Parents' Perceptions and Experiences of Parent-led Learning

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ABSTRACT

Parents have a significant and irreplaceable role in their child's learning, a role that has the potential to counteract social, cultural and economic disadvantages, and improve children's educational outcomes. However, for parents to succeed in their role, they need to view their contributions as important, feel valued in their role, and have confidence in their ability to succeed. Existing research on parental roles has had limited scope, viewing parental contributions as supplementary to formal schooling.

A mixed methods explanatory sequential research study explored parents' role perceptions and experiences of parent-led learning (PLL). The term PLL places parents, rather than teachers, at the centre of learning. This study, based in London, UK, asked parents of children in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1) in one primary school to rate their perceived importance and enjoyment levels of 11 pre-determined home learning activities (HLA). Survey results identified a positive correlation between parents' perceived value, and enjoyment levels, of HLA. Thematic analysis of open-ended questions resulted in three main themes: parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs, parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities and, the practicalities of PLL. A follow up focus group was held to deepen understanding of the survey results.

Findings revealed parents as: having high aspirations for their children, competent, and willing to help their children learn. Parents strongly viewed their role as important and invaluable, and particularly suited to relationship-based learning experiences due to the intimate nature of parent-child relationships. Significant value was placed on positive experiences of learning. Although findings of this study are localised to the participant school, and have limited generalisability, they may provide school leaders with insight into parents' experiences in their school. Other educators may be inspired to reflect on their relationships with parents, power dynamics and perceptions of learning.

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Firstly, I would like to thank my research participants. Without the support of the school, specifically the Family Liaison Officer, and parents' willingness to share experiences, this research would not have been possible. I appreciate how precious time is for both teachers and parents, so I am honoured to have had so much interest in my study. Hopefully this research will provide a glimpse into complexities of the parenting experience; highlighting parents' voices and desires to be involved in their child's education.

I also could not have got through this study without the dedication and commitment of my main supervisor Jenny Poskitt, as well as my two additional supervisors, Karen Anderson and Karyn Aspden. From the outset I felt a tremendous amount of support and inspiration to aim high and challenge myself. Over the course of the two years I faced many life changes and challenges which were, at times, difficult to overcome. However, thanks to my supervisors' understanding, flexibility and genuine compassion, I felt empowered to overcome these challenges and complete my thesis. While I worked on chapters as and when I could, my supervisors kept in touch and gently coached me to stay on track, focus my thinking and develop my writing style to improve the overall quality of my work. I am forever grateful to have had such a positive experience.

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Finally, to my boys Harper and Freddie. You two are both the source of many of the challenges I have faced and also the reason I am where I am today. I hope to always be a role model to you, showing you that anything is possible if you are committed, resilient and most importantly, passionate about what you do. I want you both grow up to be proud of who you are and whatever you choose to do in life.

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List of Abbreviations

BERA	*British Educational Research Association*
DfE	*Department for Education*
DfEE	*Department for Education and Employment*
EAL	*English as an Additional Language*
EHLEI	*Early Home Learning Environment Index*
EYFS	*Early Years Foundation Stage*
FLO	*Family Liaison Officer*
HLA	*Home Learning Activity*
HLE	*Home Learning Environment*
KS1	*Key Stage 1*
KS2	*Key Stage 2*
MOE	*Ministry of Education*
MUHEC	*Massey University Human Ethics Committee*
NZ	*New Zealand*
OECD	*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*
Ofsted	*Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills*
PLL	*Parent-led Learning*
SES	*Socioeconomic Status*
UK	*United Kingdom*
UNESCO	*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore parental experiences of learning with their children by asking the following, *"How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education influence their experiences of parent-led learning?"* Existing research on parental involvement in education has focussed on what learning occurs in the home and how often. This has been the typical measure of the home learning environment (HLE) and its influence on future educational success. Particular emphasis has been placed on literacy and numeracy learning; areas of learning that parents may not always be confident teaching. This study set out to explore how learning is experienced between parent and child by examining parents' beliefs, values and perceptions of self, and their role in their child's learning.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research study; why the initial research topic was chosen and how it evolved over time. Firstly, I discuss the importance of the early years as a focus for parental involvement. I then explain how my personal background inspired me to explore this topic and enabled me to critically examine the different ways in which parents engage in learning with their children. Definitions of specific terms are then provided for clarity, specifically the distinction between education and learning, and the development of the term parent-led learning (PLL). Definitions are followed by a detailed explanation of why this research is necessary and its expected contribution to existing literature in the field. Finally, an explanation of the research process, a brief overview of the research process, and an outline of the structure of this thesis are provided.

1.2 Parental involvement in the early years

Parental involvement in their child's education and participation in PLL is not limited to any set time period. However the early years, particularly ages three to five, are significant. Existing research has emphasised the importance of parental

involvement in the early years, specifically the end of pre-school, just before the beginning of primary school (Hunt, Virgo, Klett-Davies, Page, & Apps, 2011; Melhuish, Sylva, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2001; Niklas, Cohrssen, & Tayler, 2016a; Niklas, Nguyen, Cloney, Tayler, & Adams, 2016b). These studies examined the HLE as a predictor of future academic success, highlighting the importance of parental involvement. It is possible that this age period has been the focus based on the premise that the parental role is to prepare children for school and to support school learning, therefore the transition to school period is critical. Additional research highlights the need to look beyond conventional school learning, at competencies-based learning and learning for life, in which parents have an invaluable role (Clark, 2005; Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development [OECD], 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016). Whilst this study challenges the notion that the parental role is limited to supporting school learning, I have chosen to continue focussing on the early years. Focussing on the early years enables this study to explore parents' perceptions and experiences of a broad range of learning experiences, with a deeper appreciation of the parental role.

1.3 Background

Who I am, my past and current experiences and my own beliefs about the world influenced the course of this study; the big ideas, the specific questions asked, my approach to reviewing existing literature, refinement of the research focus and my interpretation and understandings of the research findings. However, I have maintained a critical approach to the study, reflecting on my personal influence and seeking advice and peer review from my masters' supervisors.

I trained as an early childhood educator in New Zealand ten years ago. Since then I have taught in numerous early childhood centres in New Zealand, and primary schools in London, United Kingdom, with children from infancy to seven years of age. I have experienced vastly different curricula and educational understandings of what parental involvement entails between the two countries. The New Zealand early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education [MOE], 1996, 2017) explicitly states that relationships with whānau are crucial to learning and places a heavy focus on learning how to learn, rather than what to learn. Teaching in the UK provided me

with insight into a different perspective, with early childhood education viewed as part of formal schooling, with a focus on academic learning and a heavy emphasis on assessment of what has been learnt, not how. I have also spent time nannying in London, with children aged infancy to eleven. My nannying experiences gave me insight into parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education and their personal values and beliefs around the importance of different types of learning. During this period, I attempted to act as a mediator between school and home, trying to understand both perspectives and create intentional home learning activities (HLA) that resonated with both, and sometimes conflicting, belief systems. I also had to consider my own educational understandings and beliefs, and how they influenced the relationships I developed with the parents.

My experiences made me wonder why some parents are more involved than others, regardless of context, and how I, as an educator, can harness parents' aspirations for their child's future and encourage their ongoing involvement. I was curious about what parents perceive their role to be, and what and why different types of learning are valued. I also wanted to explore how confident and empowered parents feel in fulfilling their role, particularly when their beliefs conflict with the dominant culture. The following chapter explains how I refined my thoughts and questions in response to existing literature.

1.4 Explanation of terms

The research question *"How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education influence their experiences of parent-led learning?"* refers to both learning and education. These terms are used throughout, to understand how experiences of parent-led learning contribute to overall educational success, and why PLL is worth exploring. Parents' roles in learning with their children have been explored in existing literature, with a focus on school-oriented learning such as literacy and numeracy (Hunt et al., 2011; Melhuish et al., 2001; Niklas at al., 2016a; Niklas et al., 2016b). These studies lacked insight into what learning parents value and enjoy engaging in with their children. Additionally, exploring education as a broad term is necessary to provide insight into parents' perspectives, values and beliefs, as well as cultural and societal perceptions of the importance and purpose of education. It is important to

examine how the concept of education has evolved over time, particularly the increased importance of parental involvement in preparing children for life in the 21st century. By understanding the educational context in which learning occurs, parents' role perceptions and experiences of learning can be better understood.

Existing literature on parental involvement in education refers heavily to parents' roles as limited mostly to the HLE. The term HLE describes learning that occurs within the home; particularly learning that precedes or enhances academic, school-based learning. This implies that parental involvement is limited to the home, creating a disconnect between home and school. Previous studies have sought to identify which types of HLA are most conducive to educational success. However, these studies have focussed on one understanding of educational success, that of the dominant culture, and do not include the diverse range of parental understandings that exist. As a result, existing measures of parental involvement focus solely on what learning occurs in the HLE and how often (Hunt et al., 2011; Melhuish et al., 2001; Niklas at al., 2016a; Niklas et al., 2016b). I developed the term PLL as a result of the literature review (refer to Chapter Two) and the recognition that learning is not location specific as the term HLE suggests. PLL widens the scope for parental involvement, acknowledges differing perspectives and recognises that parent-child learning is not limited to the HLE. Furthermore, the concept of PLL focuses on parental experiences of engaging in learning with their child.

1.5 Why was this research needed?

Parental involvement in education is a well-researched topic and effects on children's academic success in later life are evident. Existing literature often highlights the importance of parental involvement in the early years, prior to, and at the beginning of, formal schooling (Hunt et al., 2011; Kluczniok, Lehrl, Kuger, & Rossbach, 2013; Melhuish et al., 2001; Niklas at al., 2016a; Niklas et al., 2016b). However, the current paradigm in which parental involvement is discussed appears to be focussed around preparing for and supporting school-based learning. Consequently, research has explored the types of learning that are conducive to positive educational outcomes, often looking at the frequency of these learning activities in the home as a predictor of academic success. The unpredictable and rapidly changing needs of the

21st century require a shift in thinking about how parents are involved in their child's education and the types of learning that are valued. PLL contributes to existing literature by moving the focus away from what learning is occurring and where, to how learning is experienced. This shift in thinking enables a deeper investigation into the relationships between parent and child, and parent and educator. Learning occurs within the context of genuine relationships, not just in the home or at school but between educator and child at any given time or place. Viewing relationships at the core of learning can help bridge the gap between home and school, acknowledging unique learning experiences and valuing contributions from all types of educators.

1.6 Explanation of research

An explanatory sequential mixed methods research study was carried out in order to identify and explain a correlation between parents' role perceptions and experiences of PLL. This was achieved using a quantitative, Likert scale survey asking parents to rate their perceived importance and enjoyment levels of particular HLA. HLA were based on an existing HLE survey tool with consideration of similar survey tools to ensure validity. However, the focus in this survey was not on the frequency and type of learning in the home, but rather to gain insight into parents' perspectives. Three open-ended, qualitative questions were added to the survey to allow parents to explain their perspectives. Collection and analysis of these two components (parents' perceptions and experiences) occurred concurrently, however the research design was explanatory in nature due to the subsequent qualitative phase consisting of a focus group case study. The focus group data provided further explanation of emergent themes by showcasing a snapshot of the complex interplay between parents' role perceptions and experiences of PLL. Additionally, parents provided personal information to offer insight into the impact family structures may have on role perceptions and experiences of PLL, as suggested in the literature review (refer to Chapter Two).

1.7 Summary

This chapter provided an introduction into the purpose of the research and the direction of the study. Insight into my background and an explanation of the need for

additional research on the topic of parental involvement was given. A brief outline of the thesis structure is provided below.

Chapter one: *Introduction*

This initial chapter introduces the research topic including researcher background, outlines the direction of the study and explains the reasons for exploring PLL. The chapter explains key terms used and the structure of the Thesis.

Chapter two: *Literature Review*

The second chapter examines the current literature in the field. Existing research focussing on the what, where and when of learning in the HLE is critiqued and identifies the need for research on parental involvement related to how learning is experienced.

Chapter three: *Methodology in Theory*

This chapter describes the theory of the methodology used in this study, the planned approach to research in practice and the required ethical considerations. The content of this chapter is limited to the theory of the methodology due to the complexity of the mixed methods research design.

Chapter four: *Methodology in Practice*

This additional methodology chapter describes the pragmatic adaptations necessary to turn methodological theory into practice. The realities of data collection and research with human participants are discussed along with the processes of analysing quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter five: *Results*

This comprehensive chapter reports the results of the data analysis in relation to the research question. A focus group vignette further showcases prevalent themes identified during data analysis.

Chapter six: *Discussion*

This important chapter discusses research findings with links to relevant literature. It draws on the themes identified in chapters four and five to explain the positive correlation between parents' perceptions and experiences, of learning.

Chapter seven: *Conclusion*

This concluding chapter provides recommendations for practice, identifies areas for future research, describes limitations and discusses the contributions this study offers existing literature.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine current literature on parents' roles in their child's education, through the exploration of how learning is experienced between parent and child. The terms education and learning are both used throughout, but not interchangeably. The purpose of the study is to look at learning, but the review focusses on issues in education and how parent-led learning (PLL) can improve educational outcomes. Discussing education in this literature review is necessary to provide the context as to why it is worth exploring PLL; learning, not education as a broad concept.

Current research highlights the important role parents play in supporting their child's educational success, particularly through providing a quality home learning environment (HLE) to facilitate school learning (Hunt, Virgo, Klett-Davies, Page, & Apps, 2011; Kluczniok, Lehrl, Kuger, & Rossbach, 2013; Melhuish, Sylva, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2001; Niklas, Cohrssen, & Tayler, 2016a; Niklas, Nguyen, Cloney, Tayler, & Adams, 2016b). Additional research identifies issues faced in education in the 21st century and the importance of exploring different ways of learning, particularly drawing on parents' expertise to focus on life learning rather than traditional school learning (Clark, 2005; Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development [OECD], 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016). Research also explores the sociocultural nature of learning and identifies social, cultural and contextual barriers to learning (Hattie, 2009; Kluczniok et al., 2013). Previous research on the HLE will be investigated and critiqued to understand how sociocultural factors enable and inhibit learning experiences between parent and child, and what factors determine the success of these learning experiences.

The following sections in this review provide a critical look into existing research and propose an area for further research. Section 2.2 looks at the parameters

of the reviewed literature, how and where research was found, and explains why it is necessary to explore learning between parent and child in order to understand the issues of power and access faced in education today. Following on, section 2.3 examines the sociocultural nature of education and explores the barriers and opportunities different social groups experience in education, with further investigation into how some specific, prominent learning domains, such as literacy and numeracy, are affected. Section 2.4 reviews more deeply, role perceptions and how parenting experiences affect parents' abilities to successfully fulfil and enjoy their role. It explores themes of motivation, empowerment, parental self-efficacy and confidence.

Section 2.5 explores issues in 21st century education and the need for a paradigm shift from purely school-based learning, to learning for life. The parents' role is emphasised in this view, with a focus on parents' abilities to teach through everyday activities and promote learning competencies that will enable children to grow into flexible and adaptable adults, able to contribute to changing societal needs. Section 2.6 provides an overview of current notions of the HLE and highlights the importance of the emotional climate in learning. It provides a critique of the disconnect between current perceptions of the HLE and the needs of the 21st century, and the role of the parent. Section 2.7 showcases and critiques existing methods of assessing the HLE, an essential step in understanding the prominent foci of HLE research and identifying a gap in existing literature. Finally, Section 2.8 discusses the proposed research and explicitly describes the gap in existing literature. It ties all sections together with a clear purpose and direction for the following chapters.

2.2 Background

How education is accessed, resourced and shared holds many issues of power that need to be addressed in order to understand how the establishment of learning partnerships can improve educational outcomes. The OECD (2018) highlights the power of education, "in the face of an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, education can make the difference as to whether people embrace the challenges they are confronted with or whether they are defeated by them" (p. 3). However, Kupfer (2015) questions this black and white perspective, arguing that

education can be either oppressive or empowering, depending on levels of cultural dominance and control. Education is a significant challenge for the 21st century as issues of access, inequality and power remain (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014). Viewing parents as powerful contributors to education is an important goal for 21st century learning as children prepare for an unpredictable future, requiring complex skills and competencies that traditional schooling alone cannot sufficiently provide. This literature review seeks to de-construct the complex factors that shape parents' roles and understand how role perceptions influence experiences of everyday learning between a parent and child.

2.2.1 Development of the literature review

Initially the literature review research began with the intent to explore a possible relationship between parental empowerment and the role of parents in their child's education. Research was conducted using the Massey University database *Discover,* with additional searches and keywords added as needed, throughout the entire project. Key phrases such as *'home learning environment*', '*21st century learning'*, and parental *'empowerment*', *'role perceptions'*, *'self-efficacy'*, *'motivation'* and *'confidence'* were all entered to provide a broad overview of the current field of literature. Results were initially confined to recent peer reviewed research papers and some relevant books. Google was also used to find additional documents such as university research papers and government and organisational documents in the public domain. Local government documents were sourced to provide context for the study which is based in London, United Kingdom (UK). These documents include a government funded longitudinal study about pre-schoolers social and cognitive development in relation to family backgrounds (Melhuish et al., 2001), as well as the national Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum (Department for Education [DfE], 2017). International documents and journal articles are used throughout the review to highlight issues faced on a global scale. Current research, less than ten years old, forms the bulk of this review, however older documents have been included where appropriate.

Most research investigated parents' roles specifically in the HLE (Hunt et al., 2011; Melhuish et al., 2001; Niklas et al., 2016a, 2016b). I began research with an open

mind about child age. Literature about the HLE often refers to learning in the home before formal schooling begins. However, I was open to including primary school aged children if appropriate. Literature about both parental empowerment and the HLE were sourced, though minimal published literature explores a relationship between the two. Identification of a significant gap in the literature resulted in the focus on parental role perceptions and experiences of learning with their child. Parental empowerment was not excluded from the review; instead issues of power are apparent throughout.

2.2.2 Identifying a gap in the literature

There is a strong focus in the literature on the academic benefits for children who experience positive HLEs. The quality of HLEs are commonly assessed using a variety of survey tools with frequency and type of home learning activities (HLA) being determining factors (Hunt et al., 2011; Melhuish et al., 2001; Niklas et al., 2016a, 2016b). Existing research has confirmed a positive relationship between the quality of the HLE and children's individual academic success, particularly literacy and numeracy development (Niklas et al., 2016a, 2016b). Melhuish et al. (2001) explain that the quality of the HLE has a higher impact on children's cognitive development than any other contextual family characteristic and therefore should be a central focus for improving academic outcomes, regardless of family circumstance and background. The HLE is often viewed as a place for learning in preparation for, or supplementary to, formal schooling, with schools placed in a position of power. This perspective of home learning risks diminishing the role of the parent, creating a view of parents as passive participants in their child's learning. Subsequently the term HLE, whilst useful for exploring the impact home learning has on literacy and numeracy development, is not sufficient for exploring parents' roles. No term appears to exist in current literature to explore parental role perceptions and their experiences of learning with their children.

I have developed the new term parent-led learning (PLL) to describe any learning experiences between a parent and child where the parent plays an active role in teaching or facilitating learning in some way. This term differs from HLE in numerous ways. It is not location specific, acknowledging the various spaces for learning which is particularly relevant for the 21st century. It also moves the focus away from what is

being learnt, and how often, to how learning is experienced. An important step in understanding how parents experience PLL is understanding the various ways in which learning occurs. Recent theories of learning provide a useful framework for this study incorporating notions of informal, non-formal and formal learning (Clark, 2005), passive versus interactive parental involvement (Niklas et al., 2016b) and indirect or direct teaching approaches (Niklas et al., 2016a).

Research about empowerment highlights the importance of parents' abilities and confidence as well as motivation and desire to affect change (Damen et al., 2017). PLL places the parent at the centre of the learning, in a position of power to provide quality learning experiences and potentially improve their child's educational outcomes. Some families face many disadvantages which can reduce access to education and services (Hattie, 2009; UNESCO, 2014). Placing parents at the centre of learning, in a position of power, is not a complete solution if inequalities between social and cultural groups prevail. It is important to understand various factors that contribute towards the power struggles often seen in education today in order to understand how parents perceive their role. Research suggests that learning experienced in a positive way can potentially counteract social disadvantages (Damen et al., 2017). Therefore, experiences of learning are a worthy focus. In order to understand the complex issues of power and inequality and to provide parents with a platform to share their voices, this research aims to investigate parental role perceptions, feelings of power and experiences of PLL.

Exploring discrete learning moments between parent and child, as opposed to the overall HLE, will be a necessary adaptation to existing literature in order to fully explore the breadth and depth of the parenting experience. The concept of PLL is a more open and accepting term compared to HLE, as it acknowledges all parent-child learning and the complex and diverse role that parents really have. There is a "complex interplay between structural characteristics, parental educational beliefs and educational process" (Kluczniok, 2013, p. 432). The home environment, family structure and emotional climate are inseparable from PLL. While I acknowledge the complex roles within families, and the diverse family units that are present in every society, it is not possible to explore these broad parameters within one research

project. I have chosen to use the term parents for simplicity; however, I am referring to any home-based primary caregiver.

2.3 Culture, power and opportunities

Children are born into diverse cultures and families, their circumstances influencing their access to, and capacity to benefit from, education. Reducing inequality in education is a prominent international goal for education, with the OECD (2018) stressing the importance of equal access to education. Poverty, parental education levels and language barriers are significant challenges many families face in accessing quality education as perceived by the dominant culture (Hattie, 2009; Kupfer, 2015; UNESCO, 2014). Reducing inequalities cannot be limited to empowering parents to aspire to one version of quality. When exploring perceptions of quality, beyond a Eurocentric view, it is necessary to understand what parents' value. Parents' perceptions will be explored in relation to discreet learning experiences in order to understand the various influences of culture and power in the broader context of education. While this research will focus on the parent-child learning relationship, understanding sociocultural influences and factors that make up parents' perceptions is necessary.

2.3.1 Inequality in education

In England, schooling begins with the EFYS framework, with children often attending school during nursery and reception classes, between age three to five (DfE, 2017). By this time there is already a significant difference in level of readiness for school between social groups. "Children's economic, cultural and family background heavily influence how children access education in their early years and how ready they will be for formal education by the time they reach school age" (Kluczniok et al., 2013, p. 433). Children of parents whose culture or personal circumstances limit their access to the dominant culture are likely to have lower literacy and numeracy outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Kluczniok et al., 2013; Niklas et al., 2016a). Before and during the transition to school period, children of the dominant culture and language, whose parents can act as advocates for them, have better access to community services, and emergent learning experiences. Niklas et al. (2016a) explain that children of parents

lacking adequate language skills to access opportunities and engage in conversations with teachers have lower emergent literacy skills. However, they suggest along with Hattie (2009) and Kluczniok et al. (2013), that numeracy skills are less affected by parental language skills, perhaps because numeracy is more culturally permeable.

Literacy is also negatively affected by socioeconomic status (SES), whereas, similarly to language barriers, there is minimal correlation between SES and low numeracy levels (Kluczniok et al., 2013). This is possibly due to numeracy being more easily accessible regardless of background of SES. SES is defined by Hattie (2009) as "[relating] to an individual's (or family's, or household's) relative position in the social hierarchy and directly [relating] to the resources in the home. Such resources refer to parental income, parental education, and parental occupation as three main indicators of SES" (p. 61). Parents with higher levels of formal education and more positive SES factors feel more empowered to take an active role in their child's education (Damen et al., 2017). It is unclear as to whether parents' higher levels of emowerment are a product of higher education or whether their perceived empowerment enabled them to continue further education. This complex, reciprocal relationship may also be applicable to other SES factors.

2.3.2 Sharing power in education

Community outreach programmes can be useful for providing skills and knowledge to disadvantaged parents; however, a heavy focus on readiness for school risks implicit cultural and societal discrimination to those who do not fit within expected parameters. It is in the government's best interest to provide funding for early years services in local communities to support educational outcomes and help avoid a large gap between SES groups that can occur by the time children begin formal schooling. Hunt et al. (2011) suggest that EYFS programmes such as nurseries, playgroups and community support are used as necessary avenues to engage parents in their child's learning and provide the appropriate skills and knowledge to empower parents. When power is given, rather than shared, inequality remains as one party has the power to give and the other is in need of help. Instead, VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) discuss ways of sharing power equitably, "power with has to do with finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength. Based on

mutual support, solidarity, and collaboration, power with can help build bridges across different interests to transform or reduce social conflict and promote equitable relations" (p. 39). By shifting the focus away from parents supporting school learning, to parents being valuable teachers, power and control can be perceived differently. Providing less dominant cultures with a platform to share their voice and alternative values can empower and challenge role perceptions (Hattie, 2009).

Many current national early years frameworks, for children from birth to five years of age, recognise the powerful role that parents play in the learning process and the different ways in which learning occurs. In England, the EYFS framework emphasises the importance of diverse learning domains beyond numeracy and literacy; however, the domains lack fluidity, and school is still disconnected from home with the prescribed curriculum at the centre of learning. Hunt et al. (2011) describes the importance of relationship building between teacher and parent in the EYFS framework as a necessary step in teaching parents about the curriculum. This view places school learning at the core with the view of home learning as supplementary, implying schools hold the power to successful education. An alternative example is the New Zealand national early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki. Te Whāriki creates an interwoven view of families/whānau as inseparable from all learning experiences (Ministry of Education [MOE], 1996, 2017). Te Whāriki provides a framework that encompasses culture and diversity as valuable parts of the child, with the child at the centre of learning. Parents, families and communities are all valued as active and powerful participants in the learning process, resulting in shared power, a shared vision and collaborative effort.

2.4 Parental perceptions

How parents perceive their role, along with how they perceive their ability to fulfil their role, directly affects their experiences of learning with their children (Bandura, 1994; Bojczyk, Haverback, & Pae, 2018). Perceived and actual barriers can inhibit parent's involvement in their child's learning and negatively shape their attitudes towards learning and education in general. "There are barriers at the parent level such as poor experience of school or professionals, which may lead to negative attitudes on the part of parents and practitioners. Parents may also fear being judged

as a failing parent or place a low value on education" (Hunt et al., 2011, p.69). How parents perceive and value education and learning is often based on previous experiences within their own schooling and these perceptions impact their involvement with their child's school. In turn, parents' current experiences with their child's school can impact their perceptions and attitudes towards schooling, which can also limit or encourage their involvement. Empowering parents with knowledge and skills can provide parents with significant levels of confidence and power with the potential to outweigh disadvantages and overcome barriers (Hattie, 2009).

2.4.1 Parental interests and motivations

Parents' motivation for engaging with their children in early learning experiences is a significant factor, especially related to the extent of initiating learning. Hunt et al. (2011) describe the heavy influence parental motivation and personal interests can have on the 'where' and 'how' of parent-child learning. Parents enjoy different types of teaching and learning in a range of places, and not all want to focus on literacy and numeracy. There is a complex interactive process that connects what parents want to teach their children with what they think they should. A longitudinal study of parents in preschool education in England found that parents have many reasons for wanting to improve their children's early learning experiences. Preparation for formal school was a prominent theme within this study. In the words of one parent, she "wants her daughter to learn so that she is 'ready for school' and for her to have a 'competitive edge' so she will not [be] left behind in class and will enjoy learning as opposed to having to 'catch up'" (Hunt et al., 2011, p. 69). Families who value schooling and focus on 'getting ready for school' have higher literacy and numeracy promotion (Kluczniok et al., 2013). This reaffirms the idea that families who share values with the dominant culture have better educational outcomes.

2.4.2 Parenting abilities and confidence

There are many terms currently used to define and explore parents' feelings and perceptions of their role. Parental empowerment highlights issues of perceived and actual power, and "refers to the parents' appraisal of their own confidence in

managing their children and having a positive impact on the services that their child uses and those designed for families in general" (Vuorenmaa, Perala, Halme, Kaunonen, & Astedt-Kurki, 2016, p. 34). According to Damen et al. (2017) parental feelings of empowerment, such as the confidence in their own ability to parent effectively and perceived level of power and control, directly influences levels of parental stress and subsequently the emotional climate of the home. As stress is not location specific, it seems acceptable to assume that this stress would not be limited to the home environment and would be relevant within any parent-child learning experience. Vuorenmaa et al. also acknowledge the importance of parental empowerment, adding that the lack of skills and knowledge relating to parenting can fuel negative perceptions of self.

Self-efficacy is another hotly debated concept and encompasses a range of interconnected notions such as confidence, perception of ability and belief in the ability to succeed (Bandura 1994; Bojczyk et al., 2018; Pressman et al., 2015). Perceived self-efficacy is defined by Bandura as, "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (1994, p. 2). When it comes to parenting, overall personal self-efficacy is not enough. Bojczyk et al. (2018) explored mothers' level of self-efficacy and the quality of HLE they provide. Their findings indicate that providing an HLE and engaging in effective learning experiences requires a high level of domain specific self-efficacy. They suggest that more research is needed in this field to better understand how self-efficacy relating to parenting develops and how it can be best strengthened. Parenting is a unique role and it cannot be assumed that highly efficacious adults will become confident and able parents.

There is a measurable disconnect between parents' desire and willingness to improve but inability or lack of confidence to change parenting behaviours, with parents often aware of their shortcomings and concerned about the impact their parenting behaviours have on their children (Damen et al., 2017; Vuorenmaa et al., 2016). Parents are generally interested in learning how to make these changes, but some require outside support (Niklas et al., 2016a). Bojczyk et al. (2018) explain that even confident, highly efficacious parents sometimes require domain specific knowledge and skills in order provide the quality of PLL to which they aspire. Schools

and teachers have the ability to either harness or dismiss parents' aspirations for their children. Empowering parents to take control of their important role is necessary in order to ensure that all parents, regardless of actual or perceived disadvantages, have the power to improve PLL. Teachers and schools are in a powerful position to help parents realise expectations for their children's success within formal schooling (Bojczyk et al., 2018; Hattie, 2009). Although schools and teachers can be empowering factors, they may place parents in a position of dependency and a lower position of power.

2.5 21st century education and learning

Education is an inherently human trait, existing in all cultures, societies and historical periods (Faure, et al., 1972). The purposes of education have been debated throughout time, reflecting the changing political climates, cultural needs and diverse environments. Soon after World War Two had ended, UNESCO was established as 44 countries united with the purpose of creating global peace through education (UNESCO, 2019). However, today global peace is not yet a reality. Issues of inequality, racism, hate and power struggles remain so the relevance of UNESCO's vison continues; using education to empower and, "help people live as global citizens free of hate and intolerance" (para. 3). The challenges of the 21st century are political, economic, civic and environmental, requiring citizens with agency and drive to collaborate for effective change (Griffin, McGaw, & Care, 2012; OECD, 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016). Successful, equitable education in the 21st century requires a rethink of traditional teaching and learning processes, particularly beyond the formal school environment, to better meet these complex challenges.

2.5.1 Everyday learning to meet the challenges of the 21st century

An emphasis on how learning in a variety of ways and contexts can better equip all humans to become active citizens is an essential next step in meeting the educational needs of the 21st century. In a world where the nature and availability of work is highly uncertain, teaching solely for knowledge and skills, specifically those associated with the industrial workforce, is not the best use of time, money and state resources (Clark, 2005; Griffin et al., 2012; Reimers & Chung, 2016). Kupfer (2015)

criticizes the current educational paradigm, saying that most children still experience a conservative, knowledge-based educational system that focusses more on the 'what' than on the 'how' and 'why', and that there needs to be a focussed shift towards valuing critical thinking. A competencies-based framework is more suited to the requirements of modern workplaces where flexibility, adaptability, collaboration and resilience are essential (OECD, 2018). Reimers and Chung (2016) list competencies such as, "critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication and collaboration" (p. 7). Many questions remain about how competencies develop and how they should be taught. The OECD describe the process of 21st century learning as an extension of knowledge and skills-based curricula, not as a replacement. It is about applying previous learning in an adaptable and flexible manner and, "the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through a process of reflection, anticipation and action, in order to develop the inter-related competencies needed to engage with the world" (OECD, 2018, p. 6). To understand how 'learning about doing' becomes 'learning through doing', it is useful to look beyond the formal context of education.

When you remove the classroom walls and look at the various places in which learning occurs and the varying degree of intent and formality across contexts, the complexities of learning become even more apparent. In Clark's paper (2005), 'lifelong, life-wide or life sentence?' which reflects the breadth and depth of learning throughout life and the need for continuous learning and upskilling, he describes the three main types of learning and the spaces often associated with them. Firstly, he identifies 'formal learning' as intentional learning experiences within formal education settings such as schools. Additionally, 'non-formal learning' which is still intentional but occurs outside of formal learning settings such as in the home or within the wider community. Finally, and possibly the most abstract, 'informal learning' which has no specific intent but has significant implicit value, "it can occur almost anywhere, but as a by-product of other activities. It is often unplanned and without explicit emphasis on learning yet may still lead to the acquisition of valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes" (p. 53). All PLL occur outside the formal school setting so are non-formal and informal. Due to the focus of this research being on the parents' role, particularly in initiating learning, non-formal and informal learning will be the focus. However, when

discussing role perceptions during interviews, all types of learning will be open to discussion.

2.6 Parents' roles in home learning environments

The HLE can best be described as the sum of all learning experiences within the home, considering spaces, resources, intentional learning activities and parental attitudes towards their role as first educator (Niklas et al., 2016b). Some research has looked specifically at the HLE in relation to formal learning activities that promote literacy and numeracy skills, as well as a slightly lesser focus on social, emotional and physical learning (Hunt et al. 2011; Niklas, 2016b). Other research has also emphasised the physical spaces for learning in the home and the role the physical and emotional environment plays in learning (Froyen, Skibbe, Bowles, Blow, & Gerde, 2013). Due to the focus on intentional literacy and numeracy learning activities, many studies have assessed the parent's role based on how often these activities occur and the level of formality or intent involved. This has really limited the understanding of the valuable role that parents play and the wider context in which all learning occurs.

2.6.1 Learning in the HLE: expanding the scope

The HLE provides opportunities for both informal and non-formal learning experiences. Niklas et al. (2016b) describe the parent's role as either passive or interactive. Passive relates to an intentional learning environment for independent learning whereas interactive refers to parent directed learning activities. Both passive and interactive intents fit within the parameters of non-formal learning. Niklas et al. (2016a) provide a slightly different understanding of parent-child learning in the home. Their focus is specifically on the interactive learning experiences and the role the parent plays in planning for, initiating and guiding learning. They state that, "teaching and learning in the home literacy and home numeracy environments may be direct, for example when parents teach their children letters and numbers. Teaching and learning may also be indirect, as learning occurs when books are read to children and when adults play dice games with children" (p. 125). For the purpose of this research, I will be exploring non-formal and informal, interactive, parent-led learning experiences. Both indirect and direct learning experiences will be included in the survey.

Typically, the HLE has been defined by the quality and frequency of HLA, rather than how learning is experienced. Niklas (2016b) describes HLA as, "family orchestrated child experiences that relate to children's literacy, numeracy or even creativity" (p. 183). This definition implies parental intent for HLA to be effective, however it also emphasises the heavy focus on numeracy and literacy skills. Parents also have a unique role in creating a calm and safe emotional environment conducive for learning. "It may be that children experiencing warm, emotional environments are better able to internalise knowledge gained through home learning activities and demonstrate that knowledge in other contexts" (Froyen et al., 2013, p. 50). Froyen explains that positive emotional environments which include high levels of positive emotional expressiveness increase frequency of HLA. Whilst the premise that there is a positive relationship between increased frequency of HLA and academic outcomes is not the focus of this review, it is useful to note the increased frequency of HLA in homes with positive emotional climates. Exploring parents' enjoyment levels of PLL will hopefully contribute to current literature in this field.

With the OECD driving a change of thinking about how learning occurs, and what learning is important, there is an opportunity to look beyond facilitating play and initiating structured HLA. Parents have access to the key teaching and learning moments for children's future success such as authentic, real-world learning driven by student interest and motivation that provides opportunities for critical thinking, focussed inquiry and curiosity (OECD, 2018). Pressman et al. (2015) highlight issues relating to an over emphasis on structured, formal HLA for children in the early years, "in a period of life when children are focussed on early stages of socialization and finessing motor skills, we anticipate that an overload of homework will likely interfere with a kindergarten-aged child's ability to play and participate in extra-curricular activities" (p. 308). Hattie (2009) recommends teachers promote 21st century learning by, "creating homework that is interactive and real world applicable, (e.g., math used to help build a birdhouse, compute money needed to buy a toy at the store, or balance a check book) so the family experiences it together in a meaningful way" (p. 311). This view, of parents and children as capable, co-constructors of knowledge, is more in line with OECD goals for parent involvement and real-world learning.

2.7 Existing survey tools

There are currently numerous survey tools used by researchers to assess the quality of the HLE (refer to Appendix A). A broad range of learning domains are included in these survey tools including literacy, numeracy, creative, physical, social and scientific. However, there is a heavy focus on literacy and numeracy skills in most studies. The frequency of these types of experiences has been used to assess the quality of HLEs since "an increase in the number of HLE practices has positive implications for children's emergent literacy skills" (Froyen et al., 2013, p. 50). Moreover, "the HLE is the context in which children first acquire the literacy and numeracy skills that equip them to make sense of, describe and participate in the world" (Niklas, et al., 2016a, p. 136). The importance of literacy and numeracy skills in the early years cannot be dismissed, however current survey tools, as they stand, do not give justice to the entire parenting experience.

2.7.1 A critical look into the application of existing survey tools

The Early Home Learning Environment Index (EHLEI) was used to assess the HLE in relation to early years education provider influence in England (Hunt et al., 2011). Use of this scale was based on its success in a longitudinal research project (Melhuish et al., 2001) funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), currently known as the Department for Education (DfE). The project, conducted by the University of London from 1997-2003, formed the theoretical foundations for seven learning domains, which have relevance for this study. Hunt et al. added an eigth item relating to physical development, including sport and dance (refer to Appendix A, Table A1). The E4Kids survey (refer to Appendix A, Table A2) was used in a large-scale, longitudinal study in Melbourne, Australia by The University of Melbourne and Queensland University of Technology, to assess the HLE in support of literacy, numeracy and social outcomes (Niklas, 2016b). It was funded by multiple Australian State Governments and in collaboration with universities in London, UK and Toronto, Canada. The purpose of the Melbourne study was to validate existing, self-report measures of the HLE. Another study (Niklas et al., 2016a) has been ruled out as a suitable base for this research due to its heavy focus on literacy and numeracy promotion in the HLE. However, it does include questions relating to parents attitudes

towards literacy and numeracy HLA. These questions have inspired the Likert scale labels in this study which ask parents to rate value and experience of HLA instead of frequency.

Most studies have identified interactive HLA, like reading with a child, as more conducive to positive academic outcomes than passive HLA such as number of children's books available at home (Niklas et al., 2016b). The E4Kids survey consists entirely of interactive HLA whereas the EHLEI, which focusses more on child learning, includes some passive items. A subtle difference is apparent in both survey items about drawing. The EHEI asks if the study child has engaged in drawing, whereas the E4Kids survey asks if a parent or family member has engaged in drawing with the study child. Both surveys include items with direct and indirect teaching methods such as, teaching letters or numbers, and reading or singing, respectively. The E4Kids survey provides a more suitable base for this research as it has a stronger focus on parent intiatied learning experiences which align with PLL. Out of the three surveys explored in this review, the E4Kids focussed most on everyday learning experiences, not just literacy and numeracy, which best reflects the needs of the 21st century. However, the OECD (2018) highlight the need to focus more on quality of learning over quantity of learning. No existing survey appears to do this.

2.8 Proposed research

The OECD's vision for 2030 emphasises the equal influences of parents, students, teachers and school leaders in creating a shared vision to overcome issues of accessibility and inequality (2018). This shared vision requires collaboration and understanding from all. For teachers, this means sharing power with parents and strengthening the relationships of learning partnerships. For parents, this means questioning the current notions of the HLE as the main place in which parent-child learning occurs. It also means parents playing an active role in learning; empowered to contribute and share values with a shared goal to improve educational outcomes for all. On a daily level, it means valuing parent-child learning as more than supplementary to school learning. Exploring authentic learning experiences that occur between parent and child, in real-world situations, is an important next step in the literature in order to understand the parents' role in creating and realising this shared vision for 2030.

While research has focussed on the HLE in preparation for school, there is a gap in research about the experience of learning between parent and child, as well as how parents perceive their role. What is unique and valuable about the parental role is the ability for parents to respond to their children's subtle cues and harness teachable moments (Niklas et al., 2016a). The concept of PLL highlights the discrete learning moments that can occur within close parent-child relationships, during structured HLA and within everyday activities. The OECD (2018) stress the importance of real-world learning opportunities to develop transferrable skills and competencies. With an understanding of the types of learning required to succeed in the 21st century, this research will illuminate the contribution parents make as first teachers, not as supplementary to formal schooling, or as preparation for school, but as preparation for life.

2.9 Summary

This chapter set out to review the current literature on parents' role perceptions and experiences of PLL. The term PLL places parents at the centre of learning, with a focus on how parents experience learning with their child. The parental lens is a necessary addition to the literature as previous studies failed to examine the way learning is experienced between parent and child, focussing instead on what learning occurs in the home and how often. Traditionally, literacy and numeracy HLA have been viewed as predictors of a quality HLE, relfecting the dominance of school-based learning. This view disadvantages those who are not equipped with the expertise required to teach literacy and numeracy based HLA and ignores the invaluable contributions parents regularly make in other learning areas. Moreover, other research recognises the importance of positive experiences of learning; enjoyment of learning can be more powerful than the acquisition of knowledge. PLL focusses on relationship based learning, with the understanding that positive learning experiences occur within the context of meaningful relationships, particularly the intimate relationship between parent and child.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to provide insight into the parenting experience in regard to teaching and learning, and address issues of power and access to quality education through an understanding of the important role parents play in

their child's learning and their innate ability to provide quality learning experiences, improving their child's educational outcomes, despite sociocultural barriers. PLL looks beyond literacy and numeracy HLA and encompasses wider and deeper life learning, viewing parents as capable and competent teachers. The complex needs of the 21st century require parents and teachers to work in genuine partnership with a shared educational vision of what quality teaching and learning looks like, looking beyond the current school-centric model. By veiwing the parents' role in education as more than just an extension of school, parents can be empowered to share their expertise and work towards this shared vision.

Whilst the broad context of education has been considered to justify the need for this study due to inequality in the current educational paradigm, the study will focus on discrete learning moments such as PLL. A mixed methods survey will be used to examine parents' role perceptions and experiences of learning by asking parents about their perception of the importance of particular HLA and their subsequent enjoyment of engaging in those HLA. This study hopes to empower parents within the participant community by providing them with a platform to share their voices and perspectives with school leaders. The following chapter will describe the planned methodological approach to the study, ensuring that research is valid, ethical and critical.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY IN THEORY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the theoretical underpinnings of the methodology used in this mixed methods research study. 'Methodology in Theory', as opposed to the following chapter, 'Methodology in Practice', identifies the intended direction for the study from a methodological perspective. As mixed methods studies require a flexible, pragmatic approach, it seemed necessary to highlight the methodological progression from theory to practice by discussing each phase in isolation. This chapter discusses the theory of mixed methods research and the intended research design.

Firstly, the benefits and limitations of using a mixed methods research methodology are discussed. The research question is then explained, and the intended research design described. Data collection is also discussed, explaining the intended collection tools, such as survey and focus groups, and the proposed research phases. Finally, data quality and ethical considerations are considered to ensure the integrity of the study.

3.2 Mixed methods research

Mixed methods research integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods and data collection tools, in order to answer or explore research questions that face limitations with the use of single methodologies (Caruth, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Punch & Oancea, 2014; Shannon-Baker, 2016). Mixed methods research emerged, relatively recently, out of dissatisfaction with the limitations of pure quantitative and qualitative research methods (Caruth, 2013). Quantitative research can be defined as "empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers" whereas qualitative research can be defined as "empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers" (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p.

3). These definitions do not give justice to the complex and contrasting theoretical perspectives that shape the limited scope of each method. Relying on one method can be insufficient and risks lacking breadth, depth or context, in the case of quantitative, or risks bias or lacking integrity and validity, in the case of qualitative (Caruth, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Punch & Oancea, 2014). However, these reasons should not be misinterpreted as attacks on independent methodologies. In fact, a pertinent factor in the emergence of mixed methods research is its role as a third research method, not a replacement for qualitative and quantitative methods (Caruth, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

Mixing methods and data collection tools has many benefits such as the ability to take elements of quantitative and qualitative methods to work around a specific research question instead of fitting a question into a restrictive paradigm (Caruth, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). However, a signifcant challenge in mixed methods design is integration of several philosophical underpinnings during different phases of the project. Careful consideration is needed to navigate these contrasting perspectives.

Pragmatism is typically the overarching philosophy in mixed methods research and can be defined as an outcome-oriented approach that deliberately draws on multiple perspectives, methodologies and research tools out of necessity to overcome limitations faced by paradigmatic restrictions (Bryman, 2008; Gray, 2013). A key component in that definition is that it does not replace worldviews but encourages the use of sometimes contradictory worldviews to produce the desired outcomes (Shannon-Baker, 2016). Ansari, Panhwar, & Mahesar, (2016) suggest that effective mixed methods research draws on elements of multiple perspectives to ensure that the contrasting theoretical underpinnings are complementary not contradictory. Bryman (2008) suggests that "the pragmatist position either ignores paradigmatic differences between quantitative and qualitative research or recognizes their existence but in the interests of exploring research questions with as many available tools as possible, it shoves them to the side" (p. 19). In this way, research can be abductive, not inductive or deductive, and intersubjective, not subjective or objective (Shannon-Baker, 2016).

Despite the benefits, mixed methods research too has limitations. These include, time and resourcing constraints limiting choices for independent researchers, researcher expertise in both quantitative and qualitative methods, and an understanding of the purpose and processes of mixed methods, particularly how and why data are merged (Caruth, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). It is therefore, important to only use a mixed methods methodology when the benefit of combined methods and data collection tools outweigh the labour intensive challenges. This project requires a mixed methods research design to overcome the limitations faced by previous quantitative studies with respect to investigation of participants' contextual experiences and understandings.

3.3 Research question

Initially this research was intended to explore experiences and levels of parental involvement and empowerment in their child's learning. After a critical review of the literature, parents' experiences of involvement have become the focus, although parental empowerment research still plays a pivotal role. Research about empowerment, which touch on concepts such as self-efficacy, confidence, resilience and power, highlights the need to look beyond what learning is occurring and focus instead on how it is experienced. Power issues in education, which arose from the literature review, indicate the need to explore parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education. Previous studies have focused on parents' roles in education within the home learning environment (HLE) and associated academic outcomes with conclusive, positive findings. However, research on empowerment provided a broader learning context, highlighting the importance of parent-child interactions and the emotional climate in the home.

The following question has been constructed to look beyond the view of parents as passive participants in the formal learning process and to gain insight into how parents' perceptions of their role influence the way they experience home learning activities (HLA).

"How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education influence their experiences of parent-led learning?"

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 Explanatory sequential

There are many ways of mixing methods which differ by the order and timing of the different data collection phases. A mixed methods research design can involve concurrent or sequential ordering of methodological phases and can be quantitatively, qualitatively or neutrally slanted (Caruth, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). This research utilises the explanatory sequential research design which begins with a confirmatory quantitative phase, followed by an explanatory qualitative phase. Typically, explanatory sequential designs are weighted more in the quantitative phase, with the qualitative data adding to results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). However, this research project relies on qualitative data to explore the unknown elements of the research topic. Therefore, both phases will have equal weighting, as highlighted in Table 1.

The explanatory sequential design is a straightforward yet effective approach that uses a follow up qualitative phase to further explain initial, incomplete or insufficient quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Punch & Oancea, 2014). This design was chosen due to the heavy reliance on quantitative methods in past research. This literature base has formed the foundations of this research, providing a valid and reliable survey instrument, while also highlighting the limitations of a single method approach. The reliance on quantitative findings to confirm a direct link between the HLE and academic success provides an incomplete picture of how parents learn with their children. From the literature, themes of parental power, parental values and overall enjoyment emerged as significant factors in children's future academic success. As current survey tools rely on recording the type and frequency of specific HLA to determine academic success, an additional and alternative method is needed to understand how parents' value and experience these HLA.

While the overall intended research design in this project is explanatory sequential, the first of the two phases relies on the addition of a few open-ended qualitative questions to add context to the quantitative data. This is due to the purpose of this research differing from that in which the survey instrument was

intended. A follow up qualitative phase will use semi-structured focus groups to further explain those results.

Table 1
Proposed Research Design: Explanatory Sequential

Phase	Procedure	Product
QUANTITATIVE + QUALITATIVE Data Collection	• Paper mixed methods survey (N>30) • Purposive sampling • 11 item Likert scale • 3 open-ended questions	• Numeric data • Text data
QUANTITATIVE + QUALITATIVE Data Analysis	• Data screening (accuracy, missing data, outliers) • Data reduction • Frequencies and distribution • Pearson's r correlation coefficient • Standard deviation • Inductive thematic coding (open and axial) of responses to open-ended questions	• Descriptive Statistics • Data display • Emergent themes
Interview Protocol Refinement	• Select focus group from each key stage (N=5-7 per focus group) • Nested convenience sampling • Refining interview questions	• Interview questions • Focus groups (N=2)
QUALITATIVE Data Collection	• Semi-structured interview questions with follow up prompts	• Text data (interview transcript)
QUALITATIVE Data Analysis	• Deductive thematic coding of transcribed focus groups to support theme development from Phase One	• Case study vignettes
Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results	• Interpretation and explanation of integrated results	• Conclusions • Discussions • Implications • Recommendations for future research

3.4.2 Data mixing

There are many reasons for choosing to mix data such as: to complement methods, to add breadth, depth and context, to develop methods, or, to expand, confirm, explain, validate or compare results (Caruth, 2013; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The timing and ways of mixing data are steered by the original purpose for mixing data. How and when data are mixed during a mixed methods study is determined by the research needs and chosen research design (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009.)

Explanatory sequential designs mix data at two stages; during the analysis of the quantitative data as they inform the qualitative phase, and then following the completion of the qualitative phase as both sets of data are combined to provide in-depth explanations (Caruth, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Punch & Oancea, 2014). This research requires additional data mixing to incorporate the qualitative and quantitative data in the first phase. Those data will then inform the second phase. Finally, both sets of data will be integrated to provide a complete picture, including narrative, to ensure parents' experiences and perceptions of parental involvement are accurately and thoroughly represented.

3.5 Data collection tools

3.5.1 Surveys

Surveys, also called questionnaires, are a form of data collection tool that are typically quantitatively framed although the inclusion of qualitative data such as open-ended questions, is often used to add context and detail (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The addition of qualitative data can enhance survey results but, as open-ended questions tend to be vague, participants require clear guidance. "Surveys that collect primarily quantitative data may also include questions asking for written responses, and these responses may be used in a qualitative, textual analysis" (Check & Schutt, 2011, p. 10). There are many different types of surveys, depending on the purpose of the data collection. Descriptive surveys take a snapshot of data whereas correlational surveys compare two or more variables to explore a potential relationship (Punch & Oancea, 2014). This study will use a correlational survey to explore the relationship between

parents' perceptions of their role and their experiences of parent-led learning (PLL). A correlational survey is necessary to provide insight into how these two variables (perceptions and experiences) interact.

Likert scales are a commonly used response measure in surveys (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Likert scales allow for participants to respond along a continuum which can alleviate the issues faced with restrictive fixed-choice questions (Check & Schutt, 2011). Likert scales will be used in this survey to measure the above variables in a controlled manner, while also providing the necessary continum to allow for varied repsonses. Open-ended questions will follow the Likert scale survey to provide participants with the space to elaborate on their expeirences of PLL.

3.5.2 Interviews and focus groups

Interviews are a data collection tool that can be either quantitative or qualitative depending on the type of data being collected. Quantitative interviews will collect numerical data such as how often something is mentioned or concrete answers to closed-ended questions, whereas qualitative interviews will collect verbal responses to open-ended questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Interviews can vary in degree of structure. Structured interviews consist of an exhaustive pre-set list of questions to steer the interview, semi-structured interviews contain a less exhaustive list of key questions although subsequent follow up questions may be used to extend on the key questions, and unstructured interviews, which are often used in ethnographic studies, are highly flexible, allowing the participant to steer the discussion (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Qualitative interviews allow for participant expression and faciliate meaning making through conversation (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). This study will use qualitative, semi-structured interviews in the form of focus groups, allowing for flexibility of discussion and time for individual interpretation and consideration of questions.

Focus groups are a specific type of interview technique involving several people discussing an open-ended research question or questions (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Punch & Oancea, 2014). Despite being a qualitative research tool, they are commonly used in mixed methods studies to either facilitate the initial development of a survey or to provide greater depth of understanding of results post survey, the latter applying

to this study (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The use of focus groups is intended to provide participants with a platform to share their voices, listen to others' stories, and to construct shared meaning through the understanding of diverse exeriences and perspectives. The interviewer's role in the focus groups is to provide the framework for discussion as some direction is required in order to explain the results of Phase One. This structure should also be beneficial in supporting the inexperienced interviewer to stimulate meaningful discussion amongst participants. Additional question prompts, common in semi-structured interviews, will enhance discussion when needed but will not drive the discussion.

Focus groups are a unique type of interview technique, providing rich data beyond an individual participant's verbal responses. During a focus group, the focus is not just on answering research questions, but creating shared meanings amongst participants. The added group dynamics, reciprocal discussions and non-verbal communication allow for a greater insight into emergent themes (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Phase one

An initial mixed methods phase aims to explore a possible relationship between parents' perceptions of their role in education and their experiences of PLL. The data will be collected using a mixed methods survey with two simultaneous Likert scales followed by three open-ended questions (see Appendix B). This draws on previous survey tools, with a direct adaptation of the E4 Kids Survey (Niklas, Nguyen, Cloney, Tayler, & Adams, 2016b), however frequency will not be observed to assess quality. Instead, how parents experience these everyday learning moments with their child will be the focus. The scale has been changed from a frequency scale, to one 'importance' and one 'experience' scale to explore what learning activities parents' value and how they experience them. The 11 items in the original survey have been altered grammatically but are based on the same learning domains as the original (Niklas et al., 2016b) survey. The similarity respects the validity of previous survey tools and the broad range of learning domains acknowledged within the items. By drawing on HLA

items from an existing, valid survey tool, HLA will be used as examples of learning for parents.

The 11 survey items are intended to help answer two broad questions: *'how do parents value learning with their child?'*; and *'how do parents experience learning with their child?'* It is expected that the variety of learning domains included in these items will ensure that the data fully reflect the broad parenting experience. Three open-ended, qualitative questions will conclude the survey, allowing for parents to contextualise and enhance their survey answers. These data will be coded, and the resulting themes will be explained further in the following phase.

Two schools will be approached to participate in the study to create a purposive sample, with parents of children in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1) being invited to complete the survey. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) suggest a suitable number of participants for a correlational survey with a two-tailed hypotheseis is 84. The goal in this study is to get approximately 30 returned surveys from each school with willingness to participate in Phase Two indicated by at least five parents per school. If a poor return rate results in a sample size that is too small, parents of children in Key Stage 2 (KS2) will be invited to participate in a second attempt at Phase One. If more than 40 surveys are returned from each school, all surveys will be used in the analysis as it is not expected that the sample size will become uncontrollably large.

3.6.2 Phase two

A second, purely qualitative phase aims to explain the initial results and explore emergent themes. Parents will be empowered to share their voices and experiences through semi-structured focus groups. The focus groups aim to explore parents' diverse experiences and perspectives in a range of areas through the use of wide, open-ended questions to prompt discussion (see Appendix B). Follow up questions have been prepared in order to prompt further discussion and add depth where required. It is hoped that this research will illuminate perceptions of parents' roles in their children's learning and invite discussions about feelings of power and control.

The exact details of this phase will emerge as a result of Phase One findings and the further needs of this study. It is likely that this phase will involve convenience

nested sampling, relying on participants indicating willingness during the first phase. Onwuegbuzie and Collins' (2007) review of the literature suggests that focus group size is most effective between 3-12 participants, providing a lot of flexibility. The aim for this research will be six participants in order to avoid limitations that might occur at each end of the spectrum. If more participants than anticipated indicate willingness, it will be possible to select particpants based on Phase One results. If there is a low turnout of willing participants, only one focus group will be held.

3.7 Data quality

Reliability and validity of data are essential elements of all research (Caruth, 2013; Check & Schutt, 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Punch & Oancea, 2014). Having a well constructed, intentional and explicit research process is a crucial element of validity and reliability. Descriptive validity refers to the "actual accuracy of the account as documented by the researcher" (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007, p. 299).

A significant benefit of mixed methods research is the inherent processes of triangulation, combining multiple data sources to provide a more complete and valid picture (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Shannon-Baker, 2016). The use of an existing Likert scale survey and open-ended questions from two sample populations followed by two semi-structured focus groups from subsets of the original samples reduces the limitations encountered by the use of single data collection tools. Combined results from different sources of data can be either confirmatory or disconfirmatory, providing extra confidence in the final analysis (Check & Schutt, 2011).

3.8 Ethical considerations

Educational research requires comprehensive ethical considerations, specifically when human participants are involved, and personal beliefs and values are shared (British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2018; Massey University, 2017; Check & Schutt, 2011). Mixed methods research combines two different research methods, both with different ethical requirements (Caruth, 2013). Extra consideration is required for vulnerable participants, particularly children; however, that is not relevant for this study as only consenting adult participants will be included. Ethics approval ensures the research study is "conducted within *an ethic of respect* for:

the person; knowledge; democratic values; the quality of educational research; and academic freedom" (BERA, 2018, p.5).

Massey University's 'Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants' (Massey University, 2017) has been the founding source of ethical guidance for the formation of this study and approval has been granted by Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC). Along with MUHEC, the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) has also been considered in order to ensure that the study remains relative to the geographical and political context and meets the needs of local participants in the UK. Ethical consideration did not vary significantly between contexts and both emphasised the importance of trust. Other stakeholders that will need to be consulted are the participant schools and local governance bodies if applicable. The exact requirements will be assessed as needed.

The following ethical considerations have been identified as potential ethical issues, and mitigations provided:

Confidentiality, storage of information, and informed consent

Information sheets and consent forms will be provided for all participants, including permission to use text from the interview transcripts (see Appendix C). The transcriber will also sign a confidentiality agreement. The right to decline to participate, or withdraw at any point, or to refuse to disclose information are clearly outlined in the information letter and consent form.

Harm to participants

Although it is unlikely the research processes will bring about psychological or emotional harm to participants, appropriate support services will be highlighted if these concerns become apparent.

Participant comfort

The survey highlights participant ability to decline to answer. During the interviews, questions will be directed at the group, not the individual. Open-ended, shared questions are intended to facilitate open conversation, ensuring participants feel valued not critiqued.

Impact on community

It is hoped that results will be of some benefit to the community, particularly by sharing parents' voices. Results might also assist the participant school by encouraging teacher reflection, enhancing teacher-parent relationships. Research results are unlikely to bring about harm to the community, although teachers or schools who read published research findings may reflect on their openness and inclusivity towards parent involvement. This research investigation aims to explore and represent diversity within the community.

Conflict of interest

No existing research-participant relationships are expected. If one arises, the participant will be excluded or withdrawn from the study.

Stored information

Information will be stored on the researcher's password protected laptop, using pseudonyms when transcribing the interview recordings. Surveys will remain anonymous. Data will be shared only with masters supervisors.

3.9 Summary

Mixed methods research is used widely in educational research due to the qualitative and quantitative nature of educational issues. The benefits of qualitative and quantitative research are optimized in this pragmatic approach, and negative implications of each method are mitigated by the presence of the other. A mixed methods approach is best suited to better understand how parents' perceptions of their role, within the broader context of education, influence PLL. Previous studies have confirmed a positive relationship between the HLE and academic success and provide a base for this study. An explanatory sequential research design has been chosen to enhance current research with the inclusion of other possible factors such as, parents' perceptions of their role, and their experiences of PLL. Adding a significant qualitative phase to this project allows for richer data and better understandings overall. The following chapter describes how the chosen methodology worked in practice in this context.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICE

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology in practice and adjustments that were made to the proposed methodology. Details of sampling, actual research processes, data analysis, and limitations of the study are discussed.

The first section describes the actual sample size and type for both the survey and the focus group, including the participant overview showcasing the percentages of different family structures within the research group. The following section explains the actual research process as experienced in the field, highlighting where it differs from the proposed research plan. The next section provides an overview of the data analysis processes for both quantitative and qualitative data, specifically thematic analysis. Finally, limitations of the study are discussed to demonstrate the validity of the study.

4.2 Sampling

This research intends to contribute towards a gap in the current field of research, specifically relating to how parents learn with their children. As the age of children is not a primary focus of this study, and does not directly contribute to the findings, previous studied ages of children have been applied to also enhance the reliability of the study results. Only parents were invited to participate with the purposeful exclusion of other caregivers, in order to align with existing research. To fit within the UK context, parents with children aged three to seven in two educational stages, Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1) (ages three-seven), were invited to participate.

Parents were asked about several contextual factors at the beginning of the survey in order to identify possible trends and relationships in the data. The following categories shown in Table 2 were included as these categories had been identified in

Chapter 2 as possible inhibitors and enablers of parent-led learning (PLL). These categories will be discussed further in chapter 5.

Table 2
Participant Overview

	Frequency	***Percentage***
Relationship to child		
Mother	*28*	*87.50%*
Father	*4*	*12.50%*
Nil	*0*	*0.00%*
Age of child		
EYFS	*10*	*31.25%*
KS1	*17*	*53.12%*
Nil	*5*	*15.63%*
Number of children		
1 child	*14*	*43.75%*
2 children	*6*	*18.75%*
3+ children	*12*	*37.50%*
Nil	*0*	*0.00%*
Parental level of English		
English as a first language	*9*	*28.12%*
English as an additional language (EAL)	*23*	*71.88%*
Nil	*0*	*0.00%*
Parental level of education		
High school	*9*	*28.12%*
Certificate/diploma	*3*	*9.38%*
Degree/postgraduate	*16*	*50.00%*
Nil	*4*	*12.50%*
Adults available in home		
1 parent	*6*	*18.75%*
2 or more parents/adults	*20*	*62.50%*
Nil	*6*	*18.75%*
Work or study commitments		
Full-time	*11*	*34.38%*
Part-time	*8*	*25.00%*
No	*12*	*37.50%*
Nil	*1*	*3.12%*

4.2.1 Survey sample

Purposive sampling was used for the survey. Purposive homogenous sampling is when participants are selected by their shared specific personal characteristics (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). As stated in Table 2, participants were required to be parents, mother or father, of children in a specific age band, EYFS and KS1, in order to

participate. Parents of the participant school who met these requirements were invited to participate. There were 196 children on the roll, which resulted in 32 survey respondents, with a response rate of 16.33%. This response rate is an approximate figure as it does not account for siblings in the available participant pool, so the actual response rate is likely to be slightly higher.

4.2.2 Focus group sample

The focus group that followed used a nested sampling technique in order to inform the interpretation of the survey results. Nested sampling is useful when looking at a subgroup of the original sample group (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The school's Family Liaison Officer (FLO) was asked to invite all those who had participated in the survey, to sign up for an EYFS or KS1 focus group. To keep the two planned focus groups to a manageable size, it was expected that some purposive sampling would be required to select the participants from those willing. However, as only two participants were willing and available in the given time frame, it was convenience and timing that determined the final sampling.

4.3 Conducting research in the field

4.3.1 School engagement

Approaching schools with no personal link was unsuccessful on every occasion, presumably due to the busy nature of schools in London. The use of a personal contact was required to initiate engagement with the school, however there was no pre-existing relationship between researcher and school or participants. During initial conversations with the school's Deputy Head Teacher, followed by their dedicated Family Liaison Officer (FLO), parent engagement was identified as one of their key goals as a response to feedback from their recent Ofsted inspection. Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) is England's primary department for assessing education quality and academic progress and success (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, 2017). As the purpose of this research and the many potential benefits for the school and parents were explained, the school quickly became very interested in being involved.

The FLO became the main point of contact between school and researcher and facilitated the research through parental engagement and organisation of meeting rooms. Regular contact was maintained via email throughout the course of the study and a letter was sent to the Head Teacher from Massey University to verify the study (see Appendix D). An initial face to face meeting with the FLO was set up to discuss research plans and ensure they aligned with school policies and priorities. Minor amendments to the survey and consent forms (see appendices B and C) were suggested to best meet the needs of their many parents with English as an additional language (EAL) and a personal note to parents was included to make the research seem more inviting and the researcher more relatable.

Despite full engagement with the school and parents, there were issues of timing and availability. There was a conflict between the NZ and UK academic timetables. This combined with the delayed start due to finding a willing school, resulted in the study beginning near the end of the UK school year and clashing with an exam filled school calendar. Fortunately, due to the school's consistent investment in parental engagement, and the dedicated support from the FLO, the research was able to continue with successful outcomes during this busy period.

4.3.2 Participant involvement

Finding willing participants was not an issue for the survey phase. A workshop was held to assist parents in completing the survey and to model to the FLO how to assist parents whilst avoiding accidentally steering participants. Six parents attended the workshop. The remaining surveys were either completed by parents at home, or at school with the support of the FLO. The FLO actively sought out parents and invited them to participate, over the course of a few weeks. Providing parents with paper copies, along with the ongoing support of the FLO to encourage parents to participate, proved to be successful. There were some gaps in the surveys, as to be expected in any survey, but overall the quality of answers showed most parents understood the questions being asked. However, a future recommendation would be to reassess the format of the Likert scale questions, as it appeared some parents did not realise there were two questions being asked per item. This was observed during the workshop and during the data collation phase.

Two focus groups were planned, on two separate occasions, to allow the session to start shortly after school drop off, with the intention of making it more convenient and accessible to parents. The first session was for parents of children in EYFS. Six parents agreed to participate but only two were present on the day. The two participants were happy to continue despite the small group size and the session was successful with open dialogue and authentic conversations. Both participants had strong accents which made transcribing difficult, but their understanding of the questions asked was apparent throughout and they readily expressed their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

The second focus group, for parents of children in KS1, also had six parents sign up but only one was present on the day. This parent had limited knowledge of English and understandably did not want to proceed with an interview. It is possible that the low turnout was due to the rapidly approaching end of school year, and many other commitments placed on parents during that busy period. Due to this presumption, and my limited availability, it was agreed that the focus groups would not be rescheduled. The detailed transcript of the first focus group is sufficient for the purposes of this study.

4.4 Data analysis

Both phases of the study resulted in data of enough quantity and quality to address the research question. Data included quantitative during Phase One and qualitative across both phases. Analysis was carried out on Phase One initially, with the results of Phase One informing the analysis of Phase Two. A mixed methods survey, completed by 32 participants, was displayed in an Excel document to enable quantitative and qualitative analysis (see Appendix E). All participants were assigned IDs to protect their identity.

4.4.1 Quantitative data

Numerical data were collected in the form of a Likert scale survey. Eleven items were used to assess parents' perceptions of the importance of learning and experiences of engaging in learning with their child. Excel was used to display descriptive statistics such as number of responses, average responses and standard

deviation (Tables 3 and 4). Descriptive statistics involves data reduction and basic analysis of raw data with the benefits of allowing the researcher time to get to know the data and understand patterns and distribution across variables (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Graphs were also created in Excel to visually display the spread of average responses to the Likert scale survey questions. These graphs are displayed in Chapter 5.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Research Question 1: How important do you think these learning activities are?

Survey Item		N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Reading to your child	30	4.67	0.66
2	Telling oral stories to your child, not from a book	31	3.87	0.96
3	Encouraging your child to engage in art activities, including drawing	31	4.13	0.76
4	Playing music, singing songs or dancing with your child	31	4.23	0.92
5	Playing inside games with your child, such as board games and card games	31	3.87	1.02
6	Learning during everyday activities such as cooking and caring for a pet	30	3.97	1.03
7	Playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking	30	4.57	0.73
8	Learning through structured learning activities that promote literacy development such as letters and words	30	4.42	0.81
9	Learning through structured learning activities that promote numeracy development such as numbers and shapes	31	4.52	0.68
10	Using technology such as computers and phones to expand knowledge	30	3.73	1.08
11	Playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)	30	3.60	1.16

5-point scale: 1 = Not Important, 2 = Slightly Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Quite Important, 5 = Extremely Important

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Research Question 2: How would you rate your experiences of initiating these learning activities with your child?

Survey Item		N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Reading to your child	32	4.22	0.94
2	Telling oral stories to your child, not from a book	30	3.77	1.10
3	Encouraging your child to engage in art activities, including drawing	29	4.00	0.89
4	Playing music, singing songs or dancing with your child	29	4.03	0.94
5	Playing inside games with your child, such as board games and card games	31	3.68	0.94
6	Learning during everyday activities such as cooking and caring for a pet	31	3.74	1.18
7	Playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking	32	4.22	0.83
8	Learning through structured learning activities that promote literacy development such as letters and words	30	3.87	1.14
9	Learning through structured learning activities that promote numeracy development such as numbers and shapes	29	3.97	0.98
10	Using technology such as computers and phones to expand knowledge	31	3.87	1.02
11	Playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)	29	3.59	1.18

5-point scale: 1 = Very Poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Fair, 4 = Good, 5 = Very Good

Further analysis identified a potential relationship between parents' perceptions of importance and experiences. Excel data pack was used to calculate Pearson's r correlation co-efficient (see Chapter 5, Table 9). Pearson's r correlation coefficient is one method of identifying a relationship between two variables (Bors, 2018). It is important to note that identifying a relationship, or correlation between two variables, is not the same as interpreting causation, when one variable directly affects another (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The results of this analysis are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

4.4.2 Thematic analysis

As part of this mixed methods study, qualitative data from Phase One were analysed using a thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis is a foundational method of qualitative analysis, used for making sense of textual data with the gradual development of themes, "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 10). Open coding is one of the first stages of thematic analysis. The data are coded in order to "generate abstract conceptual categories – more abstract than they describe – for later use in theory building" (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 232). These responses were analysed using open coding to break the text into chunks with a simple code attached (see appendix E). It was the crucial first step, enabling the researcher to gain familiarity with the data. This form of data reduction allowed for the words of participants to be compared inductively which is an essential step in the meaning making process that is thematic analysis.

Codes were first visually scanned to ensure similar data chunks were given the same label, where the difference in meaning of the codes was inconsequential. The codes were then physically displayed and sorted into groups that expressed similar ideas and themes (see Appendix E). This deductive process required many reconfigurations of the codes into exploratory categories, with continuous reflection on existing literature on parents' perceptions and experiences, as highlighted in Chapter 2. A further method of data display in the thematic analysis process involved axial coding. Axial coding is the process of making connections between different categories to better understand prevalent themes, in relation to existing literature (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The emergent categories were explored further to find common relationships and interconnections between categories (see Appendix E). Codes and categories were refined during this process and sub themes and themes identified. Further reflection on current literature in Chapter 2 assisted in the meaning making and theory development for each theme, as shown in Table 5.

Additional qualitative data were collected during Phase Two to add depth to the emergent themes from Phase One. The focus group interview data were transcribed (see Appendix E) but the audio recording was revisited to provide

clarification on poorly transcribed responses. Contextual quotes were extracted from the text to provide meaningful examples of themes and strengthen verification of conclusions drawn in the original thematic analysis. This process contributed to validation of the themes and theories.

Table 5

Overview of Thematic Analysis and Theory Development

Codes	Categories	Sub-themes	Themes	Theories
Shared learning *Shared feelings* *Shared experiences* *Shared enjoyment* *Engagement*	Shared interactions	**Interactions**	**Parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs**	The view that parents are capable and competent and have detailed knowledge of their child's needs; that parents understand the diverse range of experiences their child requires in order to meet holistic developmental needs. The understanding that learning is not restricted to one type of teaching and learning format. Parental awareness of the importance of their role in learning, not just to facilitate school learning, but to prepare their child for life. The importance of the parental role in providing meaningful learning experiences in the context of authentic relationships and everyday interactions.
Conversations *Avoid distraction* *Communication* *Listening* *Observing* *Patience*	Parents role within interactions			
Unstructured *Structured* *Informal learning* *Non-formal learning* *Child centred learning* *Visible learning* *Direct teaching*	Structure and formality of learning Different ways in which children learn	**Types of learning**		
Everyday routines *Life skills* *Learning about the world* *Health* *Social skills*	Learning for life	**Life learning**		
Imagination *Curiosity* *Exploration* *Play* *Outside experiences* *Physical development*	Valuing different approaches to learning Exposure to different learning experiences			

Using technology				
Numeracy *Literacy*	Compulsory school learning	**Schooling**		
Arts *Science*	Supplementary learning			
Enjoyment *Fun* *Pride* *Confident* *Laughter*	Positive feelings towards PLL	**Parents' feelings**	**Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities**	The understanding of the important role parents have and the effects feelings and role perceptions have on their ability to fulfil and enjoy this role. The importance of empowerment, self-efficacy and self-confidence and the effects on the parenting experience as a whole. The role of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in shaping parents' role perceptions.
Guilt *Sad/disappointed* *Anxiety* *Self-pressure*	Negative feelings towards PLL			
Mother is important *Parent contribution* *Parenting choices* *Role models*	Parents overall perceptions of parenting	**Parents' role perceptions**		
Helping with homework *Support child* *Parent sacrifice*	Immediate role of the parent			
School support *Importance of school*	Role of the school			
Use of time *Surplus time* *Routine* *Scheduling* *Time together* *Quality time*	The value of time and time use	**Time issues**	**The practicalities of PLL**	The practical realities of the human experience of parenting; everyday teaching and learning between parent and child. The understanding that learning does not exist in isolation from people, places and things. Learning
Busy *Restricted schedule* *Work commitments*	Time pressures as inhibitors of PLL			
Dislike arts	Dislikes and conflicting	**Inhibitors of PLL**		

Dislike play *Child dislike* *Dislike literacy* *Conflicting preferences* *Prefers structured learning* *Dislike technology* *Child learning preferences*	preferences			is a sociocultural experience that encompasses likes, dislikes, past experiences, and cultural and social expectations. Contextual factors can inhibit or enable successful learning experiences; can demand or foster resilience and have the power to motivate and empower parent and child alike.
Lack of confidence *Lack of ability* *Difficult to encourage child* *Child resilience* *Homework is challenging*	Intrinsic parent and child inhibitors			
Dislike messy play *Cooking too messy* *Cleaning required*	Physical obstacles			
Child happiness *Child confidence* *Child success* *Child enjoyment* *Child pride* *Child development* *Child improvement*	Reasons for enjoying PLL	**Enablers of PLL**		
Child behaviour positive *Expert knowledge* *Effortless* *Capable*	Reasons for finding PLL easy and more inviting			
Encouraging *Gaining experience* *Improved confidence*	Motivating enablers and reasons for improved enjoyment of PLL			

4.5 Limitations of the study

This study relied heavily on the willingness of participants from a local school to volunteer their time and share their experiences. One main benefit of purposive sampling noted in this study is that willing participants were typically enthusiastic and provided informative responses. This resulted in meaningful, contextual data; however, due to the small non-probability sample size, the data are not generalisable to other contexts (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). It is also possible that relying on parents who are willing to offer their time will limit understanding of a wider range of parents who may have differing priorities and availability. This limitation was reduced by the FLO encouraging parents, including those with limited home-school engagement, to complete the survey at home, sending paper copies home with all children in KS1 and EYFS over the school holidays.

Participant, school and researcher availability proved to be another issue which may have limited the range of participants and subsequently the generalisability of the data. Due to various time constraints from all parties, term time restrictions and room availability at the school, rescheduling focus groups after poor turnout was not possible. Therefore, only one focus group was held with two parents with children in EYFS. As a result, a detailed comparison of EYFS and KS1 parents will not be possible as originally planned. This is not expected to affect the overall quality of the research, as it was not the primary focus.

Working predominantly with parents whose first language is not English provided another set of limitations. The survey contained 11 items, each with two Likert scale questions to complete followed by three open ended questions with complex content. Complexity of the survey combined with a heavy EAL participant pool may mean that some questions were not answered fully or were missed altogether. An attempt to reduce this issue was made by the researcher and FLO supporting parents in completing the survey. However, many parents did not want help and chose to complete the survey in private. Overall, the responses that were received in the survey were informative, detailed and answered the questions asked so it is expected that the issue of missed questions will have minimal impact on the overall data.

4.6 Summary

This chapter explained how the proposed research methodology worked in practice, given time and resource constraints. Pragmatic changes to the original plan were required. Despite adaptations, the quality of the data is strong and valid, with sufficiently sized sets of quantitative and qualitative data. Analysis of all data provided rich displays of data, as is evident in this chapter, the following chapter and the appendices. Further explanation of the analysed data is provided in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from research carried out at one local school with parents of children in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1) as participants. The following research question was explored through a mixed methods questionnaire and a follow up focus group.

"How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education influence their experiences of parent-led learning?"

The first objective of the research was to identify any relationship between parental role perceptions in relation to parent-led learning (PLL), and parents' overall experiences of PLL. A quantitative approach was used to provide numerical data in order to highlight any patterns or trends. Parental perceptions and experiences were gauged by asking parents to think about 11 common home learning activities (HLA) (refer to Appendix B for a copy of the survey). Parents were asked to rate the importance of the 11 items to gain insight into perceptions of their role in their child's learning, as well as their enjoyment levels of engaging in the same HLA. Findings indicated a positive correlation between perception of importance and enjoyment levels. Additionally, parents were asked for demographic information to provide a detailed picture of contextual influences that may affect parents' role perceptions and experiences of PLL. This data formed the foundation for analysis and explanation of the thematic data.

The second objective of the research was to explain the links between parents' perceptions and overall experiences of PLL. In the same questionnaire, open-ended questions asked parents about their positive and negative experiences of PLL, as well as their overall levels of confidence in their parenting role. This qualitative data helped explain the quantitative findings through the development of explanatory themes. The following three themes were identified:

- *Theme 1: Parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs*
- *Theme 2: Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities*
- *Theme 3: The practicalities of PLL*

This chapter is structured into four main sections. Section 5.1 introduced the research question, purposes, and associated data collection processes. Section 5.2 explores the links between parents' role perceptions and experiences of PLL. Section 5.3 draws on family demographic data to better understand how family structures shape perceptions and experiences of PLL. Section 5.4 seeks to explain the links between parents' role perceptions and their experiences of PLL. Finally, Section 5.5 showcases these links with clear insight into family structure with a detailed case-study vignette, constructed as a result of a follow-on focus group.

5.2 Parents' perceptions and experiences of PLL

The first section of this chapter reports on quantitative findings and explores links between parents' role perceptions and their experiences of PLL. Links are identified by the exploration of parents' perceptions of the importance of various HLA, followed by their reported experiences of engaging in PLL. Table 6 provides an overview of the 11 HLA items that parents were asked to consider in the survey (refer to Appendix B for full survey details).

Table 6

Survey Home Learning Activities

	HLA Item
1	Reading to your child
2	Telling oral stories to your child, not from a book
3	Encouraging your child to engage in art activities, including drawing
4	Playing music, singing songs or dancing with your child
5	Playing inside games with your child, such as board games and card games
6	Learning during everyday activities such as cooking and caring for a pet
7	Playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking
8	Learning through structured learning activities that promote literacy development such as letters and words
9	Learning through structured learning activities that promote numeracy development such as numbers and shapes
10	Using technology such as computers and phones to expand knowledge
11	Playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)

Parents were first asked to rate the importance of all 11 HLA as a way of understanding the different types of learning that parents' value and perceive as important. It is expected that by understanding parents' perceptions about the importance of learning, insight can be gained into their overall perceptions of their role in their child's learning. Parents were also asked to rate their experiences of PLL they initiate, which is referred to throughout this chapter as enjoyment levels. The initiation of learning was a key component of the survey as it ensured the focus was on parent driven learning, strengthening the focus on parents' perceptions.

5.2.1 Importance of PLL

Parents were asked to rate their perceptions of how important eleven HLA were for their children. For example, in reference to HLA 1, parents were asked, 'how important do you think *'reading to your child'* is?' Parents were asked to rate their perceived importance on a scale of 1-5; *1=not important, 2=slightly important, 3=important, 4=quite important* and *5=extremely important*. Figure 1 shows the spread of responses across the 11 HLA with numbers 1-11 relating to the respective HLA specified in Table 6.

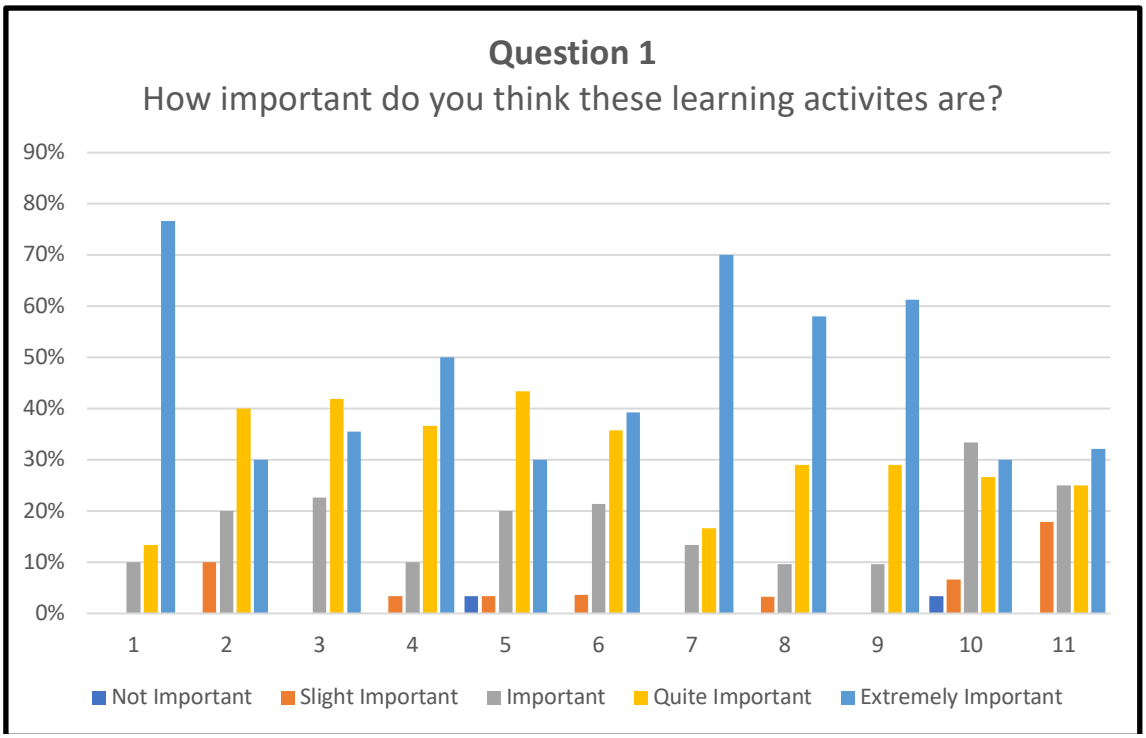

Figure 1. Spread of participant responses to survey Question 1.

There was a 94% average response rate from participants across all 11 HLA. Responses for each item had an average rating of either *'important'* or *'quite important',* ranging between 3.60 and 4.67 (see Table 3). Item 11 *'playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)'* was rated the least important at 3.60. Item 1 *'reading to your child'* was rated the most important at 4.67. Six items were rated as *'quite important'* on average, including items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9. Five items were rated as *'important'* on average, including items 2, 5, 6, 10 and 11. Table 7 shows which HLA were perceived as most important, those rated *'quite important'*, and which HLA were perceived as *'important'* to those considered least important.

The average standard deviation of responses was 0.89. Seven items had a standard deviation of less than one, including 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9. Item 1 *'reading to your child'* had the lowest standard deviation at 0.66 while item 11, *'playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)'* had the highest standard deviation at 1.16. Parents seemed confident committing to higher ratings of importance of HLA with more consistent ratings around the 4 and 5 marks.

Table 7

Importance of Home Learning Activities

Most important
1. Reading to your child
3. Encouraging your child to engage in art activities, including drawing
4. Playing music, singing songs or dancing with your child
7. Playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking
8. Learning through structured learning activities that promote literacy development such as letters and words
9. Learning through structured learning activities that promote numeracy development such as numbers and shapes
Least important
2. Telling oral stories to your child, not from a book
5. Playing inside games with your child, such as board games and card games
6. Learning during everyday activities such as cooking and caring for a pet
10. Using technology such as computers and phones to expand knowledge
11. Playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)

Parents perceived activities that: encourage shared interactions (3 and 4), promote school learning (8 and 9) and encourage life learning (7) as most important. It is possible that '*reading with your child*' was rated the most important because it

combines the two elements of shared interactions and promoting school learning. Items 10 and 11 were both rated low in importance, possibly due to intense resource requirements that not all families may be able to afford. Therefore, parents may not consider these HLA as necessary for promoting school or life learning.

5.2.2 Experiences of PLL

Parents were also asked to rate their experiences of initiating those same HLA. For example, in reference to HLA 2, parents were asked, 'how would you rate your experience of initiating *'telling oral stories to your child, not from a book'* with your child?' Parents were asked to rate their experiences on a scale of 1-5; *1=very poor, 2=poor, 3=fair, 4=good* and *5=very good.* Figure 2 shows the spread of responses across the 11 HLA (refer to Table 6 for details of each HLA).

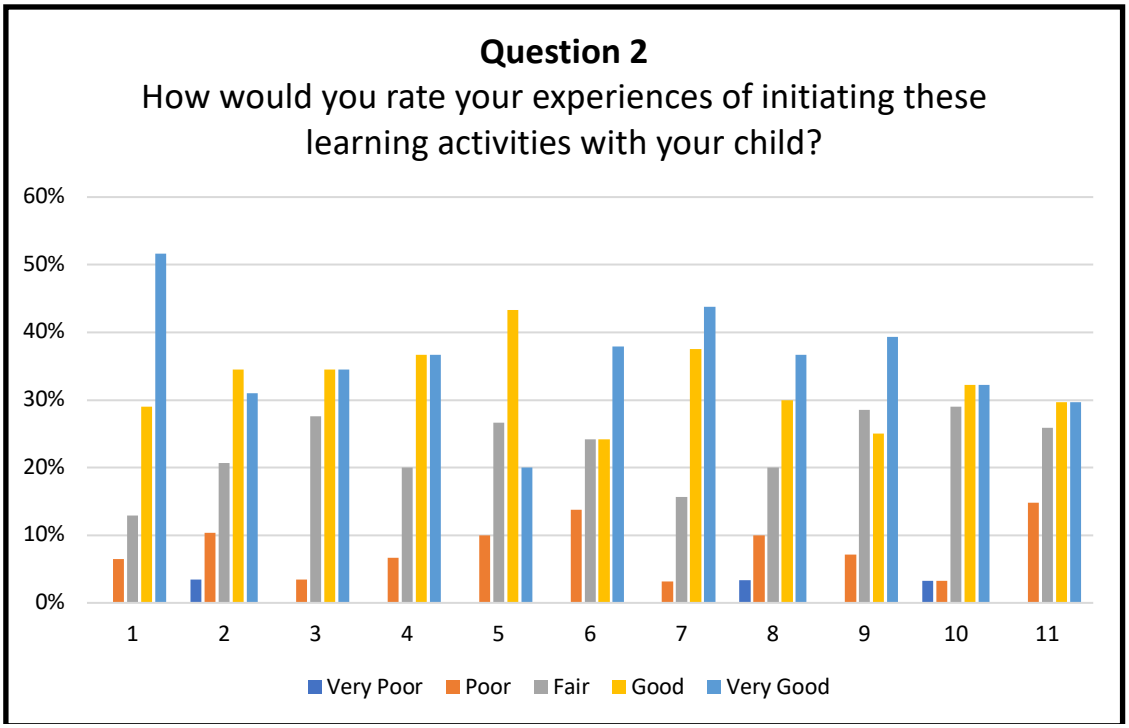

Figure 2. Spread of participant responses to survey Question 2.

There was a 93% average response from participants across all 11 HLA. Responses for each item had an average rating of either *'fair'* or *'good'*, ranging between 3.59 and 4.22 (see Table 4). Item 11, *'playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)'* was rated the least enjoyable at 3.59. Item 1 *'reading to your child'* and item 7 *'playing outside games and sports such as*

cycling, swimming and walking' were both rated the most enjoyable at 4.22. Four items were rated as *'good'* on average, including items 1, 3, 4 and 7. Seven items were rated as *'fair'* on average, including items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11. Table 8 shows which HLA were perceived as most enjoyable, those rated *'good'*, and which HLA were perceived as least enjoyable, those rated *'fair'*.

The average standard deviation of responses was 1.01. Six items had a standard deviation of less than one, including 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9. Item 7 *'playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking'* had the lowest standard deviation at 0.83 while item 11, *'playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)'* had the highest standard deviation at 1.18. Parents seemed less confident in committing to a higher rating of their experiences of PLL with a less consistent, wider spread of responses and less rated as *'good'* than *'important'* overall.

Table 8

Experiences of Home Learning Activities

Most enjoyable
1. Reading to your child
3. Encouraging your child to engage in art activities, including drawing
4. Playing music, singing songs or dancing with your child
7. Playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking
Least enjoyable
2. Telling oral stories to your child, not from a book
5. Playing inside games with your child, such as board games and card games
6. Learning during everyday activities such as cooking and caring for a pet
8. Learning through structured learning activities that promote literacy development such as letters and words
9. Learning through structured learning activities that promote numeracy development such as numbers and shapes
10. Using technology such as computers and phones to expand knowledge
11. Playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)

Parents rated activities that encourage shared interactions (1, 3 and 4) and life learning (7) as most enjoyable. This list is similar to the list of HLA perceived as important in the previous section, however, does not include HLA that promote school learning. Reading was again rated highest, as most enjoyable. Perhaps this rating is due more to the social interaction of reading, rather than the facilitation of school learning. It seems that overall, parent's value and perceive engagement with their

child has a crucial part of their role in their child's learning, with themes of promoting life learning and supporting schooling also standing out.

5.2.3 Links between perceived importance and experiences of PLL

Part of the first objective was to identify a link between perceived importance and experiences of PLL. Both data sets were analysed to find the correlation co-efficient, as explained in section 4.4.1. A correlation coefficient effect size can range from -1.0 to +1.0, with a correlation of more than 0 showing a positive correlation. All HLA in the survey had a positive correlation between rating of importance and experiences of PLL. An effect size can be considered small, medium or large; more than 0.1 is classed as small, more than 0.3 is classed as medium, and more than 0.5 is classed as large. Table 9 shows the spread of small, medium and large positive correlations across all 11 HLA.

Table 9

Correlation Between Importance and Experience Ratings

Survey Item		Correlation Coefficient	Effect Size
Large Effect Size			
6	Learning during everyday activities such as cooking and caring for a pet	**0.63**	Large
5	Playing inside games with your child, such as board games and card games	**0.60**	Large
2	Telling oral stories to your child, not from a book	**0.59**	Large
10	Using technology such as computers and phones to expand knowledge	**0.58**	Large
1	Reading to your child	**0.56**	Large
11	Playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)	**0.50**	Large
Medium Effect Size			
8	Learning through structured learning activities that promote literacy development such as letters and words	**0.46**	Medium
9	Learning through structured learning activities that promote numeracy development such as numbers and shapes	**0.45**	Medium
3	Encouraging your child to engage in art activities, including drawing	**0.44**	Medium
7	Playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking	**0.43**	Medium
Small Effect Size			

4	Playing music, singing songs or dancing with your child	**0.27**	Small

Table 9 shows correlation only between importance and experience ratings and does not reflect actual ratings as identified in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. Overall there is a significant correlation between ratings of importance and experience of PLL, with most items having an effect size of large or the higher end of medium.

The largest correlation was item 6 which was rated low on importance and experience. This large correlation is possibly due to the complex factors involved in initiating learning during everyday activities. This type of learning does encourage shared interactions and engagement but also requires time, patience and confidence to scaffold learning in the moment. It is important to note again that a large positive correlation does not reflect positive ratings, rather that parents were inclined to rate similarly for importance and experience, for a variety of reasons. In fact, all items with a large correlation, aside from item 1, were rated low in importance and experience. Item 1 is interesting because it was rated high in both areas and has a large effect size. Parents tended to consistently rate reading as important and enjoyable. This is perhaps because reading involves shared interactions, promotes school learning, requires less confidence and effort than other activities, and can overcome the issues of lack of time by easily fitting into the bedtime routine.

Items 8 and 9 were rated high in importance but not experience, which is perhaps the reason it only has a medium effect size rather than large. Parents value school learning and regard it as important but found structured, formal PLL less enjoyable, possibly due to the time, effort, confidence and skills required. The smallest correlation was item 4 which parents rated high in both importance and experience. This small correlation is possibly due to the natural variations in parents' personal preferences, levels of own enjoyment and satisfaction, and confidence to engage in the dramatic arts.

Overall, it is fair to say that in this participant group, HLA perceived as important are generally also experienced positively. However, the more obstacles that parents face in initiating PLL, whether extrinsic or intrinsic, the smaller the correlation between ratings of importance and experience.

5.3 Family Structures

As contextual obstacles appear to impact PLL, it is important to have an overview of different family structures and how they might shape role perceptions and experiences of PLL. Participants were all asked about their personal circumstances at the beginning of the survey (refer to Appendix B). Details of the different participant subgroups represented in the sample group are shown in Table 2.

Table 10 shows participant subgroup responses to each category. These responses are based on the qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the survey. After codes and categories were identified in the text, additional analysis was carried out to understand which participant subgroups expressed which of the codes and categories. Percentages in Table 10 show the percentage of responses per subgroup for comparison. For example, when looking at the category of time issues and parents' relationship to their child in Table 10, 29% of mothers identified with a code in the category time issues, compared to only 25% of fathers. Time issues and associated codes are discussed further in section 5.4.3.

Outliers have been identified for each of these subgroups which will be discussed in 5.3.1 to 5.3.7. These outliers can provide insight into varying contextual obstacles different parents face, depending on their circumstances. Average response rates are also provided to show where certain groups had much higher or lower response rates to particular categories.

Table 10

Response Rate per Participant Sub-group Across Thematic Categories

	Relationship to child		Age of child		Number of children			Parental level of English		Parental level of Education			Adults available in home		Work or study commitments		
	Mother	*Father*	*EYFS*	*KS1*	*1 Child*	*2 Children*	*3+ Children*	*English as a first language*	*English as an additional language*	*High School*	*Certificate/ Diploma*	*Degree/ Postgraduate*	*1 Adult*	*2+ Adults*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*None*
Time Issues	29%	25%	60%	18%	29%	33%	25%	44%	22%	22%	33%	38%	17%	35%	36%	13%	25%
Inhibitors of PLLE	50%	0%	50%	47%	57%	50%	25%	44%	43%	33%	67%	44%	67%	40%	36%	63%	33%
Enablers of PLLE	36%	25%	40%	35%	36%	33%	33%	11%	43%	22%	33%	44%	67%	25%	18%	38%	42%
Parent Feelings	64%	50%	70%	65%	57%	50%	75%	67%	61%	33%	67%	81%	50%	70%	73%	38%	67%
Parent Role Perceptions	25%	25%	30%	24%	21%	0%	42%	0%	35%	22%	33%	31%	33%	20%	9%	25%	33%
Interactions	50%	25%	40%	59%	50%	50%	42%	44%	48%	33%	67%	56%	50%	50%	36%	63%	42%
Types of Learning	50%	0%	60%	41%	43%	33%	50%	22%	52%	22%	67%	50%	83%	35%	27%	50%	50%
Life Learning	54%	25%	70%	41%	50%	50%	50%	44%	52%	33%	67%	56%	83%	40%	55%	50%	42%
Schooling	32%	25%	40%	29%	36%	17%	33%	11%	39%	22%	67%	38%	33%	25%	18%	25%	42%
Average Response Rate	**43%**	**22%**	**51%**	**40%**	**42%**	**35%**	**42%**	**32%**	**44%**	**27%**	**56%**	**49%**	**54%**	**38%**	**34%**	**41%**	**42%**

5.3.1 Relationship to child

Participants consisted of 28 mothers and 4 fathers. Mothers had an overall response rate of 43% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 64% and lower to the category *'parents' role perceptions'* at 25%. Fathers had an overall response rate of 22% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 50% and lower to the categories *'inhibitors of PLL'* and *'types of learning'*, both at 0%. Regardless of parent gender, feelings appeared to be a prominent theme. Mothers seemed to have less reported thoughts about their role whereas fathers had less reported thoughts about specific learning and appeared to perceive less obstacles to PLL.

5.3.2 Age of child

Participants consisted of 10 parents of children in EYFS (aged 3 and 4 years) and 17 parents of children in KS1 (aged 5 and 6 years), with 5 parents choosing not to disclose. Parents of children in EYFS had an overall response rate of 51% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the categories *'parents' feelings'* and *'life learning'*, both at 70%, and lower to the category *'parents' role perceptions'* at 30%. Parents of children in KS1 had an overall response rate of 40% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 65% and lower to the category *'time issues'* at 18%. Parents' feelings were again a prominent theme and parents of younger children seemed to place higher value on life learning. Parents of older children perceived time issues as less of an obstacle, perhaps due to less caring routines required for older children.

5.3.3 Number of children

Participants consisted of 14 parents with one child, 6 parents with 2 children, and 12 parents with 3 or more children. Parents with one child had an overall response rate of 42% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the categories *'parents' feelings'* and *'inhibitors of PLL'*, both at 57%, and lower to the category *'parents' role perceptions'* at 21%. Parents with two children had an overall response rate of 35% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the categories *'parents' feelings'*, *'inhibitors of PLL'*, *'interactions'* and *'life learning'* all at 50%, and lower to the category

'parents' perceptions' at 0%. Parents with three or more children had an overall response rate of 42% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 75% and lower to the categories *'time issues'* and *'inhibitors of PLL',* both at 25%. Surprisingly, parents of one and two children consistently perceived more obstacles than those with three or more children. Perhaps parents with larger families to juggle have, out of necessity, developed better strategies for managing time and fitting PLL into daily routines.

5.3.4 Parental level of English

Participants consisted of nine parents who speak English as a first language and 23 parents who speak English as an additional language. Parents who speak English as a first language had an overall response rate of 32% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 67%, and lower to the category *'parents' role perceptions'* at 0%. Parents who speak English as an additional language had an overall response rate of 44% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 61% and lower to the category *'time issues'* at 22%. Parents' feelings again stood out as significant, regardless of level of English. Parents who speak English as an additional language seemed to have less reported views on their role whereas parents who speak English as a first language perceived time as an obstacle to meeting their parenting expectations.

5.3.5 Parental level of education

Participants consisted of nine parents who had a high school level education or less, three parents who have a certificate or diploma level education and 16 parents who have a degree level of education or higher, with four parents choosing not to disclose. Parents who have a high school level education or less had an overall response rate of 27% with all responses being 22% or 33% across the board. Parents who have a certificate or diploma level education had an overall response rate of 56% with all responses being 33% or 67% across the board. Parents with a degree level of education or higher had an overall response rate of 49% across all 9 categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 81% and lower to the category *'parents' role perceptions'* at 31%. Parents with lower levels of education did not

appear to have any strong trends in their responses. Parents with a degree level of education or higher expressed strong feelings about PLL but less preconceived ideas about their role.

5.3.6 Adults available in home

Participants consisted of six single parents, with no other adults in the home, and 20 parents with one or more other adults in the home, with six parents choosing not to disclose. Parents with no other adults in the home had an overall response rate of 54% across all nine categories, responding higher to the categories *'types of learning'* and *'life learning'*, both at 83%, and lower to the category *'time issues'* at 17%. Parents with one or more other adults in the home had an overall response rate of 38% across all nine categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 70% and lower to the category *'parents' perceptions'* at 20%. Single parents stood out as having strong views on different types of learning, including incorporating PLL into daily life; however, identified time as an obstacle to PLL. Parents with other adult support in the home did not perceive obstacles as strongly.

5.3.7 Work or study commitments

Participants consisted of 11 parents who work or study full-time, eight parents who work or study part-time and 12 parents who do not work or study at all, with one parent choosing not to disclose. Parents who work or study full-time had an overall response rate of 34% across all nine categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 73% and lower to the category *'parents' role perceptions'* at 9%. Parents who work or study part-time had an overall response rate of 41% across all nine categories, responding higher to the categories *'interactions'* and *'inhibitors of PLL',* both at 63% and lower to the category *'time issues'* at 13%. Parents who do not work or study at all had an overall response rate of 42% across all nine categories, responding higher to the category *'parents' feelings'* at 67% and lower to the category *'time issues'* at 25%. Full-time work or study commitments did not appear to create more perceived obstacles for PLL, just strong parental feelings. Parents who do not work or study perceive time as less of an obstacle than others and parents who work or study part-time highlight the importance of interactions. Perhaps full-time working

parents need for additional support and care makes it easier to juggle parenting and other commitments than those working only part-time.

5.4 Explanation of links between perceived importance and experiences of PLL

There is a clear correlation between perceived importance and experiences of PLL and the role that family structures play in this relationship. Thematic analysis of parents' thoughts and feelings, as shown in Table 5, provides an explanation of these links. Table 11 shows a summary, extracted from Table 5, of the three main themes and associated sub-themes. These will be discussed in more detail throughout this section.

Table 11
Summary of Themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs	**1.1** Interactions **1.2** Types of learning **1.3** Life learning **1.4** Schooling
2. Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities	**2.1** Parents' feelings **2.2** Parents' role perceptions
3. The practicalities of PLL	**3.1** Time issues **3.2** Inhibitors of PLL **3.3** Enablers of PLL

Each theme is discussed through the examination of sub-themes, categories and codes to provide a comprehensive overview of what each theme means for this study and why it is significant. Codes within each sub-theme are grouped into categories and discussed in order of frequency for ease of structure; this does not reflect the level of importance of prominent themes.

Specific attention is placed on showcasing how parents from different family backgrounds are represented in each theme. Graphs within sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.3 show the spread of responses per sub-theme across different participant subgroups. Data for these graphs were extracted from Table 10.

5.4.1 Theme 1: Parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs

One theme that emerged from the qualitative survey data was *'Parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs'* (see Table 5). This theme recognises that parents are capable and competent and have detailed knowledge of their child's needs; that parents understand the diverse range of experiences their child requires in order to meet holistic developmental needs. This is based on parents' understanding that learning is not restricted to one type of teaching and learning format such as formal, teacher-led schooling. There is also a strong sense of engagement as parents value shared interactions as an essential part of teaching, highlighting the importance of the parental role in providing meaningful learning experiences in the context of authentic relationships and everyday interactions. Parents are aware of the importance of their role in learning, not just to facilitate school learning, but to prepare their child for life.

This theme emerged as a result of the following sub-themes; '*interactions', 'types of learning', 'life learning',* and *'schooling'*. These sub-themes were linked together through a process of axial coding, as explained in 4.4.2. The focus in all these sub-themes seemed to be child's needs and the various ways they are met through PLL. They reflect parents' expert knowledge of their child and their crucial role in learning process, something that is highlighted in the literature as an essential part of 21st century learning (refer Chapter 2). They are discussed, and examples are provided below.

Sub-theme 1.1: Interactions

The sub-theme *'interactions',* which had an overall response rate of 47%, identifies parents' perceptions of their role in the teaching and learning processes. There are strong elements of engagement, shared experiences and the importance of sensitive responses. Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'interactions'* sub-theme consists of 11 codes which can be organised by category, as shown in Table 12. Five of these relate to shared interactions and the other six relate to the parents' role within the interactions.

Table 12
Summary of Sub-theme 'Interactions'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Interactions	*Shared interactions*	Shared learning Shared feelings Shared experiences Shared enjoyment Engagement
	Parents' role within interactions	Conversations Avoid distraction Communication Listening Observing Patience

The generic code of engagement was mentioned heavily in the sub-theme '*interactions'*, with specific focus being placed on shared interactions, including shared learning, feelings, experiences and enjoyment. One parent described this as, *'both parent and child having fun' (SP9Q12).* Another parent stated, *'I feel very happy when I help my son, or when we learn together is the best time ever' (SP29Q14).* Shared time together and shared experiences of PLL was a prominent theme in the survey data, reflecting parents' experiences and enjoyment of PLL.

Parents also talked about their role within these interactions. *'I think the most important is our conversations. He asks me questions about stuff and the world, and I explain it all to him the best I can' (SP5Q14),* one said. Communication and conversations appear to be key objectives with the parents' role to listen, observe, avoid distraction and be patient. One parent described this as, *'telling each other stories? Taking turns to build the story (one sentence each)' (SP24Q12).* Another parent expressed the importance of, *'parent staying fully engaged and not distracted by phones etc' (SP9Q12).* Parents expressed strong perceptions of the importance in ensuring interactions are enjoyable and meaningful.

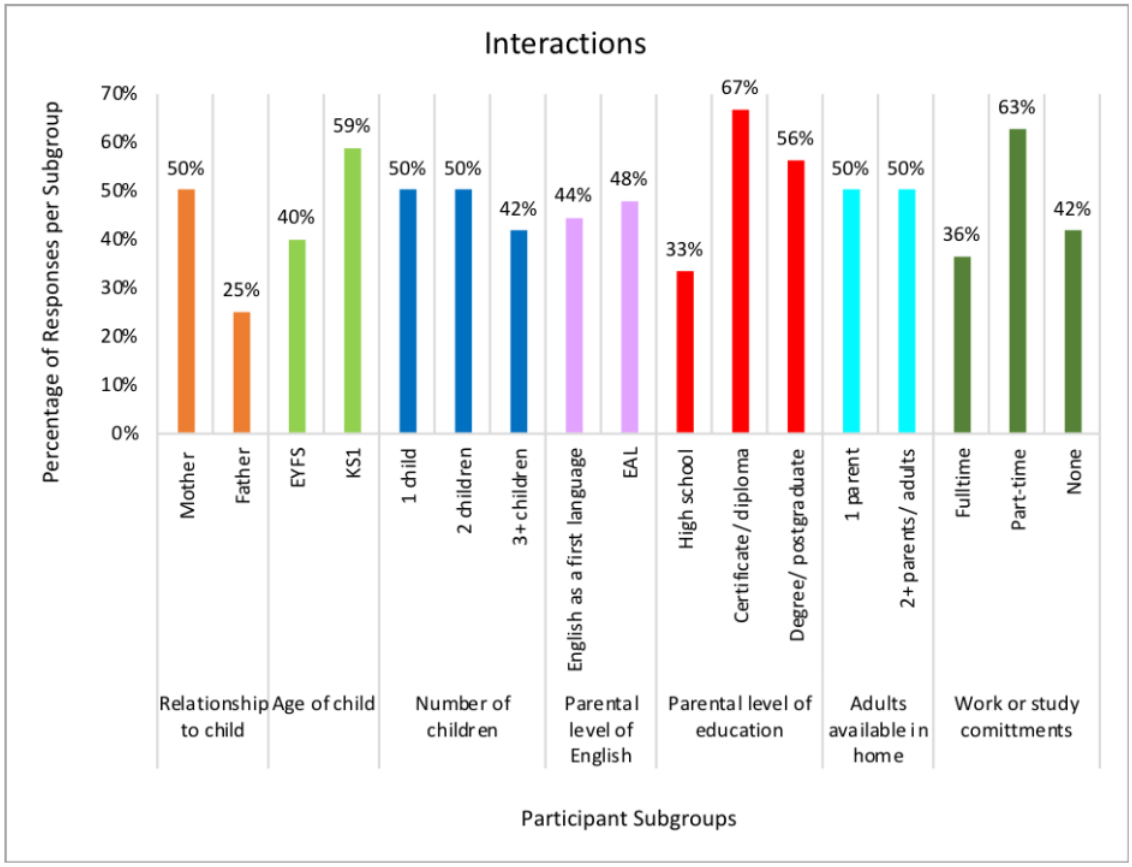

Figure 3. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Interactions'.

Figure 3 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures influence parents' views on interactions in PLL. Percentages in this graph show percentages of participants per subgroup who indicated one of the codes in Table 12 in their written responses. Mothers mentioned interactions twice as often as fathers, but the greatest variance was between various levels of parent education, with parents with higher levels of education more likely to mention interactions. Number of adults and children in the home does not appear to impact parents' perceptions of the importance of interactions.

Sub-theme 1.2: Types of learning

The sub-theme *'types of learning',* which had a response rate of 44%, identifies parents' understanding and value of the different ways in which learning occurs. Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'types of learning'* sub-theme consists of seven codes as shown in

Table 13. Four of these codes relate to the varying structure and formality of learning and the other three relate to different ways in which children learn.

Table 13
Summary of Sub-theme 'Types of Learning'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Types of learning	*Structure and formality of learning*	Structured Unstructured Informal learning Non-formal learning
	Different ways in which children learn	Child centred learning Visible learning Direct teaching

Parents recognised the value and importance of different modes of learning, with variations in structure and formality to suit the child and situation. These include non-formal learning where there are clear, intentional learning outcomes, often taught in a structured way, and informal learning where there is less intent and structure but where important, meaningful learning occur nonetheless. One parent described the former as *'teaching by using flash cards' (SP2Q12).* Another described the latter as, *'learning everyday activities.* Arising factors included*: 'easy, not structured, they learn by example, teaches them life skills' (SP10Q12).*

Parents also demonstrated an awareness of the different ways in which children learn. Many mentioned direct teaching as a way of initiating non-formal PLL, as mentioned above with the flash cards example. One parent described child-centred learning as, *'he initiated it and was fully engaged. He asked for further information and wanted to keep doing it' (SP22Q12).* Another described it as, *'the child learning in the game form and with the help of educational games' (SP18Q14).* The importance of learning being visible to the child and parent was also discussed, with one parent highlighting the benefits of visible learning with reference to using technology as a teaching tool, *'I think because my son can see and hear what is being taught' (SP32Q12).* Parents seemed to perceive learning as a complex and multi-dimensional experience with no one right way to learn. This was also reflected in parents' answers to the questions discussed in 5.2, showing parents perceive various types of learning as

important, regardless of structure and formality. The key component that is apparent throughout is the importance of engagement during any form of learning.

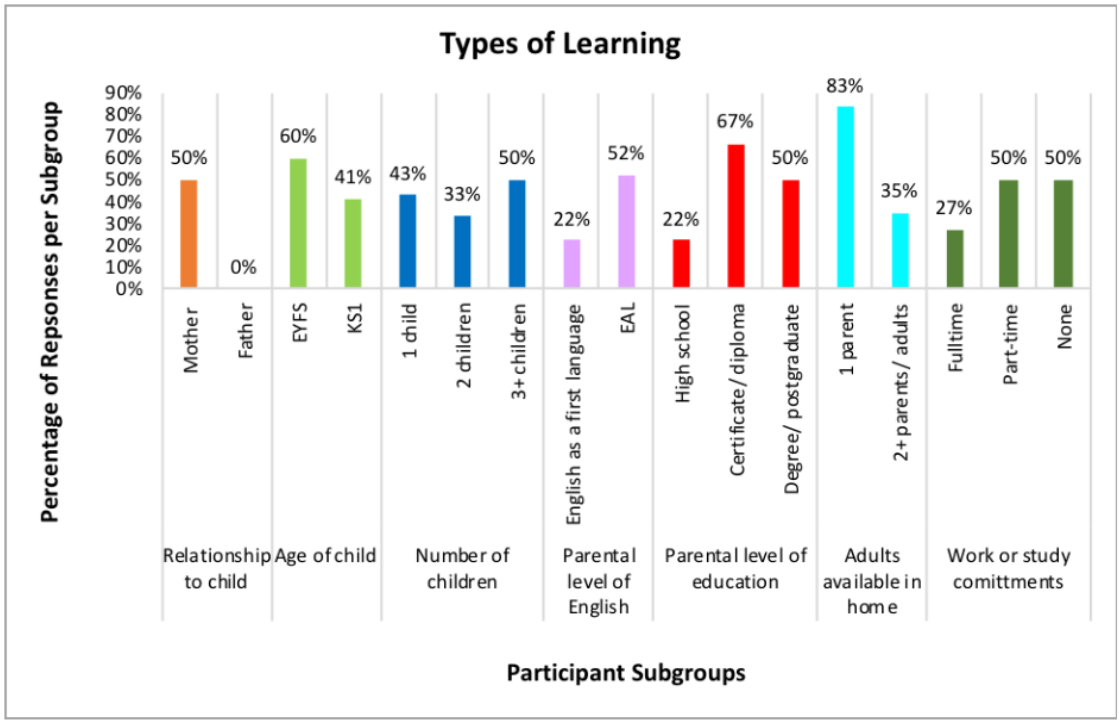

Figure 4. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Types of Learning'.

Figure 4 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures influence parents' understanding of types of learning. Percentages in this graph show percentages of participants per subgroup who indicated one or more of the codes in Table 13 in their written responses. Single parents were most likely to demonstrate an understanding of different types of learning, compared to parents with other adult support, as were mothers compared to fathers. Number of children in the home does not seem to have a great impact of parents' awareness of types of learning, in fact, half of all parents with three or more children referenced it.

Sub-theme 1.3: Life learning

The sub-theme *'life learning',* which had a response rate of 50%, recognises the valuable authentic life learning that takes place in informal environments such as the home. There are strong elements of holistic development and learning how to learn.

Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'life learning'* sub-theme consists of 12 codes as shown in Table 14. Five of these relate to learning for life, four relate to valuing different approaches to learning and the other three relate to exposure to different learning experiences.

Table 14
Summary of Sub-theme 'Life Learning'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Life learning	*Learning for life*	Everyday routines Life skills Learning about the world Health Social skills
	Valuing different approaches to learning	Imagination Curiosity Exploration Play
	Exposure to different learning experiences	Outside experiences Physical development Using technology

Life learning was a strong sub-theme throughout the survey results. Developing a healthy lifestyle and improving physical development are essential parts of learning for life, as too are developing social skills, life skills and participating in everyday routines. One parent stated, *'health is very important, always play with them cricket, football, athletic activities at park' (SP31Q14).* Another had similar views, stemming from her own upbringing, *'I prefer sport activities such as cycling swimming, because I wasn't an active child and I prefer my child has more sport activities in her life' (SP4Q12).* Parents also valued involving children in everyday activities to ensure they develop the necessary life skills for their future. One parent strives to teach their child life skills by *'involving him in home cleaning activities' (SP2Q12).* Parents tend to perceive learning for life as an important part of PLL.

Parents also acknowledged different ways of learning as important to the success of PLL. One parent, when talking about successful PLL, said, *'this can be helpful that build a child's imagination and social skills' (SP20Q12).* Another highlighted their approach to learning through play, curiosity and exploration at home, *'curiosity what*

we do at home (SP15Q12). Parents appeared to have a good understanding of the different ways in which learning occurs such as, through exploration, imagination and curiosity.

Many parents emphasised the importance of varied learning experiences, particularly through time spent outside. One parent said, *'I like, and we both enjoy, physical activities such as swimming, going to farm, to trampoline and bus trips to explore new playground' (SP8Q12).* Another said, *'going to the park is to enjoying playing together' (SP29Q12).* Using technology and learning about the world were also identified as important learning experiences. One parent talked about technology use, *'using technology such as phones to expand knowledge' (SP32Q12).* Another parent talked about incorporating literacy and learning about the world, *'to keep in touch with book reading, always go to library with them (SP31Q14).* The value of these experiences was often placed on the resulting enjoyment.

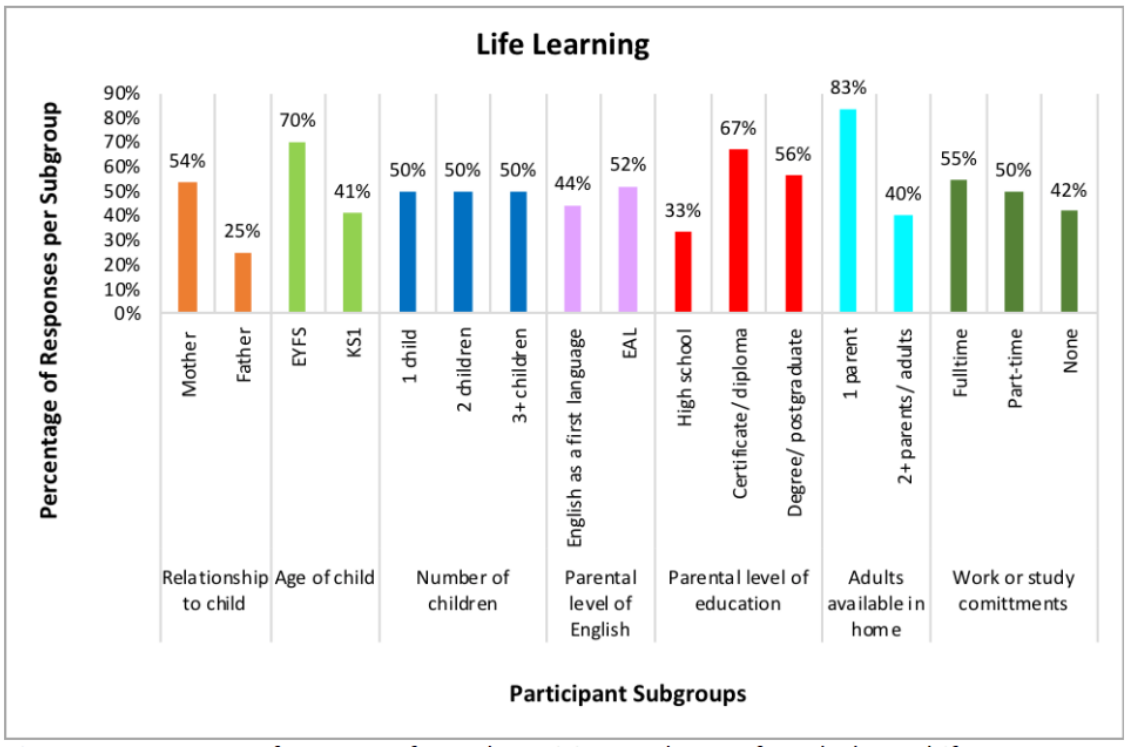

Figure 5. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Life Learning'.

Figure 5 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures shape parents understanding and appreciation of life learning. Percentages in this graph show percentages of

participants per subgroup who indicated one of the codes in Table 14 in their written responses. Number of adults in the home greatly increased parents' levels of responses about the importance of life learning with single parents mentioning it 83% of the time compared to 40% of parents with other adults in the home. Number of children does not appear to affect parents' views around the importance of life learning.

Sub-theme 1.4: Schooling

The sub-theme *'schooling',* which had a response rate of 31%, highlights parents' awareness of the role of formal, structured learning in their child's overall learning. The focus here seems to be learning with specific academic, school-based intent; in contrast to the holistic life learning discussed in the previous section. Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'schooling'* sub-theme consists of four codes as shown in Table 15. Two of these codes relate to compulsory school learning and the other two relate to supplementary school learning; however, all responses are related to learning environments outside of school.

Table 15
Summary of Sub-theme 'Schooling'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Schooling	*Compulsory school learning*	Numeracy
		Literacy
	Supplementary learning	Arts
		Science

Literacy and numeracy were identified during the literature review as key components of the HLE (see Chapter 2). Similarly, the survey results recognised the importance of literacy and numeracy in both the quantitative and qualitative data. One parent talked about ways in which they promote numeracy learning in an authentic way by looking at, *'bus stop letters, bus numbers signs. Counting random objects, like balls in hoops, steps, windows etc.' (SP8Q12).* Another parent talked about more structured ways of promoting numeracy learning such as, *'matching number, shapes or*

pictures game with the timer' (SP2Q12). While many parents mentioned the importance of reading and having books in the home, one parent highlighted the importance of emergent literacy, *'reading is important, the learnt words' (SP3Q12).*

Other learning areas with key learning objectives were also mentioned, such as science and arts. These can be considered supplementary learning experiences as they are secondary to literacy and numeracy. One parent talked about science and understanding the world, *'learning about plants, and animals and the world' (SP5Q12).* Another explained how structured arts activities have become a family routine, *'started doing arts and crafts and my 10 years old and myself enjoy with little one' (SP2Q12).* Similarly, one parent stated that *'art activities, dancing' (SP18Q12)* were commonplace in their home. When talking about enjoyment of PLL, parents were more likely to mention supplementary and life learning, compared to literacy and numeracy, however literacy and numeracy are consistently perceived as most important.

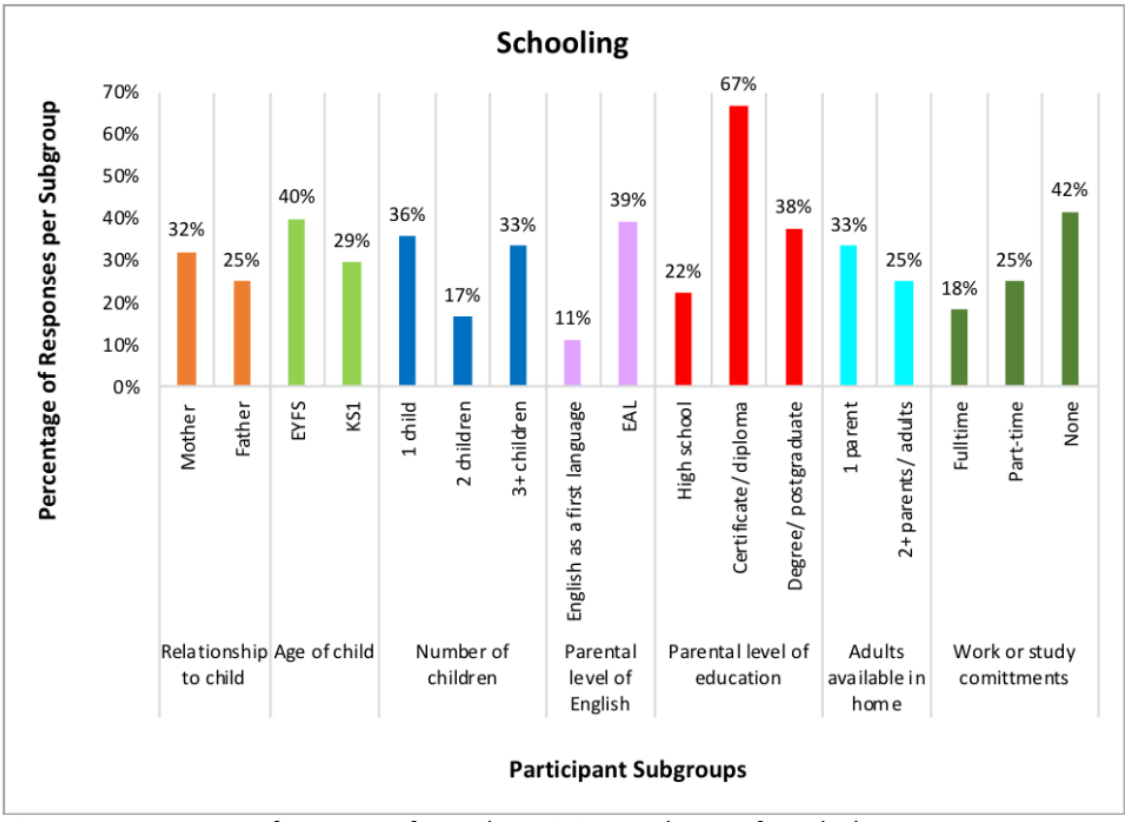

Figure 6. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Schooling'.

Figure 6 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures influence parents' perception of the importance of school learning. Parents with degrees or diplomas showed a high level of perception of importance of schooling compared to parents with only high school level education. Surprisingly, parents with postgraduate qualifications do not seem to think schooling is as important. Number of adults available in the home and parental relationship to child do not appear to greatly affect parents' perceptions of the importance of school learning.

5.4.2 Theme 2: Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities

Another theme that emerged from the qualitative survey data was *'Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities'* (see Table 5). This theme highlights the important role parents have and the effects feelings and role perceptions have on their ability to fulfil and enjoy this role. There is evidence of parents' awareness of their role, the strength of intrinsic beliefs, and the influence their feelings have on PLL. The importance of empowerment, self-efficacy and self-confidence are also recognised as well as the effects on the parenting experience. There is also a clear role of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in shaping parents' role perceptions and feelings towards PLL.

This theme emerged as a result of the following sub-themes; *'parents' feelings',* and *'parents' role perceptions'*. These sub-themes were linked together through a process of axial coding, as explained in 4.4.2. The focus in both sub-themes seemed to be parents' perceptions and feelings around PLL in relation to themselves and their capabilities as parents. They reflect parents' expectations, shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and demonstrate how their feelings around their ability to meet these expectations affect PLL. They are discussed, and examples are provided below.

<u>Sub-theme 2.1: Parents' Feelings</u>

The sub-theme *'parents' feelings',* which had a response rate of 63%, highlights the strength of parents' feelings in shaping PLL. This was a notable sub-theme with parents from a range of family backgrounds expressing strong feelings around PLL, both negative and positive (refer to 5.3). Specific categories and codes are discussed

below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'parents' feelings'* sub-theme consists of nine codes as shown in Table 16. Five of these codes relate to positive feelings towards PLL and the other four relate to negative feelings of PLL.

Table 16
Summary of Sub-theme 'Parents' Feelings'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Parents' feelings	*Positive feelings towards PLL*	Enjoyment Fun Pride Confident Laughter
	Negative feelings towards PLL	Guilt Sad/disappointed Anxiety Self-pressure

Parents expressed substantial enjoyment out of learning with their children. Codes of enjoyment, fun and laughter were identified, with parents stating, *'we enjoy making each other giggle' (SP24Q12)* and *'I love learning time, because my child education is very important for me' (SP29Q13)*. Parents also identified pride and confidence and positive feelings towards PLL. One parent stated, *'I feel confident when I learn anything with my child' (SP28Q14).* Another referred to the amount of quality time she gets to spend with her child, *'I feel very happy and very proud' (SP14Q14).*

Some parents also expressed feelings of guilt, sadness, disappointment, anxiety and self-pressure when talking about their role in initiating PLL. One parent when responding to the question, *'How would you describe your overall feeling of confidence in your role, and your ability to initiate and engage in learning with your child?'* praised herself before adding *'but I need more hard work' (SP1Q14).* One parent said, *'the guilt kills me when I don't do something' (SP2Q14).* Another feeling pressured said, *'I am a busy Mum so I do not have time, some time I am sad' (SP3Q14).* While overall there seems to be a positive view of PLL from parents, many are also quite critical of themselves and their perceived shortcomings.

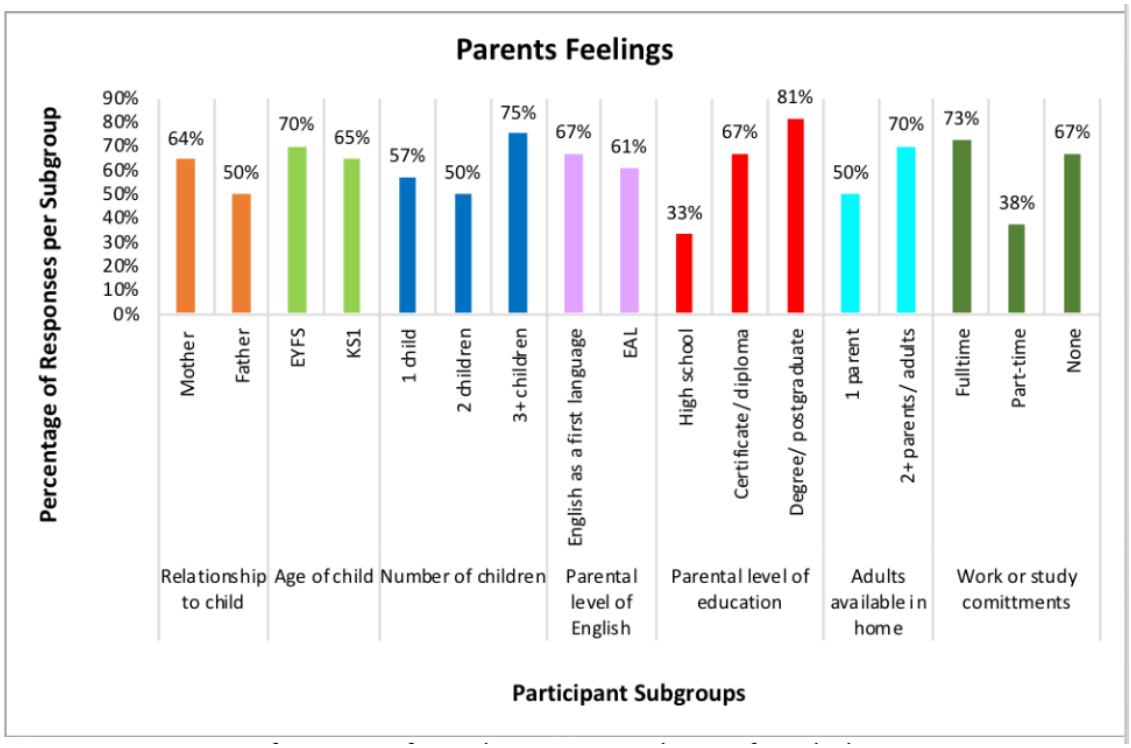

Figure 7. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Parents' Feelings'.

Figure 7 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures influence parents' feelings towards PLL. There is a consistent increase in parents' expression of feelings about PLL compared to their increased level of education. Parental level of English and age of child showed the least variance in expression of feelings, both consistently near or above the average response rate of 63% for the overall category.

Sub-theme 2.2: Parents' Role Perceptions

The sub-theme *'parents' role perceptions',* which had a response rate of 25%, recognises the strong influences parents' perceptions of themselves, their abilities and their role in teaching and learning have on PLL. There is a strong connection between parents' role perceptions and feelings, particularly of guilt. Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'parents' role perceptions'* sub-theme consists of nine codes as shown in Table 17. Four of these codes relate to parents' overall perceptions of parenting, three relate to the immediate role of the parent and the other two relate to the role of the school.

Table 17

Summary of Sub-theme 'Parents' Role Perceptions'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Parents' role perceptions	*Parents' overall perceptions of parenting*	Mother is important Parent contribution Parenting choices Role models
	Immediate role of the parent	Helping with homework Support child Parent sacrifice
	Role of the school	School support Importance of school

Parents' overall perceptions of their role in their child's learning included: being or showing role models, the importance of the mother, and parent sacrifice. One parent stated, *'mothers have an important role in kids learning' (SP3Q14).* Another said, *'even if I was sick, I try to do everything to make him happy' (SP14Q13).* Parenting choices also stood out as key factors in parent's beliefs about their role. Dislike of technology use was a common comment with one parent stating, *'I raise my son without the TV, he watches DVD's' (SP5Q14).* These perceptions of what it means to be a parent reflect parents' feelings about what they value as important learning.

Many parents talked about what these role perceptions look like in practice; the direct actions that take place day to day. The immediate role of the parent included supporting the child, parent sacrifice and helping with homework. One suggested, *'I think my role is to explain to my child everything she can't understand' (SP4Q14).* Another, with more of a focus on supporting school, said, *'I enjoy helping him doing his homework' (SP29Q12).*

Some parents also referred to the importance of promoting school success, with one parent stating, *'I want him to be the best in the school' (SP14Q12).* School was also discussed as a tool for assisting parents in their role in PLL, *'with help of school and gaining experience I feel more comfortable with providing better learning experiences for my child' (SP8Q14).* Parents' role perceptions had a low response rate overall and included elements of parents' views of themselves in relation to school; as less skilled than teachers and less equipped than schools. This possibly reflects a prominent, albeit subconscious, view that school is where learning occurs.

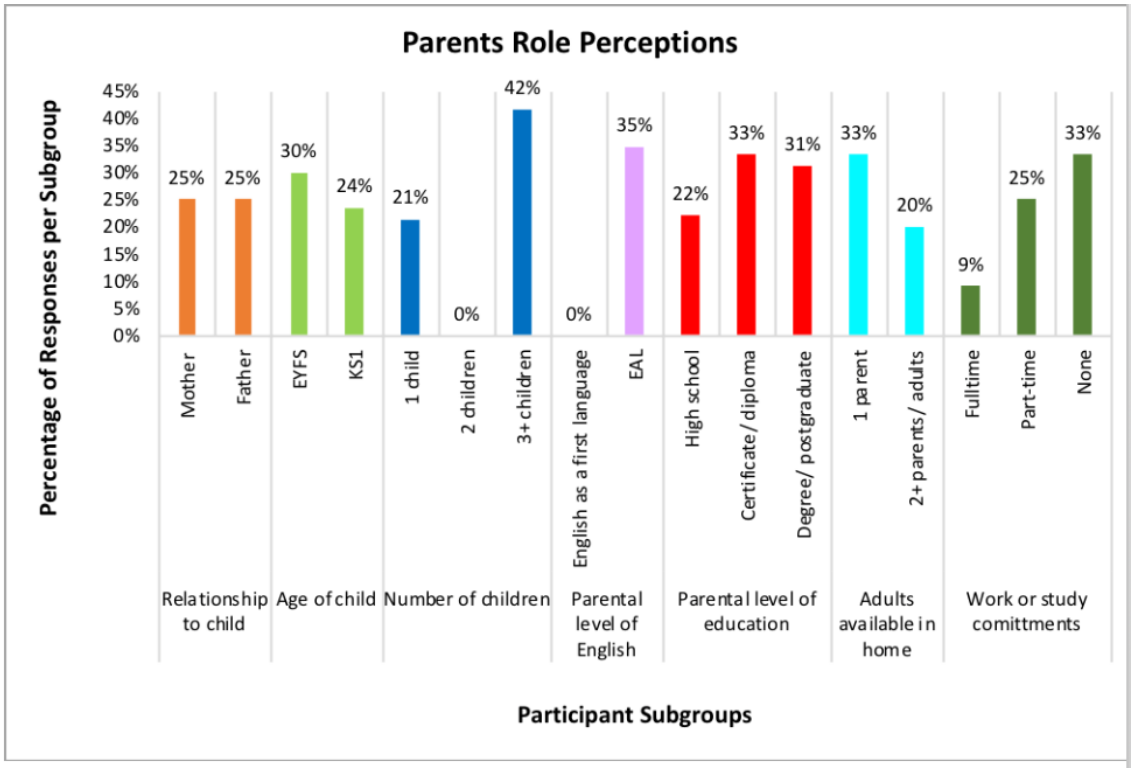

Figure 8. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Parents' Role Perceptions'.

Figure 8 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures shape parents role perceptions. There were lower responses across the board compared to other categories, particularly with both mothers and fathers mentioning their role perceptions only 25% of the time. Surprisingly, parents who speak English as an additional language appear to have greater expression of role perceptions than parents who speak English as a first language. Parents with three or more children seem to have stronger views about their role as a parent. This might be a result of increased confidence and awareness from having a large family with children of various ages and life stages.

5.4.3 Theme 3: The practicalities of PLL

The final theme that emerged from the qualitative survey data was *'The practicalities of PLL'* (see Table 5). This theme showcases the practical realities of the human experience of parenting and the success factors that shape everyday teaching and learning moments. This theme demonstrates understanding that learning does not exist in isolation from people, places and things. Learning is a sociocultural experience that encompasses likes, dislikes, past experiences, and cultural and social expectations.

Contextual factors can inhibit or enable successful learning experiences; can demand or foster resilience and have the power to motivate and empower parent and child alike.

This theme emerged as a result of the following sub-themes; *'time issues',* *'inhibitors of PLL',* and *'enablers of PLL'*. These sub-themes were linked together through a process of axial coding, as explained in 4.4.2. Within these sub-themes there is a sense of the complex interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; a sense that there is no simple solution to the challenges some parents face in initiating and enjoying PLL. What factors contribute to parents' perceived success of PLL and how can these be harnessed to promote PLL for a range of diverse parents? These inhibitors and enablers are discussed, and examples are provided below.

Sub-theme 3.1: Time Issues

The sub-theme *'time issues',* which had a response rate of 28%, identifies the significant issue of time in PLL. Time is itself an inhibitor of PLL but relates to parents' perceptions and personal expectations. Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'time issues'* sub-theme consists of nine codes as shown in Table 18. Six of these codes relate to the way time is used within families and parents' beliefs about the importance of time spent with children, and three relate to time pressures which act as inhibitors of PLL.

Table 18
Summary of Sub-theme 'Time Issues'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Time issues	*The value of time and time use*	Use of time Surplus time Routine Scheduling Time together Quality time
	Time pressures as inhibitors of PLL	Busy Restricted schedule Work commitments

The value of time was expressed by many parents throughout the survey. Use of time, the importance of routine and the usefulness of careful scheduling of time were all regularly mentioned. One parent highlighted the importance of small daily routines such as, *'reading before bed' (SP27Q13).* Another highlighted the necessity of strict scheduling to ensure time is used wisely, *'time is key to our family. Everything has to be scheduled!' (SP10Q14).* Overall, parents tend to see the value in time spent with their children, particularly quality time. *'I try to do it by spending with her as much time as I can (e.g. reading, playing games, walking together)' (SP4Q14).*

Time pressures were identified as key inhibitors of PLL but also relate to parents' expectations and role perceptions. Parents highlighted work commitments, scheduling conflicts and being busy in general as key time pressures. One parent said, *'busy schedule sometimes don't let me do things what I want or wish to' (SP2Q13).* Another parent explained, *'the main issue is finding the quality time to engage in learning due to work commitments, especially during weekdays' (SP9Q14).* Parents value shared time with their children and have high expectations of the quantity and quality of time they will spend together. It is possible that these expectations and the realities of time pressures may negatively impact on enjoyment levels of PLL.

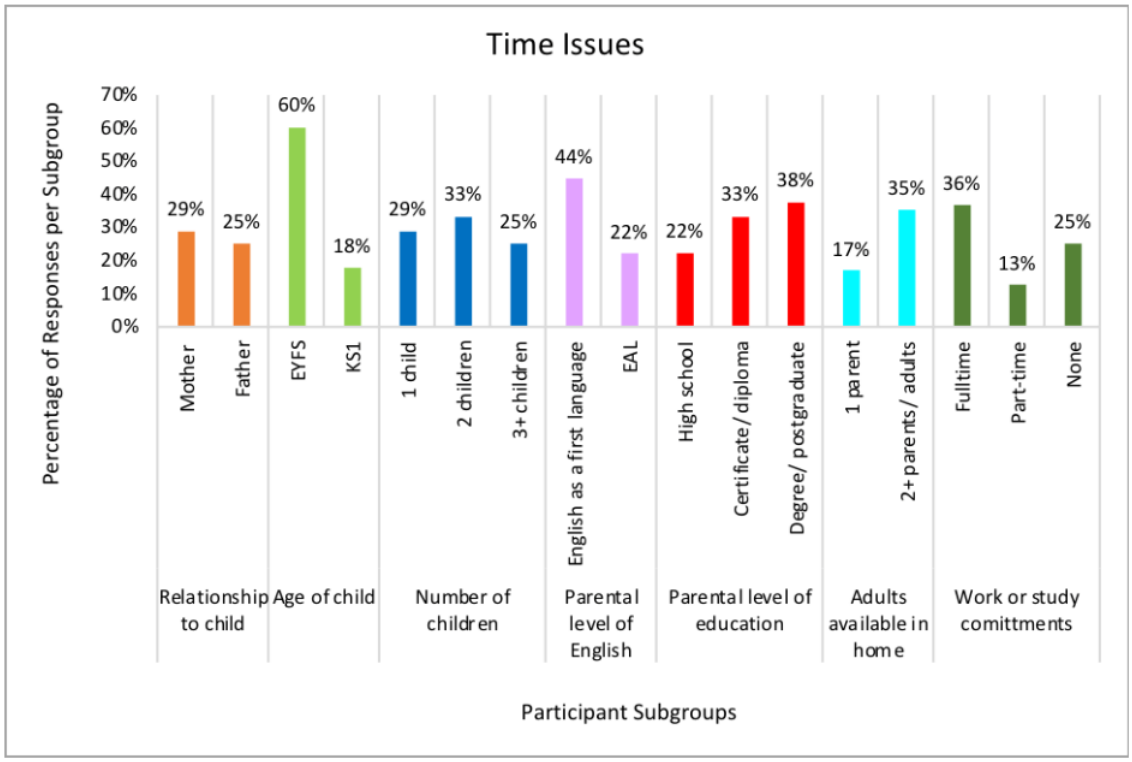

Figure 9. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Time Issues'.

Figure 9 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures shape parents perceptions of the importance of time and the obstacles time often poses. Parents of children in EYFS were much more likely to discuss issues of time, compared to parents of older children in KS1. Surprisingly, an increase in number of children in the home does not seem to impact parents' feelings about time issues. In fact, parents of three or more children seemed to view time as less of an issue than parents with one or two children.

Sub-theme 3.2: Inhibitors of PLL

The sub-theme *'inhibitors of PLL',* which had a response rate of 44%, highlights various reasons parents gave for not enjoying or engaging in PLL. Inhibitors include physical obstacles to PLL such as time, as discussed above, and mental and emotional obstacles such as parent or child dislikes and lack of confidence and ability. Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'Inhibitors of PLL'* sub-theme consists of 16 codes as shown in Table 19. Seven of these relate to general likes and dislikes for both parent and child, six relate

to intrinsic parent and child inhibitors, and three relate to physical obstacles such as mess and required cleaning being a leading cause for parent dislike.

Table 19
Summary of Sub-theme 'Inhibitors of PLL'

Sub-theme	Categories	Codes
Inhibitors of PLL	*Dislikes and conflicting preferences*	Dislike arts Dislike play Child dislike Dislike literacy Conflicting preferences Prefers structured learning Dislike technology Child learning preferences
	Intrinsic parent and child inhibitors	Lack of confidence Lack of ability Difficult to encourage child Child resilience Homework is challenging
	Physical obstacles	Dislike messy play Cooking too messy Cleaning required

Overall dislikes and conflicting preferences were identified as key inhibitors of PLL, in addition to time issues mentioned above. Dislike of activities such as arts, literacy, technology, among others, can discourage parents from initiating PLL. Additionally, parents' perceptions of what learning is important can reduce frequency of particular learning experiences, *'I can say that I like to do a lot of things with my child, but to play computer games is not so helpful for my child and I spend very few time' (SP6Q13).* As two parties are involved in PLL, conflicting preferences between parent and child can also be an issue. One parent stated that, *'my son likes playing Nintendo Wii games and I suffer anxiety, so gaming makes me angry. I stay away from it. I do not enjoy technology as much as my son does. I prefer the outside and gardening' (SP5Q13).*

Some reasons parents gave as inhibitors of PLL were to do with intrinsic parental feelings such as lack of confidence or ability and finding it difficult to encourage their child. One clearly able parent described her difficulties in applying her

knowledge in relation to her own child, *'I have bachelor's degree in PE teacher what means it's in me just need better addressing to my own child' (SP8Q14).* Another parent mentioned dislikes, specifically due to their perceived lack of ability, *'I don't like playing music, singing songs or dancing because I can't do it very well' (SP4Q13).* Similarly, intrinsic child feelings can inhibit PLL. Children's learning preferences, ability to complete tasks and resilience are all key inhibitors. One parent describes a difficulty as her child, *'learning to adapt to different changes that get throw their way' (SP20Q13).* Another explains, *'homework is extremely difficult because he doesn't like anything unless he has a personal reason to do it and he would rather spend time of self-directed tasks and activities. He procrastinates and tries to distract so he doesn't have to do it' (SP22Q13).*

Particularly common dislikes were messy play and cooking. One parent described negative experiences of PLL as, *'cooking as I feel it becomes messier and takes a lot of my time and patience' (SP2Q13).* Another parent highlighted the issues of the time taken to clean up afterwards, *'messy play (tidying up after!)' (SP24Q13).* Additionally, one parent suggested her son dislikes messy play, *'mud because my son doesn't like being messy' (SP32Q13).* Inhibitors of PLL appear to be directly related to lack of enjoyment of PLL, regardless of whether the obstacle to success is intrinsic or extrinsic.

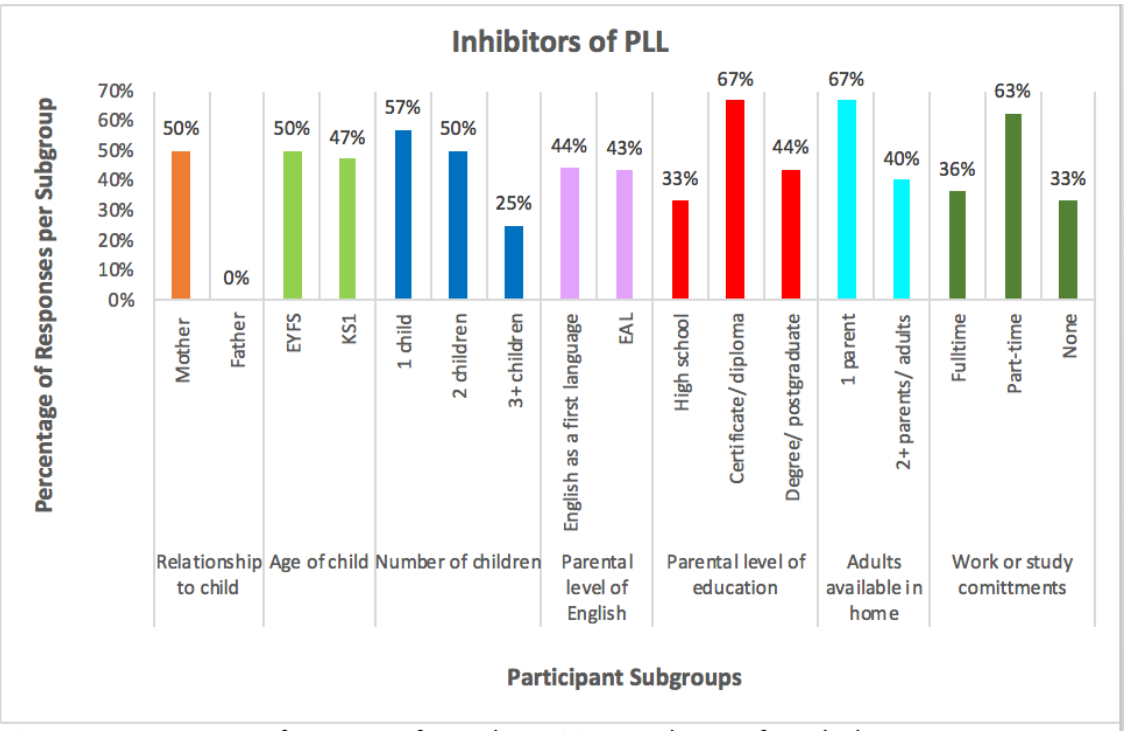

Figure 10. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Inhibitors of PLL'.

Figure 10 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures reflect inhibitors and obstacles of PLL. Similarly, to *'time issues'* above, parents of three or more children seem to perceive less inhibitors of PLL than parents with one or two children. Parental level of English does not seem to factor into perceptions of inhibitors of PLL which indicates that language level is not a significant inhibitor of PLL.

Sub-theme 3.3: Enablers of PLL

The sub-theme *'enablers of PLL',* which had a response rate of 34%, highlights various reasons, often motivating factors, parents gave for enjoying or engaging in PLL. There are elements of enjoyment, motivation and encouragement throughout this sub-theme. Specific categories and codes are discussed below, with supporting quotes from the survey data. The *'enablers of PLL'* sub-theme consists of 14 codes as shown in Table 20. Seven of these codes relate to reasons parents gave for enjoying PLL, four relate to reasons parents gave for finding PLL easy and more inviting and the other three codes relate to motivating enablers and reasons for improved enjoyment of PLL.

Table 20

Summary of Sub-theme 'Enablers of PLL'

Category	Sub-themes	Codes
Enablers of PLL	*Reasons for enjoying PLL*	Child happiness Child confidence Child success Child enjoyment Child pride Child development Child improvement
	Reasons for finding PLL easy and more inviting	Child behaviour positive Expert knowledge Effortless Capable
	Motivating enablers and reasons for improved enjoyment of PLL	Encouraging Gaining experience Improved confidence

There were many reasons parents gave for successful, enjoyable PLL, all of which specifically related to the child. These include, child development and improvement, child enjoyment and happiness, child success and pride, and child confidence. One parent recognised her willingness to engage in PLL for her child's benefit, *'I am very happy to play and engage my child because I think child need to learn between games, that she feel attraction in what she do' (SP6Q14).* Another parent said, *'I feel I am playing well contribution in developing growth of my children' (SP31Q14).* Seeing their child succeed with pride was another reason given by a parent, *'he was proud of end results and enjoyed the process' (SP22Q12).* Parents seem to be motivated by their children's success.

Some parents, who find PLL easier and more inviting, found other factors enabling such as their intrinsic abilities and attitudes, and positive child behaviour. One parent felt confident in her ability due to her expert knowledge stating they felt, *'fully confident as I am a teacher' (SP22Q14).* Another parent felt similarly confident and as a result enjoyed PLL more stating they felt, *'highly confident, I love and enjoy learning with the kids' (SP10Q14).* Another commented on the behaviour of her child and the subsequent ease of most PLL, *'My son is really good' (SP5Q14).*

There were also many motivating factors identified such as, finding PLL encouraging, gaining experience and seeing improvement in confidence. One parent

stated, *'my feelings of confidence in engaging in learning with my child is quite better than before because he really enjoys any activity, I participate with him' (SP32Q14).* Another felt encouraged by seeing improvements in their child's learning, *'when something my son does, I don't expect him so I feel like doing more activities with him because I can clearly see him learning and he remembers that' (SP2Q14).* Parents' perceptions of themselves and their capabilities, along with experiencing successful PLL, seem to improve parental desire and willingness to initiate PLL.

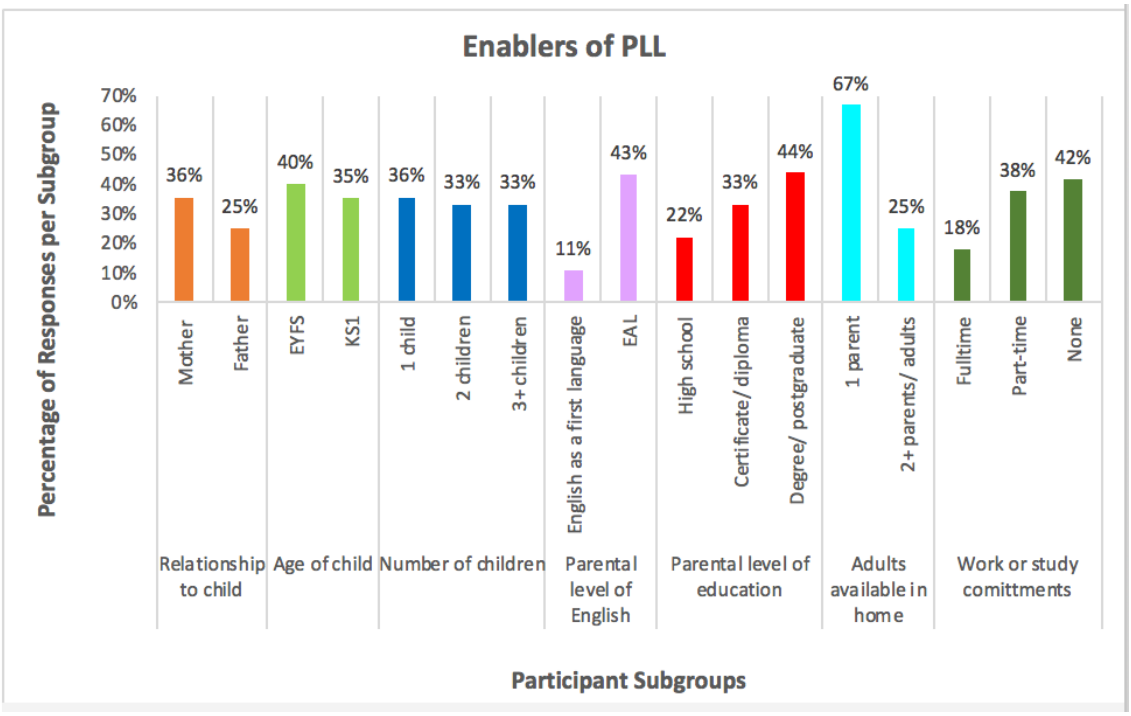

Figure 11. Percentages of responses for each participant subgroup for sub-theme 'Enablers of PLL'.

Figure 11 shows the percentages of responses across each participant subgroup, to provide insight into how family structures reflect enablers and motivators of PLL. Parents' perceptions of inhibitors of PLL appear to increase as parents' level of education increases, and as parents time available, work or study commitments, decrease. Surprisingly, single parents indicated much higher perceptions of enablers of PLL than parents with additional adults in the home. Perhaps this is due to the quality time and interactions that being a single parent promotes, with no additional support to reply on. Number of children in the home does not appear to impact perceptions of enablers of PLL.

5.5 Focus group

Survey findings provided possible explanations for the varying degree of correlation in the quantitative data, with an exploration of different participant subgroups. A follow up focus group interview was also conducted, serving as a small case study to add depth and context to the emergent themes. The transcript was not analysed within the original set of qualitative data and will instead be used to showcase thematic development.

5.5.1 A focus group vignette: Mothers of children in EYFS

Two mothers, participant one and participant two, talked more about their perceptions and feelings about PLL in a focus group interview. Both parents appeared to be anxious initially, expressing concerns around their level of spoken English and confidence to articulate their thoughts. Parents both spoke English as an additional language, with native languages and English being spoken regularly at home. Both parents came from families with three or more children. Throughout the focus group parents were asked about their role in their child's learning, their feelings of confidence in initiating different types of learning, the importance of play, their feelings about their role, the importance of parents versus teachers, and positive and negative experiences of PLL.

Both parents talked about the different ways in which children learn and the importance of learning for school and academic success, as well as learning for creativity and cultural enrichment. Participant two spoke of school learning, *"he have to learn spelling and math and all these things. For me, it's very important because for the future"* and parent one discussed the importance of learning through cultural experiences, *"we try to make dancing, music, we listen to all type of music. Not just for kids' music- for adult music, for Indian music, for Asian music, to French music, to Spanish music – everything music."* They also discussed the importance of knowing their child when scaffolding their learning. Participant two talked about how she supported her child's speech delay, *"he don't know how to said the 's', he don't know how to said the 'f', he don't know to said the 'c'. I have to do extra work with him."* Participant one provided a couple of examples of extending learning such as, *"puzzles, if you give it bigger than four pieces, he done it. Next you give six piece, eight pieces*

and he will done this one" and on using flash cards and modelling, *"I don't know what you call this in English but like a word in there so, example, I do with the letter first then I say the word, then he repeat after me. I have to do syllables, like o-ran-ge".*

Participants also talked about their role in helping their children learn about life and develop into healthy, successful adults. Participant two compared her role to that of school, *"the school is the teacher, reading, math, English and science and the discipline but home, as she said, is the cooking, cleaning. I have a little baby and my son is year 3 helping with the little kids so sometimes give the milk. He is learning at home with me cleaning and cooking, everything. Parents and teachers both need to learning for the kids everything"* Participant one highlighted how she extends learning through everyday family experiences such as baking a cake, *"I say, 'now put the cake in your mouth and eat the cake and where does the cake go? It go there and there and that will go to the stomach and after the stomach will go around and round. Each piece you eat is good for your health but not sugar. Little bit is good for your health but not that much'."* Participant one also talked about her perception of her role and why it is important, *"since I was little, I used to love children, so my own children is not just to make them, it's to teach them the life. I'm the mother, I teach them everything"* and on future success, *"in the future, they have a job, they have to listen to the boss so that's why I teach them to listen."*

Both participants expressed the importance of learning through play, having fun and building meaningful relationships to support learning. Participant one talked about shared experiences and time together through play, *"I think it's good to teach them how to play. The development is very good. Example, if we go to the park, they have play area and they have flowers. Which play we do, he have to do something else like if I'm going to hide this on the park and he have to look for it, search for it. This way we are together, and we play as a group."* Participant two shared this view, *"I think you can play anything with kids but mostly you need the time and you play a very good thing. If you playing, you're more learning. Bring a lot of time for the park playing together and he's riding bike."* Participant two also mentioned the importance of spending time together to strengthen attachment relationships which support learning, *"the father's role is going job and something but mother is, in my house, kids are more attached to me."*

Participants discussed positive experiences of PLL and identified enablers and motivators of PLL. Participant one talked heavily of the importance of fun and enjoyment during learning. When asked to talk about a recent positive experience she talked about watching her son grow in confidence through play and fun, *"I have a lot! It was the day before and the next day was my daughter birthday, so we are dancing. My son is a little bit shy about dancing and he came, and he started dancing a lot and everyone was laughing, he was dancing cos he was making a funny dance. He was so funny!"* Pride in their child's success also stood out as a motivating factor, for example, Participant two talked about her son's kindness and thoughtfulness, *"I'm proud he's helping me and because I'm pregnant so I can't move down because my belly's big. He said, 'Don't move, your belly's big so you can't go down and I can do it'."* Participant one shared this sentiment, *"I'm very, very proud to teach them."* Participant two highlighted the encouragement she gets from other mums who comment on her parenting success, *"My child is going to my friend's house and they said 'he's a very good child. He don't go upstairs and picking things.' I'm very proud doing a good job. If some people said, 'your child is no good' very sad."*

Participants agreed that learning with their children is motivating and empowering as it extends their English. Participant one said, *"I'm very happy because as well my English is not very good so more he learn and there's some word I don't know, I learn it as well! We help each other."* Participant two agreed, *"same, speaking at home is not good English so he give me every day the new words and I speak with my kids and my English is more better."* On the other hand, their lack of English restricted their ability to help with all types of learning, although neither perceived this to be an obstacle due to the extra adult support in their home. Participant one had adult children who spoke fluent English, *"I ask my daughter to do it for me because her English, I can speak, I can read it little bit because French and English is not the same so I ask my big daughter to do."* Participant two sought help from her husband, *"my husband is good in the English and everything so I can't do it say to my child, 'Go to daddy and he will tell you'."* Both participants also talked about the importance of the wider family and community support, for example, participant two conveyed her experiences at a local playgroup, *"we speak mother together and is friend, in this country you need a friend."*

Participants also talked about inhibitors of PLL and what made an experience less successful. Neither participant was able to provide much insight into negative factors as they mostly perceived their role as important and enjoyable. When asked about negative experiences, participant one said, *"never because I believe even every day when you teach your child is a new experience for him"* although participant two did mention the tedious nature of repetitive play, *"sometimes they're playing three/four hours the same thing."* They were more able to discuss obstacles to engage in PLL to their expected standard. Time stood out as a key inhibitor – participant two said, *"with a lot of child their mum and dad don't have the time so he can't do it".* Participant one agreed, and added her feelings of guilt, *"sometimes I feel a little bit today don't give the time, he tell me, 'you don't give me time'. Sometimes I feel guilty. It's not I don't want to, but I can't."* Both participants also talked about the number of children in their homes and their ages as potential inhibitors or enablers of learning. Participant one had older children in general, including two adult children who were supportive. She recognised this as an enabler and participant two agreed, *"If you have a child is bigger you have support. I have little kids so I need more time. Sometimes I don't have time."*

There was an additional language barrier that resonated with both parents, yet culture differences seemed to be viewed as a positive not a barrier. Participant two talked about the challenges speaking English as an additional language brought with supporting school learning, *"we are not English, we are Pakistani, so our kids need to learn. Speak English in the home is everything. Reading is a different type of English. Normal English he can but if you're reading in a book, it's difficult."* She also talked about support from teachers sometimes lacking the clear guidance she required as an EAL parent, *"I'm trying to have a math book. Teacher has show me the book then I buy from online and then I'm struggling."*

5.6 Summary

This study set out to identify and explore a potential relationship between parents' role perceptions, based on their perspectives of the importance of a range of HLA, and experiences of learning, based on their levels of enjoyment while initiating the same HLA. The main research question asked:

- *How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education influence their experiences of parent-led learning?*

Quantitative survey findings indicated a positive correlation between participants' ratings of importance of learning and experiences of learning when asked to rate the following two questions on 5-point Likert scales:

- *How important do you think these learning activities are?*
- *How would you rate your experiences of initiating these learning activities with your child?*

This positive correlation indicated that parents in this research group generally perceived similar levels of importance and enjoyment for each HLA and did not typically enjoy learning that they did not also value. Parents were also asked to provide demographic information to better understand why some parents perceived some learning as variably important and enjoyable than others. These data also helped explain some obstacles to parents' enjoyment of PLL.

Thematic analysis of textual data from the second part of the survey helped explain the findings. Three main themes emerged. Parents' perceptions of the importance and enjoyment of PLL are shaped by their:

- *understanding of learning processes and their child's needs*
- *understanding of themselves and their capabilities*
- *managing practicalities of PLL*

These themes were explored in depth, with quotes from the participant responses used to support thematic development. Family structures and circumstances were also explored using demographic data to gain insight into different obstacles and motivators families typically encounter. A vignette from a follow up focus group showcased these obstacles and motivators with added context.

The following chapter will discuss the key findings and themes from this study and make comparisons to relevant literature. It will examine the role family circumstances play in shaping parents' perspectives and experiences of PLL.

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the potential relationship between parents' perceptions of their role in their child's learning and their experiences of parent-led learning (PLL). Previous research on the home learning environment (HLE) focussed primarily on the parent's role in preparing their child for school and supporting teachers with their valuable, expert teaching (Hunt, Virgo, Klett-Davies, Page, & Apps, 2011; Kluczniok, Lehrl, Kuger, & Rossbach, 2013; Melhuish, Sylva, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2001; Niklas, Cohrssen, & Tayler, 2016a; Niklas, Nguyen, Cloney, Tayler, & Adams, 2016b). A significant issue with the view of teachers and schools as powerful, imparters of knowledge, and parents as passive and supplementary, is that parents may feel disempowered in their role and lack confidence in their knowledge and their abilities. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) highlight the importance of parent-child learning and the potential power parents have in preparing children for complex needs of the 21st century. They stress the need for schools to work in genuine partnership with parents, valuing and understanding their important contribution, in order to work collaboratively in the interest of providing children with a broader educational experience.

Other research has also discussed the importance of the emotional climate both in the home and during any learning experience in improving educational outcomes (Damen et al., 2017; Froyen, Skibbe, Bowles, Blow, & Gerde, 2013). It is necessary, therefore, to look at how learning is experienced by both educator and learner, not just what learning is occurring and where, as has traditionally been the focus. This is an essential contribution to the current field of literature – highlighting the importance of the parent's role in their child's learning beyond formal schooling.

This chapter discusses the experiences of a group of parents in London, as described in the previous chapter. It also examines the currently unexplored

relationship between parents' role perceptions and experiences of learning; to give parents a voice in the literature and inform future practice for educators working with parents. Critical links and comparisons are made to previous research as discussed in the literature review (refer to Chapter 2).

The body of this chapter discusses the positive correlation between parents' perceptions of their role and their experiences of PLL, as identified in Chapter 5 of this study. Insight is given into how this positive correlation affects current notions of the HLE and recommendations made for how this addition to literature can inform practice for those interested in working with and empowering parents. The following sections will draw on the themes identified during the study to further explain and showcase parents' experiences.

These themes are:

- *Theme 1: Parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs*
- *Theme 2: Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities*
- *Theme 3: The practicalities of PLL*

Discussion of these themes recognises parents as capable and competent educators with high aspirations for their children, acknowledging the complex and valuable role that parents have. These themes also highlight the realities of parenting and the difficult juggle parents often face in overcoming obstacles and meeting their self-imposed expectations. Throughout the body of the discussion, family structures, culture and diversity will be examined to further understand complexities of the parenting experience.

6.2 Theme 1: Parents' understanding of learning processes

Research shows that traditional teaching and learning methods alone will not be enough for meeting the educational and societal needs of the 21st century (Griffin, McGaw, & Care, 2012; OECD, 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016). Clark's (2005) concepts of life-long, life wide, and life-deep learning highlight the need to look at how learning occurs beyond the traditional, formal school setting. Both Reimers and Chung (2016) and the OECD (2018) emphasise the crucial role competencies-based learning will have in meeting the educational needs of the 21st century. Competencies focus on learning

how to learn, rather than simply teaching children to be consumers of specific, culturally valued knowledge. Niklas et al. (2016a, 2016b) explore the distinctive learning processes that occur between teacher and child, looking particularly at parents as their child's first teacher. Findings in this study reveal parents' awareness of their role, and their children's complex educational needs, particularly those relevant to the 21st century. Parents appear to highly value relationship-based learning, something that needs to be recognised and appreciated by teachers in the formal school setting.

6.2.1 Parents as capable and knowledgeable teachers

This study highlighted the importance parents place on their role as their child's first teacher, not just to prepare their child for school, but for life. There was a consensus that school teachers have an important role, but that parents have a unique role that cannot be replicated by teachers. Parents viewed themselves as capable of teaching their child through real world experiences and play as opposed to teachers who have many more children to manage, less time, and must focus on literacy and numeracy. Parents viewed success for their child as more than just becoming competent in literacy and numeracy, although still important. They mentioned notions of being healthy, happy and confident as they grow, as goals for their education. Parents' aspirations reach far wider and deeper than simply succeeding at school. Some parents also talked about the importance of learning through play and having fun, and developing social skills through real-world, collaborative learning, as suggested in recent literature (OECD, 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016). Parents' understandings appear to align with learning needs for the 21st century.

A primary goal for 21st century learning is to develop a shared vision between all stakeholders, particularly parents and teachers, of what learning should look like and what ultimate educational goals should be (OECD, 2018). For this to occur, power needs to be shared between teacher and parent and both roles valued for their unique abilities and knowledge. Parents have intimate knowledge of their child and their needs and interests, as well as strong aspirations for their future. These aspirations are often based on succeeding at school; however, when looking at education in the 21st century, it appears necessary to draw more on parents' discrete knowledge of their

child rather than assuming all parents value academic success above all else. Parents have ideas about what they value and what their child's current and future needs might be, far beyond the scope of schooling. Reimers and Chung (2016) state that:

> Ensuring that education is relevant to the demands that students will face over the course of their lives – such as the demand to live long and healthy lives, to contribute positively as active members of their communities, to participate economically and politically in institutions that are often local as well as global, and to relate to the environment in ways that are sustainable – is an adaptive challenge. (p. 2)

This challenge is one in which parents have an irreplaceable role.

Findings in this study contribute to existing literature by challenging current perceptions of school-based, academic, teacher-led learning and adding new elements of broad, parent-led, experiential learning. This study draws on previous studies that have focussed on the parent's role as mostly limited to the HLE and explores the wider context in which diverse types of learning occur. Findings align with existing literature on 21st century learning and emphasise the vital role of the parent, a role in which parents are overtly striving to succeed. This study highlights that parents are capable and competent educators with high aspirations for their children's future and clearly understand the importance of parent-child learning in meeting these aspirations. Findings suggest that educators need to reflect on their values and beliefs around the purpose of learning in order to develop genuine partnerships with parents. Parents are not secondary or supplementary to school teachers, they are essential co-partners in their child's learning.

6.2.2 Relationships as a foundation for learning

Throughout this study, many parents expressed strong opinions about the importance of shared interactions and engagement during PLL. Parents mentioned the quality of the relationships they have with their children and explained how it enables them to recognise learning and scaffold appropriately. The word 'attached' was used by one parent, indicating an understanding of the importance of relationships and time spent together. Time was spoken about a lot, as too was the importance of sharing positive emotions such as fun, enjoyment and laughter. It seems parents had a

solid understanding of the importance of learning within a positive, emotionally safe environment. Parents also talked about making learning fun through play and family time together. There appeared to be a stronger emphasis on this spontaneous, real-world learning and exploring, compared to direct non-formal teaching moments, although the latter were also commonplace. Findings show that parents place importance on the way learning is experienced and are more likely to engage in positive learning experiences that they feel comfortable and confident initiating.

Froyen et al. (2013) highlight the importance of the emotional climate in the home, including the security of relationships between family members and the types and quality of interactions they experience. They explain that children's academic success improves as a result of a positive emotional climate. Damen et al. (2017) adds that parents' feelings of empowerment and confidence in their parenting role positively affect stress levels in the home, which in turn shapes the emotional climate. If the emotional climate affects relationships in the home, then as a result it is likely to influence the quality and frequency of PLL.

> During infancy and early childhood, interactions are initiated by the child or the primary caregiver and sensitive adults respond to young children by adjusting the nature and extent of the support they provide in accordance with children's understandings and skills. Adults may choose to step in and support a child's learning, intervene in a child's play-activity, set up particular activities, stand back and observe, or even pay little or no attention to the child's learning. (Niklas et al., 2016a, p. 121)

Parents' intimate knowledge of their child is a unique part of the parenting experience, but it is only possible within the context of secure relationships that promote personalised PLL opportunities.

Findings confirm the importance of the parenting role in drawing on existing, intimate relationships to extend learning and promote positive PLL. Parents are often able to harness their intimate knowledge of their child, resulting from secure, authentic relationships, to facilitate and scaffold learning. These findings indicate that PLL has the power to improve educational outcomes through frequent, enjoyable learning experiences. Previous studies have used frequency of HLA as an assessor of the HLE but have not explored the cause of increased frequency. Without this

understanding, educators lack the knowledge of how to promote learning in the HLE. PLL that involves enjoyment of learning and spending time together has the potential to improve the quality and frequency of learning. Accordingly, educators might reflect on their perceptions of parents and the types of contributions parents can make in improving educational outcomes.

6.2.3 The role of school: Valuing parents

Findings clearly show that parents value their children's education and aspire to promote educational success in any way possible. However, findings also show that parents' values and beliefs about educational success often differ from the dominant view of formal, academic achievements. Parents perceive life learning as a vital part of education, as well as academic learning. Results from the focus group in this study highlighted parents' pride in their own culture and their desire to share this with their children, particularly through the shared enjoyment of culturally diverse music. Parents appear to be aware of their potential impact on their children's education and how they are able to complement the valuable role of the school teacher; they view teachers as experts on education, and themselves as experts on their children. Some parents spoke about feeling confident asking teachers for help with school-based learning, but not really knowing what to do with their advice or not having the language proficiency to help with homework to a standard they would like. When language barriers exist, and teachers' expertise are inaccessible, parents need to feel confident that their own contribution is valued along with formal learning to avoid feelings of inadequacies. Teachers in all countries, regardless of curriculum framework, need to be recognising and harnessing this passion, and desire parents' involvement and sharing of experiences.

Existing research confirms that children of families who do not fit within the dominant culture have poorer academic success than those who conform to culturally predominant values and societal expectations (Hattie, 2009; Kluczniok et al., 2013; Niklas et al., 2016a). However, findings from a study on the quality of the HLE in relation to contextual factors show there is no difference in the level of educational support provided by migrant families compared to non-migrant families, although literacy and numeracy rates may be lower for children of non-English speaking families

(Kluczniok et al., 2013). Essentially, speaking a different language or having different cultural values and expectations does not limit parental involvement or lower parental aspirations. It can however reduce access to formal learning and support which is designed to cater to the majority, not the few. Hattie (2009) highlights a concern over cultural access to mainstream education, "some parents know how to speak the language of schooling and thus provide an advantage for their children during the school years, and others do not know this language which can be a major barrier to the home making a contribution to achievement" (p. 61). It is paramount that teachers and schools are aware of this language barrier.

In order to overcome barriers to accessing education and reduce inequality, the OECD (2018) suggest teachers and parents develop strong learning partnerships and create a shared vision of learning for each child. A study based in the UK, within the EYFS framework, indicated that nursery teachers do understand the importance of building relationships and partnering with parents before offering advice (Hunt et al., 2011). However, what is concerning about these results is the discourse of a partnership to impart knowledge, not to develop a reciprocal relationship to share knowledge. This places the school, the dominant culture, at the centre of learning for every child, regardless of differences in needs and backgrounds. The New Zealand early childhood education curriculum offers a more culturally responsive framework which promotes this notion of shared learning. At the core of this curriculum is not literacy or numeracy, but four principles to guide all learning. These are, 'holistic development', 'empowerment', 'family and community', and 'relationships', along with the aspiration for all children "to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2017, p. 6).

Results align with existing literature, suggesting that parents' aspirations for their children are not affected by cultural diversity but that language barriers may hinder parents' attempts to work in partnership with teachers and realise their aspirations. Findings also confirm that perceptions of the purpose of education differ greatly and that educators, who are in a higher position of power, need to reflect on their own values and beliefs and how they may influence their relationships with

diverse parents. This study indicates that learning partnerships need to be developed with an understanding that both teachers and parents have valid contributions in improving educational outcomes for children. Recognising parents and developing meaningful relationships involves moving beyond a simple imparting of knowledge from teacher to parent, and towards shared experiences and meaning making to ensure that education is culturally accessible and enjoyable for all.

6.3 Theme 2: Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities

Parents' perceptions of their role and their ability to succeed in their role affect the way they experience PLL with their children (Bandura, 1994; Bojczyk, Haverback & Pae, 2018). The way learning is experienced can be linked to the emotional climate which may or may not be conducive to learning. Unfortunately, previous research on the HLE has been limited, looking predominantly into the quality and frequency of PLL, not into the way PLL is experienced by both parent and child (Hunt et al., 2011; Melhuish et al., 2001; Niklas et al., 2016a, 2016b). Parents have intimate relationships with their children that teachers do not, therefore they are in a strong position to create the emotional climate and dictate how learning is experienced. Moreover, parents make decisions in their daily interactions; what learning to initiate, when and how to initiate learning, how direct learning should be, how involved they should be in learning activities and when to extend or simply observe (Niklas et al., 2016a, 2016b). What is not clear in the research is parents' level of awareness of their powerful role and how this relates to their confidence in their ability to meet their own role expectations.

6.3.1 Understanding parents' role perceptions

Interestingly, the survey section on parental role perceptions had a lower response rate than other sections, possibly indicating parents' limited awareness or confidence in articulating their role. Nevertheless, some parents highlighted the importance of mothers due to the time spent with children and the quality of the mother-child relationship. Parents viewed their role in learning as direct and interactive, specifically related to shared interactions and time spent together. Parents

seemed to value their role, expressing the importance of learning within the context of meaningful relationships, which they believe they are best equipped to offer. They viewed the role of the parent in child learning as extremely important and reported personal sacrifice to ensure such learning was prioritised, which was sometimes accompanied by considerable guilt over the times they felt they did not meet the demands of this important role. Parents also believed their role involved elements of preparations for school, although their interpretation of preparation for school reached beyond literacy and numeracy learning. This was evident in the many comments about ensuring their children enjoyed learning, developed social skills, fitted in with societal expectations, and were healthy and happy. In short, parents understood their role in supporting school learning, though there was consensus that preparing their children for life was more important.

Damen et al. (2017) and Vuorenmaa, Perala, Halme, Kaunonen, & Astedt-Kurki (2016) posit that parents are aware of the importance of their overall role in their child's learning, their child's needs, and have high aspirations for their future success. However, they argued that parents are not always sure how to realise these aspirations, or lack confidence in their ability to do so. Survey and focus group findings in this study confirmed that parents hold strong aspirations for their child's learning and overall education. These aspirations, alongside parental confidence and with necessary support, could motivate parents', strengthening their powerful contributions. As educators work alongside parents to understand and value parents' contributions, they will be in a stronger position to help parents realise their aspirations and become confident in their role. Despite literature showing that parents are aware of their role and its importance, it is possible that they lack awareness of the potency of their role. Indeed, existing research from Hunt et al. (2011) suggests that parents believe their main role is to prepare their children for school. Even though this preparation included attention to academic, social and sporting skills, the main purpose of the PLL at home was to enable their child to experience success at school. There is an implicit belief here that school is where learning occurs and that parents are supplementary educators.

This study does not completely align with existing literature as, although preparation for school was valued by parents, parents prioritised focussing on their

children enjoying learning and developing life skills. Parents did appear to value their role as different to that of the teacher, not supplementary or less significant. Parents' predominant value was in 'relationship-based' PLL, manifested in the importance of positive interactions with their children. However, since this study design privileged parental voice, they revealed a much wider view than exists in the current literature. Parents perceived their role purpose as preparing their children for more than school, but for life – life-wide and lifelong learning. While some of them sought practical help in this role, others operated from diverse cultural and social values, but all were influenced by their level of self-belief as a parent. Educators could benefit from gaining insight into parents' diverse role perceptions in order to better understand parents' values and beliefs, and how parents and teachers can best work together to enhance educational outcomes that go beyond that of the dominant culture.

6.3.2 Parental self-efficacy

Throughout this thesis study, parents discussed their feelings of confidence in their role and associated levels of enjoyment during PLL. Unfortunately, no statistics were gathered on the ratio of positive to negative feelings (a proxy for confidence). Parents shared many positive feelings towards PLL, including feelings of pride and confidence. Negative feelings were mainly related to guilt about lack of time and dissatisfaction with their overall success in their role. This guilt may be due to parents' high aspirations for their children being compromised by the realities of multiple demands in their work-life balance. During the focus group interview one parent talked about her high levels of confidence and self-efficacy from having older children (refer to section 5.5.1). The other parent was more reserved in her ability and referred to seeking help when needed. Nevertheless, her ability to identify gaps in her knowledge and abilities, particularly English proficiency, and ask for help from appropriate sources, showed reasonably high levels of self-efficacy and positive perceptions of power and control.

Bandura (1994) theorised high self-efficacy as a perception of control and power; an understanding that lacking skills and knowledge does not define a person and that attaining sought after skills and knowledge is possible. Concepts of control and power relate to theories of empowerment. Hattie (2009) suggests that

empowered parents, who feel in control, are more resilient and more likely to overcome sociocultural disadvantages and barriers to provide quality PLL experiences. Understanding parental self-efficacy is an important step in understanding how parental perceptions translate into actual parenting and what actual and perceived barriers exist. “Parental self-efficacy is a belief that one can successfully parent a child, which affects one’s willingness to take on the role of their child’s first teacher” (Bojczyk et al., 2018, p. 170). A parent may be a highly efficacious and self-confident person, but without confidence in their knowledge and skills relating to PLL, they may be reserved when approaching new teaching and learning experiences. Moreover, Bojczyk et al. argue, “even though a mother believes in her ability to teach, the home learning environment that she maintains is dependent upon what she believes she is ready to teach, as well as her perception of what her child is ready to learn” (p. 176). Parents need understanding of what their role entails and confidence in their ability to fulfil this role.

Results of this study appear to align with literature on self-efficacy and perceptions of power and control. Parents showed confidence in their role, when their perceptions of their required abilities matched their actual skill set. Interestingly, parents in both the survey and focus group showed high levels of self-efficacy when they perceived their role as separate from the teachers and vital to their children’s learning. When parents talked about the importance of the mother’s role, particularly to provide relationship-based PLL, shared interactions, quality time and enjoyment of learning, they also talked about having confidence in their ability to fulfil this role. Parents who focussed more on replicating school-based learning at home, showed more dissatisfaction with their attempts to meet their own self-imposed standards. Some parents showed realistic awareness of their abilities, asking teachers or other family members for help with literacy and numeracy HLA when they identified their skill set as being insufficient. In contrast, one parent demonstrated high levels of confidence in providing quality HLA in all areas, suggesting that this was because she is a trained teacher and has the appropriate skill set. Parents’ awareness of the powerful impact of their role and understanding of their invaluable contribution as a parent, rather than a teacher, is necessary in the development of shared partnerships between teachers and parents.

6.4 Theme 3: The practicalities of PLL

Despite adversity, some parents can overcome many demographic and structural barriers and initiate and engage in high quality, enjoyable PLL. This is possibly due to parental self-efficacy and levels of empowerment and confidence in their role. “High empowerment is associated with parents’ resilience to demands and their confidence to make decisions and take actions that positively affect their families” (Vuorenmaa et al., 2016, p. 25). While parents face many obstacles in everyday life, resilient parents view these obstacles as surmountable rather than overwhelming. Bandura (1994) explains the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience, “when faced with obstacles and failures people who harbour self-doubts about their capabilities slacken their efforts or give up quickly. Those who have a strong belief in their capabilities exert greater effort when they fail to master the challenge” (p. 5.). Self-efficacy and empowerment are considerable factors in the development of resilience and should be promoted by teachers and other professionals working with families.

6.4.1 Inhibitors and enablers

Throughout this study, parents commented on factors in their lives which inhibit or enable PLL, specifically time and availability, and understanding of the English language. The focus group discussion provided a perfect example of this as both parents talked about how they manage the high number of children in their families and how they seek support from other adults to provide time for one to one learning or support with English related learning. Moreover, they highlighted the importance of collaborative learning, showing that shared learning experiences can be successfully achieved in large families when they view collaboration, communication and play as valuable learning. While SES was not explored in this study, parents did not mention any struggles relating to finances and lack of opportunities due to additional costs. Parents in this study pointed out structural barriers to PLL but did not seem overwhelmed by them. Parents perceived levels of power and self-efficacy, confidence in their abilities and contributions, appeared to be much more significant than family structures.

Family structures and demographic position may, depending on circumstances, either inhibit or enable PLL and promote academic success, particularly to literacy and numeracy domains. For example, Kluczniok et al. (2013) found that:

> Literacy stimulation is better in families without migration background who have a higher socioeconomic status, maternal education, income, expenses for activities and higher educational orientations. Promotion of numeracy was primarily associated with non-immigrant families with higher SES and educational beliefs in the value of scholastic preparation. (p. 432)

This trend has also been confirmed in other studies, particularly one relating specifically to the UK context which provides an explanation of how structural characteristics such as time can impact academic success, "larger families may result in less parental attention being available for any individual child. This decreased individual attention from parents may be the reason for the effects on cognitive development" (Melhuish, 2001, p. 37). However, Kluczniok (2013) and Hattie (2009) stress the importance of looking at the whole picture of the family. Structural characteristics are significant factors, but they alone do not inhibit or enable successful PLL and promote academic success. Parents' educational beliefs and aspirations play a large role in the complex relationship between what parents and families believe they are capable of and what they achieve.

Findings specifically related to inhibitors and enablers of PLL diverge from existing literature. Reduced time and attention for children in larger families was not evident in this study. In fact, parents of three or more children reported inhibitors of PLL less often than parents of one or two children. It is possible that these findings reflect parents' educational views and role perceptions. Literature suggests that family structures may disadvantage minority families, resulting in poorer academic results. However, families in this study did not seem overly concerned by structural barriers as they felt their role was not limited to literacy and numeracy learning. When families valued collaborative, relationship-based learning, family size was not an issue but an asset. When families valued life learning as opposed to school learning, other barriers such as language and cultural differences were also reduced. This study does not disprove that barriers exist, inhibiting some parents from providing high quality literacy and numeracy learning experiences. Instead, this study suggests an alternative

view of parents' roles and contributions which differs from existing literature. Teachers may benefit from reflecting on their perceptions of parents and their valuable contributions, and subsequently the ways they engage with parents from varying backgrounds.

6.5 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss findings of this study which asked, *"How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education influence their experiences of parent-led learning?"* A positive correlation was identified between the importance parents placed on learning activities and their levels of enjoyment of engaging in them with their child. This positive correlation justified the need for further exploration of how perceptions of learning importance and parental role influence experiences of PLL, with the acknowledgement that positive emotional experiences are conducive to learning.

Three main themes were identified during the data analysis stage, all of which were discussed in the body of this chapter.

These themes are:

- *Theme 1: Parents' understanding of learning processes and their child's needs*
- *Theme 2: Parents' understanding of themselves and their capabilities*
- *Theme 3: The practicalities of PLL*

These themes provided insight into parents' role perceptions and experiences of PLL. This study enhances existing literature as it combines two areas of research which do not appear to have been previously linked: the HLE and the emotional climate in which learning takes place. The combination of research on the emotional climate and experiences of learning between child and parent created a robust survey tool in which to explore the research question and reveal how parents perceive themselves as first teachers. Finally, the new term PLL contributes to existing literature by building on previous studies of HLE to become more relevant to the 21st century; understanding that learning is experiential and occurs everywhere, within the context of relationships rather than specifically in the home.

The Conclusion Chapter will summarise research findings and outline implications for future research, including limitations and gaps in this study. Recommendations for practice for those seeking to support and empower parents will also be provided. The results also serve as a reflection of the voices and perspectives of a group of parents at one London school. While this study does not represent all parents, their voices provide a snapshot of parenting experiences.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This study aimed to rethink the ways in which parental involvement in education is viewed by examining the way learning is experienced by parents, an area seemingly unexplored in current literature. Parents' values and beliefs were explored, to better understand parents' perceptions of the importance of different types of learning. This small study confirmed that parents enjoy learning that they believe is important for their children's overall education. In general, parents in this community were more concerned with the way learning is experienced, preferring and valuing relationship-based, parent-led learning (PLL). These findings, although not generalisable to a wider population, provide educators with a deeper understanding of how these parents experience learning, an essential step if educators are to create meaningful partnerships with parents.

The main research question asked, **"How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education influence their experiences of parent-led learning?"** PLL is a term that emerged out of dissatisfaction with current research on parental involvement in education. A gap was identified in existing literature which focussed mostly on the home learning environment (HLE) and the types and frequency of specific home learning activities (HLA). This published research failed to take heed of the wider educational context, cultural diversity, parental values and beliefs, and the ways learning is experienced. I developed the term PLL to steer the focus towards parents; how they perceive their role in their child's education and the types of learning they value, and parents' direct experiences of learning with their child in relation to their perceptions. It is hoped that this new term will encourage readers to consider parental involvement in education through the parental lens.

This concluding chapter summarises the value of this study, particularly the contribution to existing literature, areas for future study and research limitations.

Recommendations for practice are then provided which are directly relevant to the participant research school. It is also hoped that these recommendations for practice could inspire other educators to consider experiences of PLL and how further investigation could improve their parent-teacher partnerships.

7.2 Value of this research

A mixed methods research design allowed for a deeper and wider examination of parental experiences of learning with their child, something that was missing in existing literature. Previous research on parental involvement focussed on learning within the HLE. Existing quantitative survey tools used to assess the quality of the HLE, an indicator of the impact of parental involvement on educational outcomes, focussed on what learning occurred in the home and how often. There are many issues with this perspective, including viewing the parents' role in their child's learning as limited to the home environment; and assessing learning using a pre-set list of HLA.

7.2.1 Contribution to existing literature

By assessing the type and frequency of specific HLA, perceptions of educational success and failure are limited to views of the dominant culture. Understanding parents' values and beliefs, as showcased in this study, provides a more accurate view of parent-child learning experiences from perspectives of multiple cultures. Currently, research on the HLE has provided limited insight into the way parents perceive their role in their child's education and the types of learning they value. By understanding who parents are on a deeper level, educators can begin to develop genuine partnerships with parents, placing explicit value on parents' contributions. Genuine teacher-parent partnerships require power sharing and shared understandings which are steps towards reducing inequalities resulting from cultural dominance. Parental voices provided in this study provide a glimpse into diverse parental perspectives.

There is also a disconnect between the types of learning currently valued and the needs of the 21st century. The wider context of education needs to be considered to understand the purpose of learning, within the school, the home and beyond. Research on 21st century learning suggests a move towards a competencies-based framework with a lesser focus on the consumption of knowledge (Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016). This involves shifting the prominent focus of what learning is occurring and when, to how learning is experienced in the unpredictable climate of the 21st century, requiring flexible and adaptable learners. This study highlights the need for a wider view of parental engagement in education. Participants in this community showed an implicit understanding of a competencies-based framework, the enjoyment of learning and learning for life.

Additional research (Froyen, Skibbe, Bowles, Blow, & Gerde, 2013) on the emotional climate of the home provides insight into the importance of how learning is experienced by both parent and child. There is evidence that positive experiences of learning can have a stronger positive impact on educational outcomes than attempts to overcome social disadvantages (Damen et al., 2017). This means that by focussing on how learning is experienced, more families may be able to improve their child's chances of educational success, despite adversity which can often be challenging to overcome. Findings in this study showcase the value of positive PLL experiences as social disadvantages appeared to negatively impact parents' attempts to initiate school-based learning, such as literacy and numeracy, more so than life learning. This research adds depth to research on the HLE since, so far, no studies combining the two areas appear to exist.

PLL that is relationship-based and reflects the needs of learners in the 21st century frames learning in a more flexible way. Learning is not location specific; learning can occur in a variety of ways, anywhere and with anyone. What matters most are positive emotional experiences of learning which occur in the context of meaningful, trusting relationships. Parents are in a prime position to provide these experiences. Parents in this study felt strongly about their role being different to the teachers, but not better or worse, specifically due to significant value being placed on the importance of relationship-based PLL to develop essential life skills.

7.2.2 Areas for future research

This study identified a gap in the literature and explored a possible way to better understand parental involvement by exploring their experiences of PLL. Findings provided insight into parents' perceptions and experiences of PLL which could be

useful for educators to understand. It is hoped that this new term will encourage educators to reflect on the way they engage with parents and inspire new research, from internal reviews at the school level, to larger formal studies that expand on the concept and term of PLL. Larger research studies could help mitigate some of the limitations this study faced.

As a localised study with a small non-probability sample size, these findings are not generalisable beyond this immediate participant pool. While it cannot be said that the positive correlation between value and enjoyment of PLL applies to all parents of children in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage One (KS1), the qualitative nature of this study provides insight into the parenting experience. By adding parents' voices to research about parental engagement, this study has created an alternative lens through which to view parents' contribution to their child's learning. Further qualitative research on PLL, focussing on the parent experience, would be beneficial to this field of literature.

Participants in this study were willing and available to share their voices. It is possible that relying on willingness and availability may privilege perspectives of types of parents and therefore not accurately reflect the entire community. This was an unavoidable limitation in this small thesis study due to time and resourcing constraints. Further research on PLL could be carried out across a much wider participant pool, possibly including comparative case studies from different schools or age groups. This could provide a more generalisable data set and allow for a more in-depth examination of the influence of family structures. Understanding of how learning is experienced could be enhanced by further research on PLL, with the addition of teacher and child voices. Careful consideration would be needed to ensure the research remained centred on parents. Alternatively, this research could inspire further research about teacher-parent relationships, using findings to encourage teachers to reflect on their relationships with parents.

7.3 Recommendations for practice

The results of this study provide benefits for any reader working with parents and for the participant school and families who invested their time and resources into making this research possible. The participant school was particularly interested in

involvement in this research due to a prominent school development goal to improve parental engagement. It is hoped that the following recommendations for practice will assist the school in developing an action plan to improve parental engagement and stimulate conversations among staff to challenge current perceptions and reflect on their personal values and beliefs. Recommendations for practice could form the base of an internal review or research investigation into the school's current parental engagement and future aspirations for improved engagement.

7.3.1 Consider diverse values, beliefs, cultures, and the wider educational context

This study provided insight into one community and is not generalisable to other communities due to the diverse range of cultures, values and beliefs, and family circumstances that exist. Educators are advised to consider the wider context in which learning occurs; learning is not an isolated event and should not be assessed as such. In order to better relate to parents, educators need to understand the sociocultural context in which learning occurs; children's families, cultures and family backgrounds. Educators' might consider who parents are, parents' past and present experiences of education, and recognise potential inhibitors and enablers of PLL. PLL places emphasis on the parenting experience. Therefore, further exploration of PLL could offer valuable insight through a diverse range of parents' voices.

7.3.2 Reflect on personal understandings of learning and perceptions of the purpose of education

Educators may benefit from reflection on their personal understandings of learning; the purpose of education, what learning is valued and why, and how learning is experienced. Research on 21st century learning (OECD, 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016) highlight the need for educators to reflect on their perceptions of the purpose of education as future societal needs become increasingly unpredictable. Schools need to consider if their approach to teaching and learning prepares children for life in the 21st century, particularly in relation to engaging with families. If the purpose of education is to prepare students for the future workforce, then a knowledge-oriented curriculum on its own is no longer appropriate. Instead, the addition of a competencies-based framework with a focus on learning for life is more appropriate. Clark's (2005)

concepts of lifelong, life-wide and life-deep learning are worth exploring when reflecting on personal and collective understandings of learning and education. These concepts require widening perspectives to look far beyond school learning and might prompt further reflection on the different ways in which children learn and the potential positive impact of PLL.

Schools may also benefit from assessing their school culture and the types of learning that are promoted and valued – do these reflect parents' cultures, values and beliefs? Ideally, parents feel represented in their school with the belief that their contribution to their own child's learning is valued and irreplaceable. Current views of parental engagement revolve around parents' contribution in the home, to prepare children for school (Hunt, Virgo, Klett-Davies, Page, & Apps, 2011; Melhuish, Sylva, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2001; Niklas, Cohrssen, & Tayler, 2016a; Niklas, Nguyen, Cloney, Tayler, & Adams, 2016b). This view of school being the primary place for learning with parents offering supplementary learning experiences is outdated. This study, although small, identified parents' values as being more aligned with 21st century learning, focussing on the processes and experiences of learning rather than just the consumption of knowledge. These parents have strong aspirations for their children, not just to succeed at school but to succeed in life. When parents and schools have conflicting goals for children's learning and different understandings of the purpose of education, parents are unlikely to feel valued and respected.

7.3.3 Examine power dynamics between parents and educators

The current dominant discourse of school as the main place for learning, with teachers as experts, places teachers in an influential position. Educators' awareness of their power to influence parents' role perceptions and confidence in their ability to succeed in PLL is vital (Bojczyk, Haverback, & Pae, 2018; Hattie, 2009). Educators do have specific knowledge of learning processes and curriculum content which is invaluable. Educators have potential to find ways to share their expertise, particularly in relation to numeracy and literacy, to empower parents and provide them with the tools and knowledge to support school learning. However, educators could also benefit from engaging with parents' invaluable knowledge of their own child and their interests, abilities and needs.

7.3.4 Reflect on relationships with parents

Working in partnership with parents is an essential step for educators, providing insight into the diverse parenting experiences that exist in their community. This study provided a glimpse into this diversity and highlighted parents' varied values and beliefs about education. Parents in this study indicated that they collectively valued the learning experience over learning content. Educators could benefit from exploring their understandings of parental roles in education, the power of parents' contributions, and the implications for developing genuine relationships with parents.

The intended use of this study is to inspire educators to reflect on their relationships with parents; the power dynamics between school and home, parental roles and unique contributions, and the importance of the emotional climate in which learning occurs. Research (Froyen et al., 2013) confirms that learning experienced in a positive way, by educator and learner, is likely to occur more frequently, and positively impact academic outcomes. This study showed that parents enjoy HLA that they value. Educators need to work alongside parents to understand their values and beliefs and develop a shared vision of educational success. The more aligned values and beliefs are, the more empowered parents might feel when making decisions about what learning to initiate, when, where, how and how often. Educators are likely to benefit from empowering parents, placing value on their irreplaceable role, and working in partnership with parents to ensure all children have access to the best quality of learning available, regardless of personal circumstances and cultural differences.

7.4 Summary

This chapter summarized the value of the research, contribution to the field of literature and research limitations. Recommendations for practice were described with the intention of encouraging educators to reflect on their relationships with parents, roles and perceptions, and to inspire further research on PLL. The recommendations for practice are for educators to:

- *consider diverse values, beliefs, cultures, and the wider educational context;*
- *reflect on personal understandings of learning and perceptions of the purpose of education;*

- *actively seek and listen to varied perspectives of parents, especially those with different life experiences from the educators, with a view to adapting educational experiences to suit the learner;*
- *examine power dynamics between parents and educators; and*
- *reflect on relationships with parents.*

This study emphasized the importance of examining parental involvement in education through the parental lens, with the addition of qualitative research to add depth and breadth to existing literature. Quantitative findings confirmed that parents enjoy PLL which they believe to be most valuable. This is an important finding for educators as it highlights the need to understand parents' values and beliefs when developing parent-teacher relationships. Qualitative findings offered insight into how parents experienced PLL and why they valued specific HLA. Parents seemed to value relationship-based PLL above all else and enjoyed initiating interactive PLL. They also viewed their role as irreplaceable in their child's education, specifically due to the intimate relationships they have; time and presence were viewed as more valuable commodities over expert curriculum knowledge.

By focussing on school as the main place for learning and teachers as experts, parents' valuable contribution may be missed, resulting in a narrow educational experience. Parents are capable, competent and have high aspirations for their children, not just to succeed in school but to succeed in life. Their aspirations are more aligned with 21st century learning and highlight the need for educators to work with parents to develop shared aspirations focussing on how children learn, not just what they learn. Educators could benefit from reflecting on their role and recognizing their potential to listen to parents' perspectives and experiences, and mutually enhance their respective roles. This study highlighted the importance of developing shared parent-teacher partnerships with shared understandings, goals and aspirations. Further research on PLL with the inclusion of parental voice would be beneficial, both within schools and within the wider field of literature.

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APPENDICES

A – Existing HLE survey tools

Table A1

The Home Learning Environment Scale

Question	Response	Score
Does anyone at home ever read to index child?	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0
How often does someone at home read to index child?	1 - Occasionally or less than once a week 2 - Once a week 3 - Several times a week 4 - Once a day 5 - More than once a day	1 2 4 6 7
Does anyone at home ever take index child to the library?	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0
How often does someone at home take index child to the library?	1 - On special occasions 2 - Once a month 3 - Once a fortnight 4 - Or, once a week	3 5 6 7
Does anyone at home ever teach index child a sport, dance or physical activities?	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0
How often does someone at home teach index child a sport, dance or physical activities?	1 - Occasionally or less than once a week 2 - 1 or 2 days a week 3 - 3 times a week 4 - 4 times a week 5 - 5 times a week 6 - 6 times a week 7 - 7 times a week/constantly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Does index child ever play with letters at home?	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0
How often does index child play with letters at home?	1 - Occasionally or less than once a week 2 - 1 or 2 days a week 3 - 3 times a week 4 - 4 times a week 5 - 5 times a week 6 - 6 times a week 7 - 7 times a week/constantly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Does anyone at home ever help index child to learn the ABC or the alphabet?	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0

How often does someone at home help index child to learn the ABC or alphabet?	1 - Occasionally or less than once a week 2 - 1 or 2 days a week 3 - 3 times a week 4 - 4 times a week 5 - 5 times a week 6 - 6 times a week 7 - 7 times a week/constantly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Does anyone at home ever teach index child numbers or counting?	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0
How often does someone at home try to teach index child numbers or counting?	1 - Occasionally or less than once a week 2 - 1 or 2 days a week 3 - 3 times a week 4 - 4 times a week 5 - 5 times a week 6 - 6 times a week 7 - 7 times a week/constantly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Does anyone at home ever teach index child any songs, poems or nursery	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0
How often does someone teach index child songs, poems or nursery rhymes?	1 - Occasionally or less than once a week 2 - 1 or 2 days a week 3 - 3 times a week 4 - 4 times a week 5 - 5 times a week 6 - 6 times a week 7 - 7 times a week/constantly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Does index child ever paint or draw at home?	1 - Yes 2 - No	 0
How often does index child paint or draw at home?	1 - Occasionally or less than once a week 2 - 1 or 2 days a week 3 - 3 times a week 4 - 4 times a week 5 - 5 times a week 6 - 6 times a week 7 - 7 times a week/constantly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Note. Reprinted from "Provider Influence on the Home Learning Environment: Part 2" by S. Hunt, S. Virgo, M. Klett-Davies, A. Page and J. Apps, 2011, p. 81-83. Copyright 2011 by Family and Parenting Institute.

Table A2

Questionnaire on HLE used in the E4Kids Study

Tell us about the study child's experiences at home. In the last week, on how many days have you or someone in your family done the following with the study child:	Days							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Read to the study child from a book?								

2	Told the study child a story, not from a book?
3	Drawn pictures or done other art or craft activity?
4	Played music, sang songs, danced, or done other musical activity with the study child?
5	Played with toys or games inside like board or card games with the study child?
6	Involved child in everyday activities like cooking or caring for a pet?
7	Played games outside together like walking, swimming or cycling?
8	Done activities with the study child that helped them learn letters or alphabet?
9	Done activities with the study child that helped them learn numbers and shapes?
10	Done activities using a computer such as a computer game or internet search?
11	Done activities at home that are messy, like painting?
12	Taken the study child to a special or extra-cost activity outside of the home, like ballet, gymnastics, swimming or language lessons?

Note. Reprinted from "Self-report measures of the home learning environment in large scale research: Measurement properties and associations with key developmental outcomes" by F. Niklas, C. Nguyen, D. Cloney, C. Tayler and R. Adams, 2016, Learning Environment Research, 19, p. 199. Copyright 2016 by Springer.

B – Data collection tools

Survey

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

Parent-Led Learning Experiences (PLLE) Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey and sharing your thoughts and feelings. First, you are invited to answer a few questions about yourself, your family, your work, and your education. This information will be confidential and you have the right to leave any questions blank if you feel uncomfortable answering. The information will be used in this study to help better understand parents' role in educating their children.

Please circle or write your answer below

Which parent are you?	Mother	Father	
How many children do you have?			
Who else do you live with?			
Is English your first language?	*Yes*	*No*	
What is your highest level of education?	*GSCEs/A levels*	*Certificate/Diploma*	*Degree (Bachelors or Postgraduate)*
Do you work or study?	*Yes, part-time*	*Yes, full-time*	*No*

What is your area of work or study?

The 11 items on the next page are adapted from an existing survey to investigate how you, as parents, experience and feel about learning with your child. Each of the 11 items has two scales, asking the questions, **"How important do you think these learning activities are?"** and **"How would you rate your experiences of initiating these learning activities with your child?"** To complete the survey, **please circle the number** that most accurately reflects your thoughts and feelings to each of the two questions in each row. If you would prefer to not answer a question, or find it is not applicable to you, please indicate with a tick in the appropriate right-hand box.

If you have more than one child, for the purposes of this survey please think of learning between you and one of your children who are currently in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 2. ***Please circle which year group this child is in:*** **Nursery** **Reception** **Year 1** **Year 2**

Example Questions

	How important do you think these routines are?					How would you rate your experiences of these routines?					Tick if appropriate	
	Not important	*Slightly important*	*Important*	*Quite important*	*Extremely important*	*Very poor*	*Poor*	*Fair*	*Good*	*Very good*	*Not applicable*	*Prefer not to say*
Example 1: **Daily exercise**	1	2	3	(4)	5	1	2	(3)	4	5		
Example 2: **Family dinner together**	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	✓	

Purpose of survey is to explore the relationship between parent's perceived value, and their personal experiences, of PLLE. The 11 items are adapted from the E4 Kids Survey (Niklas, Nguyen, Cloney, Tayler, & Adams, 2016).

	How important do you think these learning activities are?					How would you rate your experiences of initiating these learning activities with your child?					Tick if appropriate	
	Not important	*Slightly important*	*Important*	*Quite important*	*Extremely important*	*Very poor*	*Poor*	*Fair*	*Good*	*Very good*	*Not applicable*	*Prefer not to say*
1. Reading to your child	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
2. Telling oral stories to your child, not from a book	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
3. Encouraging your child to engage in art activities, including drawing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
4. Playing music, singing songs or dancing with your child	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		

	How important do you think these learning activities are?					How would you rate your experiences of initiating these learning activities with your child?					Tick if appropriate	
	Not important	*Slightly important*	*Important*	*Quite important*	*Extremely important*	*Very poor*	*Poor*	*Fair*	*Good*	*Very good*	*Not applicable*	*Prefer not to say*
5. Playing inside games with your child, such as board games and card games	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
6. Learning during everyday activities such as cooking and caring for a pet	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
7. Playing outside games and sports such as cycling, swimming and walking	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
8. Learning through structured learning activities that promote literacy development such as letters and words	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
9. Learning through structured learning activities that promote numeracy development such as numbers and shapes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		

	How important do you think these learning activities are?					How would you rate your experiences of initiating these learning activities with your child?					Tick if appropriate	
	Not important	*Slightly important*	*Important*	*Quite important*	*Extremely important*	*Very poor*	*Poor*	*Fair*	*Good*	*Very good*	*Not applicable*	*Prefer not to say*
10. Using technology such as computers and phones to expand knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
11. Playing with messy materials for sensory development (paint, mud, water etc)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		

12. Think of a learning activity (perhaps from the list above) that you enjoy engaging in with your child. What factors do you think contributed to this?

13. **Think of a learning activity (perhaps from the list above) that you don't enjoy engaging in with your child. What factors do you think contributed to this?**

14. **How would you describe your overall feelings of confidence in your role, and your ability to initiate and engage in learning with your child?**

Focus group questions and prompts

Purpose of the interview is to explain results from the survey and provide insight into how parents experience PLLE. The intention is to talk about learning experiences that have occurred, not reasons why they can't occur. Interviews will be semi-formal with the italicised questions only used as prompts, when necessary.

1. Role

How would you describe your role in your child's education? (school, home, community etc)
Possible prompts include:

- *How do you feel about this role?*
- *Do you think parents are valuable teachers? In what ways?*
- *What assets do you think you have specifically in your role as parent?*

2. Importance of play

How important is play for your child's learning?
Possible prompts include:

- *What is your role in your child's play?*
- *How do you think your role as a parent impacts your ability to respond to and extend play-based learning?*
- *How do you feel about your ability to extend learning?*
- *How confident do you feel when responding to your child's play?*

3. Importance of structured learning

How important is it for you to initiate structured learning activities with your child? Why/why not?
Possible prompts include:

- *What kinds of activities are important for you to initiate? Why?*
- *How confident and able do you feel teaching literacy and numeracy skills?*
- *How confident and able do you feel teaching creative and expressive skills?*
- *What type of learning activity do you most enjoy initiating? Why?*

- *What type of learning activity do you think is most important to initiate? Why?*

4. Factors contributing to negative experiences

Discuss themes about negative factors that emerged from the survey. "What do you think about….?" Or "how do you feel about….?")
Can you tell me about a time when you experienced one or more of these negative factors?
Possible prompts include:

- *What factors led to the experience being a negative one? How did you respond to the factors?*
- *How did you feel during the experience?*
- *Has this experience, or perhaps the recurrence of these factors, impacted your motivation to initiate learning experience? How so?*
- *What might be done differently so that similar experiences in the future could be more pleasant (for you or other parents)?*

5. Factors contributing to positive experiences (Repeat the above with positive factors).

Talk about a time when you experienced one or more of these positive factors?
Possible prompts include:

- *How did you respond to these factors? What did you do?*
- *How did you feel during the experience? How did you feel about it?*
- *Has this experience, or perhaps the recurrence of these factors, impacted your motivation to initiate learning experiences? How so?*
- *How might these 'positive factors' be increased for you or other parents?*

6. Final Questions

What do you think it means to have power or control to initiate and engage in learning experiences with your child?
Possible prompts include:

- *How would you describe your overall feelings of control and power?*
- *How do these feelings influence your confidence to initiate and engage in learning with your child?*
- *How do you think power and control differ for different people? Why?*

What do you think would improve your experiences of learning with your child?
What inspires and motivates you to initiate and engage in learning with your child?
What influence has this interview had on your thoughts about your role in your child's learning? In what ways?

C – Ethics requirements

Parent information sheet

"How do parents feel about learning with their children?"

Parent Information Sheet

Introduction
My name is Aleyce Thompson and I am currently completing my Masters of Education (Teaching and Learning). This letter tells you about some research that might interest you. The study aims to gather information from parents about how you feel about learning with your child – what you think your role is in their education and your experiences learning with your child.

Why am I doing the project?
The role of parents has been viewed, largely as preparation for and supplementary to formal learning. Yet other research has highlighted the special role that parents have in their child's learning. Your views would contribute to deepening our understanding of parent's perceptions, enjoyment and experiences of involvement in their child's learning.

What will you have to do if you agree to take part?
If you would like to contribute your ideas, **please fill in the attached survey and return to the Front Office.** Surveys will remain anonymous. The survey is the first of two phases in my project. If you participate in this phase, you have no obligation to join Phase Two. However, if you would like to discuss your ideas further, you might like to join a focus group of parents. Following the initial analysis of completed surveys, I will invite parents to participate in a small focus group to discuss ideas further.

- Parents of children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are being invited to complete the survey.
- If you chose to participate, please complete and return the survey by Monday the 3rd of June.
- If you are interested in becoming involved in a focus group, please speak to the Family Liaison Officer.
- Due to focus group size limitations, I cannot guarantee that all parents who register interest will be invited to participate in Phase Two.
- I will contact participants to set a convenient time for all in the group to meet and conduct the focus group session.

How much of your time will participation involve?
The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The focus group will be one session lasting about 45-60 minutes.

What are the advantages of taking part?
You might enjoy sharing your thoughts about your role in your child's learning. If you participate in a focus group, you might enjoy sharing and discussing your thoughts and experiences with other parents. A combined summary from at least two focus groups will be

shared with your school and could help them better understand parent perspectives and ways to improve experiences of parental involvement within the school.

Are there any disadvantages of taking part?
It is possible that you might feel uncomfortable discussing your feelings about your role, confidence, ability or enjoyment of learning with your child.

Do you have to take part in the study?
You are under no obligation to accept this invitation.
Completion and return of the survey implies consent. You have the right to decline to answer any particular question.

If you decide to participate in the focus group, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw at the start of the interview;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- have your information kept confidential;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Will your participation in the project remain confidential?
Your participation in Phase One of this study (survey) is anonymous and all of your responses to the questions will only be used for the purpose of this study. During Phase Two, I will take all possible steps to ensure your privacy and remove any identifying information. The confidential data from this research will be processed and stored securely. Access will be password protected and restricted to myself and thesis supervisors. A summary of the research (across year groups) will be available for all who wish to read it at the end of the study.

What happens now?
If you are interested in being involved, you can:

- Pick up a survey at the Front Office and complete and return by Monday the 3rd of June.
- Join an optional coffee morning for help completing the survey.
- Talk to the Family Liaison Officer if you are interested in being involved in a focus group.
- Talk to the Family Liaison Officer if you have any questions or concerns.

If you decide you do not wish to participate then no further action is required.
This project (Ethics Notification Number: 4000020235) has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Project Contacts
Aleyce Thompson, Masters of Education (Teaching and Learning) student at Massey University
[redacted]
Supervisors: Karen Anderson k.f.anderson@massey.ac.nz. Phone +64 6 356 9099 extn 84451 and Dr Jenny Poskitt j.m.poskitt@massey.ac.nz Phone +646 356 9099 ext 83070

Focus group consent form

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

How do parents feel about learning with their children?
Research investigator: Aleyce Thompson

Focus Group Consent Form

I agree to participate in the Parent Focus Group carried out by Aleyce Thompson of Massey University, for research purposes about how parents perceive their role in their in their child's education and how they experience learning with their child.

I have read the accompanying information sheet and understand the aims of the project.

I am aware of the topics to be discussed in the focus group.

I am fully aware that I will remain anonymous throughout data reported and that I have the right to leave the focus group before or at the start of the interview.

I understand that I have a responsibility to ensure that what is shared in the group remains confidential but that the researcher cannot control if other members of the group discuss what has occurred.

I am fully aware that I am not obliged to answer any question, but I do so at my own free will.

I agree to have the focus group recorded (audio recording), so it can be transcribed after the focus group is held.

I am aware that I have the right to edit my contribution to the transcript of the Focus Group once it has been completed.

I will fill in how I would like to be sent the transcript details so I can edit them below.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date : / / 2019

I **do** / **do not** (please circle) wish to be sent the transcripts to edit my contributions.

Please fill in how you would like to be sent them if you wish to edit them:

I would like them sent to this postal address:_____

I would like them to be emailed to me at: _____

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa
Institute of Education
Cnr Albany Drive & Collinson Road, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 356 9099 www.massey.ac.nz

Transcriber's confidentiality agreement

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

How do parents feel about learning with their children?

TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I ..... (Full Name - printed) agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: ..... **Date:** .....

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Institute of Education
Cnr Albany Drive & Collinson Road, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T 06 356 9099 www.massey.ac.nz

D – School communication

Letter to school

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

25 March 2019

Dear Principal,

A master's research student of ours, Aleyce Thompson, may approach you seeking your interest in participating in her research titled, "*How do parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education affect their experiences of PLL (Parent led learning)?* " Aleyce is a New Zealander who is currently working in England and is studying by distance at Massey University.

If the research could be useful to your school, then we appreciate your willingness for Aleyce to conduct a survey and some focus group interviews with the parents. Aleyce is willing to meet with parents to explain the research topic, process and answer any of their questions. However, if the timing or nature of the topic are problematic for your school or school community, please decline to participate. You may be able to suggest other schools that Aleyce could contact instead.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments to make about the proposed research.

Yours sincerely,

Associate Professor Jenny Poskitt

Associate Head

j.m.poskitt@massey.ac.nz

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Institute of Education
Cnr Albany Drive & Collinson Road, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T 06 356 9099 www.massey.ac.nz

E – Data analysis

Examples of data display

	Participant Information								A) How important do you think these learning activities are?											B) How would you rate your experiences of initiating these learning activities with your child?										
ID	Year group	Parent	Number of chilrden	Family structure	EAL	Work/ study	Work/study area	Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10	R	Mother	3	M,F,C,C,C	No	FT	Private equity	3	5	4	3	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
11	2	Mother	4	nil	No	No	NA	1	5	4	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	3
12	R	Mother	2	M,OA,C,C	No	FT	Accounting	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	4	4	4	5	3	2	2	5	4
13	1	Mother	2	M,F,C,C	No	FT	Retail	3	5	3	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	3	NA	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	3	NA
14	2	Mother	3	M,F,C,C,C	Yes	No	I was Barrista in my back home	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
15	2	Mother	3	M,C,C,C	Yes	FT	Health Services	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4
16	1	Mother	3	M,F,C,C,C	Yes	No	NA	1	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	5
17	1	Mother	1	M,OA,OA,OA ,C	Yes	FT	I'm clean	1	3	2	3	4	4	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	nil	nil	nil	4	3	3	2	3	3	4
18	2	Mother	1	nil	Yes	No	NA	2	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	5	4	4
19	nil	Mother	1	M,OA,OA,C	Yes	PT	East London	1	nil	nil	3	4	nil	nil	nil	5	4	nil	2	4	3	nil	nil	3	5	4	nil	nil	5	nil
20	1	Mother	5	M,C,C,C,C,C	Yes	No	NA	nil	5	3	4	5	2	4	5	5	4	3	2	4	2	5	5	2	2	3	1	3	5	5
21	2	Father	1	F,M,C	Yes	FT	nil	3	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	PNS	5	PNS	5	PNS	PNS	5	PNS
22	2	Mother	1	M,F,C	No	FT	Teacher	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	5	4	3	3	4	5
23	nil	Mother	1	M,OA,OA,C	Yes	PT	NHS Trust (Medical Doctor)	2	5	4	nil	4	4	5	5	3	3	4	3	5	4	nil	5	4	5	4	3	3	4	3

	Qualitative Questions			Additional survey notes						
ID	12	13	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10	Learning everyday activities. Factors: easy, not structured, they learn by example, teaches them life skills.	Mess play! Factors: structured, messy, hard to tidy up after.	Highly confident, I love and enjoy learning with the kids, just time is key to our family. Everything has to be scheduled!							
11	nil	nil	nil							
12	Regular activity in household.	Not having time to do so.	Confident.							
13	nil	nil	nil							
14	Is very important to share everything with my son, because I want him to be the best in the school.	I enjoy everything with my son even if I was sick, I try to do everything to make him happy.	I feel very happy and very proud because I spend too much time with my kids.							
15	Learning during everyday activities. Curiousity what we do at home.	nil	Confident.							
16	Engage with drawing, dancing, reading books.	I enjoy engaging in with my child.	I always try to help my child to do engage with his activities.							
17	nil	nil	nil							
18	We like enjoy engaging with child: reading, art activities, dancing, sport, structured learning.	Phone games.	Learning the child in the game form and with the help of educational games.							
19	nil	nil	nil							
20	This can be helpful that build a child imagination and social skills.	Learning to adapt to different changes that get throw their way.	I'm very confident in my role as a parent, my child loves to engage in sporty activity but hate to engage in literacy.							
21	nil	nil	nil							
22	He initiated it and was fully engagd. He asked for further information and wanted to keep doing it. He was proud of end results and enjoyed the process.	Homework is extremely difficult because he doesn't like anything unless he has a personal reason to do it and he would rather spend time of self directed tasks and activities. He procrastinates and tries to distract so he doesn'thave to do it.	Fully confident as I am a teacher.							
23	nil	nil	nil							

Year Group		Parent		Family Structure		Work/Study		Education		General	
N	Nursery	M	Mother	M	Mother	FT	Full-time	1	GCSEs/A levels	EAL	English as an additional language
R	Reception	F	Father	F	Father	PT	Part-time	2	Certificate/Diploma	nil	No response given
1	Year 1			C	Child			3	Degree (Bachelors or Postgraduate)	NA	Not applicable
2	Year 2			G	Grandparent					PNS	Prefer not to say
				OA	Other Adult						
				OC	Other Child						

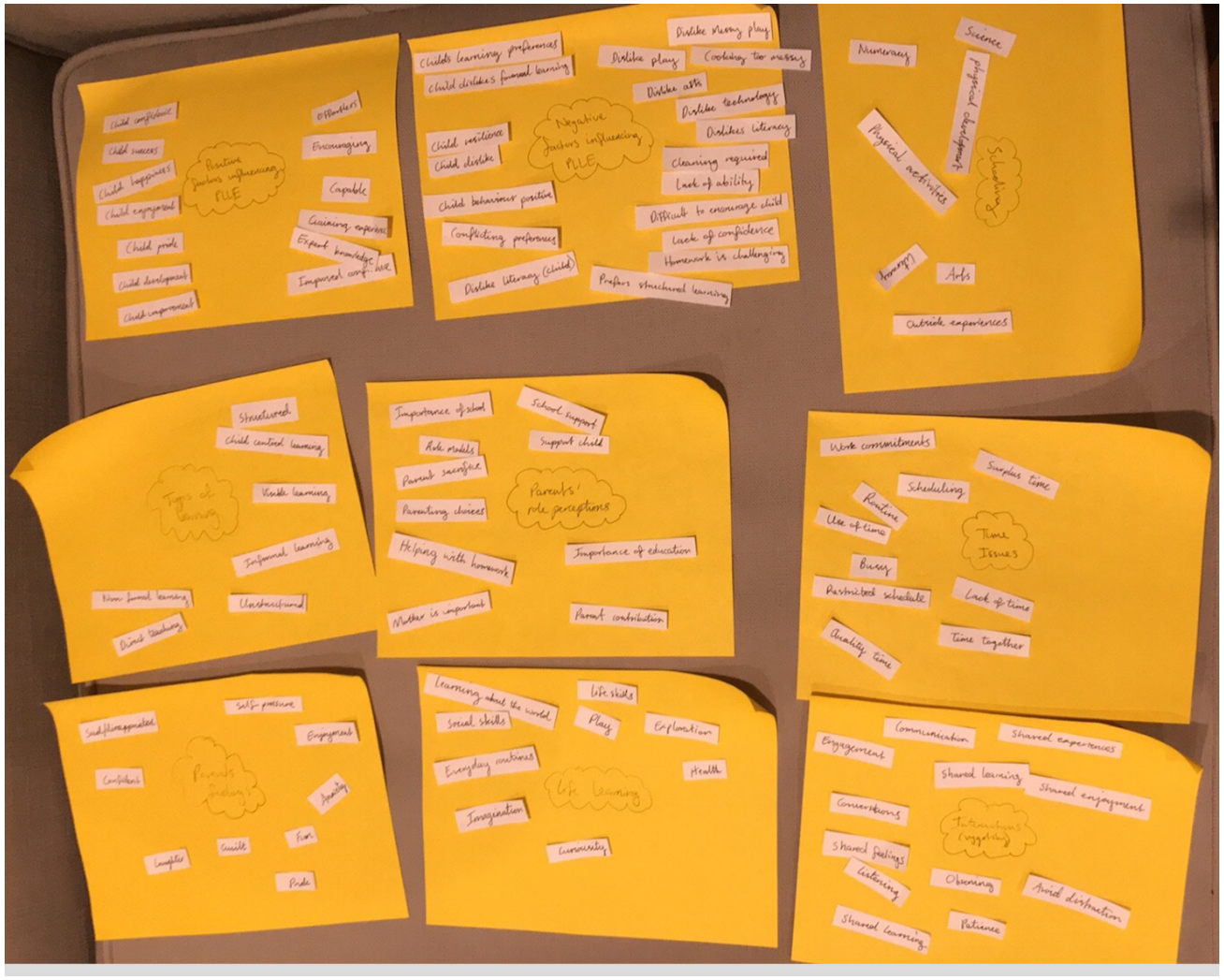
Examples of open coding

ID	Response	Codes				Reference ID
	Question 12 - Think of a learning activity (perhaps from the list above) that you enjoy engaging in with your child. What factors do you think contributed to this?					
1	nil	Nil				SP1Q12
2	I enjoyed reading books with my son.	Enjoyment	Engagement	Literacy		SP2Q12
	Now started doing arts and crafts and my 10 years old and myself enjoy with little one.	Enjoyment	Engagement	Arts		
	Teaching by using flash cards. Matching number, shapes or pictures game with the timer.	Direct teaching	Numeracy	Non-formal learning		
	Involving him in home cleaning activities.	Everyday routines	Engagement	Life skills		
3	I like reading a book.	Enjoyment	Literacy			SP3Q12
	Reading is important the learnt words.	Literacy	Non-formal learning			
4	I prefer sport activities such as cycling swimming, because I wasn't an active child and I prefer my child has more sport activities in her life.	Parenting choices	Physical development			SP4Q12
	Also I prefer reading, telling stories, drawing.	Enjoyment	Literacy	Arts		
5	I enjoy our reading and outdoor activities the best.	Enjoyment	Literacy	Outside experiences		SP5Q12
	Learning about plants, and animals and the world.	Outside experiences	Science	Learning about the world		
6	I think the factors that contribute to this are, 1. That child like to do different activities like (dancing, painting, etc).	Child enjoyment				SP6Q12
7	nil	Nil				SP7Q12
8	I like and we both enjoy physical activities as swiming, going to farm, to trampoline and bus trips to explore nrew playground.	Physical development	Exploration	Outisde experiences		SP8Q12
	And as we go we find learning on way.	Shared learning				
	Bus stop letters, bus numbers signs. Counting random object, like balls in hoops, steps, windows etc.	Literacy	Numeracy	Non-formal learning		
9	Both parent and child having fun. Parent(s) staying fully engaged and not discracted by phones etc.	Shared enjoyment	Engagement	Avoid distraction	Fun	SP9Q12
10	Learning everyday activities. Factors: easy, not structured, they learn by example, teaches them life skills.	Everyday routines	Life skills	Unstructured	Informal learning	SP10Q12
11	nil	Nil				SP11Q12
12	Regular activity in household.	Everyday routines				SP12Q12
13	nil	Nil				SP13Q12
14	Is very important to share everything with my son, because I want him to be the best in the school.	Shared experiences	Importance of school	Child success		SP14Q12
15	Learning during everyday activities. Curiousity what we do at home.	Curiousity	Everyday routines	Informal learning		SP15Q12
16	Engage with drawing, dancing, reading books.	Arts	Literacy	Engagement		SP16Q12

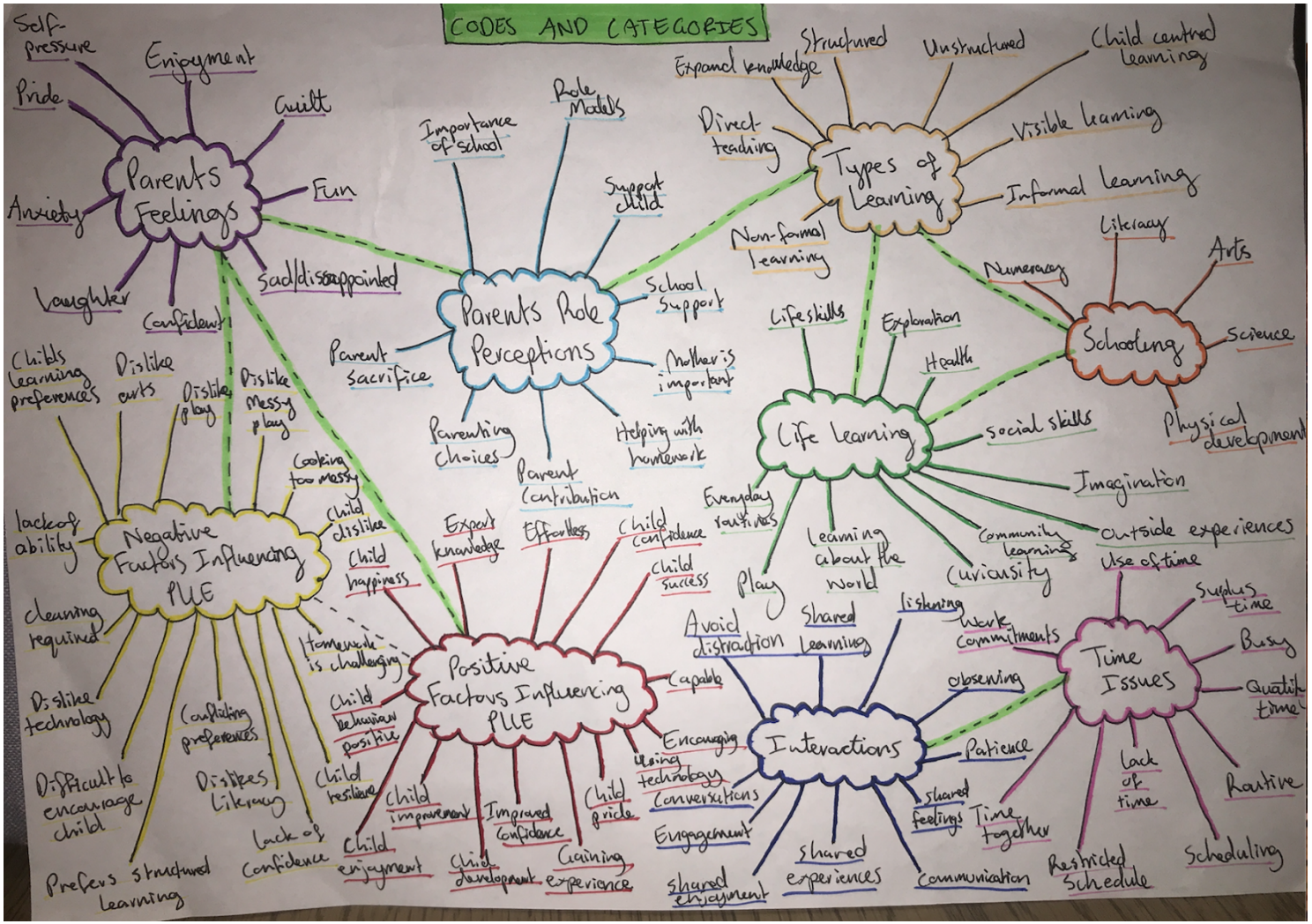
ID	Response	Codes				Reference ID
	Questin 13 - Think of a learning activity (perhaps from the list above) that you don't enjoy engaging in with your child. What factors do you think contributed to this?					
1	I engaging with my child every thing, playing outside,	Play	Engagement	Outside experiences	Informal learning	SP1Q13
	learning activity, no factors to my kids this activity play gems is very factors my child.	Non-formal learning				
	I don't want more play games.	Dislike play				
2	Cooking as I feel it becomes messier and takes a lo of my time and patience although I need to work on it.	Cooking is too messy	Patience	Use of time	Cleaning required	SP2Q13
	Busy schedule sometimes don't let me do things what I want or wish to.	Busy	Restricted schedule			
3	No any thing.	Nil				SP3Q13
4	I don't like playing music, singing songs or dancing because I can't do it very well so I prefer to look about my child does it.	Dislike arts	Lack of ability	Observing		SP4Q13
5	My son likes playing Nintendo Wii games and I suffer anxiety so gaming makes me angry I stay away from it. I do not enjoy technology as much as my son does. I prefer the outside and gardening.	Dislike technology	Anxiety	Conflicting preferences	Outside experiences	SP5Q13
6	I can say that I like to do a lot of thinks with my child, but to play computer games is not so helpful for my child and I spend very few time.	Dislike technology				SP6Q13
7	nil	Nil				SP7Q13
8	Alphabet. As I am not too good myself and don't feel confident with my own pronounciation or spelling.	Dislikes literacy	Lack of ability	Lack of confidence		SP8Q13
9	There are no activities I do not like engaging with my child in.	Nil				SP9Q13
10	Mess play! Factors: structured, messy, hard to tidy up after.	Dislike messy play	Prefers structured learning	Use of time	Cleaning required	SP10Q13
11	nil	Nil				SP11Q13
12	Not having time to do so.	Busy				SP12Q13
13	nil	Nil				SP13Q13
14	I enjoy everything with my son even if I was sick, I try to do everything to make him happy.	Enjoyment	Child happiness	Parent sacrifice		SP14Q13
15	nil	Nil				SP15Q13
16	I enjoy engaging in with my child.	Enjoyment	Engagement			SP16Q13
17	nil	Nil				SP17Q13
18	Phone games.	Dislike technology				SP18Q13

ID	Response	Codes				Reference ID
	How would you describe your overall feeling of confidence in your role, and your ability to initiate and engage in learning with your child?					
1	It's good, but I need more hard work.	Self-pressure				SP1Q14
2	It makes me really happy	Enjoyment				SP2Q14
	and surprising for me as well when something my son does I don't expect him so I feel like doing more activities with him because I can clearly see him learning and he remembers that.	Visible learning	Encouraging			
	On the other hand the guilt kills me when I don't do something	Guilt				
	because of the time and other commitments.	Busy				
3	Mother have a important role in kids learning	Mother is important				SP3Q14
	but I am busy mum so I do not have time some time I am sad.	Busy	Sad/disappointed			
	I give the time to me kids.	Time together				
4	I think my role is to explain to my child everything she can't understand.	Direct teaching	Support child			SP4Q14
	and to help her to become strong person.	C improvement	Support child			
	And I try to do it by spending with her asmuch time as I can (e.g. reading, playing games, walking together).	Play	Quality time	Engagement	Shared experiences	
5	Effortless! I think it's amazing.	Effortless				SP5Q14
	I raise my son without the TV, he watches DVD's.	Parenting choices				
	My son is really good, I think the most important is our conversations. He asks me questions about stuff and the world and I explain it all to him the best I can.	C behaviour positive	Conversations	Informal Leaning		
	We really enjoy our time in the garden and in the park.	Time together	Outside experiences	Shared experiences	Shared enjoyment	
	I love him telling me stories he invented in his head. That's my favourite, always makes me laugh.	Enjoyment	Child centred learning	Listening		
6	I am very happy to play and engage my child because I think child need to learn between games, that she feel attraction in what she do.	Enjoyment	Play	Informal learning	C enjoyment	SP6Q14
7	nil	nil				SP7Q14
8	With help of school and gaining experience I feel more comfortable with providing better learning experiences for my child.	Gaining experience	School support	Improved confidence		SP8Q14
	I have bachelor degree in PE teacher what means it's in me just need better adressing to my own child.	Lack of confidence		Expert knowledge		
9	Fair to good, the main issue is finding the quality time to engage in learning due to work commitments, especially during weekdays.	Quality time	Busy	Work commitments		SP9Q14

Axial coding – first stage



Axial coding – second Stage



Extract from focus group transcription

Focus Group 1 (EYFS) 25 Jun 2019

Present:
Researcher – R
Participant 1 – P1
Participant 2 – P2

[Start of recorded material 0.01]

R: I am the researcher and I have no children at this school.

P1: Participant 1 and I have one child in reception.

P2: I have a participant second and my child is in the nursery.

R: We're gonna start off talking about your role in your child's education – what you think is important that you do. Can you describe, Participant 1, please, what do you think your role is as a parent in your child's learning? Not all the things, what do you think you should be doing at home with your child?

P1: Like the example I have cards with the writing.

R: Flash cards.

P1: Yeah, I don't know what you call this in English but like a word in there so, example, I do with the letter first, then I say the word, then he repeat after me.

R: You're modelling the word.

P1: Yeah, and which colours as well. My son, he have difficulty to speak so I have to be slowly and not doing ...

R: Lots of examples.

P1: Yeah, and I have to do syllabes.

R: Syllables.

P1: We say syllabes in French. I don't know what you say, like o-ran-ge.

R: Breaking it into segments.

P1: Yeah, this he can learn as well more.

R: Participant 2.

P2: My job in the nursery so I think reading the books. If you're reading so he know a lot of words then he tell me again. This child is a little bit clever so he speaking a lot of words quickly. My third child is a girl and I go to the two years nursery and she goes three days. Pick up a lot of things in the nursery so school is more better but we at home reading the books and on the TV kids nursery rhymes so picking up quickly.

R: You like to do things at home that are similar to the things at nursery.

P2: Yeah.

R: Participant 1, how do you feel about being a parent and helping your child with their learning? How do you feel about that?

P1: I'm very happy. I'm very happy because as well my English is not very good so more he learn and there's some word I don't know, I learn it as well! We help each other.

R: Participant 2.

P2: Same, speaking at home is not good English so he give me every day the new words and I speak with kids and my English is more better.

R: I've got one more question about your role. Do you think that parents are as valuable as teachers are in teaching children? What do you think? Honest answer. Maybe not as valuable but what do you think being a parent helps you do that teachers can't do when it comes to learning? What do you think about that?

P1: I think the teacher in the school, she learning about the things in school but at home, we teach them how discipline, like I do. Like I make a cake because I have one in Year 4 so I do together. If I do pancake we do it together. The one in reception, he break the egg, the other one he put the milk, the other one he put something else and we all do it together so the teacher in the school is school but at home we teach something else.

R: That's something at school they couldn't do – having the mixed age group a lot.

P1: Exactly.

R: At home you have small group, just a couple of children and you can ...