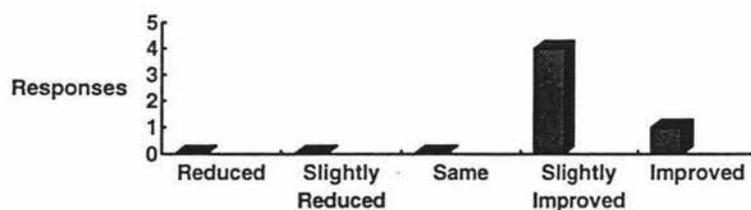


Figure 13: Fine-motor Opportunities

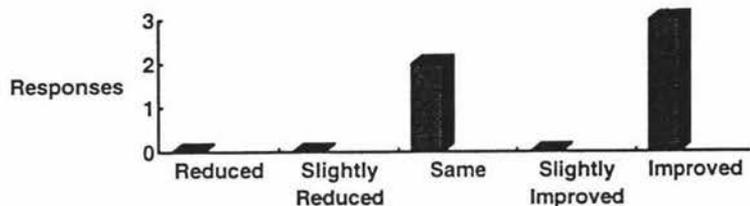


Figure 14: Gross Motor

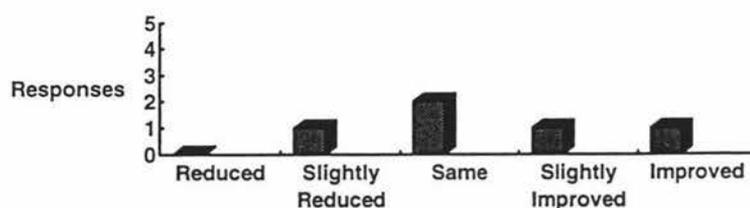


Figure 15: Art Opportunities

Parents talked about projects they had embarked on over the last 18 months or were about to embark on. Examples of improvements vary from centre to centre. But in one kindergarten in the study, improvements since the beginning of 1992 included a new shed, new dramatic area, new carpet, new books and puzzles, extra soft furnishing, blocks and art resources. All the kindergartens however had still fundraised to build up their resources and equipment. Because the parents interviewed were also on the committee, and thus involved in the fundraising and deciding how to spend the money, they seemed very aware of the equipment and resources their centre had bought.

All centres felt they offered the same opportunities for children to have free play. This was supported by a continuation of the same routines and systems that give children the opportunity to be self-motivated, to move independently between a range of activities making choices about their own learning. Staff felt the provision and quality of their programme planning and evaluation had generally stayed the same, although some staff saw a slight increase and others a slight decrease in this regard. All the teaching teams felt the general learning atmosphere of their centres had either stayed the same or improved due to their increased efforts.

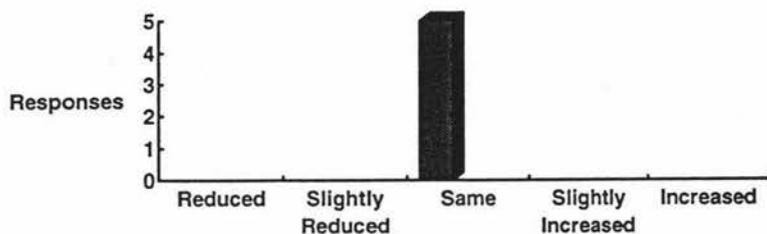


Figure 16: Free Play Opportunities

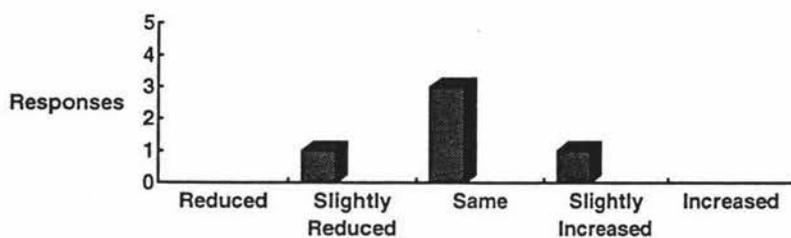


Figure 17: Evaluation and Planning of Programme

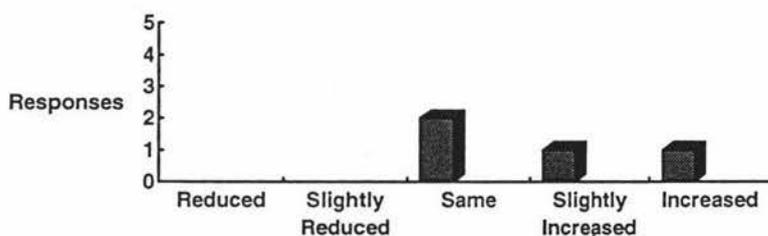


Figure 18: General Learning Atmosphere

Adult-child Interaction

It is in the area of adult-child interaction that the greatest range of answers were recorded. Teaching teams were asked a range of questions about the opportunities they had to extend children through social interaction, for example by questioning, challenging and extending the children and helping children develop expressive and reasoning skills. The results in this area depended on the change that had occurred in staff:child ratio. For the

centre that was always 1:15, they generally found little change in this area. But for the teachers in centres that have moved from a 1:20 to a 1:15 ratio they generally felt opportunity to interact with children had improved. Conversely, for centres who have gone from a 1:13 to 1:15 ratio, teachers felt generally they have had less opportunity for interaction.

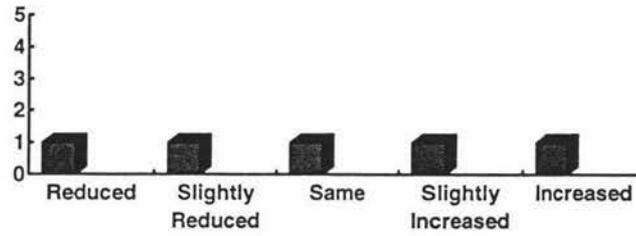


Figure 19: Opportunities to Encourage Children's Expressive Skills

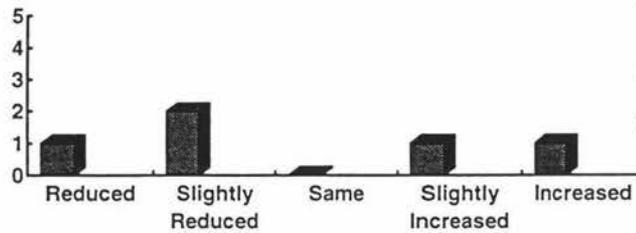


Figure 20: Opportunities to Challenge Children

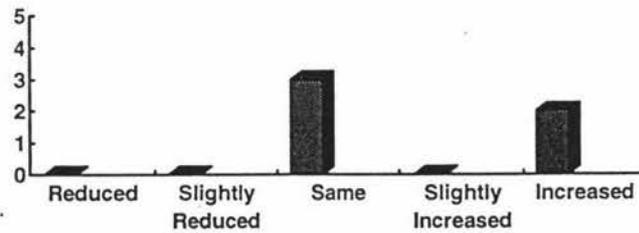


Figure 21: Opportunities for Small Group Work

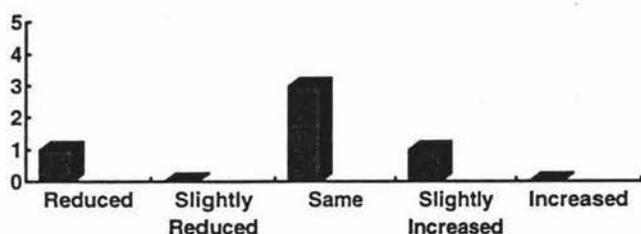


Figure 22: Support of Children Outside

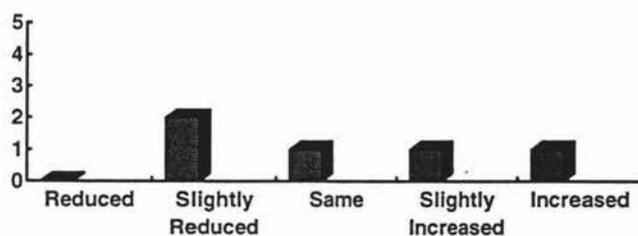


Figure 23: Opportunities to Encourage Reasoning

Comments from the teachers whose ratios have improved show that they believe they have had more scope and opportunity to spend with the children:

"The resource person is scheduled now to take group music in the middle of the session." (teacher)

"Personally I have spent more time sitting down with the kids ... compared to only two teachers." (teacher)

"You don't feel guilty when you sit down with the children now, say in the puzzle area, and you can work with the children." (teacher)

And some parents have noticed the difference too:

"If we were here we'd get the phone and try and help the teachers. But now they have a teacher on resource, (enrolments and things like that), one inside, and the other one outside. So it is the resource teacher who does the calls. And the teachers

with the children can actually work with the children, and not get distracted. They (the teachers) are able to get in working with the children and their programme a lot more." (parent)

Conversely teachers in centres whose staff:child ratios have become less favourable have found opportunities for social interaction with children decreased.

"We're trying to get around more children and have less time with each child."

"There are lots of different groups, so it is harder to get around everybody."

"We are not seeming to get long concentrated conversations."

"There are always interruptions from other children."

"Lots of house keeping jobs interrupt our work."

Staff in four centres thought the provision and quality of their assessment and evaluation procedures for individual children had improved since the beginning of 1992.

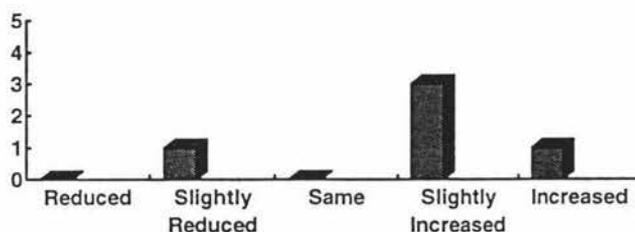


Figure 24: Assessment and Evaluation of Children

One centre which gained a third teacher had noticed a significant improvement in this area.

"You can sit down and go through a whole assessment of a child without interruptions. We are more aware of where children are at and can plan and carry out extension work. Since we have had three teachers, we do individual assessments on all the morning children. What we do then is we put them into little groups. Like, at

the end of last term we had about twelve children who were needing extension. We had a little group doing extra work with puzzles. And another little group we worked with colours...." (teacher)

Some kindergartens are finding it hard to keep up with the formal assessment and evaluation systems because of increased pressure on their time.

"We're having trouble finding time to walk around with a pencil and paper and individual records take up time." (teacher)

"The process has improved but we are not doing it as often. The materials have improved but it is more difficult to action it even with a parent coming a day a week to release a staff member." (teacher)

Equity needs

The introduction of Bulk Funding has not affected teacher commitment to the equity issues of gender and race and they continue to add to their practices and resources to support this when they can. Staff are still committed to having special needs children as part of the kindergarten.

Not all children with special needs come under the label of "mainstreamed". For many children it may be a matter of providing help in one particular area of their development such as language or behaviour. Support services, such as Special Education Service (SES) or speech–language therapy, are available to help with these children too. 79% of teachers felt there was a reduction in the availability these support services. The remaining 21% thought the availability of service had stayed the same.

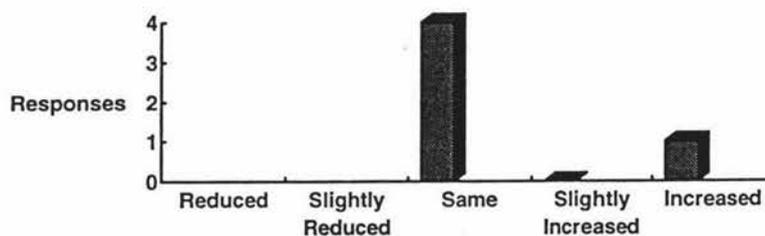


Figure 25: Non-sexist Practices

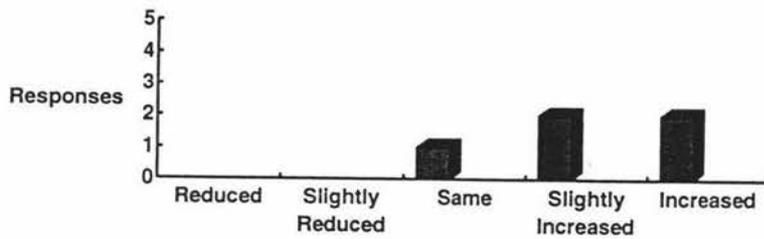


Figure 26: Cultural Materials



Figure 27: Commitment to Special Needs Children

Comments from teachers imply that support agencies are harder to get hold of, are in more demand and that there are fewer support staff to do the work. For example:

"The speech and language therapist – we don't see her now, this year. We used to though – she used to pop in. But there is no communication this year – she is worked off her feet and she hasn't got time."

"SES seem to have more children and families to deal with and no extra staff to do this with. Therefore their availability is limited."

"SES are harder to get hold of because there are more demands on them and less of them employed."

"SES are increasingly at the advisory level."

"Kindergarten staff are having to do extra work. For example instead of an Early Intervention teacher, aides are being used. Teachers have to employ the aides, give them skills and it is reviewable every 6 months."

Slightly more than half the respondents found that the quality had reduced slightly or significantly. No improvements were noted although one centre thought there was very good support from all concerned. But this centre found that with 45 children it was very difficult to give their one child with special needs the extra time he needed.

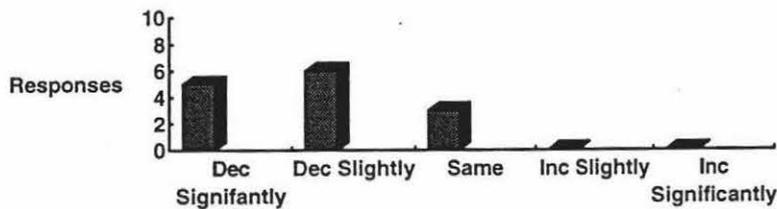


Figure 28: Availability of Support Services

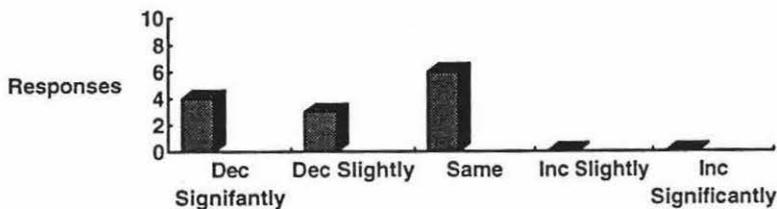


Figure 29: Quality of Support Services

Resourcing of special needs children is an issue.

"We don't actually have special needs children in our kindergarten but I know that a lot of kindergartens out there have got up to five special needs children. And they're not getting any assistance with them even to build ramps or other facilities. The communities are having to raise the money to make alterations though technically they are not allowed to refuse the children." (parent)

One kindergarten in this study which had 4 special needs children is feeling increasingly disillusioned with the situation. They find having so many special needs children puts an extra stress and strain on the staff. Apart from needing to give the special needs children extra attention, they find there are just lots of extra bodies in the centre. It is not uncommon for them to have 8–10 extra people in the centre – with students, psychologists, teachers aides, special education teachers, the neuro-physiologist and the speech language therapist. The number of different SES workers coming through the centre is a problem in itself. Staff have asked to have only one SES teacher to cover all their special needs cases, but this has not happened, so staff have to cope with this constant stream of visitors through the centre.

Staff find the support agencies do little hands on interactive work with the children. Teacher aides are employed for this but the responsibility for overseeing the aides and providing extra quality interactive learning opportunities for the special needs children falls back on the teachers. As one commented:

"We find more and more we are left to deal with special needs children and their families with little support. There are things we do now with children that previously the Special Education Service (SES) did."

For example, one of the teachers was helping a special needs child and her family with the school transition process. The teacher had to take time out of normal session time to visit schools with the mother and child. This teacher commented:

"The quality of service from SES is not good enough. They are having to cut back and we are suffering."

A parent at this centre expressed unhappiness with the way special needs children are serviced. She sees that the government is turning around from their commitment to special needs children, pulling back. Her son has three hours teacher aide time and one hour with a special education teacher each week. But she feels her son does not get enough quality interactive hands-on time with the qualified special education teacher. In the past, special needs units were attached to kindergartens. Under this old system she felt her son would have received one hour per day of ongoing interaction with a trained special education

teacher. But the qualified teachers are now unavailable to work as frequently with special education children. It is common to find unqualified teacher aides who mainly work with the children. Special education teachers "visit" now.

Parent-Staff relationship

All the staff interviewed placed great importance on having a good relationship with parents and felt they have worked hard to keep this up. But problems are starting to appear:

"The general increase of work with increased roll numbers. There are more families, more parents wanting to know things...everything has increased." (teacher)

"An increased number of parents needing support and counselling from the teachers. You have parents in here in tears, they're quite worried with stuff going on, such as marriage breakup unemployment and redundancy." (teacher)

In spite of this, teachers feel their support for parents hasn't deteriorated. As far as their physical space will allow they continue to provide a place where the adults can get together away from the children's activities. They also still work to improve the systems that promote communication with parents, such as information sheets, newsletters, social gatherings and notice boards.

Provision for Parents

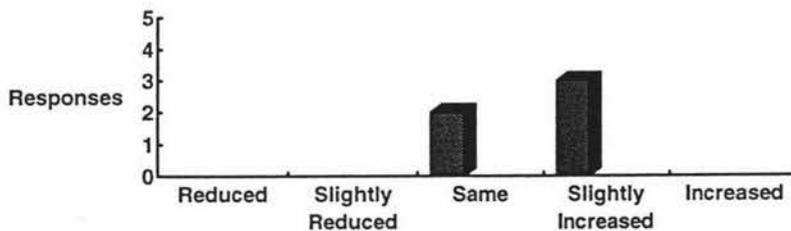


Figure 30: Provision for Parents

Parents feel having a third teacher appointed has made the teachers more accessible for parents in those kindergartens. As a parent explains:

"If you wanted to before, you could make a time to see the teachers outside the kindergarten hours. You could see them on those two non-contact time afternoons if you wanted to. But now you can see them anytime. Because of the leeway with three teachers, you can take one out of the working environment just to have that ten minute chat if you're worried about something. Whereas before, if it was only something basic it was fine. But if you really wanted to have a talk about something you were very worried about you'd have to do it out of the session because you were taking one kindergarten teacher out and leaving the other with 40 children." (parent)

As part of the process of interviewing parents it became evident that many parents felt they had drawn closer to their teachers. They have been involved in their centre since the introduction of Bulk Funding and worked together with their teachers to decide how to respond to the pressure from their association to increase roll numbers. Parents and teachers of each kindergarten had spent considerable time together, planning and working to improve their centre for the children. And the children remain their prime motivators. As one parent pointed out:

"We're more interested in our children, not the money side of it."

Summary of main points in Section Three

Since the introduction of Bulk Funding:

- Parents and teachers overwhelmingly see an improvement in the physical environment of their centres. Examples of improvements include new furnishings, resources and equipment for the children.
- The routines and systems that support "play" as a method of learning, remain unchanged. The learning "atmosphere", teachers thought, had either stayed the same or improved.
- Opportunities for teacher-child interaction have generally increased in kindergartens where a third teacher has been appointed.

- Opportunities for teacher–child interaction have generally decreased in the three teacher kindergartens whose roll–numbers have increased.
- Provision of assessment and evaluation procedure for children has improved in most of the centres.
- Commitment to equity issues of gender, race and special need has remained the same or improved in all the centres.
- All kindergartens think the availability or quality of support services, such as SES has either stayed the same or decreased.
- Parent–teacher relations have either stayed the same or improved. In cases where a third teacher has been appointed the opportunity for parents to see teachers during session time has increased.

SECTION FOUR - PERCEPTIONS OF BULK FUNDING

Bulk Funding was introduced with no obvious public mandate such as support from parents and teachers, seemingly to fit in with the state's agenda for devolution of responsibility of education. As shown in Chapter Two, Bulk Funding is clearly linked to the New Right marketisation policy for education.

Yet people's support and acceptance of government policy is important for the state to maintain their hegemonic power and legitimate their position. An important question must be, whether consent for Bulk Funding has been won and maintained since the policy's implementation?

This section presents the perceptions of parents and teachers towards the policy of Bulk Funding. The responses are divided into three time frames (remembering the responses were elicited in one interview). Respondents were asked how they felt about the policy when it was first introduced, about eighteen months after its implementation and finally as a policy for the future.

Perceptions of Bulk Funding at the Time of its Introduction.

Asked how they had felt when it was announced that Bulk Funding was going to be introduced, teachers and parents expressed a range of feelings about the policy. Comments reflected a heightened awareness of potential funding difficulties in the future and many felt a lack of consultation and discussion about the proposal from government. The participants in the study expressed the following views.

- there was an absence of information about Bulk Funding from which to make any judgement. Comments included:

"The teachers tried to 'rev' us up about it, but there just wasn't any public information. The government just sort of dictated 'this is happening'. There has never been a public forum on it. We had one in the theatre, or something, but prior to that, they just didn't give enough information. And I think that some of the problem was that the ministry and administrators didn't know themselves. It wasn't from the

man at the top, Lockwood Smith, it was his deputy. But information was just dribbled through so that there wasn't a 'oh my God, here's a list and this is what's going to happen!' It was bang and you were into it!" (parent)

"We were not too worried. We were not sure how it was going to affect us. There wasn't much discussion. Our awareness increased quickly though when we were told to increase rolls, when we were told our license had been increased to 45/45, when we were told it was our choice of raising the rolls to 45/45 but that if we didn't do this, another kindergarten would have to subsidise us. We were made to feel guilty" (parent)

- A lack of consultation and discussion by the government was perceived:

"There was no information, no discussion or consultation....primary teachers were going on and on about it...we were told we were going to be Bulk Funded and that was that." (teacher)

"It was really disappointing when it came in because we had done such a lot of work and that, really trying to fight against it. And here we had parent and community support - and we thought - 'what's the point?' They're not going to listen to us anyway. We're just an experiment. They brought it all in together. They did it at the same time. It was such a busy year. They just picked off the little groups. And no one really listened to us -oh I'm sure some people listened to us..but not politically listened to us. It just blew on in and then ...we got it!" (teacher)

- Skepticism about the government's motives behind Bulk Funding was expressed:

"I felt skeptical about the whole thing. I felt it was a cop out by government. It gave the power to the community then reduced funds and let the community take the flak for it." (teacher)

"Basically the government is trying to get people to do their job for nothing so they don't have to pay. I don't think anyone has the right to do that. Its not fair. " (teacher)

- There was an increased awareness of the potential difficulties ahead:

"I knew we were going to be on the losing side because there wouldn't be enough money to go around." (parent)

"I think the more understanding I got of it I realised it was not going to be, you know, an advantage. It was going to be a disadvantage. Once you start limiting purse strings you've got to run into problems - you've got things that have got to be costed, things that have got to be cut to balance the books. You've got to do more fund-raising, and that's pretty hard yacker on a tight economy." (parent)

Perceptions of Bulk Funding 18 months after its Implementation

Parents and teachers stated that, a year and a half after the implementation of Bulk Funding, they felt specific difficulties were developing. For example:

- A more "difficult" relationship with the association was evolving caused by the association's control over both teachers salaries and operational grants, with the need to make ends meet. Comments included:

"What's wrong with it is what it's doing to the associations. It's given the associations, I don't like to use the word power.....but because it's the associations responsibility with the Bulk Funding money, the associations are now looking at ways for us to work an extra week in August, to take away our teacher only days, to do all those sorts of things.... I mean that's the negative side of Bulk Funding. To me that's not what it is supposed to be. The associations are looking all the time at ways to make extra money to the detriment of the children. I mean, you know they are not thinking of the children first and to me that's really wrong." (teacher)

- Finding the money to pay teachers salaries has put pressure on individual kindergartens. For example some centres felt under pressure to generate extra funds to meet their own teachers' salaries. As a consequence many teachers felt they were being made to feel too "expensive". Comments included:

"I would feel a lot happier if it did not effect teachers' salaries. I feel that because I cost more I've got flak from the community for costing too much." (teacher)

"You're penalised if you've got stable, experienced, highly trained staff as these centres may have to generate the extra funds needed to fully meet their teachers' salaries" (parent)

- Some felt there was a greater responsibility being placed on parents to fundraise.

"I always contend with the idea of volunteers...a huge expectation is placed on volunteers to fundraise. It's fully unreasonable to expect them to be on top of everything." (teacher)

"Because parents haven't a big, high awareness of how the kindergarten functions...it is not actually until you get on the committee and you realise you have got to meet all these costs...you actually realise that is how things go. You know for a lot of parents they are very ignorant of how things are, so it would take a matter of saying to them 'I'm sorry we've run out of paper and paint and we can't afford to buy any more' for them perhaps to realise." (parent)

"The thing that makes me the most angry about Bulk Funding is the association taking the operational grant off committees. That's what they're doing. .. They're running in deficit.....so they're taking the money off the committees. They are not giving them their operational grant. That account is called "grant-in-aid" and in it goes our salaries from government and the operational grant. But do you know what comes out of that? Salaries and operational grant but also the appointments scheme..... It means the committees will get less, so they're going to have to fundraise more. And in the end it is going to mean less equipment for children , less art supplies, less new equipment...which will effect the quality. Which is just what we were going on about with Bulk Funding." (teacher)

- There was a feeling that children's needs were no longer the first priority for the government.

"I just feel that they, the government, have lost the sight that it's the children that they're really there for. It doesn't matter if it's the kindergarten level or higher education - it's just being lost. " (parent)

"It's sad when we get down in terms of talking in dollars. Our children's education shouldn't be measured like this." (teacher)

- But intermingled with this concern was also a certain pragmatism, especially from the parents, that this is the path New Zealand has chosen to take and kindergartens just have to "bite the bullet".

"Bulk Funding is unfair on the children...they're our chief concern....they come here to mix and learn...I know the education system couldn't go on as it was....it's had to change...I'm not sure how." (parent)

"It's just the way we've gone. You can be for it or against it but you have to deal with it the best you can." (parent)

"Bulk Funding in a way is a good idea to keep the good education we are getting. I don't mind paying and fundraising and it's only for a couple of years" (parent)

"personally I don't think Bulk Funding is a bad thing...the philosophy behind it is not a bad thing.....but the formula by which it was done is inadequate. No matter which way the association divides the money there isn't enough there" (parent)

Perceptions of the Future of Kindergartens under Bulk Funding

Parents and teachers expressed both positive and negative aspects of the future under Bulk Funding.

Positive comments focussed mainly on the increased flexibility and accountability which comes from greater community decision-making. But intermingled with these comments there were general concerns about the future level of funding. For example:

"I think in some ways its helped because I mean like we've had to do charters, be more accountable, so there are some things that have come out of it that are good ...its just the money...the moneys taken over ..literally" (teacher)

"I don't want to see another big change again. I want to see Bulk Funding stay but staff salaries paid in full, not just a national formula." (teacher)

"I agree that there had to be accountability but there's got to be some more fine-tuning.....I think the formula that they're working out has to be more flexible than what it is....they've taken a standard running cost and averaged it out across the whole of New Zealand which doesn't account for varying areas and economies." (parent)

"I think there have been too many situations where they have been overstaffed for the number of children. But that has to be addressed and sorted out. The monies been taken in the wrong direction and the stance of no redundancies taken, when there should have been. These things should have been tidied up at the beginning of Bulk Funding. That's one good thing about Bulk Funding. These things have to be addressed...because there were kindergartens out there with 40 children and 2 teachers and there were others with three teachers and not the children." (parent)

"I think Bulk Funding is a good thing as long as they keep up the funds and don't let the centres deteriorate. Really you need to think of putting more into early childhood - you've got to realise that we are educators not child minders....." (teacher)

"In theory Bulk Funding is a good thing. In theory the government said they're going to bring the other services to the level of kindergarten. The reality is that kindergartens are being dragged down to the others." (teacher)

There was concern that early childhood education was undervalued and that Bulk Funding would be used as a mechanism to withdraw financial support and resourcing by government. For example:

- Comments expressing concern that early childhood education was undervalued by government and society included:

"The writing is on the wall. Their whole attitude to early childhood is not positive." (teacher)

"Labour had done a few things (for early childhood education) but then I don't think Treasury value it. It doesn't matter which government is in because it is Treasury who pull the purse strings. And I think for Treasury people its not an important priority and no matter what you do, if Treasury say no, that's it - a stonewall!" (parent)

"I'm not so sure that the National government, in particular Lockwood Smith, appreciates the value of early childhood education." (teacher)

"I think a lot of the problem is public perception and I think its right through the teaching profession . They see university people with the highest knowledge, then the secondary teachers. Then they see the standard four teacher is higher qualified than a junior teacher and a kindergarten teacher is just..yeah..amongst the grass and the dirt. That's the public perception. Where as actually, from zero to five is your child's greatest learning and these children really need to have the highest skills. But its not seen as important because it takes too long. To see the money put into a kindergarten or a preschool centre means its fifteen years down the track before you see the benefit of that. So the governments can't wait fifteen years to see money they have invested. They'd rather put into something where they get quick results." (parent)

- Many felt Bulk Funding was only the beginning of a downward trend in support.

"It seems that our purses, unless we are catering for a new group of children, are shut tight. If we can find new children we can have extra money, but they will not give us extra for the existing children." (parent)

"I think it is going to get worse. I don't think it is ever going to get better. It might maintain at the level it's at but I can't see it getting better." (parent)

"Every time the government want to cut money they will do so and everyone will have to put rolls up, ratios will go up." (parent)

"They are going to drop the funding even further. If they are going to keep it at a reasonable level I see that as O.K. The present government is trying to wheedle its way out of its responsibility in early childhood education. And that's the thing eh? That's all the government wanted to do - to lose responsibility for early childhood education." (teacher)

"Communities and children will miss out. It's user-pays in the long-term. Because who supplies the money in the fundraising? Usually the people who use the kindergarten." (teacher)

"I really felt strongly last year in particular, that if we went beyond our budget we are saying to the government 'we cannot survive within this budget'. But I felt that if we survived in the budget the government would say the following years 'you have managed' and the government could then say 'OK here's the same amount,' or less the following years. I think that sort of spirals down so each year you always get less." (teacher)

Summary of main points in Section Four

- Parents and teachers expressed a range of feelings about Bulk Funding when it was being introduced. Some talked of an initial acceptance of the policy, caused mainly by lack of information and knowledge. There was also unease about levels of future funding and skepticism about government intention behind the policy.
- Eighteen months into Bulk Funding parents and teachers identified specific difficulties. For example some teachers saw their relationship with the association and community as more strained. The association, and to a certain extent the kindergarten community, had become their "employers" and teachers felt they were losing working conditions and had to justify their pay - especially if they were experienced "expensive" teachers. There was also a greater expectation on parents to fundraise. But many parents seemed to accept Bulk Funding, with the attitude that one just had to "deal with it the best you can". For example by paying higher fees or increasing fundraising.
- Some parents and teachers saw positive effects of Bulk Funding. For example the increased flexibility it has given to associations to meet the needs of the community.

But the shadow hanging over the policy, they felt, is the level of funding set by government. Parents and teachers both questioned the existing level of funding to kindergartens and saw it as likely to get worse in the future. Some felt the government was trying to lose responsibility for early childhood education which was not valued by the state and society.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

This chapter uses two different approaches to discuss the results of this research:

Firstly a New Right analysis is used to evaluate the effects of Bulk Funding. The affects on quality in terms of the quality indicators are examined, as teachers and parents identify changes in the care and education provided by their kindergartens. Many of the results support the state's contention that the increased community involvement in kindergartens caused by Bulk Funding will bring greater efficiencies and ultimately improved "learning opportunities" (Ministry of Education circular of 14 February 1992) This reinforces the state's New Right ideology which claims that increased efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness, developed with policies such as Bulk Funding, will lead to better education for all.

Secondly a socialist feminist perspective is used to understand what is happening at a more underlying, subtle, level. It can be argued that improvements in quality have occurred not as a result of Bulk Funding, but in spite of Bulk Funding. Using a socialist feminist perspective, it is argued that women in kindergartens have responded to changes caused by the new policy by working even harder to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment for their children. The changing working conditions of teachers are focussed on as they become more entrenched in the low paid sexual division of labour. In addition the work of mothers is explored using the concept of the reserve army of labour.

New Right Analysis

As was argued in the Literature Review (Chapter 2), the ideology of the New Right has set the political and economic climate for policy changes affecting kindergartens. Bulk Finding is a pivotal policy in the rationalisation and marketisation process of kindergartens. It was argued by the state that self-management, such as taking day to day responsibility

for teachers' salaries would lead to greater efficiencies and responsiveness in managing schools leading to improved opportunities for children. But as Codd (1990) pointed out the government was looking for policies that "would effectively reduce educational expenditure and fragment existing structures and patterns of interest representation"(p.200).

Through the "eyes" of the New Right, many of the results of this research could be interpreted to support the aims of the state regarding Bulk Funding. That is, that the operating environment will become more efficient leading to enhanced learning opportunities for children. For example, this study shows that, in spite of funding cuts, teachers have seen improvements in the learning environment of their kindergartens since the introduction of Bulk Funding: new equipment and resources have been added to each kindergarten; the appointment of a third teacher in some centres has allowed more planning and monitoring of activities by teachers and increased opportunities to interact with children; assessment and evaluation procedures have improved in most centres; staff-parents relations, and staff's commitment to the equity issues of gender, race and special need, have been maintained; overall teachers feel they have continued to deliver a developmentally appropriate programme encouraging children's learning through play.

On the other hand, respondents identified a number of less positive changes in their centres since the introduction of Bulk Funding. In particular, increasing the group size of sessions to 45 children, and increasing staff:child ratios to 1:15 in some centres, in order to generate the funds to pay teachers' salaries and other associated costs, has created difficulties. For example, insufficient floor space on wet days and during large group activities. There are also signs that less cooperative and constructive behaviour and more conflict behaviour among children is appearing in some centres. And where the number of children per staff member has increased teachers feel there is less opportunity to interact with each child. The influx of the new children needed to keep the funding high means the settling of new children has become a real problem in some kindergartens. Teachers are finding more unhappy and crying children in the afternoon sessions. This has occurred particularly in centres where the entry age is low. Traditional systems such as pre-entry sessions, set up to ease the transition from home to kindergarten for the child, have broken down in some centres.

It could be argued however that many of these new problems could be solved over time. For example verandahs could be covered in and buildings extended, to create more space.

(Although this solution would require even more fundraising by parents!) The settling of extra new children is likely to be simply a "transitional" problem, occurring only during the time when roles were being increased. Once the new role numbers are established, the intake should settle to a steady rate - only slightly above the previous one. At the time of the study some centres were already looking for alternative models of pre-entries to keep up with the more rapid pace and manner of children's entry.

Signs of decreasing opportunities for teachers and children to interact, due mainly to the increased group size of the children and less favourable children:staff ratios, are not so easily fixed however. This was particularly felt by centres where the number of children has increased, without an increase in the number of staff. A staff:children ratio of 1:15, found in all the centres in this study, is far above the recommended "quality" ratio of 1:10. (NAEYC;1993, *Minimum Standards*, 1990). Likewise a group size as large as 45 children is way beyond the recommended quality group size of 15-20 children (NAEYC,1993). This makes it more difficult for teachers to meet the individual developmental needs of children.

It should also be pointed out, that one of the criteria for selection of kindergartens for this study was staff stability. Some teachers mentioned the positive effect that staff stability had on the quality of their programme. This has helped them cope with changes to kindergartens such as the increased group size. Given the positive influence this stability has on a preschool programme, and that one of the criteria for the selection of the sample was staff stability, the results of this study are likely to reflect a more positive result than from centres experiencing more rapid staff turnover. So despite the fact that Bulk Funding has been shown to improve some areas of the kindergarten programme, there are also some serious concerns.

The results of this study also show that many parents and teachers are looking at ways to retain the quality of care and education in their centre. For example three of the five centres in the study had resisted increasing their numbers to the full 45/45 in an attempt to maintain quality. This supports Treasury's (1987) claim, as discussed in the Literature Review, that early childhood education primarily benefits the children and parents - that it is a "private good" and therefore, if parents want to pay more to have a better quality service, it is their choice! Parents would obviously prefer to have kindergartens totally funded by the state, and seem to be disappointed at the level of state funding, but as one parent said, "I'd rather have the best teachers and pay for it". To this end, parents on the

three affected committees were investigating alternative strategies to meet any financial shortfall in their kindergartens. Two of these centres have increased the amount of their voluntary donations and the third centre was contemplating it. Extra fundraising activities were also being planned.

The concept of hegemony discussed in the Literature Review emphasised the need of a ruling class (the state) for popular support and legitimation of its ideas and practices, in order to maintain its position of power. These results show a degree of support and acceptance for the Bulk Funding policy by parents (not teachers), with comments such as "the education system couldn't go on as it was", "it's just the way we've gone" and "Bulk Funding is a good idea to keep the good education we are getting. I don't mind paying and fundraising, and it's only for a couple of years." The principle of Bulk Funding was seen as positive by many parents, but the level of funding too low. Overall many of the comments by parents could be interpreted as consent for Bulk Funding. This consent and acceptance supports the hegemonic power of the state.

No centres in this study had introduced compulsory fees for parents, as legislation now allows (*Social and Economic Initiative*, 1990), but some had increased or were thinking of increasing the level of "voluntary donations". This was occurring in those centres resisting an increase in their rolls. They didn't want to compromise the quality they already had. Given the influence of group size and staff:teacher ratio on the quality of the education (NAEYC;1993), this suggests that parents who can afford to pay more are going to end up with a better quality service, and negates the claim by the New Right that the marketisation of education will increase equality of opportunity. These results support Lauder's (1991) opinion that Bulk Funding is going to advantage those who can afford to pay for their children's education. Wylie's 1993 research has already identified kindergartens' increased dependency on parents' financial contributions and a widening gap between kindergartens in low and high income areas. Kindergartens in low income areas are likely to find the future more difficult under Bulk Funding, when there is an increasing dependency on their community to "top up" the finances of their centre.

Socialist Feminist Perspective

This research shows that Bulk Funding has produced a range of effects but overall it is undeniable that there has been a human cost to Bulk Funding with teachers and some parents shouldering additional workloads. That is, the burden of maintaining quality early

childhood education and care is falling more heavily on the shoulders of the women in kindergartens. It is this underlying effect of Bulk Funding that gives cause for concern and will be addressed using a socialist feminist perspective in the following discussion.

As discussed in Chapter Two, kindergartens have developed as a result of women's work in caring and nurturing of children (Finkelstein,1988; Hughes,1989). The gendered role of women in kindergartens exemplifies the subordination of women in society and in the education system, where they tend to occupy the low paid and unpaid labour positions in the sexual division of labour (Slyfield,1991; O'Neill,1992). The state's policy-making control over society's political, social and economic processes serves to maintain this situation. It can be argued that the policy of Bulk Funding has in effect acted to consolidate this subordinate position for women in society, reinforcing existing gender inequalities. Equity between men and women continues to be a myth propped up by the rhetoric of the state and its hegemonic power. Far from providing the New Right ideals of equity, freedom and choice for women in kindergartens, the New Right ideology, of which Bulk Funding is an instrument, keeps them subordinate. Yet this women's work which is low paid and/or unpaid and undervalued, plays an essential part in the reproduction and production of the future labour force. This is vital for the continuance of an industrial, capitalistic society such as New Zealand.

Women in kindergartens overwhelmingly fall in the unpaid and low paid section of the labour force. For example, even within the educational sector, early childhood teachers are at the bottom of the hierarchy, while the higher status, higher paid educational positions are dominated by men (Slyfield,1991; Court,1993)). It can be argued that the results of this research show that women in kindergartens are being further consolidated in this position in the sexual division of labour. For example, these results show that kindergarten teachers have had no pay increase and working conditions have deteriorated considerably since the introduction of Bulk Funding. Sayers (1991) comments, that the ideas of the New Right are grounded in "individualistic, anti-collectivistic philosophy" which "implicitly condones self-interested behaviour thereby discriminating against more altruistic motivations" (p.163). It is altruism which characterises the early childhood movement. The options of "freedom" and "choice" for these women in early childhood are not apparent, as they continue to be rendered subordinate to men in the sexual division of labour. Their cheap labour power is further exploited under Bulk Funding as the capitalist state benefits from their work of reproducing, caring and educating the nation's young (Deem, cited by Weiler,1988), while at the same time withdrawing funding from the kindergarten service.

Using a socialist feminist framework it can be argued that any improvements in the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens are not the result of a more "efficient" and "responsive" system caused by Bulk Funding. Rather it could be argued that these kindergarten teachers and mothers are continuing to play out an ascribed gendered role that is motivated by altruism and the cult of domesticity (Saville-Smith,1987). One parent talked of kindergarten teaching as "truly a job of love". This means, if you love and care what happens to your children you will want what is "best" for them. The comments by parents and teachers support this. As one parent commented "we're more interested in our children, not the money side of it".

The concept of the reserve army of labour, discussed in Chapter Two, helps explain the importance of the voluntary work of mothers to the functioning of their kindergartens. Already used as unpaid committee members, sessional aides and fundraisers, this research suggests that the labour power of mothers is going to be used even more extensively in future. For example in this study the kindergartens resisting going to full 45/45 rolls will have to meet any shortfall in salaries for their teachers by increased fundraising efforts. Again many mothers allow their labour power to be exploited freely because it is their children's education which is at stake and as Novitz pointed out (1988) it is again women who end up linking their homes to "Plunket, playcentre and kindergarten committees and their voluntary work in schools" (p.25)

There seems to be genuine bewilderment and disappointment by the teachers and mothers that something they saw as so important (quality of education for their children) is so undervalued by the government and society. One parent spoke of the the public perception of kindergarten teachers as being at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, "amongst the grass and the dirt". It seems, as Armstrong (1989) contends, that the value of the work of women continues to be rendered invisible or is ignored. The difficulty for the state seems to be that to genuinely recognise early childhood as a valuable and essential service for the whole of society - as a public good - would require the state to pay more for it.

This study also showed a significant increase in workload and stress levels for staff with an accompanying deterioration in working conditions. Teachers report a greater workload caused primarily by: extra numbers of children and their parents; more administrative demands; reduced non-contact time for centre tasks; increased counselling role with parents; increased involvement at the board of management level monitoring the policy and

decision-making process and increased responsibility for mainstreamed special needs children. Examples of deteriorating working conditions were also described. They include: the loss of teacher preparation days; not being able to employ relief teachers during non-contact time; fewer opportunities for, and less quality of, professional development and decreased support and availability of support services such as Special Education Services. (Some teachers suggested that this is the result of the Special Education Service cutting back its own service due to funding restrictions by government).

These findings are supported by Wylie's national study (1993) in turn providing support for Apple's contention (1986) that a process of "intensification" is occurring, with teachers' working conditions being eroded. Apple warns (1986) that intensification results in a reduction of the quality of service offered by teachers. As he explains, "the quality of teaching is eroded as teachers cannot find time to keep up with their fields, to think, to plan, to relax, and even to go to the lavatory" (Apple, 1986 cited in Casey & Apple, 1989, p. 178). This study shows, however, that staff continue to provide an effective learning environment and to maintain their level of performance. Stommel, Benson & Power (1993) suggest that dissatisfaction about working conditions or the work itself leads to emotional exhaustion for teachers, affecting teachers' ability to function as efficient and capable educators. This process contributes to the proletarianisation of teachers as they become simply "workers", to be employed as cheaply as possible, rather than being valued as effective "professionals". As such, teachers lose more and more power and autonomy over their own labour. There is also less time for professional development with the increased workload and reduction in support and quality of professional development opportunities.

These factors support Lauder's (1991) claim that the marketisation of the education system heralds the deprofessionalisation and deskilling of educational workers. It also makes teachers a group of workers to be "controlled" by the state rather than being a group of experts with knowledge and skills in early childhood education who can operate semi-autonomously. Casey and Apple (1989) see this process affecting women in particular, with "the decrease in jobs with autonomy....closely related to changes in the sexual division of labour." (p. 179-80). "Changes" for kindergarten teachers mean increased entrenchment within an already gendered, underpaid and undervalued sector of the labour market.

This study shows that teachers certainly feel in an increasingly tenuous position. Their relationship with their board (or association) has changed and appears more confused. The

association has become their "employer" rather than an administrative body. Many teachers see the association now working to cut staff working conditions and to squeeze more work out of them. This relationship is problematic. As previously cited in Chapter Two, Codd (1990) and Snook (1990) warned that although Bulk Funding allows the government to retain economic and political control of educational institutions, it is the local boards who end up facing the teachers and communities with the problems, and dealing with the difficult issues. For example a teacher in this study talked of the Association in this vein saying: "the Associations are now looking at ways for us to work an extra week in August, to take away our teacher only days..." As well as becoming the "servant" of Treasury, association is also clearly becoming the scapegoat for problems caused by a lack of government funding. In addition another New Right government policy (discussed in Chapter Three), the Employment Contracts Act (1991), is seen as a mechanism favouring employers by enabling them to reduce salaries and working conditions of staff. (CECUA,1991)

Like other associations nationally (Wylie,1993) the association in this study has raised rolls to increase their funding. Joce Nuttal predicted (1991) boards would need to find ways to generate more funding from the government, and that they would need to accommodate as many children as their license would allow. This seems to be occurring especially in centres which haven't raised the level of voluntary donation or increased fundraising. These changes are ultimately at the expense of teachers' working conditions. Increasing the number of days of teachers work is also a way to generate money and erodes teachers' working conditions. As one teacher stated: "We have lost our in-service day and we almost lost our teacher-only day. As it is, it is on Wednesday so we only lose one session's funding."

This study also highlights a changing relationship between teachers and their communities. The parents interviewed were obviously working closely with teachers, especially those resisting going to full rolls and who anticipated a shortfall in their teachers' salaries. They had a common goal, united together to defend the children's right to quality early childhood education. But some teachers felt they were now having to justify being qualified, experienced and thus expensive teachers. They felt they "cost" too much. This uneasy atmosphere may be heralding a future when employment of cheaper, less qualified and experienced teachers will be used to balance the books as predicted by Snook (1990). Research shows that qualified teachers are important in maintaining quality, (Travers et al.,1979; Snider & Lee,1990; Powell & Stremel,1989; NAEYC,1993) but as Snook (1990)

points out, boards may have to choose between employing qualified staff and meeting other needs of the service, such as capital expenditure.

Understandably, hegemonic approval and support for Bulk Funding was not widespread among respondents. Many parents felt that when Bulk Funding was introduced they had little knowledge of the policy itself. They felt it was introduced with little discussion or consultation. In fact parents had little knowledge of it, apart from an awareness that it had "stirred" up opposition in some quarters. But they have learnt more about it over time. Signs of counter hegemonic contestation and resistance to the policy was evident by the refusal of some kindergartens to increase rolls to the maximum. Many were deeply skeptical of the state's motives for introducing the policy and saw Bulk Funding as part of a downward funding spiral by which the government would further withdraw support. But in spite of this, as was illustrated in the first section of this discussion, there were signs that parental acceptance of the policy was slowly developing.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to document the perceptions of parents and teachers towards the government policy of Bulk Funding and its effects on the quality of care and education provided by kindergartens. A case study approach allowed the gathering of qualitative and some quantitative data. Five kindergartens participated in this research, a year and a half after the official introduction of Bulk Funding.

Overall, this study highlights some of the changes occurring in kindergartens since the introduction of Bulk Funding and the perceptions of parents and teachers of the policy. On the one hand a New Right analysis of this research could lend support to the claim by government that learning "opportunities" for children have improved which may lead to their "overall enhancement of educational achievement" (*Ministry of Education* circular of 14 February 1992). On the other hand, analysis employing theoretical tools of a socialist feminist perspective shows how improvements have been achieved through the increased workload of women. Although only an exploratory study, with a small sample size, this research raises important questions and concerns about the effects of the Bulk Funding policy on women's lives.

This research indicates that the responsibility of caring and nurturing children has been placed even more firmly in the hands of a group of women who are already over-represented at the low end of the sexual division of labour. The evidence of this research suggests that the gap between the recommended hourly rate set by the Meade Report and that which is provided by government has been bridged at the expense of women - teachers and mothers. They appear to be adapting to the changing circumstances, at a cost, and we need to ask if they will be able to continue to provide quality care and education under such stressful working conditions in the long term. We need to ask how much more mothers can be asked to contribute, and whether children will be denied access to kindergarten because their parents cannot afford the monetary or voluntary donation. Many mothers and

teachers hold misgivings about the future quality of the services they provide and the government's on-going commitment to the provision of a quality kindergarten system. We also need to question women's continued exploitation in the paid labour market. Is it fair and equitable to expect these women to "carry" a service because the state no longer sees early childhood as its responsibility.

As Helen May (1993) comments:

"It was clear that early childhood services, which have become crucial to the growth of women's independence, were now in potential conflict with the Government's new right policies which called for "family responsibilities" and families "free" from dependence on the state. By contrast the Before Five Policy had been developed on the assumption that early childhood services were of benefit not only for children, but also for women, and that the state had an investment in supporting the interests of both." (p.17)

Consolidating women in a subordinate position in the home and in low paid work keeps them powerless to challenge the male hegemonic power of society and the state. For New Zealand women political recognition and support of their needs has been an on-going and unresolved issue. As Helen May (1993) points out:

"The century of women's suffrage now being celebrated in Aotearoa-New Zealand, parallels the development of early childhood services that began in Dunedin with the opening of the first kindergarten in 1889. As the women's suffrage ditty suggests, the emancipation of women from the home to the workplace was then linked to a reappraisal of family roles. A hundred years later the shift of women into economic and public life is more visible and the basis of official celebration, but the question posed in the ditty of who will rock the cradle has only begun to be addressed at a political level, and even then with considerable caution and constraint." (p.1)

From the results of this study it is likely the pool of women "who rock the cradle" in kindergartens will continue to strive for quality early childhood education in their centres, in spite of the constraints forced on them by the state.

Suggestions for Future Research

Because Bulk Funding was introduced with no trialling, and there has been little research evaluating its impact on kindergartens, there is a strong need to continue research in this area. Given the scarcity of previous research, the aim of this thesis was to be exploratory, to uncover changes in quality occurring in kindergartens as a result of Bulk Funding. It has raised some concerns about changes to our kindergartens occurring as a result of Bulk Funding which could be explored further. There are concerns about:

- The changing workload of teachers. There is a significant need to further explore the changing work conditions of kindergarten teachers - to assess whether the process of intensification and proletarianisation is occurring and find out more about teachers' changing working environment.
- The learning environment and learning experiences of children. It would be especially valuable to compare the quality of children's experiences between kindergartens of different socioeconomic areas.
- The voluntary efforts of mothers which appear to be unrecognised and unappreciated. A study to establish the extent and level of their work in kindergartens would be valuable.
- The effect of group sizes as large as 45 children needs further evaluation.

It would be valuable to address these concerns by future studies. Overall, the early childhood education sector would have much to gain from increased research and evaluation leading to greater understanding of factors that impact on the quality of care and education for children.

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APPENDICES

August 1993

Dear Staff

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The objective is to gather qualitative "in-depth" data from teachers and parents about the changes in their kindergartnes since the beginning of last year and whether these changes have affected the quality of educational service they provide. And also, if any of these changes be attributed to the recently introduced government policy of bulk funding?

To gather information for this research I plan to:

- * Spend two mornings in your kindergarten making observations of your programme using running records, time-sampling and event recording.
- * Distribute a small survey to each staff member about their "working environment".
- * Interview staff, as a team, informally during their lunch break or non-contact time. This seems to take about 3 lunchtimes.
- * Interview a number of parents who have been involved in the centre since the beginning of 1992.

I assure you that the names of all participants and your kindergarten will be kept completely confidential in the final report. It is also assumed that by participating in this research you have consented to take part in it.

Thank you for taking part in this project. I'm looking forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely

Ursula Dougherty
Research Affiliate
Education Department

INFORMATION SHEET

(to be filled in by the researcher in consultation with the teaching team)

NAME OF KINDERGARTEN: _____

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION: _____

CHARACTERISTICS:

		Beginning 1992	Present Time
License numbers	a.m. p.m.		
Roll numbers	a.m. p.m.		
Age of entry			
Amount of donation per session			
Fees required			
Sessional structure			
Number os permanent teachers			
Training of teachers	Head Teacher		
	Teacher		
	Teacher		

SURVEY OF TEACHER WORK ENVIRONMENT

This brief survey is for you to record the changes you think have happened in your "work environment" since the beginning of last year. All the questions may be answered by circling the appropriate statement. However you may write additional comments whenever you wish to do so.

Wages:

Compared to the beginning of 1992, (not counting annual service increments), have your wages

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly	—
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Any Comments

Benefits:

Compared to the beginning of 1992, do you think the benefits (e.g. travel allowances, sickness, holidays) of your job have

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Working Conditions:

Compared to the beginning of 1992 do you feel the working conditions (e.g.noise, heating, lighting) of your job have

Deteriorated significantly	Deteriorated Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Professional Development:

Since the beginning of 1992 do you feel the opportunities for professional development have

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

And what about the QUALITY of this professional development? Since the beginning of last year do you think it has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments**Support Services:**

Since the beginning of 1992 do you think the availability of support services (such as Special Education Service and speech therapist) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

What about the QUALITY of those services e.g. depth of support available? Since the beginning of last year do you think quality of services have

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Stress:

Compared to the beginning of 1992 has your stress level at work

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Workload:

Since the beginning of 1992 do you feel the level of your workload has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments:

In particular, how do you feel the administrative workload has changed? Do you think it has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Job Satisfaction:

Since the beginning of last year do you feel your level of job satisfaction has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

SCHEDULE FOR HIGHLIGHTING CHANGES IN PROGRAMME QUALITY IN THE KINDERGARTEN

This schedule has been developed from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms and Clifford). But instead of giving an overall evaluation of the quality of the programme it has been reduced, modified and added to, be used as an indicator of **change in quality.**

It is to be completed by the researcher in consultation with the teaching team. The teaching team are encouraged to discuss the specific areas together. The questions are answered by circling the appropriate statement.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1992 DO YOU THINK YOUR KINDERGARTEN'S:

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Range of basic equipment (such as tables, shelves, carpentry trolley) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

availability of "soft areas" for children to go to (such as a couch, cushions and carpet) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Quality of display work (children's work complemented by other resource material) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Variety of developmentally appropriate fine-motor materials (e.g. crayons, paints, lego) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Quality of environment which promotes gross motor activities (e.g. safe, barked, full of activities to stimulate a variety of skills such as climbing, balancing, swinging, running...) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Planned opportunities that allow for gross motor experiences (e.g. planned obstacle course) have

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Range of art activities (that encourage individual choice and creativity, and allow children to experience a whole variety of art experiences) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Opportunities for children’s block play (e.g. suitable surface, blocks, accessories, storage) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Opportunities for children to have free child-initiated play has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Quality of routines and schedules (allowing for flexibility of children’s play with smooth transitions between activities) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

ADULT- CHILD INTERACTION

Opportunities to help children develop skills in expressing their thoughts (e.g. talking about their experiences) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Opportunities to help children develop reasoning skills (e.g. sequencing, sorting, matching) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Opportunities for staff to interact (e.g. questioning, challenging and extending) with each child has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Opportunities to encourage children's learning (e.g. by helping them when needed and support them moving onto more difficult activity, scaffolding) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Quality of supervision and support of children while they are outside (e.g. the teacher being near the children helping them develop their ideas, find resources) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Opportunities for small group interaction (e.g. music and movement, drama, puppets) with children have

Improved Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Provision and quality of assessment and evaluation procedures for children has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Provision and quality of planning and evaluation of the programme has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

GENERAL LEARNING ATMOSPHERE

Provision of "space" to allow children time to be alone (e.g. for solitary play, concentration, to relax, be independent) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Use of a variety of cultural materials, including books, puzzles, games, dolls language, ideas, has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Use of non-sexist practices, ideas and resources (e.g. puzzle of a girl carpenter) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Commitment and support of special needs children

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

Quality of general learning atmosphere (e.g. calm but busy, children mostly happy, staff relaxed and helping children through skilful intervention) has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

Provision of adult meeting area (where adults can get together away from children's activities) has

Decreased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Stayed the Same	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly
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Any Comments

General communication with parents e.g. information sheets, newsletters, notice board, social gatherings has

Reduced Significantly	Reduced Slightly	Stayed the Same	Improved Slightly	Improved Significantly
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Any Comments

PROPOSED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO PARENTS

To explain initially:

- My name and background.
- The importance of consent and confidentiality.
- That the respondent was chosen because of the length s/he has been a parent at the kindergarten.
- That I wish to talk to parents because "I am trying to identify any changes that have perceived in the kindergarten since the beginning of last year".

What differences have you noticed regarding:

The environment at the kindergarten? (e.g. equipment and resources.)

The programme that is being run for the children?

The atmosphere at the centre?

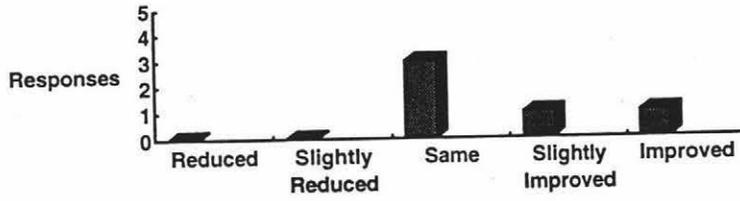
Your relations with the staff?

PROPOSED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

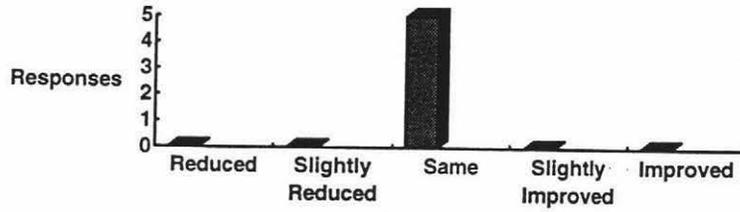
How did you feel when you knew Bulk Funding was going to be introduced? Why?

How do you feel about it now?

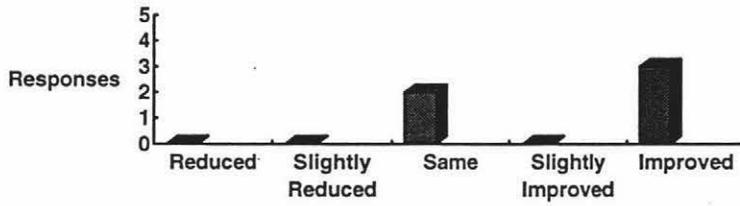
What do you think about the future of New Zealand kindergartens under Bulk Funding?
Why is this?



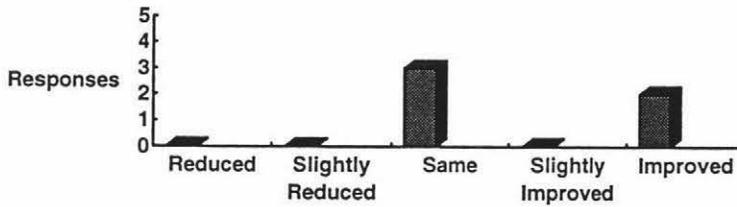
Planned Gross Motor



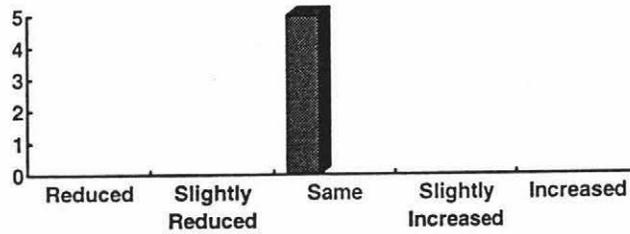
Block Opportunities



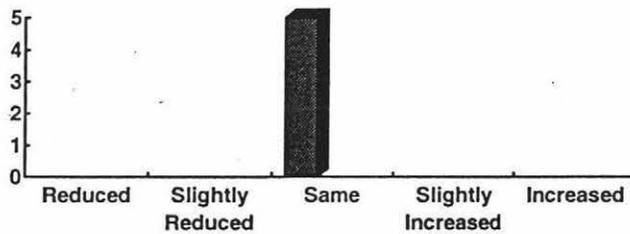
Soft Areas



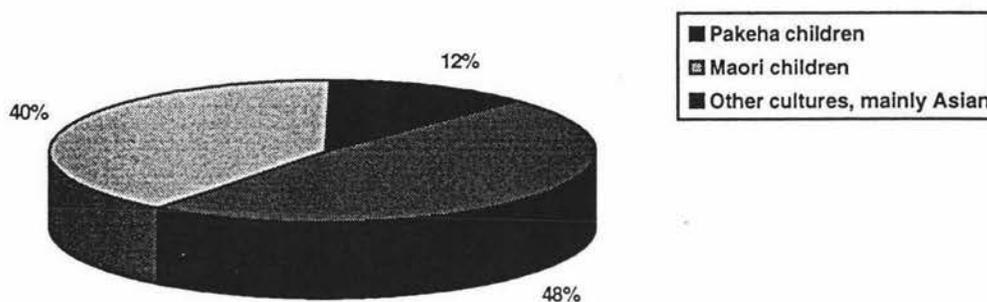
Space to be alone



Adult Space

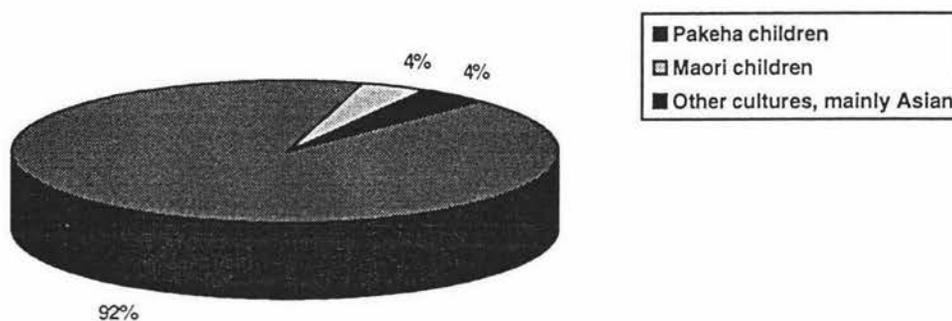


Centre 1



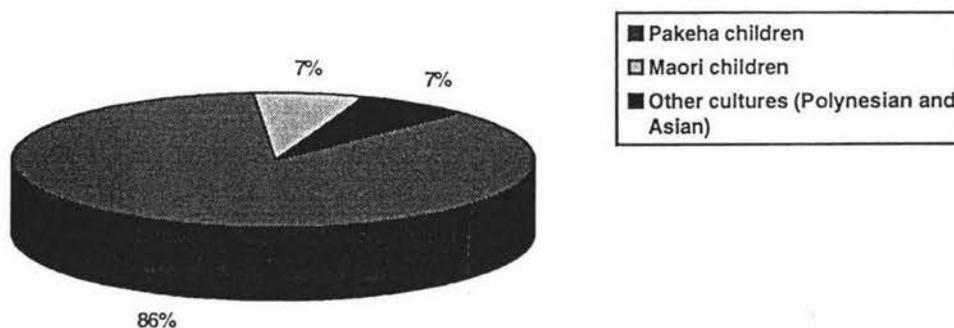
Staff from Centre 1 saw their kindergarten families coming primarily from low to middle socio-economic groups in society. There was one child here under Special Education Service (SES).

Centre 2



Staff from Centre 2 saw their kindergarten serving serves mainly urban middle class families.

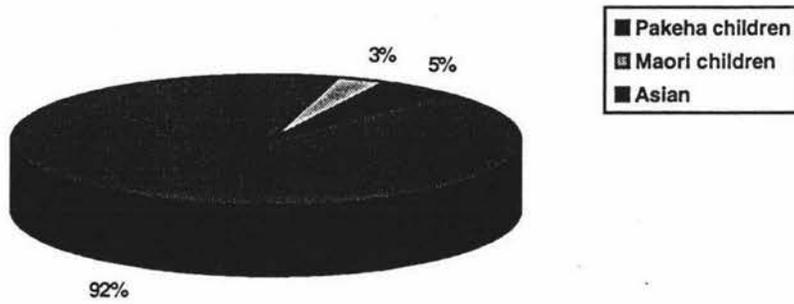
Centre 3



Staff in Centre 3 saw their kindergarten servicing a mainly middle class urban area. This centre had four children under the SES and two teacher aides giving support for 19 hours per week.

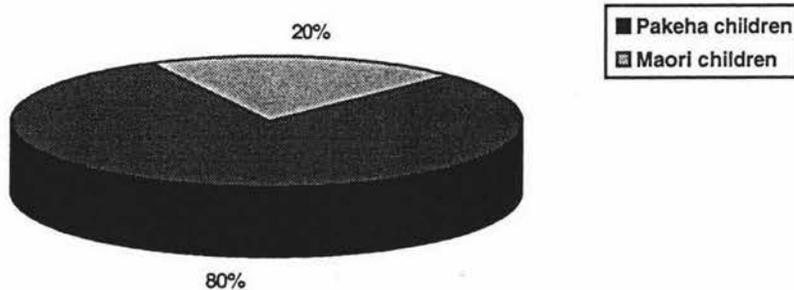
Centre 4

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Staff from Centre 4 saw their kindergarten serving a mainly a low to middle socio-economic group. There were quite a number of rural families attending this centre.

Centre 5



Staff from Centre 5 saw their kindergarten as a broad range of socio-economic groups, from unemployed to professional. Children were mainly Maori or Pakeha with little representation of other ethnic groups.