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Personal, interpersonal and organisational factors that enable or constrain the  
development of attachment-type relationships between infants, toddlers and their  
teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

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## Abstract

Research has demonstrated that close and affectionate relationships between infants/toddlers and teachers within early childhood settings are of vital significance. It is within these relationships that infants and toddlers cognitive, emotional and physical health is promoted and protected (Dalli, White, Rockel, & Duhn, 2011; Rolfe, 2004; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). It is also in these close foundational attachment-type relationships that children develop adaptive emotional regulation and individual self-concept. These relational experiences form the blueprint for the manner in which children and adults approach and negotiate current and future relationships (Treboux, Crowell, & Waters, 2004). The goal of this mixed-method design study was to identify the structural and process quality factors that predict high quality relationship development opportunities between teachers, infants and toddlers.

Three case studies were undertaken in the first phase of data generation. The sample for the research comprised groups of teachers, infants/toddlers and their families/whānau. Case study data identified organisational factors that influence the opportunities for quality relationships to develop in Early Childhood Services (ECS); these organisational factors were then further validated in phase two through a national survey of 213 centres that were identified as catering for infants and toddlers.

Results showed there is a need for centres to develop relationship-based approaches, which could include primary/key teacher programmes within an organisational climate that is flexible, safe and open to critique and change. This relationship development requires specific attention in each of the three planes of activity: personal, interpersonal and institutional (Rogoff, 1998). The three planes pay attention to: participation of an individual within an activity and how this participation transforms during the course of the activity (personal focus of analysis), the individual's collaboration and relationships with others (interpersonal focus of analysis), and on cultural/institutional/historical factors (community or cultural or contextual focus of analysis).

It is in the structures such as rosters, or duty lists, and staff rotations where relationship opportunities get missed or unfulfilled. The findings suggest that the reduction of teacher rotation in the infant and toddler areas should be considered to promote consistency and continuity for the infants and toddlers and their families/whānau. The need for increasing infant and toddler specific preparation within initial teacher education and on-going professional learning programmes were identified as key factors in improving the development of quality teaching practice.

Implications from this study include the need for teachers to recognise the importance of developing attachment-type relationships with the infants and toddlers with whom they work, and to engage in on-going professional learning focused on infant and toddler pedagogy. Finally, the findings recommend that policy makers should develop regulations to ensure ratios for infants and toddlers be maintained at one adult to three children (1:3) for under two-year-olds. There is a call to reinstate the 100% fully qualified teacher requirements (particularly for infants and toddlers); and a need to provide financial and professional support to ensure all infant and toddler teachers can be exposed to a variety of on-going professional learning opportunities. The framework of planes of activity (Rogoff, 1998) has been utilised to make coherent sense of so many variables, each of which contributes to quality relationships between the teachers and the infants, toddlers.



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## Glossary

Centre	Early childhood place, building or institution. The Ministry term is ECS.
Education Review Office ERO	The New Zealand Ministry of Education Review Office
Initial Teacher Education (ITE)	Initial Teacher Education, takes place largely or exclusively in institutions of higher education. A teacher can first obtain a qualification in one or more subjects (often an undergraduate bachelor degree), and then studies for a further period to gain an additional qualification in teaching. Other pathways are also available; it is possible for a person to receive education as a teacher by working in an early childhood centre whilst studying part time with an approved provider.
ITERS-R	Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition
Key teacher/primary care	Based on attachment theory; successful implementation requires attention to activity in each of the three planes of analysis: <b>The institutional</b> ECS culture, philosophy, staffing and low adult:child ratios, planning for continuity of teachers; routines, assessment procedures <b>The interpersonal</b> warm, caring, intersubjective attunement to cues to children's needs and interest; collaborating teachers and <b>The personal</b> for chn: secure attachments to a few teachers; confident exploring and peer and adult relationships; for teachers: fulfilling, shared understandings.
Profile	A profile is a record of the child's process of learning: what the child has learned and how she has gone about learning and how she interacts, intellectually, emotionally and socially with others. Generally contains: stories, photos and examples of artwork.

Profile teacher	In this study the profile teacher is commonly the teacher assigned to document the child's learning, often with input from other teachers. This role does not equate to that of a key teacher or primary care role.
Professional Learning PL	The term professional learning in this study is used in reference to a wide variety of specialised learning opportunities, intended to help educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness.
Three Planes of Analysis	A system of analysis in which the focus can be on one of the planes while the others remain in the background. The three planes focus on: participation of an individual within an activity and how this participation transforms during the course of the activity (personal focus of analysis), the individual's collaboration and relationships with others (interpersonal focus of analysis), and on cultural/institutional/historical factors (community or cultural or contextual focus of analysis).
Whānau	Extended family or community of related families who live together in the same area.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Relationship development is recognised as a major part of the work of infant and toddler teachers and this study was undertaken in the hope of gaining a richer and fuller understanding of the vital role that organisational cultures play on attachment-type relationship development in early childhood settings. The research was undertaken through a case study approach in three Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood centres combined with a national survey of infant and toddler centres from across Aotearoa New Zealand. This thesis presents my research journey to further understand the complexities of organisational cultures and their impacts on attachment-type relationship development in infant and toddler settings.

The use of concepts from attachment theory has helped to construct the term ‘attachment-type relationships’. The attachment-type relationships between the teacher and the infant and /or toddler are where the child develops a secure base to explore from and return to. The child develops a sense of trust in her environment and comes to understand that someone in particular is going to be there for her, and the interactions experienced will be consistent, sensitive and responsive. The child is enabled to develop a concept of herself as being worthwhile and of value, where she is able to connect meaningfully with someone with whom she can return to for protection, engage with in moments of pleasure and where the development of shared understandings (a meeting of the minds) can occur. The concepts from attachment theory used to construct this term for this thesis are: secure base, internal working model and intersubjective attunement.

While in essence this research project was about relationship development between the infants, toddlers and teachers, it is acknowledged that these relationships are dependent on the connections between the teacher and the family/whānau. Attempts were made to explore the relationship development between the teacher and family/whānau, however, it was beyond the scope of this study to explore this at any more than surface level.

### ***Overall research aim***

The overall research aim was to consider the ways in which the organisational cultures in infant and toddler settings in Aotearoa New Zealand can affect the ability of teachers to intentionally develop and nurture the attachment-type relationship needs of infants and toddlers.

I have been involved in early childhood education for the past thirty-five years. During this time I completed the Supervisor's Certificate and Federation Certificate for Playcentre, a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education at Massey University. Currently I am the curriculum leader of two infant and toddler rooms at Massey Child Care Centre and support a teaching team of 14. In this role, I support teachers in their teacher certification process, mentor beginning teachers, and work with the senior leadership team of my centre to develop and enhance teacher practices specifically for working with infant, toddlers and their families/whānau.

From 2005 to 2007 I was privileged to be part of the Ministry of Education's Centre of Innovation Programme as a practitioner researcher. The New Zealand Ministry of Education's Centres of Innovation Programme involved selected Centres undertaking three years of funded research investigating identified areas of innovation to improve and showcase examples of good practice. My involvement with this programme was as a practitioner researcher along with six colleagues and two research associates. This

experience afforded me the opportunity to understand further how research can make a difference in the lives of teachers, children and families/whānau. A large part of the Centre of Innovation Programme was dissemination, where we were invited to deliver presentations at seminars, provide workshops and were encouraged to visit other centres throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

What piqued my interest, as I participated in discussion with participants at these seminars, were the questions, comments and often barriers presented about primary care or key teacher systems. Participants often voiced how such systems would be inappropriate, with concerns of children becoming too attached to teachers or the organisational manageability of maintaining teacher duties and rosters if this type of programme were implemented. Such concerns were expressed in the absence of a clear understanding of the meaning of the terms ‘primary care’ and ‘key teacher’.

Frequently, participants would also express dismay at the policies and practices, that had been designed and implemented in their centres many years ago; at best, programmes they felt were intended for over two-year olds altered or adjusted for the infants and toddlers, and at worst, basic babysitting practices. Infant and toddler teachers often talked of feeling constrained and powerless by the very nature of policies they had to work with. Comments such as these were intriguing as the growing body of research indicated that secure attachment-type relationships in early childhood settings were vital in the on-going development of the child’s strong sense of self and their developing social and emotional wellbeing.

It was during visits to centres that I observed what I called ‘lost children’. These were toddlers who appeared to drift on the periphery of the room, toddlers who were consistently missed or overlooked, made invisible by practices that failed to provide opportunities for prolonged intentional engagement between them and their teachers.

These children were perhaps shy, withdrawn, or had temperaments that were less endearing to teachers than that of others. What I observed during these times were well meaning teachers who were trying to do the best they could, but were often constrained in discovering, or finding the “gift” in these children by their organisational cultures that prioritised tasks (rosters, duties) over attachment-type relationship development opportunities.

My Master’s thesis research Bary (2009) indicated that once teachers had exposure to a specific series of workshops on attachment they deepened their understandings and changed their practice around relationship development with the infants, toddlers and families/whānau with whom they worked. This research also provided impetus for further investigation. It was during this time of exposure to practices being carried out in infant and toddler centres in Aotearoa New Zealand that I considered undertaking further research to look deeper into organisational cultures and the impact they had on teacher, infant and/or toddler relationship development in early childhood settings.

The questions I began to think about included the following: how do organisational cultures impact on relationship development? Do rosters and duties constrain the availability of teachers to develop attachment-type relationships? Why is the implementation of attachment theory practices or concepts perceived with such obvious hesitation? These issues challenged me to consider how much I truly understood about infant and toddler teaching practices, and further, if this understanding was robust enough for me even to begin to question what was happening in the wider sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. These questions, along with a need to develop my understandings, set the scene for further research.



## **Background**

Many young children in Aotearoa New Zealand will experience care and education from multiple environments and from parents, extended family members, network connections and professional early childhood teachers. It is within these close foundational relationships that children develop adaptive emotional regulation and individual self-concept. These experiences form the blueprint for the manner in which children and adults approach and negotiate relationships (Trebourg, Crowell, & Waters, 2004).

There is a rapid growth in the number of children enrolled in formal early childhood centres across the developed world (Berthelsen & Brownlee, 2005; Brennan, 2007; Dalli, 2014). In Aotearoa New Zealand the growth in enrolment rates between 2004 and 2013 has been the highest for children aged one, two and three years. Enrolment rates for two-year-olds have had the greatest increase, up 4.2 percentage points to 65% in 2013 (New Zealand Ministry of Education 2015).

This study is in part a response to this increasing participation by infants and toddlers by considering what is known about current practices in infant and toddler early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. The growing number of infants and toddlers participating in early childhood education programmes raises questions as to how the sector is managing this and how effective practices are for the infant, toddler and their family/whānau.

The growth in enrolments in Education and Care Services (ECS) in Aotearoa New Zealand may be explained by labour market changes and demographic changes in contemporary societies (Carroll-Lind & Angus, 2011). These changes mean that early childhood services for infants and toddlers are here to stay. The discussion in this study does not focus on whether or not infants and toddlers should be in early childhood settings but rather tries to address issues relating to the impacts that organisational cultures play in

the ability of teachers, infants and toddlers to connect meaningfully. Nor does this study measure types or patterns of attachment exhibited by the infants and toddlers.

The shift towards ECS for under two-year-olds is a significant change to the previously common pattern of education and care for three and four-year-olds (Carroll-Lind & Angus, 2011). It shows the demand for ECS to provide care while parents, usually mothers return to paid work (Carroll-Lind & Angus). In Aotearoa New Zealand the increase in enrolments in early childhood services has been absorbed mainly by education and care services. These services are generally full day, with some flexibility in hours, and require little parental involvement and with their diversity of format, programmes and philosophies, can offer lots of choice for families/whānau (Carroll-Lind & Angus).

The early childhood education curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017) holds at its core, a deeply embedded philosophy of relationships; indeed, relationships are one of the four overarching principles of Te Whāriki. The leading statement for the principle of relationships states that “children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people places and things” (2017, p. 21). Te Whāriki also suggests that specialised programmes should be developed for infants to meet their unique needs. It outlines key requirements for both infants and toddlers, including the statement, “A familiar and unhurried adult has primary responsibility for each infant, so they can anticipate who will welcome and care for them” (2017, p. 33). Implemented in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood centres in 1996 and updated in 2017, Te Whāriki conceptualises learning as the weaving together of principles, strands and goals. This metaphor of weaving can also apply to relationship development where, through careful weaving, the teachers and the centres support the creation of a relationship whāriki (or woven mat). This relationship whāriki would include (at least) the teacher, infants and toddlers and their families/whānau and could provide the child with a positive

sense of self, a strong internal working model, emotional strength, resilience and a solid foundation for the future of the infant/toddler. Thus, a relationship whāriki is one on which the child can stand firm in the present, and then build upon, for their future (Te Whāriki 1996, 2017).

To develop a pedagogy focused on relationships, infant and toddler teachers require opportunities to develop a coherent understanding of attachment theory, relationship pedagogy, and implications for practice. In order to develop effective relationships, the use of attachment theory has been proffered (Lally, 1995) as a tool or supporting structure from which to design policy and build practice. It is a theory on which to build understanding regarding the fundamental role of the parent-child relationship and its effect on psychological development and in more recent times a theory on which to build infant and toddler ECS programmes and practices (Lally, 1995; Rolfe, 2004; Rutter & O'Connor, 1999).

Centre management also need to develop understandings about the influence that organisational culture plays in the ability of teachers to develop effective attachment-type relationships with the infant/toddler and their family/whānau.

Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory is now widely regarded as the most important and well-supported framework for understanding social and emotional development through relationships (Goldberg, 2000). Attachment theory is a psychological, evolutionary, and ethological theory concerning relationships between humans (Rolfe, 2004). The application of attachment theory has spread far beyond influencing parenting and is now considered an important framework for working with children in multiple contexts (Rutter & O'Connor, 1999). Teaching practices based on attachment theory are having a direct impact on childcare policy and practice, with the responsiveness and sensitivity in the infant/toddler

caregiver/teacher relationship being more fully understood and strongly emphasised (Rutter & O'Connor, 1999).

### **Purpose and design of the study**

Research evidence shows that children's early experiences impact significantly on their development, socially, emotionally and physically (Shonkoff, 2010). The impact of early environments has a significant effect on the brain development and brain architecture, which in turn has major implications for children both in the short term, as well as throughout the life course (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Quality environments, both at home and out of the home, where children are supported by positive and responsive relationships with caregivers, are crucial to optimum brain development (Perry, 2004). The increased enrolments of infants and toddlers in childcare and the current neurobiological research around the need to investigate quality practices for infants and toddlers in group care makes this study particularly significant.

A mixed method, QUALITATIVE–quantitative, (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009) sequential and exploratory study (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2006) was designed to explore infant and toddler teachers' abilities to form effective, meaningful and authentic relationships with the infants and toddlers. The qualitative phase of this study is the dominant method, hence the use of capitals (QUAL-quant). A sequential and exploratory study design uses a qualitative method to discover the important underlying phenomenon of interest, which is then followed with a quantitative phase of data collection to further validate the relationships between identified variables. In this type of design, the results of the qualitative phase give direction to the quantitative method and then the quantitative results are used to validate or extend the qualitative findings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

This study set out to examine the effect organisational culture has on the ability of teachers to develop attachment-type relationships with the infants/toddlers with whom they work. In the first phase (qualitative) of data collection, three case studies were undertaken of the selected centres' organisational cultures. These case studies included teacher interviews and the generation of observational data to discover the important variables underlying the development of attachment-type relationship formation between teachers and infants and/or toddlers. In the second phase of the study, the quantitative phase, a purposive survey sample of 800 centres (resulting in a response from 213) that identified as having infant and toddler enrolments was undertaken using Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is an online survey website that enables users to create their own surveys using question format templates. Questions were designed to endeavour to find evidence (or not) of organisational variables identified in phase one and to consider if the results from the case studies organisational practices were part of a more widespread pattern.

## **Overview of chapters**

This study is reported in seven chapters. This current chapter has set the scene for the need for the research, introduced the research aim and objectives and the personal rationale for the research.

## ***Chapter 2 - Literature Review***

Chapter two provides a review of the literature concerning infant and toddler care and education in early childhood settings. Although the literature covers a wide variety of topics relating to infant and toddler care and education, this review will focus on four major ideas that were repeatedly identified throughout the literature reviewed. These themes include: attachment theory and its relevance for ECS settings; the elements of

quality practice in ECS settings; relationship development concepts; organisational practices and their influences on outcomes for infants and/or toddlers in ECS. Although the literature presents these themes in a variety of contexts, this review will primarily focus on their application to the importance of relationships for infants and toddlers in ECS settings. Challenges and gaps in the literature are then identified providing a further rationale for the current study.

### ***Chapter 3 – Methodology***

Chapter three presents and justifies the methodology used in this research. This mixed method QUAL–quan, sequential and exploratory study sought to investigate the impact that a centre’s organisational culture has on the attachment-type relationship development opportunities between the teachers and the infants and toddlers. This study involved video observations, analyses from the use of the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale –Revised /ITERS-R (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2006) and interviews with six parents, ten teachers, including, two student teachers and three team leaders, and a document analysis of centre policies and philosophies. The survey component (phase two) of this research added value and weight to the discussion as it provided a wider picture of current organisational practices in infant and toddler centres across a large sample of early childhood services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### ***Chapter 4 – Case Studies***

Chapter four presents the information gathered from phase one of the research reporting on interviews, video data and documentary analysis of the case studies. The chapter provides an analysis of the participant interviews conducted and the video footage taken at arrival and departure times. There is also an analysis of each case study centre’s

documentation regarding philosophy and practice. Themes arising from the data generated include teacher education, understandings of attachment and organisational practices concerning the participants' experiences in their early childhood setting. The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition ITERS-R measure (Harms, et al. 2006) was employed, thus providing a validated measure of centre quality. The ITERS-R data is presented in this chapter to balance the perceptions of the teachers and families/whānau against a formal structural assessment process.

### ***Chapter 5 – Survey***

Chapter five presents the results of the national survey. The survey was designed following analyses of the case studies presented in chapter four. The survey was developed to explore if the organisational practices identified in the case study phase were representative of wider practice. A purposive survey sample of 800 centres that identified as having infant and toddler enrolments was undertaken, resulting in 213 responses; these centres were selected from the Ministry of Education database of licensed centres. The sample was taken from this database according to their listing in the directory as catering for infants and toddlers. It was hoped that this sample would provide the study with a group that could be viewed as being representative of the cohort being surveyed.

### ***Chapter 6 - Discussion***

Chapter six presents a summary of findings across the two phases of the current study responding to the three core research objectives that guided the study. The organisational practices typically adopted by infant and toddler centres are explored, and challenges identified.

## ***Chapter 7 - Conclusions***

The final chapter presents a conclusion to the thesis and examines the key implications of the study. The influences on attachment-type relationship development between infants, toddlers and teachers as identified in this study are presented. The contribution of the study to the understanding of attachment-type relationship development opportunities and teacher availability to infants and/or toddlers in ECS in Aotearoa New Zealand is articulated, the strengths and weaknesses of the study identified and suggestions for future research proposed.

### **Summary**

This chapter has introduced the idea of attachment-type relationship development between the teacher and infant and/or toddler as a complex phenomenon and identified the need for research that examines the way in which ECS services are supporting the development of these key relationships. A brief justification for the study was offered, and an overview of the structure of the thesis provided. Chapter Two, which follows, presents a review of key literature related to the importance of thoughtful, intentional attachment-type relationship development in young children's lives and in particular, children in ECS settings and then identifies the research questions arising from this review.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature**

The literature review starts with a review of attachment theory and its key elements, with a specific focus on the development of the child's secure base, their internal working model and attunement. Following this is a review of the literature on attachment concepts and relationship development in ECS and quality pedagogical practice. The review includes an analysis of research on infant and toddler care and education in the Aotearoa New Zealand context including Centre of Innovation research reports and recent Ministry of Education reports, literature reviews and their findings. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research questions arising from this review.

A literature search was undertaken using electronic databases (e.g. ERIC, Ebsco, Google Scholar, Science Direct, and Ministry of Education publications) that identified research that was relevant to the focus of the study. The key words and terms used to search educational and scientific journals included the following: infant, toddler, attachment, relationships, early childhood services, brain development, neurobiological research, organisational culture and teacher values and beliefs. The primary focus was on material published in the last ten years or, if published earlier, are seminal pieces of work. Searches were repeated at regular intervals to ensure that newly published material was captured. Particularly relevant articles were used to support further exploration by following up on any pertinent referenced content. An area that was not explored more fully was that of neuroscience and brain development. While this review touches briefly on

these subjects, it was beyond the scope of this review to give justice to the complexity of neuroscience and brain research.

### **Attachment theory**

Attachment theory explains early interactions between infants and their caregivers. It describes how certain responses between the infant and their adult caregivers can affect babies' current wellbeing and indeed their developmental trajectory throughout childhood and into adulthood. This section gives a brief description of attachment theory and its underpinning concepts.

### ***John Bowlby***

Attachment theory is based on the collective work of John Bowlby and Mary Salter Ainsworth. It began in the 1930s, with Bowlby's growing interest in maternal loss or deprivation and later personality development. This interest was motivated partly as a result of the experience of hundreds of thousands of children during the Second World War who were evacuated to safer areas of the UK separating them from their parents. Bowlby formulated an initial outline of attachment theory where he drew on ethology, control systems theory, and psychoanalytic thinking. His work on the effect of parent-infant bonds transformed parenting around the world. Bowlby and Ainsworth's collaboration began after Ainsworth had visited Uganda, where she conducted the first empirical study of infant-mother attachment patterns (Bowlby, 1971).

Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, which underpins this study, is based on the notion of the development of personal constructs, which are formed through relationships with others. Bowlby's theory of attachment contends that humans develop close emotional

bonds in the interests of survival. These bonds assist the development and maintenance of mental pictures of the self and others, or internal working models (Bowlby, 1969).

The internal working model comprises mental representations or constructs for understanding the world, self and others. The internal working model helps the individual to predict and understand their environment, engage in survival promoting behaviours such as proximity maintenance, and establish an emotional sense of felt security (Rolfe, 2004). A person's interaction with others is guided by memories and expectations from their internal model, which influence and help evaluate their contact with others (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999). Children who have readily available, sensitive and responsive attachment figures will go on to develop a representation of self as being acceptable and worthwhile (Pietromonaco & Feldman Barrett, 2000).

The child's attachment relationship with their primary caregiver is directly related to the child's development of their internal working model. Infants develop understandings about themselves, others and the world as a result of their attachment relationship. The child will develop a picture of self through how they are treated in their attachment relationship. This image of self will influence how the child comes to expect to be treated and then how the child interacts with others. If a child has mainly unfavourable and frightening experiences, this will be reflected in a distrusting and negative internal working model (Bowlby, 1973).

Around the age of three, this internal view is thought to become part of a child's personality and will affect their perception of the world and future interactions with others (Schoore, 2000). The three main characteristics of a person's internal working model include feeling valued and valuable to others, understanding that others can be depended on, and seeing themselves as being effective when interacting with others. This internal

mental representation guides future social and emotional behaviour, as the internal working model guides responsiveness to others in general (Schore, 2000).

The development of an internal working model is supported through occasions of attunement between adult and infant where they 'tune in' to each other's physical and emotional circumstances. It is through a process of co-regulation where the child learns to manage stress and anxiety. However, when the child's anxiety is met by an adult who is unable to react sensitively and expertly to the child's needs, emotional dysregulation may occur in which both the adult and infant distress escalates (Furnivall, McKenna, McFarlane, & Grant, 2012).

According to Bowlby (1973), a young child needs to form a relationship with at least one main caregiver for normal and healthy social and emotional development to occur. When an infant or toddler is confident that an attachment figure will be accessible to them whenever they desire it, that child will be less likely to be predisposed to either acute or chronic fear than an infant or toddler who for whatever reason has no such reliable attachment figure. The child's confidence or trust in the availability of an attachment figure (or adversely lack of confidence or trust) will determine the child's sense of self. This self-view is built up slowly over the child's early years experiences and could last for the rest of their lives (Bowlby, 1973).

The perceived emphasis on the role of the mother as the primary attachment figure and therefore responsible for any successes and failures of the child was the basis of a fundamental criticism of attachment theory (Goldberg, 2000). However, Bowlby did not consider that the mother child-attachment would necessarily set the pattern of attachment for the remainder of the child's life and that other attachments such as father-child would also provide long lasting patterns of attachment. Events throughout childhood can also have a direct impact on security of these relationships (Ainsworth, 1978).

Bowlby's theories may have been misunderstood or used to reflect popular attitudes at the time about the importance of mothers being at home with their children (Goldberg, 2000). It is important to note that even though Bowlby suggested that relatively long-term, stable relationships with carers (parents) would develop healthy attachment, he noted that a single attachment (monotropy) was not the only or best way of achieving secure attachments (Oates, Lewis, & Lamb, 2005). Infants can form multiple attachments in the form of a hierarchy; other attachments develop in a hierarchy below this monotropy (Bowlby, 1969). An infant may therefore have a primary monotropic attachment to his/her primary carer such as mother or father, and below this the hierarchy of attachments may include the other parent, siblings, grandparents, and potentially early childhood teachers.

### ***Mary Ainsworth***

Mary Ainsworth (1978) further developed Bowlby's work on attachment. Ainsworth's research identified the same attachment behaviours being displayed by the infants and toddlers as observed by Bowlby. In her Uganda research, Ainsworth recruited 26 families with unweaned babies (ages 1-24 months) whom she observed every two weeks for two hours per visit over a period of up to 9 months. Ainsworth was primarily interested in determining the onset of proximity-promoting signals and behaviours. She noted carefully when these signals and expressions became preferentially directed toward the mother (Ainsworth, 1978; Bretherton, 1992). As a result of these observations Ainsworth became particularly aware of the security the mother provided as key to the development of the toddler's autonomy (Ainsworth, 1978; Elliot, 2007).

In later research Ainsworth observed infants in their home environments and in a controlled laboratory session known as the "Strange Situation" for further exploration of infant attachment behaviour. The Strange Situation research consisted of a series of

experiences carried out in a clinic with a child aged between 12 and 18 months. The child's behaviour was observed when: the infant and mother were introduced to the playroom; an unfamiliar woman then joined them; the mother subsequently left the room, leaving the child and stranger together; the stranger then left the room and the child was completely alone and finally when the mother returned to the playroom (Ainsworth, 1978; Bretherton, 1992).

From this research and that of another where she observed 26 white middle class families from Baltimore, with each family having 18 in-home visits lasting four hours, along with Strange Situation laboratory sessions, Ainsworth (1978) proposed three attachment patterns in infants. These were: secure attachment, insecure/avoidant and insecure/ambivalent. The securely attached children explored freely when their attachment figure was present and were happy to engage with strangers; they were distressed when their attachment figure left and were happy when they returned. The child with an insecure /avoidant attachment avoided or ignored their attachment figure and showed little emotion when their attachment figure left or returned. The insecure/ambivalent child explored little and was often wary of strangers, even when their attachment figure was present. They were extremely upset when their attachment-figure left and ambivalent when they returned (Ainsworth, 1978). Later, a fourth category was proposed by Main and Solomon (1990), which they termed disorganised/disorientated. These children showed no signs of coping mechanisms; they would wander aimlessly, have confused expressions, would freeze, and have undirected movements, or inconsistent (unorganised) patterns of interaction with their attachment figure (Bee & Boyd, 2007).

As a result of this research Ainsworth developed the concept of the attachment figure as a 'secure base' (Bowlby, 1988, p. 11) from which the infant can explore the world. She argued that one of the major tenets of secure base behaviour is that infants and

young children need to develop secure attachments before moving out into unfamiliar situations (Ainsworth, 1978). The secure base is provided by a sensitive and responsive attachment figure that provides a safe space for the child, physically and emotionally, from which the child is able to explore the world and return to. Ainsworth (1974) identified that infants who had been responded to sensitively and held frequently and affectionately during the early months, cried less towards the end of the first year and were able to play happily and explore their environment.

There is a suggestion, however, that it is the temperament of the child that lead to a specific attachment pattern (that the child's innate or inborn temperament will produce different attachment types) (Kagan, 1984). Thus, a child who has an easy temperament, feeds and sleeps regularly and copes with new experiences well, is more likely to have a secure attachment, whereas a child who is slow to warm or one who is less regular in eating and sleep habits and who is uncomfortable with new experiences, will more likely show insecure/avoidant attachments. The child who is difficult, who sleeps and eats irregularly and who does not cope at all with new experiences, is more likely to exhibit insecure/ambivalent attachment (Fox, 1989). An explanation of why children develop different attachment patterns has been described as being an interactionist process, between the child's innate temperament and the parents' sensitivity of response (Keller, 2013). Bowlby (1988) argued that babies who are born 'easy' can be made 'difficult' by insensitive parenting and contrariwise, babies born 'irritable/difficult' can become 'easy' through sensitive parenting. He goes on to say, "The evidence points unmistakably to the conclusion that a host of personal characteristics traditionally termed temperamental and often ascribed to heredity, are environmentally induced" (Bowlby, 1988 p.170).

The validity of applying attachment theory across cultures is contentious (McKenna, 1987). It has been argued that culturally appropriate parent and infant

behaviours in different ethnic contexts may not correspond to the attachment categories, which are based on Euro-Western principles and assessments (McKenna, 1987). A level of bias may occur unintentionally in cross-cultural research, due to Euro-Western researchers, generally, constituting the majority of attachment researchers. A certain degree of bias may occur as they endeavour to develop understandings of a diverse range of cultures (McKenna, 2009).

### ***Cross cultural studies on attachment***

Babies experience different relationships with the various people in their environments and, across cultures there are different approaches to the care of infants (Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). Parenting styles in various countries and cultural contexts may affect the type of attachment pattern exhibited by the babies during the Strange Situation procedure. For example, in Japan it is unusual to leave an infant alone as they are always in the presence of a family member; infants are rarely left in the care of others and so are less exposed to strangers. In Germany, where parents value independence, the parenting focus is on getting the child as independent as possible and therefore behaviours exhibited by securely attached children would be considered 'clingy' (Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988).

In order to explore these variations in more depth a meta-analysis of 32 'strange situation' studies across eight countries, representing 1,990 Strange Situation classifications was undertaken by Van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988), investigating if there was a global attachment pattern. The studies used in the meta-analysis were carefully selected using only studies on infant- and toddler -mother attachment that used the classical Strange Situation procedures. The use of the Strange Situation classification was based on the premise of its good reliability and consistent results (Wartner et al., 1994).



The samples were analysed by way of correspondence analysis and three types of analysis were performed on these data. Considerable consistency was identified in the overall distribution of attachment patterns across all cultures, with secure attachment the most common type of attachment in all eight nations.

However, significant differences were found between the distributions of insecure attachments. The overall consistencies in attachment patterns suggest there might be universal characteristics that underpin infant and caregiver interactions. A noticeable aspect of Van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenbergs', (1988) meta-analysis indicates that intercultural variation (within countries) is nearly 1.5 times the cross-cultural variation (across countries). This finding suggests that cross-cultural differences in attachment can be more reflective of local customs, and not necessarily of the wider differences between countries (Van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). The conclusions from this meta-analysis indicated that the studies examined show remarkable consistency to attachment theory and suggest that attachment theory has validity across cultures. Attachment theory is essentially universal with culturally specific aspects of infant and maternal behaviours related to the particular values and beliefs of specific societies (van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008).

### ***Intergenerational attachment***

Research on intergenerational attachment indicates that attachment patterns established in childhood have a meaningful impact on later relationships (Marrone & Diamond, 2014). The transmission of attachment patterns is related to the development of an infant's internal-working model of self. If a parent has been able to reconstruct their view of themselves as capable and competent within a positive attachment relationship, the

child is much less likely to be negatively influenced by their parents' dysfunctional past relationship experiences (Marrone & Diamond, 2014).

The primary capacities for attachment, such as sensitive responsiveness, continuity of care, and a capacity for reflective functioning, cannot be gained by ways of intellectual learning or in isolation; they can only be acquired through repeated interpersonal experiences in early childhood or in later life in which these conditions are actively met (Bowlby, 1969). The child's likelihood of exposure to abuse or violence is influenced by their intergenerational history (Marrone & Diamond, 2014). Factors that were found to have enabled families to break the intergenerational cycle of abuse included having fewer financial difficulties and high levels of social support compared to families who maintained the cycle (Dixon, Browne, & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005).

### ***Summary***

Bowlby's work drew attention to babies and their need to be cared for and cared about. Ainsworth's research, which built upon Bowlby's work, indicated a need for infants to develop a secure base to explore from and return to. The focus of Bowlby's work was based on the mother-child dyad and was probably a reflection of the time and place of his work, which was post war when men returning needed to re-join the workforce, and of the social engineering of women back into the home (Goldberg, 2000). While Bowlby's attachment theory has been, and still is, open for debate, it remains a vital theoretical source when caring for babies in any context (Elliot, 2007). Bowlby's and Ainsworth's work have particular significance for teaching practice in early childhood settings and is worthy of ongoing consideration and reflection (Elliot, 2007; Fitzer, 2010; & Rolfe, 2004). The following section explores the relevance of attachment theory and concepts from the perspective of early childhood settings for infants and toddlers.

## **Attachment theory in ECS**

Attachment theory and research can offer ECS a critical lens through which to understand teacher, infant and toddler interactions, as contemporary attachment research now stretches well beyond mother and child (Shemmings, 2016). Attachment theory has been suggested as a useful tool in developing early childhood policy and practice (Lally, 2007; Rutter & O'Connor, 1999). A review of attachment theory and its implications for child care policy and practice was carried out by Rutter and O'Connor (1999) and provided three main themes of focus; they started by exploring the historical overview of attachment theory and how it is differentiated from other theories; they then identified significant contemporary childcare policy concerns that would benefit from an attachment perspective and thirdly they focussed on the main conceptual and methodological considerations for applying attachment theory to policies and practice in the ECS setting. Fonagay and Target (2001) stated that a child's significant caregiver should be characterised by sensitive responsiveness and these attachment relationships have a need to be sustained and continuous, rather than disturbed or interrupted. They argue that the potential of a caregiving relationship should be the source of the child's all-important sense of security in others and self and that the involvement of these relationships promotes mental health, resilience and protection against current and later vulnerability (Fonagay & Target, 2001).

However, the applicability and adherence to attachment theory for the many different cultures now participating in ECS requires some degree of caution. It has been argued that attachment theory needs to be extended to include a wider view of relationships, therefore providing a more complex appreciation and understanding of relationships within ECS settings (Degotardi & Pearson, 2009). Limited understandings or misunderstanding around attachment theory in practice could result in restricting or narrowing the relationship development for the children. Issues identified include the

implementation of attachment relationships in ECS settings that could be restrictive, rather than facilitative, of children's investigations (Elfer, 2015). Assigning children to individual teachers could restrict the children's interactions with the wider group of teachers, and possibly with their peers (Elfer 2015). Attachment theory though, does provide essential concepts of child development, which can be implemented in ECS to enhance teaching and learning processes.

It can be argued that an understanding of attachment theory concepts by teachers and a focus on relationship development are closely linked to high-quality programmes for infants and toddlers (Edwards & Raikes, 2002; Howe, 1999; Rolfe, 2004). Positive relationship development based on strong understandings of attachment theory and its concepts of intersubjective attunement and the development of a 'secure base' increases infants' and toddlers' resilience, autonomy and security in early childhood settings (Rolfe, 2004).

While it is beyond the ability of the early childhood teacher to identify or repair attachment relationships between the family/whānau (Shemmings, 2016) or to identify specific attachment patterns, it is within the scope of the teacher to provide an environment of attachment-type relationships that could support the child's development of security, self-regulation, intersubjective attunement and social competence. It is within a teacher's role to consider how they ensure children are enabled to develop a strong sense of self, to know who to trust, to be supported in the development of self-regulation tools and encouraged to forge appropriate social connections with others. This study set out to investigate the influences that enable or impede teachers' abilities to engage with infants and toddlers in these ways.

Children will form attachments outside of the home environment when they are in the provision of physical and emotional care, and when an individual has a consistent

presence and an emotional investment in the child (Honig, 1998; Howe, 1999). The development of relationships beyond the family environment, which provide emotional support and protection, have also been considered to be an important aspect of a child's development (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). The relationships children develop with their teachers are therefore similar to those with the primary attachment figure (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004), although further down the hierarchy of attachment relationships that Bowlby (1988) described.

Children who attend high quality services during their first three years are reported to have experienced closer mother-child relationships, increased positive behaviour, and more complex language and better cognitive outcomes (Cryer, Hurwitz, & Wolery, 2000). Any advantage from attending an ECS service is directly dependent on the service's quality, but more importantly a lack of quality is not neutral and results in long-lasting adverse effects (OECD, 2011).

### **Defining quality for early childhood settings**

Quality is a difficult concept to define and different contexts will have different priorities, depending on socio-cultural values and national political contexts. Quality in ECS has been defined as having structural and process factors. Structural factors include teacher child ratios, group size, and the physical safety of the setting and qualifications of the teachers. Process factors include interactions between the child and teachers and participation of the children in a variety of activities (Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). Nevertheless, there is consensus across research that quality for infants and toddlers is developed by the following: highly skilled teachers; small group sizes with low adult to child ratios; warm, responsive interactions between teachers and children and safe emotional and physical settings (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989).

Infants and toddlers have unique needs and any early childhood programme that is aimed towards infants and toddlers must be structured specifically to meet those needs. Dalli et al. (2011) undertook an extensive literature review of English medium research intended to provide the New Zealand Ministry of Education information to support the development of quality early childhood provision for infants and toddlers. ECS quality discourses have been reported as occurring in three waves (Dalli et al., 2011), with the first wave being during the late 1960s to early 1970s. This research focused on exploring whether out of home care or day-care was good for children; most of this research was undertaken in the North American context. During this time in New Zealand under two-year-old places in childcare settings were very limited and were not being empirically investigated (May, 2001). The findings of this first wave of research indicated that it was not the use of out of home care for children that was a problem, but the quality of the service being used.

The second wave of research, during the 1980s, focused on the elements in the environment; such factors included the physical environment, adult: child ratios, and caregiver behaviour. Assessment tools for evaluating quality were created during this time. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) (Harms & Clifford, 1983) led the way, and then later on the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) (Harms, et al., 1998). The rating scales were developed to measure structural and process quality, and were later adapted, updated, and validated internationally. The rating scales continue, to this day, to be used globally. The ITERS-R (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 1998) was used in this study to evaluate overall centre quality in recognition of the structural and process elements of quality.

The third wave of research occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s and had a more ecological focus. The research literature, while still mostly from North America,

focused on adults' interactions with the children, and looked for links between this behaviour and children's cognitive, and social and emotional development (Dalli, et al., 2011). The research that followed into the late 1990s has had a focus on *what* and *who* defines quality and explored the concepts of quality being a cultural construct (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999).

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, The New Zealand Education Review Office (ERO) carries out evaluations and publishes reports on quality of education and care services for infants and toddlers over various time frames. In 2009 their report was based on the findings of 74 centre based early childhood services licensed for only under two-year-olds; findings were that while many teachers encouraged the children's language and social skills and responded to the children's interests, in some centres teachers were more focused on managing tasks. ERO noted that in some centres, the teachers were more focused on managing the group and were often unaware of individual children's needs in regard to sleeping, eating and toileting (ERO, 2009). Such findings were concerning when research was demonstrating the importance of infants and toddlers having secure relationships with their teachers to support the development of their positive sense of self and to then have the ability to explore with confidence.

In 2014, the New Zealand Ministry of Education Review Office (ERO) gathered information during regular education reviews in 235 early childhood services identifying as providing for infants and toddlers. They reported that generally children were well supported and experienced warm and nurturing relationships with the teaching staff and there was evidence of a strong focus on wellbeing and belonging for the infants and toddlers. The report of their findings published in (2015) found that while 56% of centres offered somewhat responsive curriculum only 12% of these were classed as highly responsive; that is only 12% of centres reviewed were seen as offering a highly responsive

curriculum for infants and toddlers and 46% offered a limited responsive curriculum, with 13% of these being not responsive at all. These reports over a period of six years show an improving environment for infants and toddlers but also provide several concerning factors: and that after six years only 12% of centres were identified as providing high quality services for infants and toddlers. It could be argued that, if generally, children were well supported and experienced warm and nurturing relationships with the teaching staff but only 12% of centres were implementing high quality experiences for the infants and toddlers then maybe the relationships were not as warm or nurturing as they were perceived by the reviewers.

The 2011 report from the New Zealand Office of the Children's Commissioner (Carroll-Lind & Angus, 2011) reported that the particular interests of infants and toddlers, the fastest growing group of users, must be given weight when national policy and regulations are being reviewed in the future. Infant and toddler services are not monitored closely enough, and the quality of standards is too low in many services (Carroll-Lind & Angus, 2011). High-quality infant/toddler care is not just about providing a place for families/whānau to leave their infant and toddler; it is a place that is crucial to the on-going potential for a child's future outcomes. An environment of positive relationships is vital for the development of a child's optimal brain architecture because it is within these relationships that the foundations for later outcomes such as academic performance, mental health, and interpersonal skills are developed (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

High-quality early childhood programmes for infants and toddlers should strike a balance between cognition and emotionality and by teachers placing significant attention on emotional and social development; the child's cognitive development will be directly assisted (Shonkoff, 2010). High-quality ECS for under-two-year-olds should be



environments where children experience adults who are skilled in developing and maintaining responsive, attuned interactions. These responsive, attuned relationships will facilitate both cognitive and emotional well-being, and are achieved by close, affectionate and intentional (where teachers are deliberate in their practice to connect meaningfully with the infant or toddler) relationships (Raikes & Edwards, 2009b). Children who have secure relationships with their caregivers are better equipped to manage their emotional arousal in social situations and to use self-control to optimise positive social interactions; therefore, resulting in fewer externalising behaviour problems such as aggression, physical violence, and tantrums (Gilliom, Shaw, Beck, Schonberg, Lukon, & Winslow, 2002; Sroufe & Waters, 1977). Early interactions do not just produce a context for development; they also directly influence the way the brain becomes hardwired (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

This section has defined quality from an infant and toddler ECS perspective. Discussion in this section shows that there are benefits as a result of attending ECS services for infants and toddlers, but these benefits are contingent on the programmes being of high quality (Dalli, 2014). The following sub-section explores three attachment concepts: secure base, intersubjective attunement, and internal working models from an ECS perspective. The use of these concepts to guide pedagogy in the ECS setting has been suggested as quality practice with infants and toddlers (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

### ***Secure base***

When children have the opportunity to spend extended time with a sensitive and in tune teacher, their relationship is able to be more sophisticated and therefore enabling of the child to have a secure base. An example of this is illustrated in Raikes' (1993) study of

infant and teacher attachment in an infant care setting; in this centre the children were placed with a teacher as a young infant and they stayed together until approximately three years old. Findings indicated that children who spent consistent time in the care of one high ability caregiver had higher attachment security ratings; after six months with the same caregiver, the secure-attachment rate was 50%; after nine months it increased to 67%, and for children who had been with the same caregiver for one year, 91% of the infants had secure attachments with their Centre primary caregivers. A central finding of this study was that the time spent with the teacher had a substantial and positive relation to the child's security of attachment in infant day care. While these data were generated from a centre with predominantly middle-class families and high-ability teachers, this research does however provide some information regarding the ECS relationship development for children from a more mainstream background as opposed to the above-mentioned high ability teachers and predominantly middle-class families.

It is important to maintain stable relationships in the earlier years when infants and toddlers are forming their attachment-related behaviours with their teachers. Having extended time with a trusted and consistent teacher is an essential element in building a secure relationship with young children. Findings from the Howes and Hamilton (1993) and Cryer et al. (2005) studies suggest that young children whose teachers change or children who do not have access to consistent teachers at an early age, may be more vulnerable to having a less secure relationship with their teachers.

The development of secure attachment-type relationships between teachers and children is reliant on the teachers having an intentional focus on relationship development, along with the back-up of organisational practices or programmes that are specifically designed to support teachers' abilities to create attachment-type relationship development opportunities. Intentionality of practice would include: having consistent teachers

available to specific children, where they can deliberately make time to be ‘present’, to respond consistently and sensitively to the infants and toddlers changing needs and preferences. Centres would have specific programmes developed to ensure teachers are able to engage in daily routines that build a sense of safety and security and engage in interactions to promote heightened levels of intimacy (Dalli et al., 2011). Such relationships are facilitated through a sophisticated reading of children’s body language, and a thorough understanding of the very subtle cues given by children of this age; in-tune teachers who truly know the children they care for are more able to quickly and correctly pick up on these subtleties (Dalli et al., 2011). These types of relationships are complex and go far deeper than just meeting a child’s immediate needs. They are deep, meaningful and key life experiences (Van Manen, 1991).

The development of attachment-type relationships takes time and skill to develop and it is important for teachers to understand their role in the development of attachment-type relationships. Teachers require understandings of the complexity of relationship development and the part they play in managing both the time and the intentionality of the relationship development process.

Lee’s (2006) qualitative, exploratory, interpretive study of three infant and caregiver dyads in a university-affiliated childcare centre in New York focused on the time it took for firm relationships to be built between the caregiver and the infant. Involving video footage, interviews, observations and document analysis of children from 6 weeks to 24 months old she discovered that in a supportive environment, it would take 6 to 11 weeks for this firm relationship to develop, and that time and opportunity to be together was a mediating factor in this development. Several key points from her study included the importance of teachers recognising that a significant part of their teaching role is the development of safe and secure relationships with the infants and/or toddlers with whom

they work. These relationships require positive responsive and accepting interactions. She also highlighted the importance of teachers being able to work collaboratively with their colleagues and families/whānau as these relationships are being built. It is in the skilled relationship that the child grows and develops abilities that will last a lifetime.

### ***Intersubjective attunement***

A key element of attachment theory is the development of intersubjective attunement: derived as a concept from developmental psychology intersubjective attunement is described as the development of shared meaning between two or more people who jointly participate in an experience (Stern, 2004). This experience can be physical, during play, and also as a meeting of minds, which can be by way of feelings, intentions and thoughts. When two or more people share their experiences physically and emotionally, a state of intersubjective attunement, it is argued, has been achieved (Degotardi, & Pearson, 2014). The ability of a parent or significant adult to intersubjectively regulate a child's stressful time will support the child to internalise the process and thus develop their own skills to self-regulate. Language also serves as a purpose of self-control or regulation over one's own cognitive processes, processes such as memory and thought (Vygotsky, 1978). Intersubjective attunement is posited as a central tenet of quality pedagogy, its development is closely related to Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, which argues that the development of secure relationships promotes the possibility of shared minds (Beebe, Rustin, Sorter, & Knoblauch, 2003).

The development of intersubjectivity is a feature of effective pedagogy with infants and toddlers, which is realised in the development of in-tune, responsive and consistent interactions between the teacher and child (Dalli et al., 2011). Young children experience their worlds through relationships and it is these relationships that can affect nearly every

aspect of the child's development including intellectual, social, emotional, physical, behavioural, and moral aspects. The child's exposure to safe, secure and predictable relationships impacts on such outcomes as adult health, self-regulation, and the ability as an adult to develop and maintain successful relationships with others (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2004).

Relationships that recognise the importance of sensitive responses and intersubjective attunement enable the development of emotional regulation in the infant and toddler and support the wiring of the brain for learning (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Warm, positive and responsive interactions between infants and teachers, within early childhood care and education environments are important in developing intersubjective attunement and enabling the child's emotional regulation. Achieving such an outcome for children requires their teachers to be themselves attuned to the children in their care. Recchia and Dvorakova (2012) used qualitative methods to explore the everyday interactions of three infants and their teachers in an early childhood context; when teachers were 'in-synch' with infants they were more able to establish intersubjective attunement and conversely when they were 'out of synch' they did not notice the infants' subtle cues or when the infants were not adapting to the teachers' expectations or ways of being (Recchia & Dvorakova, 2012). These in-synch relationships require the presence of knowledgeable and sensitive teachers who can provide sensitive in-tune relationships.

As children develop, they transition from being 'other' regulated, such as by a significant adult to being self-regulated in their cognitive processes. They are becoming aware of self. It is in the early relationships that children develop key tools to enable them to control their reactions to stressful situations, to maintain a level of focused attention and to develop the ability to read their own and others' emotional states (Fonagy & Target,

2001). Stern (2004) identified the four main stages as an infant develops through a series of overlapping and interdependent stages or senses of self: emergent self (birth to two months); the sense of core self (two to six months); the sense of a subjective self (seven and fifteen months); and the sense of verbal self (during the second year of life). Stern (2004, p.8) refers to “now moments”, or sparks of interactions when that now moment becomes a “moment of meeting”. At that moment, there is a deep sense of connection and intimacy. It is the “small but meaningful affective happenings that unfold in the seconds that make up the now” (p. 8). It is in these ‘now moments’ that relationships are forged and deepened (Stern, 2004).

Early childhood relationships and the daily interactions that provide these ‘now moments’ are central to the care and education of children under three years. The very young child’s relationships create a critical context for daily experiences and opportunities for development (Degotardi & Pearson, 2014).

### ***Internal working model***

Each child builds working models of the world and themselves in it by the way they see life events, consider the future and construct understandings. For the infant and toddler, it is the quality of the relationship that has the greatest value. (Elicker, Ruprecht, & Anderson, 2014).

As children develop self-regulation, their emerging sense of self and internal working model is also developing, and this too occurs between people. When families/whānau and teachers are consistent and responsive to an infant’s or toddler’s cues, and respond in a warm and caring manner, the child becomes secure, confident and happy (Marshall, 1989). These interactions occur moment to moment and influence how infants and toddlers expect others to be with and treat them, thus enabling the child to feel safe and

relate to others. This developing sense of self helps to fuel the child's self-directed explorations (Marshall, 1989). In one study Elicker, et al. (2014) explored caregiver-child relationships that are perceived to provide optimal outcomes for the children. They did this by exploring six aspects of teacher-child interactions as identified through the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (LaParo et al., 2012) and the Caregiver Interaction Profile (CIP) (cited in Helmerhorst, Riksen-Walraven, Vermeer, Fukkink, & Tavecchio, 2013, 2014). They found that it was in the consistent, sensitive moment-to-moment caregiving interactions that learning and development opportunities were built.

Early childhood services can play a role in supporting the development of the child's self-regulation, an area of development that can be predictive of the child's future prospects. This is clear from the results of the extensive Dunedin Longitudinal study which followed a complete birth cohort of 1,037 children born in one city in a single year, representing the full range of socioeconomic status in the general population of Aotearoa New Zealand's South Island. Assessments were carried out between ages three to thirty-two years in 2005; 96% of the 1015 study members still alive were assessed (Moffitt, et al., 2010). The research investigated self-control, health, wealth, and public safety using the information gathered during the Dunedin Study. The researchers identified that the differences between individuals in self-control presenting in early childhood, can be a prediction of multiple indicators of health, wealth, and crime across three decades of life in both genders (Moffitt, et al.).

### ***Issues in the implementation of quality***

Stressful or neglectful situations can create problems for the young child, both in the home and in institutional settings, including childcare environments. As a result of low-quality neglectful care inside or outside of the home, infants' and toddlers' brains can be

exposed to stress hormones. Infants and toddlers who spend considerable time in low-quality childcare settings with minimal interactions, brusque adult-child interactions, inconsistency of adults, less supportive relationships and high ratios of children to adults show higher levels of stress hormones than those in more favourable environments. The ‘serve and return’ interactions, or joint attention between an adult and baby, describe where the baby reaches out for interaction by way of babbling, facial gestures, expressions and vocalisations. The adult then responds in a like manner repeating these movements or expressions back to the baby, with joy and pleasure. It is in these interactions that the baby’s responses are affirmed, and relationships built (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2012). Research shows that children require reliable, safe and nurturing relationships both at home and in early years settings (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2014).

In many childcare centres, frequent staff rotations can mean that infants are cared for by numerous different people, making it very hard to develop meaningful relationships with any single caregiver. These issues are cause for concern in the on-going future development of the child. Within the United States of America, a large range of quality of care in institutional settings currently exists and is deemed unacceptable due to the impact such situations have on the developing child (The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2012). Stressful or neglectful situations in childcare settings may include: teachers who have minimal or no training in the care and education of children; rosters or rigid timetables with assembly line care with minimal one-on-one interaction or limited serve and return interactions; and adult-child relationships that are not reliably responsive to a child’s individual needs (The National Council on the Developing Child, 2012).



Instability in care arrangements for young children can also impact on peer social competence. Howes and Hamilton's (1993) research discovered that peer relationships were more aggressive as a result of inconsistencies of care. Seventy-two children were followed from age one through age four in childcare centres. By the age of four, when children had experienced more changes in childcare teachers, they were rated by their child care providers as lower in gregarious behaviours and higher in social withdrawal and aggression. The changes in childcare teachers impacted on children's relationships with their teachers and competence with their peers. Children who changed primary teachers by 24 months of age, regardless of the quality of the relationship, were more aggressive. This finding may prove to be important in the rationale for continuity of care, as more changes in teachers had more negative impacts on younger children.

#### ***Attachment concepts and the Aotearoa New Zealand context***

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which underpins Aotearoa New Zealand's mandated early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017), suggests that development depends on interaction with people and the tools that the culture provides to help form their view of the world. Vygotsky's theory suggests that caring relationships are a central part of intellectual growth and development; children's learning is deepened through these socially mediated encounters and that caring relationships between the child and teacher is a necessary and fundamental part of an intersubjective encounter (Johansson, 2004). It could therefore be argued that in Aotearoa New Zealand ECS the development of secure base, intersubjective attunement, and the child's internal working model would be revealed in the implementation of sociocultural theory.

In the early childhood setting teachers, infants, toddlers and their families/whānau are "intertwined in time and space, in a culture and a society, in a past and a future, *and* their lived understanding of these aspects" (Johansson, 2004, p. 24). All participants including

children and adults are influenced by and influence one another in an inseparable, interactive process.

Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development Vygotsky (1978). This social interaction is illustrated by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The development of the ZPD is built through the development of a relationship between the participants in which teachers watch for evidence of children's emerging skills and either move closer to support or withdraw direct support as the child demonstrates confidence in the new skill. As children develop self-regulation, they are more able to become actively engaged learners, thus laying the foundations for further success later in life (Florez, 2011).

Te Whāriki was developed in the 1990s, published in 1996, reviewed in 2017 and has continued to be a world leading framework for delivering quality early childhood education (education.govt.nz, 2016). The aim of updating the curriculum was to ensure Te Whāriki remained relevant to educational developments and reflective of the Aotearoa New Zealand context. The new document, released just a month prior to the submission of this thesis, continues to have a focus on inclusion of all children, strengthening links between centres and schools and seems to be a document that is easy for teachers to follow. The focus on infant and toddler learning and teaching appears, in the reviewed document, to have a stronger focus on intentionality of teacher practice for the infants and toddlers.

The following section explores methods of achieving attachment-type relationships in ECS with the outcome being to support the development of a child's secure base, intersubjective attunement and their internal working model.

## **Achieving quality practice**

As previously discussed, there is increasing participation of infants and toddlers in out of home group-based care services resulting in shared care between home and centres increasingly being the norm (Dalli, 2014). Present-day childcare services have become an important family and workplace support, which increases the imperative that they provide high-quality emotional and social experiences for the children and teachers who spend many hours each year within these settings. Childcare is a reality of the twenty-first century and if children were being exposed to childcare sporadically or with only a few hours per week the need to be concerned about quality would not be such an issue. With the number of children now using childcare on a daily or long-term basis, the investigation of the quality of what is being offered in ECS settings to our youngest most vulnerable members of society is timely. The following discussion highlights three identified quality indicators for infant and toddler care and education: teacher education; continuity of care and organisational structures (Burchinal, et al., 2000; Karp, 2006; Whitebook, 2003)

### ***Teacher education***

There are many examples in the early childhood literature providing evidence that quality provision is linked to teacher qualification and positive outcomes for children (Burchinal, et al., 2000; Karp, 2006; Whitebook, 2003). Teachers with four-year degrees display greater sensitivity and are more responsive to children than teachers with lesser education and teachers with bachelor degrees are reported to be more responsive and to spend more time in language activities than teachers with lower qualification (Howes, 1997; Howes, James, & Ritchie, 2003). Specialised teaching and quality environments are of particular importance in the education and care of infants and toddlers for two key reasons. Firstly, teachers who have undertaken some form of specialised infant and toddler

teaching, either in their ITE (Initial Teacher Education) programme or as part of a professional learning programme, are more likely to respond sensitively and intuitively to the infant/toddler (Arnett, 1998). Secondly, quality environments support positive relationship development and reduce toxic stress in young children (Bell & Wolfe, 2004).

Teacher qualifications are a mediating factor in quality outcomes for children in early childhood education (Dalli et al., 2011). “Teachers need a specialised knowledge base that is not based on curriculum for older children; infants are learning about themselves and others in a context where relationships can be constraining or enabling” (Nyland & Rockel, 2007, p. 81).

Teacher education does make a difference. Arnett’s (1998) research on 59 caregivers in 22 daycare centres in Bermuda, using a caregiver interaction scale and direct observations, provided evidence of the impact of teacher education on outcomes for infants and toddlers. The observations were of teachers with no training through to teachers with four-year degrees. This study indicated that teacher education was a predictor of attitude and behaviour of teachers: those with some qualifications scored higher in positive interaction than did those with no qualification; teachers with four-year degree qualifications outscored all the others, with interactions being more positive with fewer detachment and putative practices (Arnett, 1998).

Teachers who have been exposed to specific professional learning programmes on the implementation of attachment theory in practice have shown increased sensitivity to and understanding of infant and toddler teaching (Bary, 2009; Fitzer, 2010). Raising awareness of attachment theory and its implications for practice could allow for a greater understanding, sensitive response and more effective use of teacher’s time and skills when working with the infants and toddlers (Fitzer, 2010). In one study to evaluate an early years intervention programme, ‘*Building Strong Foundations*’, which had an attachment-based

framework, Fitzer (2010) used a multiple case study method including interviews, vignette scenarios and observations; in each of three childcare settings where the intervention programme had been introduced and a non-intervention control centre, the Harms and Clifford (1983) rating scale (ECERS-R) was applied in evaluating evidence of a nurturing environment. Findings included improved practitioner understanding of children's behaviour, teachers were more confident and felt their practice had improved when dealing with challenging behaviour and there was evidence of improved understandings of both ideal nurturing environments and the concept of attunement (Fitzer, 2010).

Secure, consistent and sensitive relationships for the child in ECS are important, and these relationships require a high level of emotional engagement between the child and teacher. This emotional work of infants and toddlers is complex as teachers are expected to maintain their own and the child's emotional states while maintaining a professional approach (Degotardi & Davis, 2008; Elfer, 2012). However, the skills required to meet the emotional needs of infants and toddlers appear to be something that teachers are currently having to learn through experience rather than through any professional learning or teacher education programmes. For example, Elliot (2007) found through interviews of ECS teachers, analysing their documented journals, that managing the emotional engagement required for relationship development was challenging and frustrating, and that none of them had any professional development in it. Teachers appear, then, to adopt an intuitive approach when working with relationship development with infants and toddlers, in the absence of foundational theoretical knowledge.

Similarly, Page and Elfer's (2013) findings included the lack of theoretical or practical support to guide the teachers on how to manage the emotional demands of establishing and maintaining such close relationships (Page & Elfer, 2013). While these types of deep relationships require teachers to be consistent, sensitive, qualified and

knowledgeable in infant and toddler care and education, neither their ITE nor their professional learning seems to have provided the necessary theoretical knowledge required for this emotional work, thus resulting on them relying again, on their intuition.

### *Continuity of care*

The implementation of attachment theory-informed practice in early childhood settings, such as the secure base concept, internal working model considerations and the development on intersubjective attunement, provides the potential to promote careful, considerate, intentional attachment-type relationship development between the teacher, infant and/or toddler. The implementation of concepts from attachment theory in ECS has often been referred to as continuity of care (Aguillard, Pierce, Benedict & Burts, 2005). Continuity of care has been recognised as quality practice for infants and toddlers in group care settings (Owen et al., 2008; Ritchie & Howes, 2003).

Continuity of care requires familiar and consistent teachers working with children in childcare settings, teachers who will engage with daily care routines, such as feeding, sleeping, playing with the children individually and in small groups and supporting the transitions between home and centre. This consistency of teachers supports the development of the child's internal working model and sense of security. When specific teachers consistently support children in childcare, their play is more advanced, and their peer relationships are more positive (Howes & Hamilton, 1993).

Research has shown that preschool children who have stable caregivers over a prolonged period are more likely to receive sensitive, involved and affectionate caregiving than children that have unstable, discontinuous caregiving (Owen et al., 2008; Ritchie & Howes, 2003). When teachers have the opportunity to work consistently and with continuity alongside the infants and toddlers, their practices are more in tune and sensitive

to the needs of the children. Findings of an Indiana, USA study of one hundred and seventeen toddlers aged 12-14 months, were that toddlers in 30 classrooms that demonstrated continuity of care, experienced more responsive caregiving and were rated more socially competent and had fewer problem behaviours compared to their peers in the 30 non-continuity rooms (Ruprecht, 2010).

Infants and toddlers in ECS who have the availability of a consistent caregiver demonstrate stability in their levels of security as opposed to children who have changing caregivers. For example, Howes and Hamilton (1993) investigated the outcomes for 72 children who were enrolled in preschool as toddlers (18 months) and followed them until they were four years old. Exploring the relationship between attachment security scores and caregiver changes, they discovered that for children whose caregiver remained with them for the first three and a half years, the child's level of security remained stable. However, when a child's caregiver changed or was inconsistent over this period of time, the child's level of security was diminished. By the age of four, when children had experienced more changes in childcare teachers, their childcare providers rated them as lower in outgoing behaviours and higher in social withdrawal and aggression. Children who changed primary care teachers by 24 months of age were more hostile, regardless of the relationship quality. The findings across studies that the greater the number of staff changes, the greater the negative impacts on younger children, may well be an important argument in the rational for primary care/key teacher provision (Howes & Hamilton, 1993).

Changes in teachers and or moving between rooms may be more difficult for the infant and toddler than the older child, as infants and toddlers have little experience to draw from, which may raise their distress levels. Cryer et al. (2005) found that younger children experience more distress when they transition to new childcare teachers and classrooms.

Infants and toddlers ( $n=38$ ) between the ages of 1.4 years to 2.1 years old were visited multiple times in their classrooms prior to their transitions to assess the distress and problem behaviours within their familiar environment and with their current teacher, and then again three to four weeks after they transitioned to a new classroom and a new teacher. It was the younger children, particularly, who experienced a period of distress when they moved to a new classroom – in fact, nearly half of the children exhibited signs of distress after the transition, compared to only a few prior to the transition. Immediately following the transition, distress levels were high and did not entirely return to pre-transition distress levels, even after one month. Thus, stability and consistency in relationships are important, as are the adult's sensitivity, love, availability, and unflagging commitment to the child's well-being. Attachment-type relationships shape the development of self-awareness, social competence, emotion regulation, emotional growth and learning, cognitive growth, and a variety of other foundational developmental accomplishments (Cryer et al., 2005). The following discussion explores organisational structures and their impact on attachment-type relationship development between teachers, infants and/or toddlers in childcare.

### ***Organisational structures***

How individual centres construct their organisational cultures to support the development of teacher-child relationships will be related to the centre values, beliefs and cultural contexts. Indeed, it can be argued that there is no one-way or preferred method to develop a relationship approach for infants and toddlers in-group care. Degotardi and Pearson (2014) agree with this perspective and suggest that each centre's cultures and contexts, along with teacher beliefs, will be represented in multiple ways; that a single or scripted method of relationship development programme would be disadvantageous and unfeasible. Nevertheless, a consensus across the research is that responsive relationships



are a vital component to quality infant and toddler pedagogy (Elicker, et al., 2014; McMullen & Dixon, 2009; Ruprecht, 2010).

New Zealand research by McLeod (2002) defined organisational culture as the way we do things around here; in a simple sense, organisational culture equals patterns of behaviour. Organisational culture can have a direct impact on outcomes for infants and toddlers relationship development and thus on quality of education provision for children. Analysing empirical data from 10 early childhood teaching teams, whānau and managers, and further triangulating this information with ERO reports and other document analysis, McLeod found that the centres' organisational cultures were heavily influenced by the assumptions, values and beliefs held by the teaching staff about children.

Organisational cultures are based on shared attitudes; beliefs, customs and written and unwritten rules that the organisation develops over time and that have worked well enough to be considered valid. Often there is a large gap between the discourse in centres relating to philosophy, the view of the child and the values espoused in centre policies, and the actual practice as observed on the floor. McLeod (2002) argued that a strong organisational culture that supports children's learning can be developed over time and will be a vehicle to support the development of productive learning environments. While McLeod's research was in a centre with older children, the tenets of this study are also relevant for infant and toddler settings.

A positive organisational culture is critical for the development of positive outcomes for children. The Ministry of Education (2011) commented that; as teachers spend many hours at work, often more than they spend with friends and family, the workplace needs to be a fun and pleasant place to be. However, unwritten rules or enacted organisational cultures have the ability to constrain and direct teacher practice, with teachers being unaware of these influences on their practice. Radford's (2015) doctoral

study explored the influence of organisational culture on children's experiences in one over two section of an early childhood centre in Aotearoa New Zealand. A case study approach again generated sound empirical data with findings that this centre's organisational culture was transmitted and maintained through enacted centre norms. She cites both written documentation and unspoken or invisible norms as playing a role in determining children's daily-lived experiences, suggesting that these unwritten or invisible ways of being have become the hidden curriculum. This hidden curriculum consists of the unspoken or implicit messages that are communicated to children while they are attending early childhood settings. While this was a small research study, which focused on children over the age of two, it is of note that she identified invisible or unspoken ways of being as contributing to children's learning.

Individual centre management members have a responsibility to implement relationship-based programmes along with such things as primary care type systems, to create a centre culture that promotes communication and relationship development that is respectful of multiple voices (Radford, 2015). This type of practice, of course, requires a well-thought-out organisational culture and specific organisational structures to be in place for these highly valuable, strong relationships to develop. Radford's (2015) and McLeod's (2002) research showed examples of the results of cultural assimilation that is relevant to infant and toddler settings.

The level of intensity and complexity of work expected of infant and toddler teachers cannot occur with rigid rosters, duty lists and rotation of teachers across the day and between centre areas (White, 2009). The current assessment discourse for teachers is to notice, recognise and respond to children's learning (Ministry of Education, 2005/2009), a highly complex and intentional aspect of infant and toddler teaching. White's (2009) doctoral study investigated the capacity of teachers to notice, recognise and respond to

toddler language cues in an Aotearoa New Zealand context. White's (2009) dialogic study involved one teacher, two toddlers aged 17 months and 20 months and their families. She argued that teachers need to have freedom to explore, connect and deeply consider the multiple ways of "being with" the toddler without the confines of rosters, duties or inconsistent staffing.

Barriers that impede teachers' abilities to engage in such complex work and becoming key attachment figures for infants and toddlers in child care settings included out-dated practices and policies, such as the rigid compliance of teachers to rosters or duty lists, discontinuities of care and inadequate teacher education (Manning-Morton & Thorp, 2003). These barriers were often a result of the organisational cultures that had evolved over the years. These organisational structural points, along with the importance of secure attachments between infants, toddlers and their teachers have been highlighted in recent literature on pedagogical practices for infants and toddlers (Dalli et al., 2011; Honig, 2002; Klein & Feldman, 2007; Lee, 2006; Warner, 2002).

The adherence of teachers to roster and or duty lists has led to what has been defined as task-based versus relationship-based practice. During task-based practice teachers focus on a schedule and rosters to implement the programme, whereas a relationship-based practice acknowledges the child's pace of learning and the teacher's reflection before action (Fleer & Link, 1999). Caring for infants and toddlers is much more than a list or a set of duties of what to do and when to do it; infants, in particular, grow and change so quickly that their needs change almost on a daily basis. Trying to work to a set formula goes against the principle of noticing, recognising, interpreting and responding to the infants' and toddlers' individual rhythms (Fleer & Link, 1999).

Systems and practices that support the positive engagement between children and adults are vital since the duties and rosters frequently in place in a busy centre can

constrain and restrict staff (Rockel, 2003), which in turn impacts the development of infants', toddlers' and adults' meaningful interactions. Bary et al. (2009) were able to show links between effective relationships and positive outcomes for infants and toddlers through the participation of teachers, children and families/whānau within their learning community. The implementation of attachment concepts into practice will not flourish in centres where organisational cultures are non-relational (Furnivall, McKenna, McFarlane & Grant, 2012). The ability to implement quality practices in infant and toddler settings requires particular organisational constructs; one of the constructs that has been promoted, is that of learning communities (Bary et al., 2009).

Learning communities or communities of practice are strongly supported by social constructivist theory, where participants play an active role in building their knowledge structures through interactions with other people; Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017) with its social constructivist theoretical framework, requires the sort of interactions developed in a learning community for effective implementation. In a learning community the emphasis is on the process of collaborative learning, where children, teachers, families/whānau and participating members of the wider community are all involved in various roles at different stages, with the learning processes and activities (Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996), each contributing personal knowledge and expertise. This is a place where infants, toddlers, families/whānau, teachers and members of their community work together, contributing personal knowledge, ideas and expertise (Bary, et al., 2009); a place where teachers are open to new ideas, sharing thoughts, constructing new ways of being, and actively reflecting on practice and thus developing a culture of co-constructed, evolving understandings.

The Ministry of Education's Centres of Innovation fund supported three key projects on infant and toddler teaching practices between 2002 and 2009. These centres

were enabled to look closely at organisational structures/culture and practices for infants and toddlers; all three centres highlighted the use of a key teacher system or primary caregiving system in enhancing learning experiences of infants and toddlers. One of these projects is described below with the other two centres' descriptions given in the relevant following section of this review.

The Massey Child Care Centre of Innovation research used a case study project to investigate their innovation, posing the research question about their organisational culture and educational leadership as: "In what ways does educational leadership, within a community of practice, impact on infants' and toddlers' dispositions to enquire?" (Bary et al., 2009, p.vi). Data generation of six focus children included video recordings, field notes and journal entries. The research provided evidence that when teachers work in an environment that has leadership and organisational cultures supporting them to be active explorers in their own right, allowing time to develop attachment-type relationships, the infants and toddlers are supported in being secure in themselves and to be active explorers and capable, confident learners and communicators (Bary et al., 2009).

Further support for the central importance of teacher knowledge, continuity of care and organisational cultures in supporting quality outcomes for infants and toddlers, comes from a current longitudinal 21-year research. 'Growing up in New Zealand' is a comprehensive study of seven thousand children and their families beginning before birth and following children in the context of their families and wider environments as they grow to adulthood in 21st century New Zealand. The overall objective of this study is to provide vigorous, New Zealand relevant evidence in order to inform public policy for current and future New Zealanders'. Commencing in 2010, it has to date published six reports, with the cohort currently at age five years. The report issued in 2014 (when the cohort were two) shares some data relating to ECS participation and experience. What has

been shared thus far indicates that children from low or medium income households and Māori and Pacifica children were more likely to experience low quality ECS services. The researchers used proxy indicators of quality, such as frequent changes in care provider, daily feedback about children, and children's exposure to small group experiences. The researchers suggest that attention needs to be given to the development of pathways to promote access to high quality ECS for all children (Bird, Carr, Reese & Morton 2016), especially given the convincing statistics indicating that the gap between the success of Māori/Pacifica peoples and the rest of the population, on all counts of success at all ages continues to grow. Improving the quality of programmes for all infants and toddlers in ECS is a nation-wide imperative.

### **Programmes to support relationship development**

The following discussion explores two common methods of caring for young children in ECS settings: group care or multiple carers and primary care or key teacher systems.

#### ***Group care/multiple carers***

Very young children can and need to, develop a sense of connectedness to others. Children's relationships with other people in their lives, such as extended family relatives, carers, siblings and friends, as well as their mother, lead to enduring friendships with other children and extended networks of relationships with adults (Moss & Penn, 1996).

The specific sociocultural context in Aotearoa New Zealand is that of Māori kaupapa and philosophy in Te Kohanga Reo (Tangaere, 1996) and Pasifika philosophy. These whānau/family centre-based philosophies would not necessarily promote a primary care or key teacher approach, preferring children at an early age to interact more closely

with other children, rather than depending on the adults to develop strong relationship ties (Rockel, 2003). This paradigm is based on a collective ideology (Gonzalez-Mena & Widmeyer-Eyer, 2002) and is one where children become interdependent within an extended family grouping. The model of primary care with a one-to-one relationship between teacher and child would be rejected in favour of a position of shared care. In the model of shared care, the infant is seen as part of the group culture with the child interacting with all members.

Cultural diversity exists in relationship perspectives and to practice a relationship-based pedagogy will require teachers to engage with families/whānau to better understand and implement programmes relevant to their specific contexts (Degotardi & Pearson, 2014). When there is little focus placed on the cultural diversity of relationship practice, cultures can be marginalised. It is argued that western education systems in Aotearoa New Zealand have marginalised Māori and Pacifica children (Rameka & Glasgow, 2015); that the key to providing culturally responsive early childhood provision for Māori and Pacifica infants and toddlers is for practices and pedagogies to be reflective of the children's cultural worldviews and identities.

Relationship-based practices can be a group care process with components of individualised care embedded. To implement a relationship-based programme requires a team approach where all staff are committed to the concept (Dalli & Kibble, 2010) In essence, the implementation of a relationship-based approach into ECS settings is the responsibility of the team, it can be seen therefore as being a group care approach.

### ***Barriers to group care***

Bain & Barnett (1980) conducted a day nursery research project as part of the bigger Tavistock Institute of Human Relations project in a London borough in England. Through

observations and child assessments in this 54-place nursery, it was found that the care provided for infants and toddlers was impersonal and fragmented; with staff focusing on the domestic tasks in the nurseries and this was in a nursery selected as one of the best in the area. The use of group care was identified as possibly a defence against intimacy between the child and the nursery nurse (Bain & Barnett, 1980). In a situation of two staff and eight babies, two nurses would care indiscriminately for all the babies; other than when a baby was exceptionally demanding or distressed, the babies became faceless for the nurses. This is an extreme example of group care, of course, and certainly not reflective of all cases, but does provide a note of warning around the effects of a failure for the nursery nurse to develop (in the child care setting) safe and secure relationships with the infants and toddlers. This is an example of a tendency to devalue the relationship and ignore emotions, even in infant/toddler programmes, where relationships are vital (Hyson, 2004). The recommendation at the time, assuming the day nurseries continued in the manner in which they were operating, was that the healthy development of young children attending these services would not be achieved.

### ***Key person/primary care***

The term “key person” or “primary carer” is used in this review to explain a system used in childcare settings where teachers are assigned responsibility for specific children. “It is a way of working in nurseries in which the whole focus and organisation is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between individual children and individual nursery staff” (Elfer, Goldschmied, & Selleck, 2003, p. 18). These teachers take on the principal role for the infants’ or toddlers’ holistic care, including the intentional development of supportive and responsive relationships between infants/toddlers and their families/whānau. Each child is allocated to a specific teacher, who has the responsibility for a small group of children: maintaining assessment portfolios that document the child’s progress throughout the time they spend in the under-tuos section; communicating with



family/whānau and especially maintaining close relationships with each of the children in the group and their family/whānau. However, this key teacher does not act alone, usually working closely with a “buddy teacher” in the same room so that these two teachers know each other’s key children as well as their own; they flexibly share duties to ensure that at least one of them is working with the children, at all times. Depending on the overall group size, there will be other “buddy teacher” groupings also in the same room and all teachers, in fact, work with all the children, once close relationships are established between the key teacher and child. Attachment and security are important features in young children’s lives, as they support the development of emotional strength and positive learning outcomes.

Manning-Morton and Thorp (2003) researched the key person approach (a component of a centre’s organisational culture) being used more frequently in childcare settings. This two-year research project, in the London Borough of Camden, explored how practitioners who worked with infants and toddlers could be better helped in improving their practice, particularly in the area of developing responsive, respectful relationships with children. The premise of the research was that it was not sufficient to increase theoretical understanding of this and any other areas of children’s development without practitioners having the opportunity to reflect on the connections between their experiences, feelings, values and beliefs and those of the children with whom they worked.

This research focused on providing opportunities for the teachers to develop an emotional understanding of good practice, rather than having procedures imposed from an external source (Manning-Morton, 2006). The use of the ‘key teacher’ system was seen as one of the tools for developing responsive, respectful relationships. A key finding in this research was that unless teachers had high levels of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and organisational structures/cultures, such as learning community and strong supervisory

support programmes in place to support this practice, they would not be able to respond to the children's overtures effectively.

A'oga Fa'a Samoa, as part of their Centre of Innovation research (Podmore, with Wendt Samu, & the A'oga Fa'a Samoa, 2006) undertook a collaborative, participatory action research project designed to investigate the relationship between learning and language continuity as children and educators make transitions within the centre and on to school. An intention of their research was to document aspects of the children's identity, strength, and confidence. The children's heritage language was shown as being critical for cognitive learning. The unique characteristics of this centre were small groups of children who stay with their primary carer from the time of their enrolment until they start school. They argued that the innovative practice at the A'oga Fa'a Samoa of having a "primary caregiver" making transitions within the centre with her group of children certainly helped the children's sense of belonging, their security, and their competent communication in Samoan. Their findings show that language and cultural continuity are important for Pacifica children's education. This research project showed how important the relationships were with their teachers and how it was within these relationships that the child's language and cultural understandings were enhanced. Although the children's relationships were not described as attachment-type relationships, considering the time each child spent with their primary carer, it could be assumed that the depth of these relationships were that of an attachment-type relationship.

Childspace Ngaio Infants and Toddlers Centre of Innovation programme explored the concept of "Peaceful Caregiving as Curriculum" (Dalli & Kibble, 2010) as an approach to teaching and learning. Based on a stance of utmost respect for the child, key components of this approach included: the use of a primary caregiving system; sensitive observation; and freedom of movement. These practices are based on the ideas of two European

educators, Magda Gerber and Emmi Pikler, who are influential contributors to New Zealand ECS teachers' thinking about how teachers can work to enrich children's very early experiences.

Magda Gerber was an early childhood educator born in Hungary. Her philosophy of respectful practice comes from the work of Emmi Pickler in the Loczy institute/orphanage in Budapest. Gerber incorporated many of Pikler's theories into her philosophy, which she termed RIE (Resources for Infant Educarers). The core of her programme is based on respectful practices for infants and toddlers. These methods include having a basic trust in the child as an explorer and a self-learner and involving the child in all caregiving activities by doing things with the child, not to the child. She proposed inviting children to participate, and teachers are seen as supportive of children as opposed to interventionists (Gerber, 1998).

Childspace Ngaio Infants and Toddlers Centre initial research highlighted several areas for consideration when working with a primary care system, which included: high levels of communication among team members, an environment where teachers have the flexibility to follow children's individual rhythms, and opportunity for infant and toddler teaching teams to throw away adult time schedules and to follow the rhythms of the child. Another area they suggest has an impact on children's ability to develop meaningful relationships is to ensure there are consistent working hours, for teachers to match with specific children's attendance times. They argue that there should be good support systems such as secondary caregivers for each child, with all teachers being responsive, prepared, supportive, fully present and alert to the communications of others. The key teacher-child dyad does not operate in isolation from other teachers and children in the same room; rather the secure primary attachment within the ECS setting encourages the development

of wider numbers of attachments between children and a small number of adults other than their family/whānau.

### ***Barriers to primary/key teacher practices***

The ability of teachers becoming key attachment figures for infants and toddlers in child care settings and how this practice can be undermined by discontinuities of care, inadequate teacher education and out-dated practices and policies were discussed by Manning-Morton and Thorp (2003) as key barriers. Other concerns highlighted were the failure of many practitioners and management bodies to understand the complexities of working with infants and toddlers both emotionally and physically.

Barriers to the idea of implementing a key person approach as identified by experienced practitioners included such things as their concerns of the over-involvement of teachers with children, which could be seen as threatening for parents; concerns that the implementation of such a programme would be too complex to organise and would be restrictive for children preventing them from participating in many and varied relationships (Elfer, et al., 2003).

Manning-Morton and Thorp's (2003) study identified several problems in centres that were implementing a key person in the nursery approach without the teachers thoroughly understanding the intricacies and complexities of such programmes, and without the supporting organisational structures. Problems included the practitioners spending a great deal of time on domestic and household duties and children being given factory line care (e.g., everyone washed one after the other, or put to bed at the same time). In addition, children were treated as a group, rather than as individuals, and were expected to do things in a controlled manner. The teachers did not see attachment-type relationships as necessary or valuable. Practitioners were also treated as a group, and seen as cogs in a

machine, and therefore easy to replace. Finally, their findings highlighted that parents were seen as separate from the nursery and not involved at all in the programme or planning for their children.

Although staff espoused, in theory, the young child's need for intimate and warm attachment to a key person, they did not develop these in practice, unless helped to do so through professional learning (Bain & Barnett, 1980; Manning-Morton & Thorp, 2003; Hopkins, 1988). Professional learning that provides teachers with appropriate strategies also needs to be backed up with organisational centre structures that allow time for teachers to develop the vital intimate and warm attachment-type relationships. An outcome of Manning-Morton and Thorp's (2003) research was that they set up an accredited course of study, Level 4 Certificate: Developing practice and provision for 0-3-year-olds, now widely used in the United Kingdom that focuses on the issues of working with very young children.

Caregiver turnover has been reported as being a barrier to the implementation of continuity of care. Aguiard et al., (2005) identified that the bigger problem was with teacher values and centre Directors' reluctance to replace unwilling or less able caregivers with more able caregivers. Exploring the experiences of 52 children in four centres that advertised as offering a continuity of care programme, they discovered that only 7 of these children had been cared for within a single child-caregiver dyad from the time of their entry into the programme until they left or to their third birthday; the remaining 45 children had experienced 71 cumulative transitions to new child-caregiver dyads. Aguiard et al. suggested that many barriers to the implementation of continuity of care could be resolved by careful hiring procedures and by having teachers whose ideologies correspond with continuity practice.

There has been, in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, misunderstandings and in some cases resistance to the implementation of key teacher/primary care systems. Rockel's (2002) study in New Zealand centres identified several of these issues. Seeking to identify the participants' understandings of primary care for infants and to inform further research, Rockel found there was a lack of understanding and conflicting interpretations about primary care. She noted that these misunderstandings could place "children's everyday experiences at risk of being handled by others in ways that may not be in their best interests" (p. 85). She suggested that primary care practice should be theorised and critically examined to enhance infant education. (Rockel, 2005). This small study provides an insight into teachers' understandings of primary caregiving at the time.

More recently Degotardi and Pearson (2014) have suggested that teachers need to explore their ideologies by considering their beliefs against both theory and current practice. They argue that when teachers engage with perspectives that are alternative to their own they can deepen their understandings of their practice and can enhance and refine what they implement on a day to day basis (Degotardi & Pearson, 2014).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, further research regarding primary caregiving for infants has found that primary caregiving is being implemented in some cases (Dalli, 1999; Dalli & Kibble, 2010; Dalli, Kibble, Cairns-Cowan, McBride, Corrigan, & Dalli, 2009; Rockel, 2002). However there does still appear to be hesitation towards the implementation of primary or key teacher systems (Christie, 2010) and further research in this area is needed to more fully understand what is occurring in centres that support the development of effective relationships between teachers, infants, toddlers and their families/whānau.

An issue highlighted about the implementation of primary/key teacher programmes in ECS was the concern of children being placed for a long term with a teacher who interacts negatively with them (Cryer, Hurwitz & Wolery, 2000). In a group care setting, it

could be argued that this would not happen, as all teachers would interact with the child during their time in the centre. However, regardless of the type of programme being offered it is important to remove or retrain poor or ineffective teachers (Lally, 2007). After 30 years of social and emotional research identifying what infants and toddlers need in relationships, it would be a travesty to suggest that primary/key teacher programmes be stopped or removed without serious research to investigate if there are issues in their implementation (Lally, 2007).

What has been revealed in all of these studies is the importance of organisational structures to support the implementation of these relational practices. The various authors have stressed that organisational and individual practices can often prevent practitioners from meeting the needs of very young children. On-going, consistent and stable relationships between teachers, infants, toddlers and their families/whānau are enablers of quality pedagogy. Organisations need to have programmes or structures in place to support the development of these relationships. Programmes such as primary care or key teacher systems are reported as being a useful tool to support relationship development (Dalli et al., 2011).

Issues around the implementation of relationship-based programmes, appear to stem from the lack of clear and concise definition and guidelines. The lack of guidelines or definitions creates problems for teachers or centres that wish to explore relationship-based approaches. Ruprecht (2010) and Degotardi and Pearson (2014) agree that it is in sensitive and sustained relationships where children's social and emotional learning is constructed and there may be many varieties of programmes that achieve these outcomes. It would be of value to explore various ways of implementing continuity of care practices to discover if one produces better outcomes for the children.

The following discussion identifies the theoretical framework for analysis of this study and shares the research objectives and questions arising from the literature review.

### **Theoretical framework and research questions**

The theoretical ideas that frame the research design and subsequent data analysis were based on Rogoff's (1998) three planes of activity. As she states, "the examination of individual, personal and community/institutional development processes involve differing planes of observation and analysis" (p. 688). She argues that contribution to any activity occurs on three interacting planes of influence: the personal, (i.e. the individual teacher) shows how individuals change through their participation in an experience. In the interpersonal plane, (interactions among social partners) people communicate with each other and engage in shared endeavours, and in the community/institutional (contextual) plane, cultural tools such as institutional policies and practices provide the foundations of the settings culture. These planes interact with each other and cannot be separated. Rogoff (1998) proposed that when observing activities through the personal plane the other planes remain in the background, they are mutually constitutive and do not exist in isolation from each other. Jordan (2003, p. 6) suggested "these planes are considered to be dynamically changing products of a multitude of influences across time and space, within each specific community's socio-historical and political milieu". Rogoff (2003) proposes that understanding activities from a socio-cultural-historical perspective requires investigation of the cultural nature of everyday life. This examination would need to include studying people's use and "transformation of cultural tools and technologies and their involvement in cultural traditions in the structures and institutions of family life and community practices" (p. 10). A single plane of analysis can be used to explore one aspect of a



situation in depth; alternatively, by focusing on each plane of analysis in turn a holistic picture can be built up.

For this current study the idea of these three planes being mutually constitutive of each other and of being able to background two planes while focusing on the foregrounded one, were considered to be useful in the analysis of the centre's policies and workings, teaching, and relationships. As I show in chapter four the planes were used to identify teachers' pedagogical practice, how relationships develop and how organisational culture impacts on relationship development. When analysing data, I constantly changed lenses from one plane to the other, in order to illuminate the processes that impact on relationship development between teacher and infant/toddler.

Resulting from the review of the literature the following objectives and supporting questions were developed. The overall research question was: "in what ways do the organisational cultures in infant and toddler settings in Aotearoa New Zealand affect the ability of teachers to develop attachment-type relationships and respond to the relationship needs of infants and toddlers?"

**Objective in the personal plane of the teachers** was to discover what impacts on individual teachers' abilities to form attachment-type relationships with infants and/or toddlers.

*Supporting questions in the personal plane:*

In what ways do infant and toddler teachers engage in prolonged intimate relationship opportunities with the infants and toddlers in their care?

In what ways are teachers enabled to manage their daily interactions?

**Objective in the interpersonal plane.** To improve understandings of how centres' organisational cultures can impact on relationship development between people in early childhood infant and toddler settings.

*Supporting questions in the interpersonal plane:*

In what ways does a centre's organisational culture impact on attachment-type relationship development between infants/toddlers and teachers?

In what ways do attachment-type relationship development opportunities (between infants/toddlers and teachers) differ in various centres' organisational cultures?

How do centre organisational cultures foster relationship development for families/whānau from different cultures and/or with different learning needs?

**Objective in the institutional plane.** To identify national organisational practices regarding teaching and learning for infants and toddlers in the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education sector.

*Supporting questions in the community/institutional plane:*

In what ways do infant and toddler centres' organisational cultures structure the teacher's day to day practice and time management?

Do infant and toddler centres have specific written programme/curriculum documents, and if so who wrote them?

In what ways do the structural components of quality care as measured by the ITERS-R rating scale relate to the opportunities for attachment-type relationship development between infants/ toddlers and teachers?

## **Summary**

In this chapter research on attachment theory, and concepts arising from this theory that has implications for infant and toddler wellbeing in ECS settings have been reviewed. Themes across the literature that promote best practice and positive outcomes for infants and toddlers in group care have been identified as: the impact on infants' and toddlers' social and emotional development through the availability of sensitive and consistent

teachers (Fitzer, 2010; Radford, 2015); that early childhood teachers and institutions can play a role in either the enabling or constraining in the development of attachment-type relationships between teachers, infants, and/or toddlers (Ruprecht, 2010); central to high-quality childcare lie the relationships between infants, toddlers and early childhood teachers (O'Connor, 2010; Raikes & Edwards, 2009; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Research evidence reveals that infant and toddler teaching is highly complex and the impacts of ECS participation for the infant and toddler are considered to be of vital importance for their long-term overall health and well-being and that early childhood centres need to ensure that their organisational cultures and systems are congruent with the implementation of such practices.

What the research literature is lacking is empirical studies from the Aotearoa New Zealand context focused on infants' and toddlers' attachment-type relationship development opportunities in ECS settings. This study provides reflection on current infant and toddler provision and identified a genuine need for a more specialised focus on pedagogy with under-one and under-two-year-olds in both pre-service teacher education and professional development programmes (Dalli, et al., 2011).

The following chapter presents and justifies the methodology used in this research.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter describes the epistemological principles, theoretical perspective and methodological decisions and the methods that shaped this study. An explanation and justification for the research design, data sources, data collection techniques and choice of analysis is given.

#### **Epistemology and theoretical framework**

This QUAL– quan sequential mixed method study was conceptualised from an epistemological view that people create their meanings in different ways; meanings are not ‘discovered’ but are actively constructed by individuals in their own way (Grey, 2004). Furthermore, Bowlby’s ethological theory, which underpins this study, is based on the notion of personal constructs, which are formed through relationships with others. He postulated that children’s attachment working models are based on real life experiences and are created in day-to-day relational interactions (Bowlby, 1988a). This is closely related to constructivism (Piaget 1970) in which it is considered knowledge is created by learners through an active, mental process of development; thus, learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge (Crotty, 1998).

The theoretical position adopted in this study is constructivist, based on the idea that knowledge happens as learners are actively involved in the knowledge construction and meaning making rather than passively receiving information. Finnemore and Sikkink (2001, p. 394) suggest that “by ontological assumption, constructivists understand that

actors are shaped by the social milieu in which they live, one obvious research question for them is: How does this shaping happen and with what results?" The Constructivist approach appreciates the multiple realities that people have. To access these many realities; various methods of searching and data generation are in order. The engagement of multiple methods of data generation in the study such as observation, interviews, document analysis and a survey lead to a more valid, reliable and diverse construction of these realities (Golafshani, 2003).

The choice of a mixed method design for this study is justified in relation to the research aim. The aim of the study was to look at the lived realities, or the real world, of teachers, infants, toddlers and families/whānau in early childhood settings to gain understandings around the impacts of early childhood infant and toddler centres' organisational culture on attachment-type relationship development. The mixed method approach can enable the deepening of understandings from different perspectives such as from the field, from the wider settings and from literature (Greene, Caracellie, & Graham, 1989).

The rationale for mixing the methods is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation, such as the complex issue of relationship development between teachers and infants/toddlers. When used in combination however, qualitative and quantitative methods complement each other and allow for a more reasonable complete analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

This mixed methods approach draws on pragmatism, where researchers use methods from more than one paradigm to explore complex educational phenomena. Pragmatism argues that the researcher must be aware of and responsive to the real-world conditions in which each study is positioned (Gutek, 2004). Thus, the exploration of the thoughts, beliefs and actions of the participants are of the utmost importance (Patton, 2002). Pragmatic

researchers combine qualitative and quantitative research, which allows them to be better able to delve further into the data to understand their meanings and to use one method to verify the other method (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

The socio-cultural constructivist philosophy that underpins Aotearoa New Zealand's early childhood education curriculum also provided the direction for the choice of paradigm (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2017). Socio-cultural research involves analysing the personal, interpersonal and institutional contributions within socio-cultural activities (Rogoff, 1998). Therefore, to understand teachers' thinking and practice, research should examine the context and setting in which both thought, and practice occur. Thinking or cognition within the sociocultural model is not viewed as an individual construction but is seen as being a distributed process that occurs between and across people as they work together in culturally relevant activities (Rogoff, 1998).


## **Methodology**

The present study used a QUAL-quan sequential mixed method research design, with a dominant qualitative methodology (Fraenkel, & Wallen, 2009). A mixed method design is a procedure for collecting/generating, analysing and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative data at some time during the research process within a single study, to understand a research problem more completely (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). This study used an exploratory design where the qualitative data were generated first, and these findings tested against the findings from the quantitative phase (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The first phase of the data generation, the qualitative phase, consisted of case study research to discover variables underlying the phenomenon of relationship development between teachers and infants and/or toddlers in ECS settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. The data generated from this phase was then used to construct the survey questions (See Appendix A) for

the second phase of the study, the qualitative phase. The use of survey data in this study was to quantify a variation, to predict causal relationships and to describe the characteristics of a population. Survey data is then compared and contrasted with the case study data generated to explore variation and differences and to describe and explain relationships, individual experiences and group norms (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The survey included questions on teacher demographics, group size and ratios thus enabling some comparative analysis between the surveyed centres and the case study centres to be undertaken. The survey data were vital to the mixed method design as they provided insights into national approaches to infant and toddler care and education and an indication of the strength of the case study findings. Table 3.1 outlines the two phases of the study and explains the purpose of the research design.

**Table 3.1.**  
*Mixed method QUAL⇒quan sequential research design*

	<p><b>Phase one: QUAL</b> a case study of three infant and toddler centres to explore teacher-child relationship development via the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) observations (See Appendix B), video recording, interviews, and document analysis.</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to explore patterns of teacher availability (in relationship development) to be analysed alongside the ITERS-R results, teachers’ infant/toddler and family/whānau observational/video accounts and the interviews (See appendix C).</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><b>Phase two: quan</b> a survey of 800 infant and toddler centres across New Zealand</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> The aim of this survey was to generate statistical data on organisational practices in infant and toddler centres across Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim was to locate patterns, trends and baseline information to which the in-depth case study data could be validated or extended.</p>

The following Table 3.2 provides the reader with a brief description of the timeline, objectives, methods, participants and analysis of both phases of the study. There was a time gap between the two phases this was due to the researcher’s ill health for a period of time.

**Table 3.2.**  
*Overview of the Research Design*

	Phase one: Case studies	Phase Two: Survey
<b>Timeline</b>	August 2012 – May 2013	February – May 2014
<b>Focus</b>	Personal, interpersonal and institutional contexts.	Personal, interpersonal and institutional contexts.
<b>Research objectives</b>	To critically examine how a representative sample of New Zealand teachers and infants/toddlers experience relationship development opportunities within child care settings.	To explore in more general way the experiences as reported by a wider cohort of early childhood teachers within the New Zealand early childhood context.
<b>Research methods</b>	ITERS-R Video observations of arrivals and departure times. Semi-structured interviews face to face. Centre document analysis.	Online survey using survey monkey Mix of closed and open questions some rating scales.
<b>Participants</b>	Three case study centres. Ten teachers. Six infant/toddlers. Six family/whānau members.	Survey to all full daycare centres listed on the Ministry of Education website who identified as having infant and toddler enrolments (800), 213 total responses.
<b>Analysis of data</b>	Foregrounding, in turn, the personal, Interpersonal and institutional planes of the ten teachers and six family/whānau members. Qualitative thematic analysis addressing key topics.	Descriptive analysis of quantitative questions. Foregrounding, in turn, the personal, Interpersonal and institutional planes using qualitative thematic analysis of comments from the survey questions.

### **Phase one case study**

Each early childhood centre's organisational context and relationship development practices were the primary focus of the case study phase of this research. The case study design included observations, (ITERS-R measures), video recording of the case study children's arrivals and departure times; interviews with head teachers, teachers and families/whānau to garner their perspective of their daily lived experiences in their centre. These components were seen as being most suited to the research as they are methods for



‘fleshing out’ the explorations and describing the views, experiences, interactions and meanings of the participants through specific narratives. The first phase of the data generation involved selecting three infant and toddler centres for case studies and exploring the phenomena of the infant/toddler daily experiences of settling into the centre and leaving the centre (transitioning from home to centre and centre to home).

The use of case study in research was developed in the early 1970s and refers to the gathering and presenting of detailed information about a particular participant or small group. Case studies often include accounts of the subjects themselves, with the idea of providing an in-depth account of a particular phenomenon. The exploration is to give depth of understanding about the events, or relationships, experiences that are happening in a particular context (Denscombe, 1999). Case study research is a more widely used form of qualitative research design, with the aim being to ask, what is going on here? It is about focusing on the particularities of situations in context and trying to get some purchase on the complexities of social worlds (MacNaughton, Rolfe, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). However, because the case study centres are part of the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood community, an in-depth case study of three centres will very likely contain important messages for teachers and management of other early childhood centres, particularly from within Aotearoa New Zealand. One of the major values of case studies is that they can enable a refined perception of actual activity and dialogue between participants. Aspects of a case study become generalizable when readers relate to the report and make connections with their own contexts (Eisner, 1991).

Selecting the method of data generation is associated with the type of research being undertaken. This research used several methods in the research of the same phenomenon to establish the accuracy of the information gathered. This research compared three types of independent points of view: interviews, observation, and documentation

analysis to support corroboration of the findings of the research. This process is referred to as triangulation and is often seen as an essential methodological feature of case studies. Denscombe (2002) states “triangulation provides social researchers with a means for assessing the quality of data by coming at the same thing from a different angle” (p. 104). Triangulation is about seeking as many perspectives as possible in data generation and seeking convergence in interpretation. The following Table 3.3 illustrates the triangulation of the case study centres data.

**Table 3.3.**  
*Triangulation of case study data*

Observations
ITERS-R measures undertaken in each centre
Video recording of interactions between teachers’ infants/toddlers and family/whānau during critical periods of the day (arrival and departure times)
Interviews
An interview with each student teacher, teacher and team leader
An interview with a family member
Centre document analysis (looking for links between documents and observed practices)
Centre policies
Centre procedural documents
Centre curriculum documents

Undertaking a multiple or collective case study such as the current study has advantages in that the results can be more compelling and more likely to be legitimately generalised (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Multiple or collective case studies do require a lot of resources and time therefore selecting three centres for the case studies made the process manageable within the research time frame.

The aim of this mixed method research was to exploit the unique insights possible from different types of data collections and multiple sites. When a pattern from one type of data source is corroborated by the evidence from another, the finding is stronger and better

grounded. It was hoped that the combining of the two methodologies, albeit strongly weighted towards qualitative research, would allow the study to look beyond any initial impressions and view data through multiple lenses thus providing a more comprehensive view of the evidence.

The case study phase of the research was undertaken in keeping with the ethos of qualitative research where the phenomenon of teachers' practice was examined in the context and setting in which their practice occurs. The researcher was able to gather data such as people's stories, descriptions, opinions, visual symbols, and graphic representations (Mutch, 2005). The methods used for this phase of the study were the ITERS-R measure (Harms, et al., 2006), video recordings, qualitative interviews using semi structured interview questions and centre document analysis. The purpose of this phase of the data generation was to gain understandings of teachers lived reality of working in an infant and toddler centre alongside the lived realities of infants, toddlers and families/whānau at arrival and departure times at the Centre. The study also aimed to develop understandings of the institutional context (policy and philosophy) that underpinned these experiences.

### ***Sampling procedure case study***

The area the centres were selected from was a central North Island Aotearoa New Zealand city. The selection of the three case study centres began with a search of the Education Review Office (ERO) reports to identify centres reported by ERO as having good practices for infants and toddlers. The reason for looking for good practice centres was to enable a comparison across identified good practice centres, as opposed to comparing three centres with varying degrees of quality. ERO is a government agency set up to evaluate and report publicly on the quality of education being provided in Aotearoa New Zealand schools and early childhood services.

Based on positive ERO reviews nineteen centres were selected, and then reduced to the final three by selecting the three centres that were representative of a cross section of decile ratings of their nearest school. The Decile rating of a school is based on the school's socioeconomic catchment area. A decile of 1 indicates the school draws from a socioeconomically poor area; a decile of 10 indicates the school draws from a well-off area, the three centres each representing either a high, middle or low decile community were invited to participate. All three selected centres had completed an ERO review in the last three years and had all received positive reports. I recruited the centres and teachers by way of telephone contact, initially to gauge interest, followed by a personal visit to explain the intent of the research project.

The selection of three centres was to provide the opportunity to look closely at the differing organisational structures and compare and contrast the impacts that these have on relationship development between teachers, infants and/or toddlers. Within the centres selected teachers in the infant and toddler areas were observed and interviewed along with two family members per centre. There was a total of two staff members (currently studying ECE), five qualified teachers, three team leaders and three family/whānau members across the three centres.

Because I am a European/Pakeha woman and not fluent in Te Reo Māori or any Pasifika language it was not deemed appropriate or respectful to invite participation from Te Kōhanga Reo centres (a total immersion Māori language family programme for young children birth to six years) or language nest centres (which focus on the development and protection of a specific culture and language, usually Pacific Island groups).

The selection of three centres provided a rich source of qualitative data to support the identification of the relationship development processes in infant and toddler early childhood settings. The three centres selected all had differing organisational cultures.

However, the centres selected were all privately owned, so did not present an opportunity to investigate corporate or community-based centres in this study. The three centres were assigned the pseudonyms, Totara, Rimu and Miro. Each will be briefly described.

### ***Totara***

Totara was one of four centres privately owned by the same person. This particular centre was located in a high-decile rated area. This purpose-built centre had three areas; the back room was for infants and toddlers up to the age of two; the middle room was for children aged two to three; and the front room was for the three to five-year olds. The under-two room had a roll of twelve children, three qualified teachers including a team leader and one unqualified staff member. The team leader in this room worked out of her office in the side area of the room, and she occasionally worked in the centre with the teachers. The unqualified staff member rotated between the two younger rooms, providing noncontact and sleep room support. The research participants were two teachers, one team leader, two families/whānau. One family/whānau from this centre were unable to complete the interview process due to personal reasons but were happy for their child's video observations to be used in the research. Both parents from the second family/whānau attended the interview.

### ***Rimu***

Rimu was one of two large centres privately owned by one family. Rimu was located in a middle decile area. The centre was a large old villa converted into a childcare centre. There were two areas, one for the over-two aged children and one for the under-two aged children. The under-two room had a roll of fifteen children with five teachers including a team leader. They had two qualified teachers; two in teacher education

programmes and one teacher who was primary qualified and had some early childhood qualifications. They also employed an unqualified part time staff member to cover for lunches and noncontact times. The team leader worked out of an upstairs office above the infant and toddler room and occasionally worked in the centre with the under-two teachers. The research participants consisted of two unqualified teachers, two qualified teachers, one team leader and two families/whānau both mothers attended the interview.

### ***Miro***

Miro was one of two centres privately owned by a husband and wife and was located in a low decile area. The building is a residential home converted into a childcare centre. The over-two aged children were housed in the front part of the building and the under two children were housed in a room in the back area. They had a roll of twelve under-two-year-old children with two qualified teachers, including the team leader and one unqualified staff member. The team leader in this centre worked full time in the centre with the teachers. The research participants consisted of one teacher, one team leader and two families/whānau, both mothers attended the interview. The following Table 3.4 illustrates the centre rolls, teachers, families/whānau, how many video clips were collected per each child and decile ratings.

**Table 3.4.***Centre structures*

Centre	Roll Of under twos	Centre staff Participants in the research	Families/whānau Children Participants in the research	Video Clips	Decile Rating Local school
Totara	12	3	2	12	10
Rimu	15	5	2	12	4
Miro	12	2	2	12	1

Centre staff and parents were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity, provide an audit trail and to support the reader of the thesis. The structure for the code is as follows: the centre, then the staff member's role, followed by their initial and then the page number from the transcripts. For example, Miro, Team Leader, Sally, page 2 would read in text as (M/TL/S/2) or Rimu, Family, Isla, page 4 (R/F/I/4). Tables 3.5 and 3.6 show participants in each centre using pseudonyms.

**Table 3.5.***Pseudonyms*

Totara 12 children	Rimu 15 Children	Miro 12 children
Brooke Team Leader (Dip ECE)	Sharon Team Leader (completing her Masters)	Sally Team Leader (BEEd)
Amy Teacher (Dip ECE)	Kathy Teacher (student)	Alison Teacher (BEEd)
Rita Teacher (Dip ECE)	Robyn Teacher (student)	Plus 1 unqualified staff member
Plus 1 unqualified staff member 0-3 "floater"	Jo Teacher (Primary Teacher)	
	Grace Teacher (Dip ECE)	

**Table 3.6.***Case study participant children and families/whānau and pseudonyms*

Totara		Rimu		Miro	
<i>Child</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Child</i>	<i>Parent</i>	<i>Child</i>	<i>Parent</i>
Ruby (12months)	Poppy & Matt	Helen (24 months)	Isla	Sarah (11 months)	Molly
Anna (9 Months)	Penny	James (12 months)	Hope	Albert (8 months)	Tess

## Teachers qualifications

The ten case study teachers' qualifications ranged from Bachelor degrees (three teachers), Diplomas (four teachers), primary qualified (one teacher who had undertaken some ECE teacher education), and two teachers who were enrolled in initial teacher education programmes. Their teaching qualifications were gained from a cross section of providers including Massey University, New Zealand Open Polytechnic, New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC) and Te Tari Puna o Aotearoa New Zealand Childcare Association (NZCA), which is now known as Te Rito Maioha. Both student teachers were completing a Diploma of Teaching through NZTC. Teacher qualification is frequently associated with quality early childhood education. There are strong links between higher-level qualification and a teacher's positive attitude towards infants and toddlers and their learning (Arnett, 1998; Kowalski, Wyver, Masselos, & de Lacey, 2005). Table 3.7 identifies the teacher qualification levels across the three case study centres.

**Table 3.7.**  
*Case study qualifications*

Qualifications	Totara	Rimu	Miro
Bachelor ECE	-	1	2
Diploma ECE	3	1	-
Diploma Primary	-	1	-
In teacher education	-	2	-

## Methods

After contacting the centres by phone, meetings were held with the owners and Head Teachers prior to them accepting the invitation to participate (Appendix D). The research information and material were provided to all the centres (Appendix E). In the



Totara centre I was invited to a staff meeting to share with all the teachers the process of the research and what this would entail.

There was some confusion in all the centres as to who should be asked to participate, as the over-two teachers would often cover for the under-two staff during non-contact times and in Miro an over-two teacher would at times be responsible for the sleep room. The team leaders in the centres decided that it would be easier only to interview teachers who were in full time employment in the under-two areas. Once identified, each potential interviewee was provided with an information sheet that described the study, the nature of their participation, and their rights as participants (Appendix E). Written consent was received from each participant before data collection commenced (Appendix F).

The team leader in each centre was asked to select the children and families/whānau as they had better understandings about who would best meet the criteria. The criteria for the case study children families/whānau observations and interviews were based on length of time in the centre, preferably newly enrolled, the age of the child and hours attended. However, it soon became apparent that all the criteria could not be met, with none of the centres having recently enrolled children of the age requested (between three months to two years). I then decided to select the children based on most recently enrolled. The preference was for children to be attending for at least three days a week; this was to provide better opportunities to observe over the timeframe envisioned. Once the families were selected and had agreed to participate I offered to meet with them individually to discuss the process. I was able to meet all the families before commencing the data generation and explained to participants the process and emphasised their rights. All the selected case study families/whānau agreed to participate and went on to sign the consent forms. The other families/whānau who were not case study participants also signed information and consent forms. As noted earlier the final sample included a total of two

student teachers, five qualified teachers, three team leaders and six families (see Tables 3.5 and 3.6).

The number of teachers selected was to ensure a variety of professional perspectives, and the number of family members chosen was to provide a diversity of family perspectives while maintaining manageability. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that researchers need to set 'boundaries' to ensure that the study can be completed within the limits of the researcher's time and resources.

Each of the three centres employed some unqualified staff members in their infant and toddler rooms. All three of these staff members refused to be interviewed. This was disappointing, as their voices could have added another perspective to the research. The reasons for not wanting to be interviewed ranged from fear about what would be asked (the researcher had offered the questions beforehand); one felt that she had nothing to offer (even though her team leader and researcher reiterated she would); and the third unqualified staff member declined to comment as to why. This study cannot therefore offer comment on the roles of the unqualified staff; this is possibly an important area of further study.

### ***ITERS-R***

To add depth to the research, the use of the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition ITERS-R measure (Harms, et al., 2006) was employed, thus providing an opportunity to quantitatively analyse the centres' quality features. The ITERS-R measure is an assessment tool to measure the overall or global quality in early childhood centres. It was developed as a device to be used by centre directors/managers for administration and programme development, by teaching staff for self-assessment and teacher education programmes.

The Scale consists of 39 items organized into seven subscales. The scales are designed to assess overall quality, which consists of, among other things, the various interactions that go on in the classroom environment, interplays between teachers and children, teachers and parents and other adults, and among the children themselves. Also assessed are the interactions the children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions.

My home centre agreed to pilot the ITERS-R measure and the interview questions. This opportunity was of benefit for my colleague and I to practise using the rating scale and also for my centre as they went on to use the results to support and guide their own review process.

Once the procuring of informed consent had been gained, the ITERS-R (Harms, et al., 2006) observations were undertaken. The reason for undertaking the ITERS-R (and video recording) before the interviews was to enable the researcher opportunity to discuss pivotal incidents, as observed, in more depth during the subsequent interviews.

I completed the ITERS-R scale in each of the three participant centres and followed up with discussion and clarification by the centres' team leaders. I employed the help of an assistant for this phase of the research, thus allowing for two sets of observations to be undertaken and for inter-rater reliability to be checked. My assistant signed a confidentiality agreement (See appendix G). The assistant and I undertook separate observations, at the same time, but in different areas across the centre. This was to lessen the impact of having two unknown people in the centre at the same time. A block of three to four hours was allocated to undertake the observations and rating for each centre. The team leaders were able to meet with me to clarify or expand on any areas. This meeting was for a period of no longer than 45 minutes for each team leader.

The ITERS-R was selected so that the centres could make use of the findings discovered by the researcher as well; the ITERS-R is a worthwhile tool for analysing centre's structural and interactional quality. The opportunity for the centres to use the findings from the rating scale to enhance or review their practices could be seen as a positive outcome from the centre's engagement in the research project. Collecting data by way of qualitative case studies and quantitative instruments allowed me to see if the two types of data showed similar results but from different perspectives (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

A structured observation of each setting was initially conducted to provide data triangulation and a further source of evidence. It was felt that an observation using the ITERS-R measure would provide evidence of observed behaviour and practice within the settings, rather than just relying on practitioner's accounts and views. Robson (2002) suggests that "what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check" (p. 310).

As the objective of the observations was to provide evidence of structural and relationship components within the settings it was decided to observe the three Centre environments using all seven subsections of the scale. Once the results from these seven subscales had been analysed, it was decided to look in more depth at the results from the three subscales that were more specifically linked to the relational component of the subsections, and to the research question. The total ITERS-R score is the average of the scores on the 39 items rated. A rating of "1" indicates inadequate quality, "3" indicates minimal quality, "5" indicates good quality, and "7" indicates excellent quality, see scores table 4.4 (p.143).

## *Video*

The use of video as a means for enhancing the sense of context and realism in case studies has been well documented (LeFevre, 2004; Perry & Talley, 2001). Video can capture the complexity of teacher interactions allowing for repeated viewings, which can reveal features that may have been previously missed in past viewings. The use of video recording as a reflective tool in teacher education programmes is a way to connect the perceived gap between theory and practice. Video recording can provide the opportunity to observe the lived realities of the early childhood experience (Newhouse, Lane, & Brown, 2007).

The use of videotapes helped me to recall, reconstruct and reconsider the transition experiences. Videotapes were not simply a means to represent experiences but also to mediate the construction of new understandings. It was possible, then, as a researcher to create rich data that juxtaposed and inter-twined the experiences of teachers, infants, toddlers and their families/whānau into accounts that represented the dynamic, relational aspects of these transitions.

A total of four video clips per child were taken: two at separate arrival times and two at separate departure times. These times were organised between myself and the families/whānau and ranged from 7.30am – 9am arrivals and from 3.00pm – 5.30pm for the departures. The video footage was viewed and reviewed; pivotal incidents were transcribed and then colour coded. Teachers' practices were coded alongside the child and family/whānau responses. As a result of the coding a further review entailed watching the video clips to further explore eye contact between the infant/toddler and teacher.

The aim of the video filming at arrival and departure times, was to enable seeing and developing some understandings about the lived reality of what happened for the child and teacher at arrival and departure times. The exploration of the phenomenon of arriving

and departing is linked to Bowlby's (1988) work in which he suggests that all people need a relational anchor in order to feel safe and have a safe haven to explore from and return to (Dolby, Hughes, & Frazier, 2014). Therefore, the use of video, it was hoped, would allow me to view the child's availability of this relational anchor in action, at times most likely to elicit attachment-type related behaviours for child and teacher. Although there are many opportunities for the observation of intersubjective attunement, I felt by limiting the video filming to two specific times would create less impact on the service and be more manageable for myself.

A Flip camera, which is very small and unobtrusive, was used. This camera allowed me to film around the centre with ease, moving from inside to outside areas without being in the way or being too obvious. This camera was practised with over several weeks prior to the start of the study. This enabled me to be confident and comfortable with the camera and its workings. I attempted to be at the centre at least 10 minutes before the family/whānau were expected to arrive or depart with their child. This was to ensure the camera was ready to go and that I was positioned in an area that afforded the best view and also caused the least impact on the other children and teachers in the room. The families/whānau and the teachers were all given the opportunity to review the video footage and then if they were happy with what they saw to sign the release agreement for the footage (See Appendix H). All the families/whānau reviewed the footage and were happy to sign the consent. The exception to this was Penny who was unable to continue with the interview process due to personal reasons; she was, however, happy to sign the release form of Anna's arrivals and departures unseen. When asked if they would like to review the footage, most teachers declined suggesting that they were too busy but were happy to sign the consent form without seeing the footage.

## *Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were held with the team leaders, teachers, and families/whānau. A list of questions was developed by me and checked by my supervisors. The aim of semi-structured interviews was to obtain information in the expectation of being able, at a later date, to compare and contrast these results against the survey results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

Clarity in the questions to be asked is vital when undertaking interviews (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009); so, a series of questions were designed with the following intent: to develop understandings of backgrounds and demographics, experiences, opinions and feelings. The team leader and teacher questions had a strong focus on their initial teacher education and ongoing professional development opportunities (with a focus on attachment and relationship learning), their centre's organisational structures and philosophy. The family/whānau questions also looked at centre organisational structures, their expectations and satisfaction with their centres. The interview questions were piloted with three teachers from my home centre to gauge the strength of the interview questions. By testing the interview questions, I was able to estimate the time they would take to answer and also help anticipate the flow and structure of the interview process.

The team leaders were interviewed as these participants were seen as key informants of centre practices. Team leaders frequently hold more information or in some cases are more articulate than others of the group. They are more likely able to offer insights that are invaluable to researchers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The team leaders answered the same set of questions as the student teachers and qualified teachers with the intent of deepening or gaining a wider view of the information being sought.

All the interviews were audio recorded using an Echo Smartpen, which sends the researcher's notes and audio directly from the smart pen to the researcher's computer. The

Echo Smartpen was a valuable tool as it allowed me to link easily the recorded conversations with any notes taken at the time of interview. I transcribed the audiotapes, which allowed for multiple revisiting of the interviews, thus increasing familiarity with the raw data that supported subsequent analysis.

Using interviews to gain deeper understandings of the realities of experiences of participants in a particular situation or setting is a well-established research technique (Blenkin & Kelly, 1992). The use of interviews is not without issues, however, and it is important to acknowledge that for this study a sole researcher (with supervisors' assistance) designed the questions, undertook the interviews and analysed the data. Having only one researcher can influence the questions, the direction of the discussion and the subsequent analysis (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). This bias was acknowledged and where possible I attempted to reduce the likelihood of this by seeking other opinions on the questions and piloting the questions with colleagues.

The interviews were conducted between November 2012 and May 2013 following the completion of the assessment of centre quality using the ITERS-R, and video recording. A suitable time and place were negotiated with each participant. The interviews with student teachers, qualified teachers and team leaders were carried out in their workplace, as negotiated with them. The family/whānau interviews were also negotiated and were conducted across venues such as the centre they attended, the families own home, and one interview was carried out at my workplace. The questions asked were generated from the research objectives and were informed by the literature review and drawn from my own knowledge and experience.

Interviews were for a period of approximately one hour and in some cases, they were shorter. I endeavoured to keep the interviews within the intended timeframe acknowledging the workload and other commitments of the participants. Each interview



began with an explanation of the study and an opportunity for the participants to ask any questions. Consent to be interviewed was confirmed and the right to stop the interview at any time reiterated. I also ensured the consent for recording the interview was clearly understood. The transcripts were returned to the participants for them to check for accuracy and to confirm that their perspectives had been accurately represented. Each participant approved their transcript and signed the transcript release form (Appendix I).

### ***Documents***

Documentary sources, such as relevant policies and procedures and curriculum documents were examined for linkages across the documents. Commonalities of language were colour coded and then used for comparative analysis, comparing what was written in the policy, procedures, curriculum documents and what was observed/recorded and discussed at the interview. The study also used documentary analysis (centre policies, procedures and curriculum documents) alongside the ITERS-R ratings and measures to provide in-depth contextual information. Documents of all types are useful in providing the researcher with opportunity to discover meanings, deepen understandings and explore wider the research topic (Bowen, 2009).

### **Phase two survey**

Following the generation of case study data, a national survey was carried out to test the reliability and validity of the case study results with a larger and more representative sample. In the second phase of the study the quantitative survey research questions were used to validate emerging themes from the case studies and provided baseline information on organisational trends, issues and practices in Aotearoa New Zealand infant and toddler early childhood care and education settings.

Survey research is a strategy for collecting data from a range of respondents, typically a sample drawn from a specified population, and usually involves the use of a survey questionnaire (Punch, 2006). The survey type for this research was a cross-sectional survey. A cross-sectional survey collects data from a predetermined population, selected to represent a larger population, at just one point in time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The use of a cross-sectional survey allows the researcher to gather information not available from other sources. It can provide an unbiased representation of the population of interest.

The most commonly used instrument in survey research is either an interview or a questionnaire. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009, p. 396) state “poorly worded questions can doom a survey to failure. Hence, they must be clearly written in a manner that is easily understandable by the respondents”. The questions used should be clear, concise, explicit, and use simple language. The questions need to be possible to answer and be relevant to the respondent and should consist of one part (not “double-barrel”). There are however limitations to online survey methods. Respondents may only complete some of the questions or not partake. Emails requesting participation may get marked as spam or not forwarded to intended participants (Vehovar & Lozar Manfreda, 2008). Anticipated respondents not receiving the survey was of concern for this particular part of the study as the proposed participants of the survey were team leaders, qualified teachers and student teachers. The concern was emails or survey links not getting passed on to the intended participants. However, it was hoped that the response rates would be higher as the survey was targeted to a specific group (Vehovar & Lozar Manfreda, 2008).

The survey included questions on teacher demographics, group size and ratios thus enabling some comparative analysis between the surveyed centres and the case study centres to be undertaken. The survey data was vital to the mixed method design as it

provided insights into national approaches to organisational practices in infant and toddler care and education and an indication of the strength of the case study findings.

### **Sampling procedure survey**

The intent of this phase was to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, as part of the QUAL–quan sequential exploratory design. To capture both forms of data, a range of question types was utilised, including rating scales, yes/no responses, check boxes and open-ended responses. A balance was sought between the types of questions asked that would allow the participants to complete the survey with comfort and at a good pace. In order to gather as many participants as possible, a purposive sampling strategy was utilized, providing the researcher with data relevant to this study.

Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, was used in this phase of the study; this survey tool was chosen in preference to a postal survey to reduce the cost and to potentially increase participant response, as well as support the effective management of a large data set (Vehovar & Lozar Manfreda, 2008).

Using an online survey over traditional postal methods has several advantages; these include having the ability to access a large and geographically diverse population managed in a time and cost-effective manner (Hewson & Laurent, 2008). Due to the anonymity of the survey it is possible for respondents to comment more candidly than in a face-to-face approach. The data collection and analysis tools that are provided with the online survey programme were also a key factor in choosing this strategy for the current study. The online survey programme enabled me to download my results in a variety of formats. I was able keep an offline copy of my survey results, download individual responses for printing, and export my raw data for further analysis. The programme

allowed me to cross-tabulate the data to compare the answer choices to one question across the rest of the survey.

The questions for the survey were generated after phase one data collection was complete. This allowed the survey to be informed by the literature review and the case study findings. Survey question generation began with developing a list of potential questions. Questions were developed from the study research question and then checked against the research objectives and the case study findings, to ensure that each would measure an aspect of the objectives and be aligned to the intent of the study. The questions were similar to that asked in the interviews, which was to enable the deeper exploration of what had been discovered in the case study phase. There were demographic questions, initial teacher education and on-going professional development questions. There was also a strong focus in the survey on practices relating to primary or key teaching and rosters and staff hours (Appendix, A).

The final version of the online survey consisted of thirty-seven questions with a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, including multi choice and rating scales of the 37 questions 21 allowed for comments to be shared.

### ***Pilot testing***

The survey underwent pilot testing to ensure the questions were not ambiguous or difficult to answer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Mutch, 2005). This pilot test was carried out in a large urban community-based centre, which was not one of the selected centres. I approached the centre and requested they trial the draft survey on a voluntary basis. They were assured that their responses would only be utilised to strengthen the survey tool and not be used in the study in any other way. Three teachers provided feedback on the pilot testing, which resulted in clarifying some of the questions and shortening the length of the

survey. My supervisors also gave an evaluation on the draft versions of the survey. Discussion with supervisors and colleagues supported the fine-tuning of the questions, a process that required several revisions before the final version was completed.

### *Sample*

In order to access sufficient numbers of centres for the survey I contacted the New Zealand Ministry of Education data base office. Permission was given to use the information in this data base as long as it was for research purposes and not for soliciting business or selling a product. The database was sourced from the following website: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/data-services/directories/early-childhood-services>. All the centres who identified as providing full time care for infants and toddlers were selected from this database.

It was decided to send surveys to as many centres as possible that identified as having infants and toddlers. The reason for selecting as many centres as possible is due to a pattern of non-response to survey questionnaires (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The hope was that by surveying so many centres, the return rate would provide at least 50 responses. It was hoped that the sample would provide the study with a large enough group to provide opportunity to compare and contrast the survey findings against that of the infant and toddler centres findings as previously explored in the case study phase.

An initial purposive sample of 800 centres that identified as having infant and toddler enrolments was sent an invitation, via email to complete the survey. The emails outlined the nature of the study, invited participation, and provided the link to the survey site on Survey Monkey. Attached to this email was a brief information sheet, explaining the nature and purpose of the study, and the rights of participants (Appendix J). The emails

were sent in April 2014, hoping to recruit centres in the early part of the year when they were more likely to have time to share and/or complete the survey.

Initial response was good, with most returns completed and sent back in the first week of distribution. A reminder email was sent to all non-responding centres after a two-week period and a further sixty responses were received as a result. Responses continued to arrive for the following four weeks. Several email responses were received from centre secretaries or office administrators acknowledging the receipt of the email and assuring that they would pass this on to the appropriate person, however it is difficult to know if this was always done. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) suggest that while important, response rates in education are often low; it is the quality of response, as well as any indication of representativeness that is more important.

Of the eight hundred emails sent, approximately twenty-five were bounced back due to out-dated email addresses or centres no longer in operation, a further twenty stating that they did not have infants or toddlers currently on their rolls. Of the seven hundred and seventy-five, 213 responses were finally received. This gave a return rate of 27.48%.

### ***Demographics of survey respondents***

The types of services who responded, current roles of respondents and qualifications held are displayed in the following three tables. There were four respondents who failed to record their centre's service type.

**Table 3.8.***Service type*

Community based not for profit	36.84%	77
Community based for profit	1.91%	4
Private	50.24%	105
Corporate	11.00%	23
Total respondents		209

The survey provided some alignment with the case studies with 50% of survey respondents coming from private centres.

**Table 3.9.***Current roles in the centre*

Owner manager/director	40.10%	83
Team leader/supervisor	28.50%	59
Head teacher	20.29%	42
Teacher	29.47%	61
Part time teacher	2.90%	6
In teacher education programme	0.97%	2
Unqualified staff member	0.97%	2
Relief teacher	0.97%	2
Total Respondents		207

As with the case study only a very small percentage of survey respondents were unqualified.

**Table 3.10.**  
*Qualifications held by respondents*

Unqualified	2.43%	5
In teacher education	0.97%	2
Certificate in ECE	1.94%	4
Diploma of teaching ECE	37.38%	77
Bachelor Degree ECE	44.66%	92
Graduate Diploma teaching ECE	6.80%	14
Post Graduate Certificate ECE	0.97%	2
Post Graduate Diploma ECE	4.85%	10
Master Degree	3.40%	7
Ph.D/Ed.D	0.49%	1
Total Respondents		206

### **Data analysis**

The approach to analysis was guided by the intent of the study to be exploratory in design with the qualitative phase giving direction to the quantitative method, and the quantitative results being used to either validate or extend on the quantitative findings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

### ***The Three Planes of Analysis***

The theoretical framework used to formulate the research design and subsequent data analysis has been based on Rogoff's (1998) three planes of activity. As she states, "the examination of individual, personal and community/institutional development processes involve differing planes of observation and analysis" (p. 688). She argues that development occurs on three interacting planes of influence: the **personal**, (i.e. the individual teacher, child or family/whānau member) shows how individuals change through their participation in an experience by highlighting the role of the individual, their beliefs and understandings and how these change (i.e. outcomes). The other planes **interpersonal**, (interactions among social partners) show how people communicate with



each other and engage in shared endeavours. The **community/institutional** plane (contextual) show how people participate with others in culturally organised activities using cultural tools such as: institutional policies and practices underpinning the settings culture or special nature, philosophies, routines and duties. These planes interact with each other and cannot be separated. Rogoff (1998) proposed that when observing activities through the personal plane, the other planes remain in the background; they are mutually constitutive and do not exist in isolation from each other. Jordan (2003, p. 6) suggests “these planes are considered to be dynamically changing products of a multitude of influences across time and space, within each specific community’s socio-historical and political milieu”. Rogoff (2003) proposes that: in order to understand development from a socio-cultural-historical perspective would require investigation of the cultural nature of everyday life. This examination would need to include studying people’s use and “transformation of cultural tools and technologies and their involvement in cultural traditions in the structures and institutions of family life and community practices” (p. 10). A single plane of analysis can be used to explore one aspect of a situation in depth, or, by focusing on each plane of analysis in turn a holistic picture can be built up.

For this current study the idea of these three planes being mutually constitutive of each other and of being able to background two planes while focusing on the foregrounded one, were useful in the analysis of the centre’s policies and workings, teaching, and relationships. The planes were used to identify teachers’ pedagogical practice, how relationships develop and how organisational culture impacts on relationship development. When analysing data, the researcher constantly changed lenses from one plane to the other, in order to illuminate the processes that impact on attachment-type relationship development between teacher, infant, and/or toddler. The key concept for this study was

one of relationship development opportunities and whilst the three planes are mutually constitutive of each other the institutional plane for this study is one of emphasis.

### *Phase one case study*

Two different types of analysis were used to address the two research phases. Phase One research had qualitative data in textual form: documentation, transcription data from the video footage, interview transcripts, plus the thematic analysis of the policy documents. The ITERS-R provided a quantitative view of the centres process and structural quality through the use of rating scales. A thematic analysis was adopted as it enables the researcher to develop emergent themes, as is necessary for an exploratory study. The following steps adapted from Mutch (2005) guided the analysis process (see Table 3.11).

Table 3.11.

#### *Analysis steps*

Perceiving: what am I looking for?	Familiarising myself with data	Transcribing the data Re reading and noting initial ideas, reviewing the video clips, reviewing the ITERS-R data
Comparing: what goes together: and what things don't go together?	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic way Collating the data relevant to each code
Aggregating: what groupings are evident?	Searching for themes	Collating codes into themes Gathered all the data relevant to each theme
Ordering: are there categories and sub-categories?	Reviewing and condensing the themes	Checking to see if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts Checking to see if the themes work in relation to the entire data set Reviewing the data to condense the themes into smaller sets
Establishing linkages and relationships: how do the categories relate to one another and to the literature?	Defining and naming themes	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells Generating clear definition of names for each theme

To delve deeply into the data the steps highlighted above were used to ensure that codes and then themes were clearly identified. The video recordings were viewed and

reviewed, and notes made and then compared back again to the video footage and then coded. Interview transcripts were read and reread iteratively, and then coded; centre policies, procedure and curriculum documents were analysed for links between the written words and the teacher practices. The ITERS-R provided a rating score for each of the three centres based on observations.

### ***Phase two survey***

Phase two research was addressed using quantitative analysis methods. The survey data were analysed across each question to obtain descriptive data about the centres in the survey, such as teacher and centre practices and decision-making. Data analysis includes looking at variables or “things” that differ or change. Survey Monkey allowed for data to be analysed by individual response and by question; these tools helped in the analysis process to see any emerging trends in the survey data, by quantifying and displaying the results in a table form. Analysis was approached on a question-by-question basis; the results from the questions were printed and categorised, such as team leader responses and teacher responses, qualified teacher comments and unqualified staff comments, these were all sorted and coded. Rogoff’s (1998) planes of analysis were used to support the analysis of the data, focusing on the personal, interpersonal and institutional planes. The data from the survey were then compared and contrasted with the identified themes and sub themes from the case study data.

The answers from the open-ended questions were printed and collated, then analysed through a process of coding, in which the responses of the participants were analysed to identify themes.

The following Figure 3.1 illustrates the analysis process. In order to delve deeply into the data the steps highlighted below were followed. Themes were identified during

this time. The data were noted and colour coded using coloured symbols. By keeping the research question firmly in the forefront, the data were able to be organised into themes.

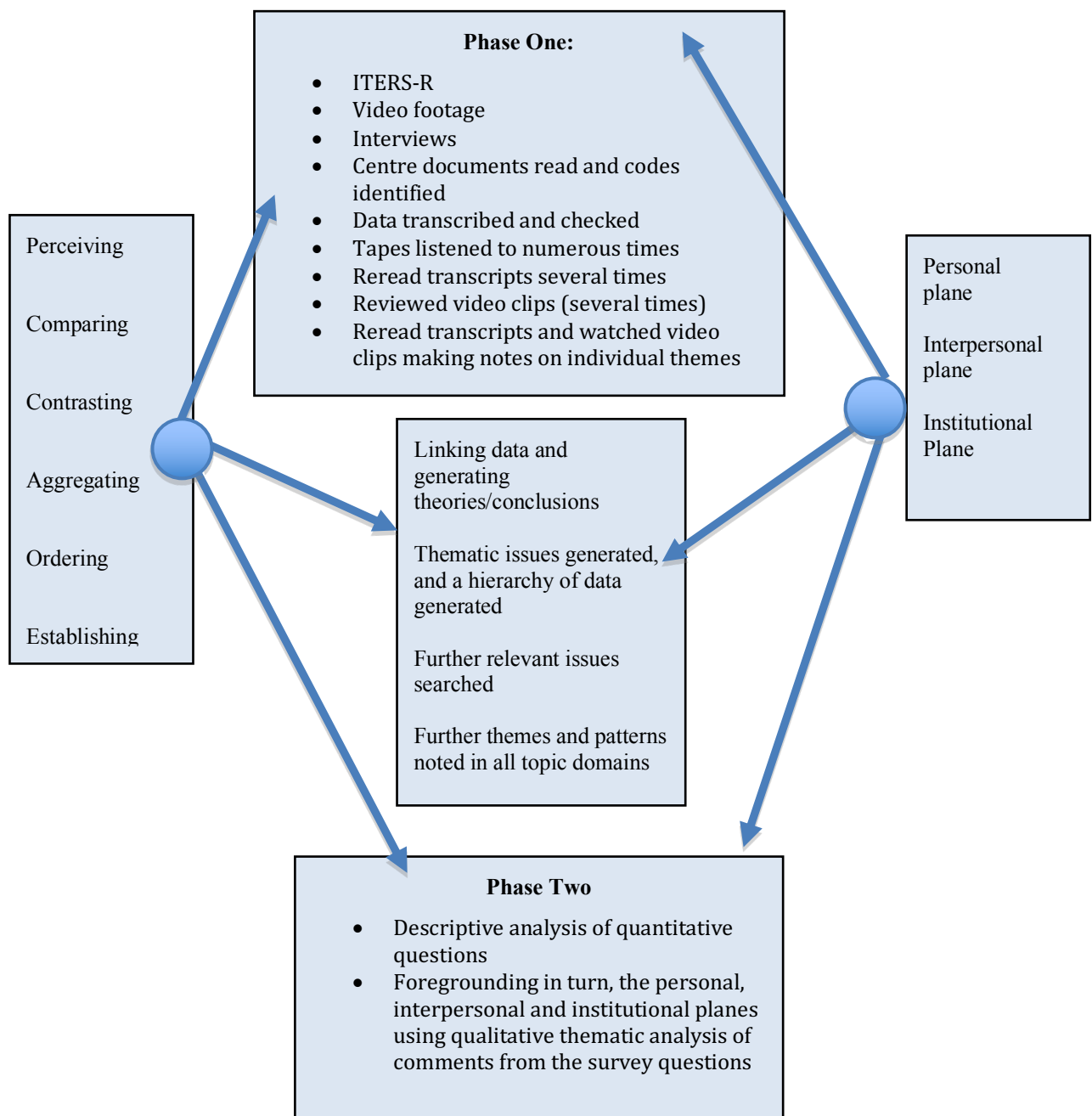


Figure 3.1. Conceptualisation of analysis method

## Ethics

It is important that researchers develop and maintain an ethical culture when undertaking research and that this development is an on-going process (Cullen, 2005).

Cullen states that “the ethics of educational research are not just the domain of academic researchers or ethics review committees; teachers are centrally involved in ethical decisions about educational research” (p. 261). In consideration of this thinking the research was designed to include and keep the teachers informed and involved in as much of the research as possible. In Totara I was able to meet with the staff team prior to the commencement of the video filming. In Rimu and Miro I met with the teachers more informally and was able to share and consult with the teachers particularly at the morning arrivals as I was generally in the centre prior to children arriving. I was able to discuss issues of sensitivity around video filming and answer any questions or concerns the teachers may have had. This meant that by the time the interviews were held a relationship had developed between participants, and myself, which enabled a more relaxed interview environment.

Caring, fairness, openness and truth are the values that should underpin the relationships between participants of research. The ethics of research focus on the need to protect people taking part in any project from harm. Transparency of process where all parties are fully informed and have clear understandings about their rights within the project are vital in all areas of research (Cullen, 2005). The centre owners were made aware that descriptions of the centres may give an indication of identity, but they were assured that every effort would be made to minimise identifiable features in the final report.

The research was guided by the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Teaching and Research involving Human Subjects (MUHEC). Ethical considerations were used to clarify and guide the research. By applying the principles of the code, consideration

of ethical issues about the current project were primarily aimed at protecting the participants, the researcher, the centres and the University.

Information about the aims and uses of the research, and all the proposed research procedures were provided to the potential participants. Written consent, as the research was to be undertaken in a face-to-face setting, was gained. All the participants were assured of their right to decline to participate or to withdraw from the study, and as this study involved young children, parental consent was procured. The use of pseudonyms supported confidentiality (case study centres) of participants and centres; the survey was anonymous; no identifying features were collected (Appendices E1 E2 E3 E4).

Issues of ethical concern for this study included the involvement of children aged under three years. While informed, written consent was obtained from family/whānau; it is important to respect the child's right to dignity and privacy. As some of the observations occurred during critical care and routine times during the day, it was imperative that I was constantly aware of any non-verbal cues from the child. Verbal or non-verbal cues expressed by the child signalling discomfort or unease at my presence was acknowledged and respected and I immediately withdrew from the area, thus affording the child respect, dignity and privacy.

The ethical procedures worked well in most cases with the exception of one notable instance; in one centre when I started to video the family's arrival I noticed that the parent was anxious and appeared to be hiding her face. I immediately turned off the video recorder and waited for a time to have an informal chat. The parent explained that she was happy for her child to be filmed, but not her. I apologised and reassured the parent that she would not be videotaped and that I would recruit another family if that would be more comfortable for the parent. She agreed and shared that she had filled out two consent forms; one agreeing to being videotaped and in the other declining. As I had only received

one of these consent forms, I was unaware that there had been two forms completed by the participant. When the team leader of the room was approached, she explained that this parent struggled to read, and she apologised because she hadn't gone through the form properly with her and had inadvertently given her two forms to complete. This lack of communication was a flaw in the process and highlighted the importance of checking and double-checking consent. Any footage that had been recorded of the child and parent was erased.

### **Validity of data**

The generation of the data was from a range of individuals using a variety of methods. The use of triangulation (Richards, 2005) strengthens the validity of the study by combining several methods and thus providing multiple perspectives, from multiple sites about the topic being studied. With this triangulation, it was possible to search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information enabling themes or categories in the study to be identified. Coding of the transcribed interviews was carried out and tentative findings shared with participants as a means of member-checking, verifying and being prepared if necessary to modify my statements concerning the participants or his/her child in any way, to ensure that the analysis reflected their perspectives, and was an accurate representation of the sentiments and perceptions expressed. Observational data on practices were compared against written policies, procedures and interview scripts. Punch (2006) suggests that triangulation is a method of crosschecking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data. Triangulation is a tool to help minimise bias: measurement bias; sampling bias; procedural bias; and design bias (Kennedy, 2009).

Having multiple case study settings such as the three early childhood centres increases the rigour of the study and the veracity of its findings. Validity and reliability are assisted, as conclusions from differing data sources and multiple sites are stronger than from one source. Authenticity, plausibility, and believability of the study are aided in this way (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Triangulation is, of course, not without its critics. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) state, “that even having multiple data sources, particularly of qualitative data does not ensure consistency or replication” (p. 114). They go on to suggest “methodological triangulation does not necessarily increase validity, reduce bias or bring objectivity to research” (p. 114). Another way to establish validity can be through ‘pooled judgement’ where researchers consult with colleagues before composing the final draft of the report, although this was not possible in this study as it was doctoral research. Results from qualitative data are not usually considered generalizable, but can in some instances be transferable (Palmquist, et al., 2005).

## **Summary**

This chapter has discussed the methodology design and the methods of the research. The theoretical framework was constructivist, the methodology was primarily interpretive, and the study employed the use of a QUAL–quan mixed method design. Sociocultural theory provided a theoretical perspective that influenced the methodology. Phase one of the research (QUAL) used observations (ITERS-R, video recording) and interviews with participants from the three centres, Totara, Miro and Rimu and families/whānau. The chapter described the case study centres and the rationale for selecting them, characteristics of the participants and data generation procedures. Phase two of the study (quan) used a purposive sampling survey with a response rate of 213 (24.7%). The survey was described and the rationale for using a purposeful sampling



method explained. Data were analysed using qualitative thematic analysis, exploring points of similarity and differences in teachers' opportunities to create effective relationships with the infants, toddlers and their families/whānau. Ethical concerns have been discussed and validity considerations of the study shared. The intention was to learn as much as possible about how organisational procedures impact on relationship development opportunities between teachers, infants, toddlers, and their families/whānau in early childhood settings.

Chapter Four will discuss the findings from the case study phase of the research, sharing the voices of the participants alongside the ITERS-R, the video observations and the centre documentation.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Case Studies**

The experience of leaving a young child at a childcare centre takes place within the bounds of that particular centre, their policies and practises. While each family/whānau and teacher will experience this in different ways, it is the organisational culture and the teachers' own values, beliefs and understandings drawn from initial teacher education and their own experiences that will shape this experience both explicitly and implicitly. The focus of this research was on relationship development opportunities between the teacher, infant, toddler and family/whānau; arrival and departure times were selected for observation as key transition times in a child's day and in a teacher's responsibilities, to provide manageable windows of opportunity to observe relationship connections. This chapter presents the findings of phase one of the study, with a focus on the qualitative component of the research.

In this chapter the case studies are explored; within each case study a description of the ITERS-R result is presented and the video, interview data and centre documentation are analysed and discussed. Themes emerging across the three centres are then discussed under each of the three planes: personal, interpersonal and institutional.

#### **Totara**

Totara was a privately-owned purpose-built centre (one of four centres located in the city). This purpose-built centre had three areas: the back room was for infants and toddlers up to the age of two with a roll of 12 at any one time, next to this was the area for

children aged two to three, and then the front room of the building which catered for the older children, up to the age of six. This centre was in a high decile rated area. Totara had three teachers who all held diplomas in ECE. They had a team leader, Brooke who had been at the centre for five years, Amy (two years at the centre) and Rita (two years at the centre). Totara had one unqualified staff member who would rotate between the two younger rooms. They also had what they called a float teacher (unqualified) from the over two room who would at times cover for lunches and non-contacts.

The case study families/whānau in Totara included, Ruby 12 months (child) and her parents Poppy and Matt (three months in the centre); and Anna 9 months and her mother Penny (two months at the centre with Anna). Penny's son also attended the Centre and was in the over-two section (See table 3.6). Unfortunately, Penny was unable to participate in the interview process for personal reasons but was happy for Anna's information to be used in the study.

### ***Daily arrivals and departures***

At arrival times all children and families were welcomed into Totara and parents were able to share with teachers pertinent information regarding their child's needs. Anna and Ruby were greeted warmly, given cuddles, and Anna was often rocked and patted when the teachers were holding her.

Totara's staff rosters and daily schedules meant the same teachers were not always available to the families at arrival or departure times. Both children appeared to settle quickly, teachers in Totara spent time settling Ruby and once she was settled the teachers would generally move on and engage with other children or return to their tasks. It was observed that the teachers spent more time with Anna and stayed with her for longer after her mother had left. The arrival when Anna was upset only took three minutes. Arrival

times generally lasted between two to four minutes with only one arrival taking longer than six minutes; I would start filming just before the family/whānau entered the room and for a period of time after the family/whānau had left the room.

Totara teachers' hours changed over a period of four weeks, meaning that each week the teachers rotated between early and late starts and finishes. Of the four arrivals observed in Totara there were three different teachers for the families/whānau to leave their children with. Rita shared her opinion for rotating staff hours:

Because of our roster we start at different times each week. Every week is different, and every day is different. So, for new comers (new infants or toddlers starting in the centre) everyone is on the floor (across the day) every teacher can interact with this child up to four weeks (teachers hours changed weekly so over a four-week period) every teacher can give the child a cuddle and have an equal relationship (T/T/R/10).

Information sharing at arrival times was mixed. Both families/whānau were greeted warmly and some sharing of information took place. The depth of this sharing seemed to be dependent on the teacher. This could have been due to several reasons, such as depth of relationship with the child and the relationship with the family/whānau. When Matt left Ruby with Amy they talked about how the weekend had been and that Ruby had played in the long grass and had great fun on the farm. Amy asked about her sleep and what time she had woken. When Ruby was handed to the non-qualified staff member she asked if Ruby was 'good to go?' and had she had breakfast.

The conversations between Penny and Rita at Anna's arrival were about how Anna slept and when she woke, what she had in her lunch box, with discussion around how she was enjoying her fruit and laughter about the mess she made with the peach. The conversation at Anna's arrival to the over-two teacher consisted of whether she'd had a good sleep and some general chat about what the family/whānau were planning to do in the upcoming holidays.

It was observed that Anna appeared to have a preferred teacher, (Rita) and when this teacher was not present at arrival time she was upset (cried) and turned her head away and twisted her body away from the teacher receiving her. She required more support to settle into the centre at this arrival time. The teacher who Anna was handed over to in this instance was an unqualified staff member from the over-two room. At this transition Anna cried and held on to her mother's top as she was being handed over. The staff member took her to look at the birds and fish. When Penny finished packing away Anna's nappies she kissed and waved goodbye. Anna's brother came and gave her a kiss and Anna smiled at him. Once the family/whānau had left the staff member tried twice to put Anna down; both times she cried and resisted being put onto the floor. The staff member held her and then sat with Anna in a chair and read a story to her. At Anna's second arrival into the setting she was in her mother's arms and when she saw Rita she leaned towards her smiling and was happy to be passed into Rita's arms.

When Ruby arrived during my first video session, she came to the door happily until she saw me, and she became shy and wouldn't come into the room. I moved back away from her sight and Ruby came in and ran happily to Amy (teacher) who scooped her up for a hug. Amy then carried her while Matt put away Ruby's things. Amy showed Ruby the fish and a hanging mobile as Matt was sorting out Ruby's lunch. Once Matt had said goodbye and left, Amy took Ruby to the play dough table where they both played with the dough. At Ruby's second arrival the teacher in the room was the non-qualified staff member who moves between the under-two and over-two areas. Ruby came into the room and looked about then moved to the small table, carrying her teddy. Ruby stood for a while watching the children. While the staff member was pleasant towards her, Ruby didn't engage with her or go to her for physical support as she clearly did with Amy. Ruby watched the other children and then went across to where there was a small container of

magnetic toys. The non-qualified staff member sat down next to the container and watched the children as they picked up and played with the toys.

At arrival times there were some joint attention episodes between the teachers and Anna and Ruby. Teachers often used distraction as a technique to settle reluctant children; distraction took the form of: showing or pointing out to the child the fish, bird, mobiles, and/or sitting with the child with blocks, books, and food. Ruby and Anna had different teachers or staff members support them at each arrival.

There were also often different teachers on duty at the end of the day so that families/whānau were frequently talking to different teachers at arrival and departure. Anna and Ruby responded positively at departure times, with Ruby running enthusiastically towards her dad and greeting him with smiles and chatter. Anna was observed holding her arms out smiling and babbling at her mother and her brother who accompanied them at arrivals and departures.

At departure times Matt and Penny asked about how their child's day had been. The comments shared at departure times ranged from in-depth to quite shallow. The in-depth interactions included discussion around experiences the child was involved in, sleep times and food intake. At other times, however, the conversation would consist of statements such as 'she has had a great day', 'she has had a good day today', and 'she had fun today'. Teachers would share information in what appeared to be a very relaxed and casual manner. The depth and length of engagement was also impacted by how busy the teachers were at the end of the day. Matt would stand for some time observing Ruby at play until she noticed him.

### *Family perspectives*

Both families/whānau agreed that they liked to be informed often about their children's day-to-day experiences. They also wanted opportunities for them to share home information with the teachers. However, when discussing the feedback they had received Poppy commented as follows:

Umm yes, we do, (get feedback) some days are better than others, umm at the start they were quite good. Yeah but I think they were just padding out of what she was doing. Like she loves the sandpit so that is what really got written (in the child's profile). They just put the same things every day, Ruby played in sandpit with her teddy, Ruby liked digging in the sand, there are only so many ways you can write she likes playing in the sand (T/F/P/2).

In Totara the teachers discussed how it is only the qualified teachers who write in the children's profiles, as Amy noted,

If we get a new child we arrange who that profile teacher (see glossary) is going to be so that teacher will be the one who helps the child settle in, as a bonding kind of thing, they get to know the parents, but we are all willing to share and do the talking but the little bit of extra time is spent by this teacher (T/T/A/10).

Nevertheless, the teachers identified by the families/whānau were not always the allocated teacher or profile teacher. Matt, when asked, said that Ruby did have a preferred teacher but then struggled to say who it was: "she does umm I always forget her name she is the blond one, what is her name?" (T/F/M/1). Matt was referring to Amy, she was the teacher allocated to settle in Ruby and to write in her profile. Poppy commented that having a preferred teacher was more for settling in to the centre when the family/whānau first commences using the service:

for the transition it was more the attachment style or whatever you call it supporting her to settle in. But now that she is sort of in there I don't think it is such a big deal (T/F/P/3).

## ***ITERS-R***

The ITERS-R observation was carried out in the Totara centre over a period of two hours. Totara had an overall score in the good quality range. They also had a subscale score in the excellence range; this subscale score was for programme structure, earned by the service having a written description of their infant and toddler programme with clear practice guidelines.

Totara scored in the excellent range in item six greeting and departing, in the subscale Personal Care Routines. They also scored excellent in item 27, Staff Child Interaction, subscale Interaction, with warm interactions between the teacher and child observed. They scored in the minimal quality range for item 26 (peer interaction), as there was limited support offered to children around their emotions or feelings and only some support for children to explore emotions or feelings with their peers. Totara teachers all discussed the importance of developing strong relationships with the infants and toddlers. Totara had explicit practices written for the teachers of the infants and toddlers. These written descriptions of practices had a strong focus on respectful and emotionally thoughtful practice.

Totara had a written description regarding the role that their key teacher would play in settling the child on their first entry to the service. This documentation, however, mainly focused on the why, but not the how, of this experience. Having some documentation regarding settling children into the centre contributed to the higher ITERS-R score that Totara received on item six, greetings and farewell, Subscale Personal Care Routines.



## ***Interviews***

Totara had strong organisational elements such as written programmes, an emphasis on professional learning for their staff, and clearly articulated expectations of practice for the teachers.

When discussing attachment theory, Brooke commented that she enjoyed the study she had undertaken on attachment and felt very passionate about infant and toddler teaching. She stated she had a folder where she kept her own research on attachment, which she shares with other teachers in her work place. Amy commented that she remembered Bowlby as being related to attachment and there was a mention of attachment in her ITE, but she was not sure what it was really all about.

Rita also talked about having undertaken ITE that had a very strong focus on the relationships between teachers and children, teachers and teachers and teachers and families. She commented on participating in discussions around attachment in connection to culture but did not elaborate on this.

## ***Documentation***

The Totara documentation consisted of a general philosophy statement, a three-page document on 'Respectful, Responsive, and Reciprocal Relationships', which was written for all of the centres in this company.

The Totara documentation stated that the centre had minimum requirements regarding enrolments such as flexibility of hours and days. They noted they would take any child they have space for regardless of ethnicity, ability, or social issues. There was a commitment to the centre's family/whānau and their values and beliefs, with statements provided regarding teachers' responsibilities to act in a non-judgmental way with

families/whānau. Documentation specified that establishing relationships with children and their families was the primary responsibility of all teachers.

Totara's respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationship document identified the need for continuity of teacher for the child. They noted that where possible there would be the same teacher meeting the child's needs every day during the settling in process. This document also noted the importance of having at least one "baby teacher" present when children are arriving in the morning. It also stated that the "baby teachers" needed to inform the 'float' teacher what the children's requirements were prior to going on lunch or non-contact time (the 'float' teacher in Totara was someone from the over-two room). A further three-page document was provided to the infant, and toddler teaching staff entitled '*Expectations for the Baby Room Teachers*'. Amy said they implement a lot of "Childspace" philosophies in their work and suggested that they were not all written down, but some were in the "*Expectations for the Baby Room Teachers*" document. She went on to talk about this document and said:

You know, the Childspace philosophies of respect, and the respect book that Toni Christie has written, we all have a copy of that and we read it from cover to cover and we try to implement that in our everyday practice (T/T/A/4).

Rita also noted that the written practice list had been based on Toni Christie's (2010) work, but nevertheless she suggested that not all things were written down:

It is not in our philosophy and it is not in our policy, but it is in our practice every day. We don't just grab a child and wipe their nose, in our centre we always get down to the children's level - eye contact we use a lot you know (T/T/R/11).

### **Totara Summary**

Totara scored with an overall rating of good quality. The centre had well written documentation with a specific focus on infant and toddler practices. However, there was

evidence of contradiction between their written documentation and their practices, in which their documentation highlighted the importance of continuity of teachers, but they had organisational structures in place that resulted in a lack of teacher continuity for the children. They also stated that there would be a “baby room” teacher to receive the child in the morning, but this was not always observed in practice. The gap between their written documents and teacher practices created barriers for the children and families/whānau in developing the deep and meaningful relationships required for best practice experiences for the infants, toddlers and families/whānau of the Totara centre.

## **Rimu**

Rimu was a large privately-owned centre (one of two) operating in a middle decile area. The centre was a large old villa converted into a childcare centre. At the time of data collection, the under-two room had a roll of fifteen children, with five teachers including a team leader, Sharon, who was completing her master’s degree (she had been teaching at the service for four years). The other participants were Kathy (three years at the service) and Robin (three years at the service); both of these participants were in teacher education programmes. Jo (five months at the service) was a primary school qualified teacher, and Grace (six weeks at the service), who had a diploma of teaching ECE. They also employed an unqualified part time staff member to cover for lunches and noncontact times (see table 3.5). There were two Rimu families/whānau participating in this research, the first was Helen, 24 months old and her mother Isla; and James 12 months, and his mother Hope (see table 3.6).

### ***Daily arrival and departures***

Both of James' arrivals into the room took a few minutes as he was hesitant to leave his mother and would stay close to her until it was time for her to leave. He would whimper and hold onto his mother's clothing or cling tightly to her legs. Robyn took him from Hope's arms at the first arrival and Hope settled him at the table at the second. He did not hold his arms out to Robyn to be taken or respond in an excited or happy manner. Robyn helped him to sit at the table at the first arrival; even though his mother had said he had breakfast at home, he sat with his plate with two other children. Hope left, and he continued to sit at the table, not eating. The following arrival video recorded Hope sitting him up to the table and this time on his own. She left, and he continued to sit alone for quite some time with minimal to no interaction with the teachers.

James was happy to see his mother when she arrived to collect him. He smiled at her then ran and threw the book he had been looking at over the gated-off area into the kitchen. In the second video clip James was outside in the small playhouse when Hope arrived, she sat with the teachers for quite some time in the sun chatting about his day. Hope gathered him up and went inside where she talked to Kathy about his day. As he was in his mother's arms and she was talking to Kathy about his day he threw the car keys he was holding down onto the floor and smiled; his mother laughed with him. They continued to chat with Kathy for a bit and then left happily waving to the other children.

Helen arrived into the room with slightly more enthusiasm than James and her mother Isla also stayed for a period of time until Helen was settled. Each day Helen brought to the centre a small doll and a backpack. Helen carefully looked after these items and she took them with her as she engaged with the teachers. On her first arrival Isla stayed for a while and changed Helen's tights as she had splashed in the puddles outside and got them wet. Once she had done that she left, and Helen and Robyn went to the over-two area

to get cornflakes for the children's breakfast. This was repeated at the next arrival. This practice was observed happening for other children, and a walk to the over-two room seemed a common occurrence for some children at arrival in Rimu.

At the first departure Helen struggled and was upset and cross mostly with her mother. Helen threw a small ball at another child and then tried to bite her mother. Isla helped her to settle down and Helen gathered up her baby doll and backpack and they left.

Information sharing at arrivals and departures was generally quite comprehensive with both mothers sharing information about their child in some depth. Teachers shared examples of what the children had been doing during the day; the conversations were relaxed and frequently humorous. However, during arrival times the conversations with both mothers seemed overshadowed by the teachers' duties of setting up breakfast or tidying up equipment. At his second arrival a teacher didn't actually take James from his mother, she sat him up to the table and left soon after.

### *Family perspectives*

When discussing key teachers Helen's mum Isla described her experience with having a key teacher as follows:

her (Helen's) key teacher was Mary and Mary left. I think she might have been gone about three months now. I have always kind of seen Robyn as her key teacher as the only time I saw Mary was... well Mary worked 9 – 3 so I never saw her. I used to talk to her on the phone a lot and if I came in early I would have a chat to her, but Robyn was always our first port of call (R/F/I/16).

Hope, when looking for a centre for James had been advised by a friend to look for a centre that had a primary care system in place, as she explained:

I was talking to a lady who runs a day-care and she said one of the key things when looking for care for under twos is one that does primary carers. She said because some of them don't and one of the reasons is that they get too attached to that one teacher and if they are away the child gets upset.

But what I have noticed with this one (Rimu) is the children have their primary carer, but all the teachers are hands on (not huge) and all the teachers are involved and how they rotate their day they all have some time in the sleep room and some time outside, so they interact with all the children across all areas (R/F/H/12).

James appeared happy to be with either Robyn or Kathy when he was at the centre and showed no noticeable preference. When asked if James had a preferred teacher Hope commented that she didn't know who it was or if he even had one (Rimu said they allocated teachers for profile writing and for settling in). She commented, "Umm I don't know umm no not really I do know that he does like Jo and he still does I think she used to pick him up a lot" (R/F/H/11). Hope was the only family/whānau who talked about looking for a centre that had a key teacher or primary care programme, but her responses show a level of confusion about what this means in practice.

### ***ITERS-R***

The ITERS-R was carried out in Rimu over a period of three hours. Their highest scores were in the subscales of programme structure and listening and talking. They scored low in item six greeting and departing, subscale Personal Care Routines. Teachers were observed in the Rimu Centre being focused on tasks and breakfast preparation at arrival times, thus affecting the quality of interactions at these times. Rimu's low score in the activities subscale was related to the outside environment, which had no grass area and limited space. Rimu scored in the minimal quality range for item 27: staff child interaction, subscale Interaction. It was observed that teachers spent some time setting up the environments and organising equipment, which tended to limit or isolate the teachers from the infants and toddlers at these times. Grace, who was new to Rimu and was in a leadership role noted,

I haven't changed the roster system because I felt coming into it I thought it was one of the most brilliant rosters I have ever seen. I believe in having

rosters. I believe you need to know where you are and what you have to do and that way you can work better as a team if you know what you have to do each day (R/TL/G/8).

### *Interviews*

Jo discussed the importance of sharing information between teachers and families/whānau and how her start time would impact on this information sharing. She commented;

I started at nine and finished about four and I missed the discussions about what was happening. I missed that parent's voice, that whole sense of belonging and where I fitted in structurally" (R/T/J/9).

Jo shared how she felt about relationship development between herself and the families/whānau. This conversation was about how teacher hours can create problems for teachers to develop relationships with the families/whānau;

There is quite a difference between starting and what my hours are now to what they were before (she previously was on a late start). That whole interaction is different, so I am able to develop meaningful relationships with parents rather than just those superficial ones. The other thing is to capture the parent's voice and extend children's learning; well you capture that in those interactions in the morning. They affect you and you can affect them and add to the children's learning. You don't get it otherwise you can do a survey, but you just don't get what you need, it is not spontaneous. That is very important and necessary to us and to the families (R/T/J/19).

Robyn commented that the rosters made sure everyone was kept on task. It was when the 'nappy' teacher, Jo, was taking a child to be changed that she (child) reached out for another teacher. Jo, who was doing nappies for the day, appeared to miss that the child was indicating a preference for another teacher. She was busy and had quite a few children to change before morning tea. When the teachers did engage with the children they were warm and responsive.

Rimu didn't provide a key teacher/primary care system. Jo suggested that having a group care approach meant that the care provided was as follows;

more uniform and that is the advantage, this is the best of that situation, you have the opportunity to get to know them all. I have worked in other centres and the whole ‘that is my child I am going to change them’ and you don’t get to know them as a group (R/T/J/10).

### ***Documentation***

The documentation provided to families/whānau contained the centre’s vision statement and philosophy. There was no mention in the Rimu documentation about teacher education or professional development. The Rimu Centre documentation reported on the importance of the child as central to the learning community. The philosophy stated that the teachers’ role is to motivate children to learn and to empower children to be critical thinkers and problem solvers.

While there is no direct information about professional learning and development the documentation said that in this centre, the teachers would provide a wide range of opportunities for learning for all. Rimu was happy for their teachers to undertake further professional learning or initial teacher education.

Rimu’s philosophy statement highlighted the importance of consistency of teachers and low teacher-child ratios. The documentation promoted the importance of relationships between all members of their learning community with a focus on the development of respectful partnerships between teachers and family/whānau.

There was no information about primary or key teacher systems, or how children would be supported during transition times. They did promote the importance of warm, reciprocal interactions but did not comment as to with and between whom.

The Rimu documentation also highlighted the important role that they see family/whānau as having in the development of their child, recognising the family/whānau as being the child’s first teachers. Respecting family/whānau aspirations for their children



was noted and the documentation reported a commitment to cater for individual children's needs.

### **Rimu Summary**

Rimu scored an overall minimal quality rating in the ITERS-R. There were also some contradictions between practice and documentation. The allocation to the child and family/whānau of a 'settling in' teacher and 'profile teacher' was listed in the centre documentation but Hope seemed to have no idea about this process and was unaware if her child had a preferred or allocated teacher. There was also confusion between the teachers about what it means to have a primary or key teacher programme. Jo was quite explicit in the fact that the centre did not operate such a programme and yet Robyn and Kathy both talked about having key children. This showed gaps between the centre documentation, teacher practices and a lack of continuity or shared understandings between the centre and the teachers.

It was noted in Rimu that interactions (length of time spent with the child and family) between the teacher and family/child altered when the environment was busy and when tasks needed to be completed. Breakfast time seemed to be an issue in Rimu with both children (at slightly different times) arriving during the breakfast period. At this time, it was apparent that the teachers were more focused on the preparation and serving of breakfast. While at times the discussion between teachers and mothers was reasonably comprehensive, generally the interactions between the teachers and children at transition times was limited.

## **Miro**

Miro was a small privately-owned centre. It was situated in a low decile area, with a roll of twelve in the under-two centre. There were two qualified teachers both with Bachelor degrees: Sally (at the setting for four years) was the team leader in this room: and Alison (four years at the setting). There was also a non-qualified staff member who worked in the room at the time of data generation (see table 3.5). The building was a residential home converted into a childcare centre.

The participating families/whānau in Miro consisted of Sarah, 11 months and her mother Molly and Albert, 8 months, and his mother Tess.

### ***Daily arrivals and departures***

The video footage in this centre showed teachers responding well to the children at arrival and departure times. The teachers welcomed the families/whānau warmly and talked with them at arrival times. One family had two children in the centre (Sarah and an older child who was in the over-two section). Molly would drop Sarah and her sister off together in the baby room; Sarah's older sister provided a strong support system for her and would play alongside her for some time until it was time for her to go across to the over-two room.

Molly commented that when the older sister was away Sarah struggled to settle into the room and she had in fact returned to the room after hearing Sarah become very distressed. Molly said she had spent some time supporting Sarah to feel settled on this occasion. Molly also commented on the struggle she experienced when leaving Sarah when there was not an under-two teacher available. This centre used the over-two staff for cover in the mornings, non-contact and lunch times. Molly explained when that happened

it would require her to spend quite some time settling Sarah before she could leave. She described the struggle as follows;

The over-two teacher (Ally) was in the room but Sarah stood at the door and cried for me, so I came back and Cathy (another over-two teacher) and I found something for Sarah to do with Ally. Sarah doesn't really have that connection with Ally (M/F/M/1).

Molly said that Sarah definitely preferred to go to Sally on arrival. The first time Sarah was videotaped she came into the room with her sister, and while she was pleased to see Sally, she appeared more focused on engaging with her sister. Sarah appeared happy to move into the playroom but paused and looked around and waited until her sister was closer and touched her hand and then walked with her to the activity table. The second arrival for Sarah was not such a happy one; she arrived with her mum and seemed upset, was whimpering and didn't want to be put down, holding tightly to her mother's clothing. Molly held Sarah for a while and chatted to Sally, she then lent over and passed Sarah to Sally. Sarah went willingly to Sally and sat on her knee cuddling into her. Sarah's sister stood next to Sally and played with the blocks on the table, glancing occasionally at Sarah. Once Molly left, Sally took Sarah from her lap and placed her next to her sister at the table where she played happily with the blocks. At each of Sarah's arrivals there was a small table top activity prepared and Sarah and her sister would start their time off by engaging with the equipment on this table. This appeared to be a routine practice for the children during arrival transitions. At both departure times Sarah would see her mother and then squeal with laughter and run into her arms for a cuddle.

Albert, who was much younger, was handed to a teacher on each arrival. He appeared happy enough but did not reach out his arms to the teachers when being passed over. On his first videoed arrival, Albert was passed to Sally first, who took him outside and passed him to the non-qualified staff member, who walked about with him in her arms for a minute or so. During this time, she spoke to the other children in the area but did not

engage with Albert at all. She then sat him on a mat outside under the veranda and Sally returned to sit with him; there was minimal interaction with Albert by Sally at this time. At the second arrival he was handed to the non-qualified staff member who placed him on a mat and then left him on his own; he appeared happy and was banging blocks together, other children were coming and going in this area and he would watch them pass by. At both departure times Albert was in the same position on the inside mat area. On the first departure he was on his own playing with a small plastic castle and the second time he was on the mat with a teacher nearby. Albert was happy to see his mother when she arrived to collect him; Tess would pick him up and then chat to the teachers about his day.

### *Family perspectives*

Both families/whānau agreed that it was easier for them to leave their child at the centre when they all had a relationship with the teacher they were handing their child over to. Although Tess said she didn't think that Albert had a favourite teacher, she was happy that he would go to any of them.

In the interview Tess shared that her husband is Tongan, and she is of Tongan and Māori descent. She said they spoke predominantly Tongan in the home, she explains this as follows:

Our boys have two languages at home, Tongan and English it was more Tongan than English before he came here. English was a bit broken but now he is very clear in English and now dad is worried that the Tongan side is 'going out the door' and he will have to take him back home to Grandma (T/F/M/7).

When asked if this loss of his home language was of concern to her she replied that the use of his Tongan language is slowly going and now he will only respond to his father in English. She commented that the teachers don't use any of Albert's home language in the centre, but she had not asked for his language to be used in the centre nor did the teachers suggest this. She had talked to the teachers when he started that he may have a bit

of a problem knowing what they were talking about, but now feels that he is actually doing well (communicating to the teachers in English).

She commented on the importance of the relationship with the teachers as being similar to building a relationship with family members and she tries to think of the teachers as family, Tess described her feelings as follows:

They have my children three days a week, just like family members; family members looking after my child and I treat them like family. (When asked what she wanted from the teachers she replied), just that he is being looked after being cared for like he is cared for at home. I will tell them what he needs and what he needs to learn and after, they will tell me what he's been doing during the day if he has been sick or feeling well. It is most important that communication isn't it? (T/F/M/8).

### ***ITERS-R***

Miro's overall score placed them in the minimal quality bracket. Miro scored high in the subscale Personal Care Routines, but low in item 27 staff child interactions, subscale Interactions. They were scored in the minimal quality range for item 26, peer interactions, subscale Interactions, but scored in the good quality range for item six greetings and departures, subscale Personal Care Routines. The teachers were observed to be warm and welcoming to the children and families/whānau. It is possible that the size of the room, which was very small, meant that everyone who came into the room was in very close proximity to each other, thus affording easier communication opportunities.

The low score in staff child interactions could be attributed to the values and beliefs of the teachers in this centre, who all discussed the importance of teachers not being overly protective, or needing to engage with children, but needing to allow the child time to sort out their own emotions. The teachers in this centre shared that they would not intervene with a child unless absolutely necessary.

## *Interviews*

Sally from Miro commented that she enjoyed working with all age groups and she felt that working with infants and toddlers was a specialised field. She noted that working with this age group is more than just babysitting. She also suggested that to her knowledge there were many teachers who did not want to work in this area. She argued that it is a challenge for her to make the work enjoyable, however she likes that challenge. She also discussed how hard it is when attending seminars and/or workshops to find that they are mainly focused on the older children. Resources being given out rarely relate to infants and toddlers; she particularly noted a lack of resources for children under one year.

Sally commented that a member of her team had attended a conference and had listened to a lecture on crying and suggested to the team that letting children cry was not optimal. Sally then shared her feelings about children and crying:

One of the big ones (ideas) was about letting the children cry; we do let children cry, we don't walk around carrying the children. I am really against that, well not really, I am not against giving a child, when they are hurt or injured, a cuddle or until they are settled. I just don't believe that carrying around a child for a few days until they are settled is the answer. You need to sit next to them and keep them busy, engage them, rather than carrying them, you need to keep them busy. You have to put them down eventually, so when do you do that then? You are still there not leaving them upset for too long. You know your children too, I think if a child is sitting around the table and they are still grizzling they are often ok. We have a child at the moment that cries nonstop she is busy playing and crying so she is actually ok, there is a lot of belief that you don't let children cry - I think that the theory of that and the practice of that is different, we don't let the children cry too much (M/TL/S/9).

Alison also talked about this idea of crying and she too indicated if a child was crying and their needs were met then she wouldn't be rushing in to pick the child up.

## ***Documentation***

Miro provided the families/whānau with an information pack, which consisted of a philosophy statement followed by a statement of centre practices. Their philosophy acknowledged the child's prior learning and placed value on the family/whānau role. They promoted the importance of building collaborative relationships between all members of their learning community. Their statement included the comment that as educators they walk alongside the children in their journey through childhood. There is also mention of the family being provided with a whānau teacher who, for the duration of the child's time in the centre, would oversee the child's daily care and education.

The documentation provided to family/whānau explained the structure of the centre, their opening hours, and the types of experiences they offer. Within this documentation they provided a small section on settling the child into the centre, their sleeping procedures, food, nappies, medicine, accidents, changing of booked in hours and communication strategies.

## **Miro Summary**

Miro's overall score was in the minimal quality rating range. Miro was a small centre with not a lot of space to move about freely which impacted in their overall score. They also scored low in the staff child interactions. Both teachers in Miro were very clear about their approach of having no attachments between teachers and children and this was reflected in their low score.

Their documentation indicated that each child would have a whānau teacher who would be responsible for the child's care and education. The documentation reported on relationships and the importance of walking alongside the child in their learning journey. The Rimu documentation is contradictory to their spoken beliefs about attachment and

relationships. Alison explained the practices the teachers would use when working with the infants and toddlers, “so if a child is crying and their needs are met, and we know that, we won’t go rushing over and pick them up” (M/T/A/3). Earlier she had talked about how the teachers in the room “respect what the children want we listen to the children” (M/T/A/4).

### **Presentation of case study findings**

Once the individual case studies were completed, all the data were coded, and themes identified. Rogoff’s (1998) planes of analysis were utilized as the key analysis framework. The planes allow for a complicated situation to be investigated through the foregrounding of specific elements. Foregrounding is described as the process of focusing on one set of aspects, while the other sets are maintained in the background. The Three planes of analysis (Rogoff, 1998) included the following:

**The Personal Plane** (i.e. the individual teacher, child, family/whānau) refers to how individuals change through their participation in an experience by highlighting the role of the individual outcomes.

**The Interpersonal Plane** (interactions among social partners, teachers, infants and toddlers and families/whānau) refers to how people communicate with each other and engage in shared endeavours.

**The Institutional Plane** (contextual) refers to how people participate with others in culturally organised activities using cultural tools such as institutional policies and practices.

The findings from the interviews, video footage, centre documents and the ITERS-R were collated, analysed and coded. The following discussion reports on the dominant themes that were identified from the analysis. From an ethical standpoint it was also



important to omit any identifying or sensitive information. It was also my responsibility to protect identities in a commercially sensitive environment.

I read and reread the interview transcripts, highlighted similarity of language (also undertook a simple word count across all the transcripts to give me an idea of language consistency). I then analysed the centre documents looking at the language used and where the emphasis had been placed. The ITERS-R findings were analysed, also looking at the interactions between the teacher and child during arrivals and departures, during play times, and routines. While I used all the seven sub-scales it became apparent that not all of these would be of use in answering the research question however they were offered to the centres if they wished to use them as a review tool. The video clips were viewed and reviewed with notes taken regarding contact between teachers and infants and toddlers, teacher behaviour and language. I then recorded the common language or meanings being used across all areas and placed them into a table. Table 4.1 represents the original data sets taken from the case study centres. Highlighted in bold across all three tables are the family/whānau concepts that were identified as holding significance for them.

**Table 4.1.**  
*Original Codes*

Originals codes from the data: Teachers	Original codes from the data family/whānau	Original codes for the data ITTERS-R & Centre documents	Original codes from the data Video recording
Attachment education	<b>Proximity</b>	Relationships	Teacher availability
Any education on infant and toddler teaching	<b>Safety</b>	Teacher availability	Rosters/duties
Philosophy, centre and personal	<b>Environment</b>	Rosters	Family relationships
Programmes for infants and toddlers	<b>Staff</b>	Equipment/space	Teacher practices
Teamwork flexibility	<b>Preferred teacher</b>	<i>Respectful practice</i>	Infant/toddler responses
Length of time in the centre	<b>Primary Care</b>	<i>Accepting everyone</i>	Time frames
Primary care/key teachers/ group care	<b>Key teacher</b>	<i>Family connections between home and centre</i>	Sibling support
Rosters teacher duties	<b>Group care</b>	<i>Family values</i>	Teacher consistency
Unwritten rules	<b>Programmes for infants and toddlers</b>		
Teacher hours	<b>Paper work</b>		
Communication between:	<b>Notebooks</b>		
Owners/teachers/ Families/whānau	<b>Caring/loving</b>		
	<b>Rules</b>		
	<b>Socialisation</b>		
	<b>Sharing</b>		
	<b>Professional</b>		
	<b>Family like</b>		
	<b>Listening to voices</b>		

This table was then colour coded using the three planes of analysis to start to form an idea of the themes that were being identified. I used the planes of analysis to give some structure to the analysis and to try to manage the data in a way that would form cohesiveness into the next step. Some items were deleted, as they didn't reflect the research question.

Personal Plane

Interpersonal Plane

Institutional Plane

Deleted

**Table 4.2***Original Codes colour coded*

Original codes from the data: Teachers	Original codes from the data family/whānau	Original codes for the data ITES-R & Centre documents	Original codes from the data Video recording
Attachment education	Proximity	Relationships	Teacher availability
Any education on infant and toddler teaching	Safety	Teacher availability	Rosters/duties
Philosophy, centre and personal	Environment	Rosters	Family relationships
Programmes for infants and toddlers	Staff	Equipment/space	Teacher practices
Teamwork flexibility	Preferred teacher	Respectful practice	Infant/toddler responses
Length of time in the centre	Primary Care	Accepting everyone	Time frames
Primary care/key teachers/ group care	Key teacher	Family connections between home and centre	Sibling support
Rosters teacher duties	Group care	Family values	Teacher consistency
Unwritten rules	Programmes for infants and toddlers		
Teacher hours	Paper work		
Communication between:	Notebooks		
Owners/teachers/ Families/whānau	Caring/loving		
	Rules		
	Socialisation		
	Sharing		
	Professional		
	Family like		
	Listening to voices		

I then placed the colour-coded words into groups or categories of similarity and created a common word/s to encompass their overall meanings. This took several times to analyse to ensure that I was correctly generating language that was representative of all the words used. Further pruning of the original themes was also carried out here. Words that were repetitive and did not fit the research question were removed.

**Table 4.3.**  
*Categories of similarity*

<b>Personal Plane</b>	<b>Interpersonal Plane</b>	<b>Institutional Plane</b>
ITE & Professional Learning	<b>Teacher availability</b>	Unwritten rules
Attachment	<b>Respectful practices</b>	Rosters/duties
Programmes for Infants & Toddlers	<b>Accepting everyone</b>	Teacher consistency
Teacher practices	<b>Family values</b>	Teacher hours
Primary Care	<b>Primary Care</b>	Primary Care
Caring/loving	<b>Staff/teamwork</b>	

Once the language had been reduced and refined and themes linked to the three planes, I then went back through the data to ensure that I had not missed anything and that I was staying true to the research question. I then developed three key themes that were representative of the points made by the teachers, families/whānau, centre documents, the video analysis and the ITERS-R findings. The three themes were then attached to the appropriate plane. Underneath the three themes I provided several sub themes, these were the themes that were predominant and repetitive in all the stages of the process.

The three dominant themes that emerged, were: professional learning, attachment relationship development and organisational constructs (see Table 4.4). The themes discussed here are seen as key to understanding the attachment-type relationship development opportunities as observed and then analysed in each of the centres at the time of data generation. Although each theme is presented separately, they overlap and interact with each other.

**Table 4.4.***Final condensed themes and sub themes*

<b>Personal plane</b>	<b>Interpersonal plane</b>	<b>Institutional plane</b>
Professional learning	<b>Attachment/Relationship development</b>	Organisational constructs
Sub themes	Sub themes	Sub themes
Initial teacher education and professional development	<b>Family/whānau perspectives</b>	<b>Infant and toddler programmes</b>
Teacher values and beliefs	<b>Key teacher/primary care/group care</b>	Rosters
	<b>Team work</b>	Philosophy

**Discussion across the three planes of analysis**

This research was not about measuring the types of relationships or attachment types being observed, but to examine how organisational structures and teacher practices supported relationship development. Observations were undertaken to show the time available for teachers to engage in relationship development opportunities, teacher responses, along with consistency and continuity of teachers to children, families/whānau. Observations of organisational structures, such as rosters, duties and organisational culture, implicit and explicit were undertaken to see if and how they influenced relationship development opportunities. All the planes overlap and do not occur in isolation from each other; only predominant themes in each plane are presented.

The findings in this chapter address research objectives one and two:

1. To discover what impacts on individual teachers' abilities to form attachment-type relationships between infants or toddlers.
2. To improve understandings of how centres' organisational cultures can impact on attachment-type relationship development between infants, toddlers and their teachers in early childhood settings.

## **Personal plane**

The following section summarises the case study data within the personal plane and explores families'/whānau perspectives, initial teacher education and professional learning; and teachers' identified values and beliefs about teaching infants and toddlers.

### ***Family perspectives***

Only one family/whānau indicated an awareness of the importance of qualified teachers (she herself was a teacher). The others felt the age of the teacher played a large part in determining the quality of the Centre. Most comments by the families/whānau were related to getting a good feeling about the teachers, and about how kind and accommodating the teachers appeared to be. Several parents liked to see older teachers in the infant and toddler room, with one family commenting that they chose their centre based on proximity to home and that the teachers were older "Yes we liked the staff, they seemed to be a bit older than the other place" (P/F/T/1).

The families interviewed had attended their centres for a period of time between seven and twelve months. All families visited the centre prior to starting, and based their selection on environment, proximity, safety, and equipment, space and on their 'gut' feeling about the teachers. One family chose their centre based on family members' recommendations; another family's selection was influenced by the provision of services such as lunches and nappies.

One parent talked about her expectations of the teachers; as she was also a teacher she felt she had very clear expectations about what should or should not be happening:

I just expect them to be fair, and to know how they can help her meet her milestones and make sure that we keep the communication open so that we are in contact every day. Umm sharing information, effective communication, and that they have rules and guidelines and consistency for her (M/F/M/8).

Another parent (a caregiver at a local rest home) talked about the correlation between the health sector and early childhood. She felt the transition between home and centre resembled the handing over that occurs in hospital or care units when staff change shifts.

### ***Initial teacher education and professional learning***

In the three case study centres, teachers' experiences ranged from twenty years to two years, with an average of four years. The length of time in their current centres ranged from six weeks to five years. Eight of the ten teachers stated that they had little to no specific preparation on infant and toddler teaching with comments such as:

No nothing about toddlers (R/TL/S/4).  
We have mostly looked at the growth of infants and toddlers and their milestones (T/T/R/3)

They indicated the courses undertaken as part of their ITE were all-inclusive and would only at times touch on the developmental stages of infants and toddlers, with little content on relationship development. Two teachers indicated they had undertaken specific papers on infants and toddlers, however one of these teachers said it was more like a parenting course and did little to prepare her for teaching this age group.

All the teachers commented on the scarcity of the infant and toddler component in their ITE, with anything relating to infants and toddlers being covered in a very general way. One teacher commented that she had undertaken some sort of infant and toddler study as part of her ITE, however, it was so long ago she was unable to describe what it addressed.

The teachers also shared other types of professional learning in which they had participated; these seemed to be mostly connected to the physical development of infants

and toddlers, focusing on the ages and stages of development. Teachers also talked about on-going educational experiences, with several having attended conferences and seminars.

The Totara Centre offered their teachers a comprehensive in-centre professional learning programme as part of the centre's commitment to their on-going learning. The other two centres, while supportive of their teachers undertaking further professional learning, did not provide any in-centre opportunities. All the teachers indicated a willingness to participate in professional learning relating to care and education of infants and toddlers.

### ***Teachers' values and beliefs***

The values and beliefs of the teachers across all centres had a strong focus on family/whānau or group care practices. Teachers in the three centres stressed the importance of the children knowing everyone in the room in order to better cope with teacher absence, and to avoid infants and toddlers becoming overly attached to a single person.

Miro and Totara have several over-two staff members coming and going from their infant and toddler rooms across the day "Kat from the over-two room will sometimes do the bedroom, we work closely together with each other and the children get to know all the teachers" (T/T/A/7). The teachers felt this had a positive effect on the infants, toddlers and families/whānau. The teachers suggested that all the children got to know the over-two teachers and consequently, perhaps, made transitioning from under-twos to the over-twos area easier. "We also have the over two teachers help us out sometimes, this is good for the infants and toddlers and helps them know those teachers when it is time for transitions" (M/T/A/8). This perspective was based on their intuition with no evidence shared to back up their claims. Therefore, the children in Miro and Totara were expected to form



relationships with not only the under-two teaching staff but also various over-two staff members who would cover for times when the regular teachers were absent from the group: during teachers' non-contact periods; regular tea and lunch breaks and during early opening and late closing times.

It appeared there was a continuum of values and beliefs around attachment and relationship development. These values ranged from two teachers (from Miro) believing infants and toddlers did not need any type of attachment relationships, to most other teachers in both Totara and Rimu who saw the value in having key teachers, although it was mainly for the initial settling in process and writing in profiles. Across the three centres the teachers' beliefs in collective care as being best practice were clearly articulated

Umm we have a roster that we follow with the children, everyone has their own jobs for the day that gets changed daily there is inside, outside, float and sleep room, this means all the teachers get to know all the children equally (R/T/K/9).

I like that the rosters mean that every teacher will get to know all the children; there are no favourites and things like that (R/TL/G/8).

Although there were practices implemented to support children during transitions into the centres, such as the provision of a specific teacher for the child's initial settling in period, or profile writing teacher, there was little to no discussion of the role of this teacher or of expected practices to support transitions or develop relationships.

None of the teachers interviewed identified infants and toddlers as being the first choice of age group to work with, during their ITE, or even at a later date. One teacher indicated she had never wanted to work with the infants and toddlers but was coerced into it by another staff member with the prospect of a long-term contract at the centre. In contrast, team leaders, Sally from Miro and Brooke from Totara explained that teaching this age group was specialised, and Brooke argued that teachers needed to want to work with this age group.

## **Interpersonal Plane**

In this summary of the case study data the families'/whānau and teachers' views of relationships and relationship-promoting environments are discussed from an interpersonal perspective. This section starts with reporting the data from the families/whānau, followed by addressing the key theme of attachment and relationship development, the sub themes of key teacher/primary care and multiple care, and finally the sub theme of teamwork.

### ***Family perspectives***

Only one family/whānau had looked for a centre that offered a primary caregiving system. This was the only parent who indicated any knowledge or thoughts about primary care systems. When asked, none of the other families/whānau had heard of this practice and didn't know the reasoning for it beyond for the settling in process;

...for the transition it was more the attachment style or whatever you call it supporting her to settle in. But now that she is sort of in there I don't think it is such a big deal" (T/F/P/3).

These families/whānau felt that they would not want a primary caregiver, as their child could get too dependent on the one teacher. Most families indicated that they wanted their children to get along with everyone at the centre (e.g a multiple care arrangement) and were happy for their child to not have a primary carer. In one instance the parent said that she was concerned about her child becoming too attached and then her child becoming upset when the teacher was away, when asked if she preferred having a key teacher the parent replied;

mm yes and no. Yes, because it makes it easier for me when I drop her off in the morning and Sally is there and no because the other morning the over-two teacher was out there (in the infant and toddler room) and Sarah stood at the door and cried for me, so I came back, and I found something for her to do with the over-two teacher. She doesn't really have that connection with the over-two teacher so she got upset (M/F/M/7).

However, families/whānau also discussed the importance for them of having that special teacher to leave their child with each day. They also, without exception, shared the importance of having someone who really cared, even loved their child. Physical safety was also of high importance to the families/whānau.

All the families/whānau in the three centres agreed that it was easier leaving their child with a teacher that they, and their child, had a relationship with. Four of the families/whānau were unable to identify the teacher that they had been allocated for settling-in and profile-writing but were able to identify whom their child felt most comfortable with. They did comment that these teachers were not always available due to staff rosters or rotations. Tess talked about being happy that her son did not have a preferred teacher, as he appeared to get along with all the teachers, commenting that;

...he will go to anyone he is a real happy chap. When he sees them he recognises their faces I can just see that when I first come in to drop him off (M/F/T/10).

However, the observations indicated that Albert had minimal relational connection to any of the teachers in Miro. All the families expressed the wish for the teachers to look out for their child and to love them sort of like they do; “all the girls (teachers) there are really lovely I know that Helen is well loved by all of them” (R/F/I/21). They talked about their child being happy, safe and stimulated; physical safety was of high importance to the families/whānau. They all noted the importance of their child having a teacher that really knew them and would be there for their child.

Families were asked about relationships between their child and the teachers in the centre and about their relationships with the teaching staff. All families/whānau agreed that the teachers were nice, kind, and appeared to care about their child. The families/whānau talked about dropping their child off at the centre and stressed the importance of sharing

with the teachers what had happened at home in order for the teaching staff to best manage their child during the day;

Umm I think that I have a good relationship with them all I can be open and honest if Helen is being naughty at home I can say I think she is testing the boundaries at home I know that I have their (teachers) support (R/F/I/21).

### ***Attachment/relationship development***

Several teachers talked about attachment from a team perspective and suggested that attachment and relationships are very important for the children and the family and for their collaborative work as a team. Rita from Totara talked about having undertaken some professional learning that had a very strong focus on the relationships between teachers and children, teachers and teachers and teachers and families, commenting on participating in discussions around attachment in connection to culture. Rita appeared confused about attachment theory and explained that from her perspective, attachment theory was what she would use to make connections between cultures; she did not elaborate on how this would look in practice “we have done attachment (in her teacher education programme) with different cultures how to make it easy for us” (T/T/R/6).

There were several comments as to why the centres chose to not use any form of attachment/relationship-based approach in their rooms. The teachers suggested that the group as a whole would care for the children and if a child had a teacher preference this would be accommodated. But this was not evidenced in practice with two children indicating preference of teacher and either not having these cues either picked up on, or possibly ignored; similar findings were also reported by Dalli (1999).

### ***Key teacher, primary care and multiple care systems***

Teachers from all three centres stated that they did not have key teacher or attachment-type related programmes; they did have teachers responsible for writing

specific children's profiles/portfolios; one centre described this as a type of key teacher programme and it appeared that it was the responsibility of these teachers to support the initial settling in process with the child and family/whānau when they first enrolled at the centre, when asked about key teachers Amy replied, "No we don't, we don't have a primary care giving system, and we all look after the children as a group" (T/T/A/10).

All the teachers talked about the importance of knowing all the children and listening to what they want, such as a child is indicating that they didn't want a particular teacher to change their nappy, the teachers would let another teacher do this. However, as pointed out earlier, during the observation data gathering in two centres, it was noted that this approach did not take place.

In Rimu two teachers indicated that they had key children who they wrote profiles for, but the third teacher Kathy seemed hesitant and unclear about the process and when asked about key or primary caregiving commented, "well it is like we do" (R/T/K/10). This comment indicated a confusion or lack of certainty around practices carried out in her centre.

Teachers perceived attachment-type relationships or more particularly key teacher/primary care systems, to be exclusive and isolating for the child Jo shared her thoughts about best practice for infants and toddlers:

I have worked in other centres and the whole 'that is my child I am going to change them' and you don't get to know them as a group. Ours works like an extended family really if one is away like, aunty is there to pick up so to speak (R/T/J/10).

There was confusion exhibited by the teachers around primary care and key teacher systems, with teachers noting that it was important for children to have a teacher available to them if they wished, but then arguing that the children should know all the teachers:

I have a new child starting now and I will, for the first few days, do that settling in and I find that works really well, but knowing all of us is important because if

anyone of us are away they are not too unsettled because they are used to all of us (R/T/J/10).

## Institutional Plane

In this section the summary of the case study data focuses on the institutional plane, reporting on the ITERS-R findings and analyses of relevant data from the interviews, video footage and centre documents. The key theme of organisational constructs is explored first, and this is followed by the sub themes of infant and toddler programmes, philosophy and rosters.

### *ITERS-R*

The use of the ITERS-R provided a view of the process quality of the three centres based on a proven method. It showed that none of the three centres scored in the quality range. The following table (Table 4.4) shows the scores for the three centres across the seven sub sections and highlights their overall total ITERS-R scores. Additional details of each centre's ITERS-R scores were provided in the individual case study descriptions.

**Table 4.5.**

*ITERS-R scores at baseline. Scale: 1-7 1-Inadequate, 3 – Minimal, 5 – Good, 7 – Excellent*

	Totara	Rimu	Miro
Space & furnishing	3.8	3.4	2.8
<b>Personal care routines</b>	<b>4.83</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Listening &amp; talking</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5.66</b>	<b>3.66</b>
Activities	5.11	3.42	5
<b>Interactions</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>5.25</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Programme structure	7	5.66	5.5
Parents and staff	6.57	4.57	5
Overall ITERS-R Score (average of items)	<b>5.10</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.58</b>

### ***Organisational structures***

When asked about the organisational culture of their centres, teachers focused mainly on the leadership and the development of shared leadership. There was a strong focus on working together as a team and supporting each other. They talked about the importance of good communication and how this impacts on outcomes for children. Teachers explained how communication about children is shared across the team members by way of notebook writing, daily diaries and face-to-face communication in each centre. The documentation from Totara included a three-page document, which is provided for the infant and toddler teaching staff, this was the only specific infant and toddler document provided to the researcher that showed specific practices for the infant and toddler teachers.

There was a lot of discussion about shared leadership and not having a hierarchy. Teachers talked about having team discussions, with opportunities to present ideas and or problems to the team. In the discussion around decision-making and who would make sure systems would be followed, each teacher talked about the team leader or the owner as being the person who would ensure that teacher performance was reflective of the centre's philosophy.

All teachers talked about information sharing between home and centre as being important for the smooth running of the centre and for best outcomes for the children and families/whānau. Notebooks were used in one centre for each child, the teachers writing about what had happened during the day for the families/whānau to read. These notebooks were for the children until they reached two years of age. A community notebook for information sharing between families and team members was used by one centre. Families could write down any information they wished to share with the teachers and teachers

would write things down so that staff who came in later could see what had been said, asked etc.

We have a diary in the morning that if anyone has medication or if anyone has had a late night or is tired or things like that you communicate through that book. There is also the food and bottle chart we communicate that way, so we can go have a look at the roster and see when the baby has last been fed (R/T/R/15).

Rita shared how they use their community notebook; “We have got our community notebook you know it is very good, parents will write down something, they might ask something, I will write things down as well” (T/T/R/14). While the teachers talked about this community notebook as being of value for information sharing, neither of the families/whānau from Totara mentioned this in their discussion on communication between home and centre.

All three centres indicated in their documentation the importance of connections between home and centre; nonetheless, four of the five families/whānau interviewed expressed interest in receiving more meaningful information about their child’s day at the centre, Matt felt they would like more information, “Yes sometimes it would be nice to have a little more information, it seems like at home we see her have little milestones every day” (T/F/M/5).

All families were given information prior to starting at their centre. This information discussed fee structures, day-to-day running and philosophical information. One family felt they were given too much information as they had already decided to attend the centre based on their gut instincts and on proximity but took the information anyway.

The centre’s organisational documentation was discussed by the families/whānau and most agreed that they didn’t read all the information received; they appeared to have made their decisions prior to receiving the documentation. The families/whānau shared the importance of having relationships with the teachers, in order to be able to ask questions in



good times and in bad. All the families/whānau appeared to be comfortable to approach the centre regarding concerns or for support regarding their child's well-being; "If I had any concerns I would definitely not hesitate to approach people even the Manager even though I don't really know her that much I still feel I could go to her" (R/F/I/21).

Family/whānau expectations for children at the centre consisted of the child being safe, liked and intellectually stimulated. Most families/whānau talked about the importance of continuity between home and centre for behaviour management. Families also enjoyed the opportunities afforded their child for messy play, art and social or peer engagement. Learning to share or turn taking and being respectful of others was seen across families/whānau as important learning experiences for their child in the centre. There was consensus across all families that the most important thing was that their child was safe, cared for, and even loved by someone.

The centres' organisational structures impacted on the families in a variety of ways, with one mother commenting on how she and her child struggled when over-two teachers were rostered into the baby room. Families/whānau also showed confusion over whether their child had a key teacher or not (as did some of the teachers): "Umm she does umm, I think, I always forget her name she is the blond one, what is her name?" (T/F/M/1). This confusion could be as a result of centres not having strong organisational structures in place such as specific policies and clear procedures.

### ***Rosters***

The Totara teachers reported that they did not have a roster sheet, other than their weekly rotations on starting and finishing times. However, they shared how the arrival time of the teachers would indicate where they would be positioned in the centre. For instance, whoever was first in for the day would be inside and when the next teacher

arrives she too would be inside, but if it was a nice day she would go outside and the next person arriving would slot in and do the nappies; there was flexibility however, and teachers would support each other.

Rimu teachers' day-to-day practices were managed by way of a roster system. This centre's roster was a wheel that turned each day indicating teacher responsibilities for that day. Rostered duties were labelled: inside, outside, sleep room, nappies and float (free to locate where support is required).

The organisation of the day-to-day practices at Miro was not rostered, but the teachers in the Miro centre said they have their own little routines that they generally follow. The early teacher does the lunches; the next teacher does the nappies; and the late teacher does the outside area. The teachers note that these are not set duties but are able to be shared and they believe that everyone needs to be flexible. It was observed the non-qualified teacher would mostly do the nappy changes and one particular teacher would do the kitchen duties.

Totara and Miro both claimed to not have rosters and yet when questioned further certainly indicated that they used a system, albeit unwritten, to structure their day and their movements; it was apparent that an unwritten roster was being enacted. Teachers in these centres appeared to have certain duties each day and were often confined to particular areas potentially limiting their availability to the infants and toddlers on a more intimate basis.

All three centres rotated teachers' starting and finishing times. In Totara, teachers' hours changed over a period of four weeks, meaning that each week the teachers rotated between early and late starts and finishes. Of six arrivals observed in Totara there were three different teachers for the families/whānau to leave their child with. It was also at Totara that I observed an infant struggle to settle when being left with a teacher with whom she obviously felt uncomfortable.

The teachers believed that all children should know all the teachers, and this would increase the likelihood of equal relationships. It would appear that equal relationships, as understood by the teachers, would mean no attachments. One teacher talked about the importance of having an under two-teacher in the room at the beginning and the end of each day to support the infants and toddlers, “there is always an under-two teacher on at the beginning and the end of the day” (M/T/A/10), however it was in this centre that a family member shared how difficult it was to leave her child when there was not an under-two teacher on duty.

In, Miro and Rimu the over-two teachers rotate between the rooms for non-contact times and lunch support and in Totara teachers were rotated between beginning and end of day hours. This appeared to be mostly to do with sharing hours between teachers, not necessarily to ensure best options for the infants, toddlers and their families/whānau. In Rimu they had a part time unqualified staff member to relieve the teachers for their non-contacts and lunch breaks. However, this centre used a relatively confining roster that structured the teachers’ day, thus impacting on their availability to the children at certain times.

When video-recording arrivals and departures, I observed a wide variety of experiences for all the families/whānau in each centre, not just for the case study families/whānau. Several times families/whānau were observed having difficulties to find a teacher to hand their child over to and often looked lost and confused.

All the teachers acknowledged the importance of having someone to support the child during their initial transitioning into the centre and each centre allocated a support person for the child and family/whānau for the first few days. This process was worked out differently in each setting. However, with the changing rosters and teacher hours, the infants, toddlers and families/whānau did experience inconsistencies at these times. Little

mention was made by any of the teachers about attachment or relationship building beyond initially getting the child settled. There was minimal description around how to settle children into the centres. Teachers talked about the importance of having the freedom to go where they needed to in relation to the infants' and toddlers' needs.

The Rimu teachers talked about how their roster system helped to ensure jobs got done and people knew where they should be. The other two centre teachers talked about not having rosters so that the teachers would be free to be where the children needed them. But as these teachers shared their organisational practices it was apparent that they still did operate an unspoken type of roster system that guided their daily organisation. The unspoken use of rosters showed how teachers could become enculturated in historic practices whilst remaining unaware of how these historic ways of being continued to influence their current practice. These findings showed contradiction between teachers' beliefs and their practice. Teachers discussed having the freedom to be where the children needed them the most; yet teachers were constrained by the implicit and explicit rosters, thus limiting their availability and consistency of experience for the infant/toddler. Observations revealed that on several occasions, in all centres, teachers were confined to areas or to tasks. This constraint of explicit or implicit rosters creates a barrier to the development of the type of relationships that has been shown to promote best outcomes for the infants and toddlers.

### ***Philosophy***

The teacher interviews revealed that all the centres had a focus on respectful practice for infants and toddlers, such as always talking to the child before undertaking tasks like nose wiping, and face washing. In one centre the teachers talked about not having high chairs for the children, however this was not elaborated on so their reason for

this was unclear. Totara had a commitment to respectful practice based on the work of Magda Gerber (1998) and Toni Christie (2010).

The teachers in Rimu placed the children's breakfast in front of them with little to no discussion about what was happening. Children were left unattended at the breakfast table on several occasions and one child in a high chair sat for some time waiting for his food. In all three centres teachers were observed picking children up, washing faces and wiping noses without talking to them before or during the process.

When asked about unwritten rules once again the teachers talked about how important respectful practice was for the children but went no further than discussing the need for respectful care routines. All but one teacher indicated that these practices or rules were unwritten, and they were expected to carry out these practices as part of being a respectful practitioner. There was no discussion at all about emotional awareness, respecting children's feelings, behaviours or varying temperaments.

The centre's culture also played a large part in how teachers responded to and interacted with the infants, toddlers and their families. In Miro there was a culture of 'hands off' when it came to emotional support for the infants and toddlers. The two main teachers in this room were both qualified with Bachelor degrees and strongly believed in the practices they were enacting. The centre's culture appeared to override the teachers' understanding of emotional development possibly gained in their ITE programme.

Each of the three centres had their own unique ways of doing things and felt their systems and practices were meeting the needs of the families/whānau that attended. In each of the centres, the participants all reported to have positive and supportive relationships with each other. Teachers expressed happiness and pleasure in their work places. The families/whānau expressed satisfaction on most levels of the service they received from

their individual centres. Some findings were contradictory though, with the teachers' articulated beliefs and philosophies not always evident in practice.

## **Summary**

This chapter has provided a summary of the case study findings from the participant interviews, video footage and the ITERS-R conducted for phase one of this study. These findings were analysed using Rogoff's (1998) three planes of analysis; key themes were explored, along with several subthemes. The focus was on participating teachers' perceptions and feelings of preparedness from their: initial teacher education programmes, along with understandings on attachment and the impact organisational structures have on the participants' relationship experiences in their early childhood setting.

There were many and varied views of what attachment or attachment concepts looked like in practice. The teachers' values and beliefs around attachment and relationship development, both articulated and observed in practice, provided examples of how infants and toddlers were interacted with during these day-to-day practices. Miro teachers had a firm conviction that close attachments were to be avoided. Believing that by reducing teacher interactions when children were upset would support the child's ability to cope and manage in the ECE setting. Totara and Rimu centres talked about the allocation of key teachers for initial settling in and profile book writing. There was confusion amongst these two teaching teams as to what this would look like in practice; teachers in both centres stated that they had key children for profile writing and for settling in; these teachers would spend time with particular children and families/whānau to help them adjust to the transition into the child care setting. However, other teachers from both the centres stated that all teachers would interact with the children across the day.

The case studies revealed how implicit and explicit rosters could limit teacher availability to the infants, toddlers and families/whānau in the centres. The teachers were unaware of the impact that their rosters (explicit and or implicit) were having on the quality of their interactions and their availability to the infants, toddlers and families/whānau. The findings relating to the rosters across the three case study centres were similar even though each centre had their unique ways of enacting their programmes.

Teachers all highlighted frustrations around the lack of depth of their ITE and on-going professional learning relating to infant and toddler care and education. They described their ITE programmes as having a very general overview, and in some cases no specific papers/courses relevant to infant and toddler pedagogy were available.

There was some contradiction across the centres, where teachers had indicated they had not specifically chosen to work with infants and toddlers and yet all the teachers described infant and toddler care and education as being a specialised field.

This chapter has revealed how personal, interpersonal and institutional contexts can impact on relationship development between families/whānau, teachers, and infants and toddlers. The areas that appear to have the most impact on the development of relationships between teachers, families/whānau and infants and toddlers were:

**Personal Plane**

Family/whānau perspectives  
Initial teacher education and on-going professional learning  
Teacher values and beliefs

**Interpersonal Plane**

Understandings of attachment/relationship development  
Key teacher/primary care/multiple care arrangement

**Institutional Plane**

Rosters/duties  
Philosophy

The following chapter shares the findings from the National Survey and makes links between the case study findings and reported national practices.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Survey**

In this chapter the results of the national survey data are presented and discussed. The survey (see appendix A) was designed in response to the findings from the case studies as presented in Chapter Four. As noted earlier the online survey consisted of thirty-seven questions with a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, including multi choice and rating scales. Of the 37 questions 21 allowed for comments to be shared. The goal of the survey was to determine if the national findings (survey) was consistent with the case study results, and to develop understandings about current infant and toddler centre organisational practices carried out nationally.

In line with the decision making for the overall thesis, a thematic approach was selected as providing the most cohesive and manageable method for analysing and presenting the results and analyses of this phase. The three planes of analysis Rogoff (1998) were employed in this phase of the data analysis and presentation. Where appropriate, quotes from participants have been provided to support theme connection or illumination of key points. Quotes are coded as follows: Role of the Participant/question number. Page numbers are not given in this coding, as the quotes are not drawn from transcript data. The following abbreviations have been used to identify the participant's role: T=teacher, HT=head teacher or supervisor, and O=Owner.

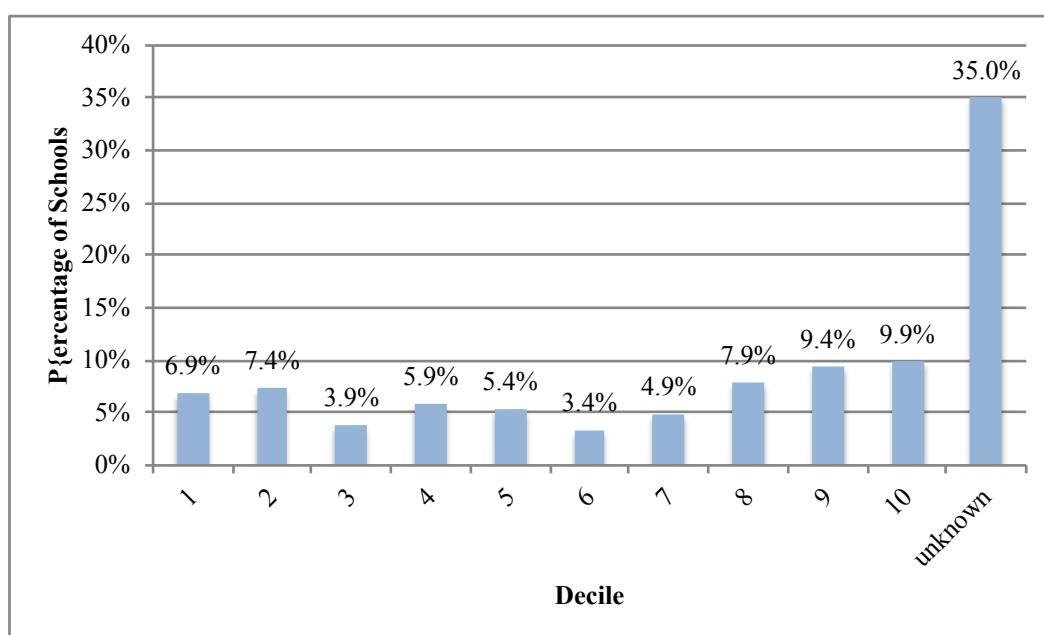
The nature of the online survey was such that respondents were able to skip questions, which resulted in an inconsistency in response rates to individual questions.



Percentages shown throughout the following discussion reflect percentage of responses to individual questions.

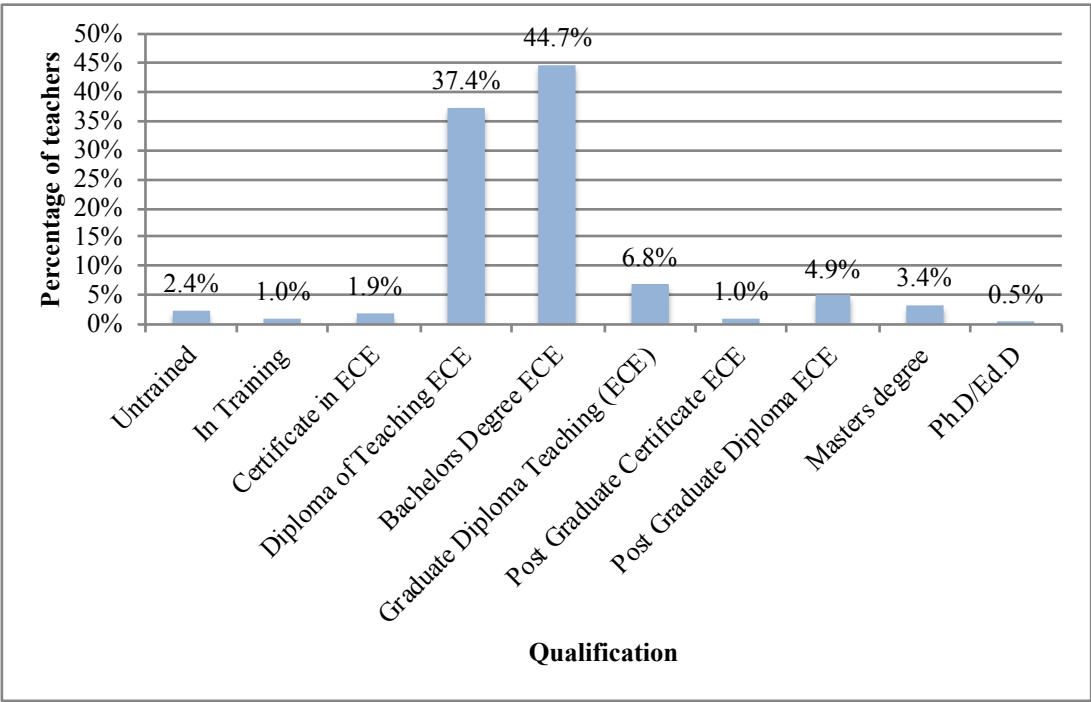
### Demographics of services and teacher education

Respondents ( $n=209$ ) reported their service type with 50% coming from private centres, 36% community based or not-for-profit, 11% Corporate, and just 1% from community based for profit. The sample consisted of 61 teachers, 59 team leaders or supervisors and 42 head teachers. There were twelve other participants who were either in qualifying programmes or non-qualified and 39 respondents who didn't state their position (see figure 5.2). Respondents were asked to identify the decile rating of their nearest school in order to provide a generalised view of the respondent's communities. The following Figure 5.1 shows the cross section of teachers' communities. The figure shows a relatively even socioeconomic cross-section of centres being represented in the survey; the case studies were also representative of a cross section of socioeconomic areas.



**Figure 5.1. Q. 13** Decile rating of schools nearest to the surveyed early childhood services.

Figure 5.2 shows the respondents' qualification levels. The majority of respondents had an early childhood qualification, with the largest percentage of these holding a Bachelor degree in early childhood education. Respondents who were unqualified indicated their levels of experience working in ECS with 80% ( $n=25$ ) identified as being very experienced. Respondents who identified as being qualified, 59% ( $n=211$ ) also noted having ten plus years teaching experience. Thirty-two percent (32%) of this qualified cohort ( $n=204$ ) reported as having 10 years plus working with infants and toddlers specifically. These percentages indicate the sample group as being well qualified and with high levels of experience.



**Figure 5.2. Q. 3** This figure illustrates the qualification levels of the survey respondents

## **Personal plane**

### ***Professional learning infants and toddlers***

There was an overwhelming consensus by 98% of teachers ( $n=206$ ) that infant and toddler teaching is a specialised field. Respondents indicated strongly in the comments section that teaching infants and toddlers requires a specific set of skills. They also expressed dismay at the lack of understanding of this across all sections of the education sector, as the following quotes suggest:

Finding experienced and qualified staff who specialise in working with under twos is difficult. Graduates have often had no teaching about working with infants and toddlers and are ill equipped to contribute positively to the children's experiences in the way that I would like a 'qualified' person to contribute (HT/Q.37).

I also feel that teachers who have recently graduated, have very little knowledge of infant/toddler development and are more confident working with the older children. We have made a conscious decision to focus our professional learning on infant/toddler development and this has been very beneficial for the whole team (HT/Q.37).

Participants were asked to indicate any professional development undertaken that was specific to infant and toddler teaching and learning. Eighty-seven percent of respondents ( $n=211$ ) reported they had participated in a range of professional development opportunities. However, 76% of respondents ( $n=114$ ) reported a lack of availability for specific training opportunities for infants and toddlers as being a barrier to furthering their knowledge of infant and toddler teaching and learning. To gather further information about the content of the teachers' ITE and professional learning, participants were asked to indicate topics they had covered during their ITE and PL. Seventy-one (71%) percent of respondents ( $n=129$ ) reported having some type of attachment training in their studies, with 40% ( $n=82$ ) indicating they would like further training specifically on attachment.

Several teachers made comments about what impacts on their ability to receive on-going infant and toddler PL these include the following:

In house professional development where management is choosing what the team needs to learn and not what they want to learn as a team (T/Q.11).

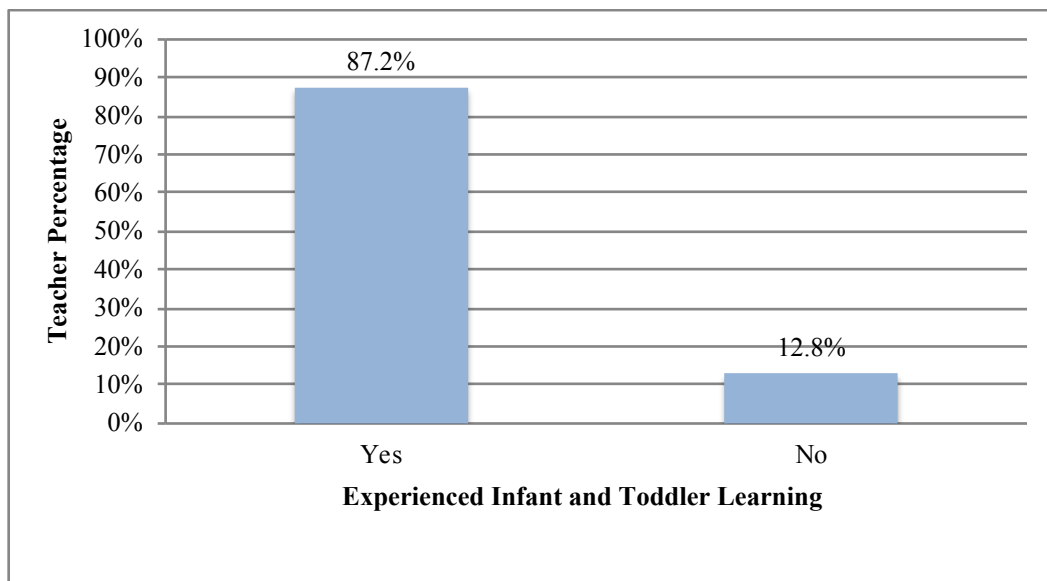
Belonging to a larger Corp that tend to dictate PD that staff are able to attend during work hours (HT/Q.11).

Always seems to be the same and one type of opinion only (HT/Q.11).

Concerns were expressed that new graduates were completing their ITE degrees or diplomas having not had enough exposure to the complexities of teaching infants and toddlers. One respondent indicated that her infant and toddler centre would not employ a new graduate but would rather employ any new teachers into their over-two area and allow them to access further professional learning specific to infant and toddler teaching before allowing them to join the under-two teaching team.

Sixty-six (66%) percent of respondents ( $n=142$ ) reported having encountered barriers to gaining professional learning for infant and toddler care and education. The majority identified a lack of availability of infant and toddler specific PL as being the main barrier. The majority of respondents indicated the most important PL need as being for infant and toddler curriculum. In the comments section respondents indicated willingness for on-going PL opportunities.

As Figure 5.3 below indicates, many respondents reported having undertaken some form of PL specific to infants and toddlers. This appears to show that while participants have taken part in some PL they do not believe there are enough opportunities available or that their initial teaching education programme provided them with enough or sufficient infant and toddler specific learning opportunities.



**Figure 5.3. Q. 8 Infant and Toddler Specific Professional Learning Experiences**

When asked to add any comments at the end of the survey, one Head Teacher clearly showed her frustration at what she perceived to be a lack knowledge, understanding, and interest, from multiple sections of her community around infant and toddler teaching, she explained her feeling thus:

There is such little education and knowledge on infants and toddlers in any education programme that I have seen, there is little acknowledgement of infants and toddlers being anything other than tiny mewling pre-schoolers who can be manipulated to toe (sic) the preschool line. I am rather disappointed there is not more interest or care about infants and toddler knowledge in services and in teachers as individuals. Practice from home is not acceptable in centre. Any ole (sic) Joe Blow is not a teacher just because they love babies. I get rather frustrated by this in the field as it is (HT/Q.38).

There were several other comments made regarding the lack of availability of professional learning for infant and toddler teaching. Respondents also expressed frustration at the perceived lack of support and understanding for the importance of having qualified teachers working with infants and toddlers. Others commented on the importance of infant and toddler teaching being recognised as a specialised field of teaching. The overall consensus from respondents was a need for further professional learning opportunities specific to infants and toddlers, with comments such as:

Any further professional learning around infants and toddlers would be great! (T/Q.12).

Love to renew my skills... I think perhaps guidance on food and nutrition for under twos, what they need routine wise at what stage of development ... lots of teachers don't seem to have this knowledge" (HT/Q12).

## **Personal plane Sub themes**

### ***Initial teacher education and professional learning***

The majority of the respondents' held ECE Bachelor degrees, and came from a cross section of socioeconomic settings. When discussing their ITE, respondents indicated concerns at the minimal content on infant and toddler teaching in undergraduate ITE programmes, nationwide. There was consensus across the survey that having qualified teachers working with the infants and toddlers was of the utmost importance, but frustration that this was not always supported by centre management and government perspectives. Several respondents reported teachers arriving at their teaching positions unskilled and ill informed as to the complexity of the work.

On-going professional learning opportunities was highlighted as concerning, with teachers being restricted or directed to attend on-going learning opportunities at the behest of their centres; therefore, limiting the teachers' abilities to experience a wide, or diverse, array of learning opportunities. There were several teachers who reported to only want to attend trainings that were relevant to their specific philosophy such as Gerber or Pikler-type training opportunities "I would like to do all of the above (the list of training ideas) as long as it went alongside our philosophy which follows RIE" (T/Q.12), however, this type of thinking could lead to a narrowing of teachers' knowledge base. Generally though, teachers indicated a willingness to participate in professional learning relating to care and education of infants and toddlers. An overall inability to access infant and toddler

professional learning opportunities was clearly identified as a barrier for the teachers' on-going learning.

There was strong indication that infant and toddler teachers were feeling marginalised and under-valued, not only by society as a whole but also by members of their own profession.

### ***Teachers' values and beliefs***

That teachers' values and beliefs about infant and toddler teaching being a specialised field of teaching was exhibited strongly throughout the survey, alongside teachers having to have a particular desire to want to work with this age group.

Many teachers indicated the importance of children knowing everyone in their rooms so as to be able to cope within an ECE setting. Having teachers allocated to specific children for the initial settling-in period only was also identified as being best practice. Alongside these comments were those of teachers who believed strongly in having key or primary care programmes for their infants and toddlers. However, these teachers expressed concern and dismay when their requests or thoughts on this topic were dismissed or unaccepted by their centre's hierarchy or owners.

Several respondents discussed the frustration of having over-two teaching staff cover for non-contact or lunch times. One teacher commented how the introduction of an over-two teacher upsets and creates disharmony and discontinuity for the infants and toddlers. Teachers talked about the importance of their work and the value that they place on doing the best job they can within the constraints of centre structures and governmental policy.

## **Interpersonal plane**

### ***Attachment/relationships***

Just over seventy percent of respondents' report having been exposed to attachment theory in either their ITE programme or their on-going professional learning opportunities. Requesting or indicating a need for further exposure to attachment theory was suggested by 40% of the respondents. Respondents signified a need for professional learning related to infant and toddler curriculum as being the highest priority. There was a clear need identified for on-going professional learning across multiple topics, with teachers suggesting that there was a serious lack of availability for on-going professional learning directly relating to infants and toddlers.

Respondents indicated multiple relationships as being a priority for the children in their care, such as the children having relationships with all teachers and suggested over-attachment or children receiving more specific individualised treatment as being unfair and inequitable: "They (infants and toddlers) do have a rostered teacher to be responsible for them each day. This way they get to know all the teachers in the centre" (HT/Q.37), "We do not have primary caregivers, our children are happy to settle with anyone" (HT/Q.37). Conversely, other respondents expressed frustration at wanting to be more relationship-based with their infants and toddlers, however policies, practice and managerial perspectives often thwarted this.

## **Interpersonal plane Sub themes**

### ***Key teacher/primary care***

Just over half the centres surveyed reported using some type of primary or key teacher system. There appeared to be a variety of methods and meanings being used under this banner. In some centres the children were given time to connect to the person they



wanted to, so allocation of teachers to children was not undertaken as the children would do this in their own time. The key teacher/primary carer in some centres would be for the duration of the settling in period. In some cases, the allocation of a teacher to a child was for profile writing only. Some barriers identified for the implementation of a key teacher system was being a small team, so we don't need to do this, having a commitment to the children knowing everyone and to avoid over attachment of children to certain teachers "we rotate across the rosters, so all the toddlers get to know us all" (T/Q.37).

When asked if the respondents had responsibility for specific children in their centres (i.e. key teacher or primary carer) the responses showed just over half implementing some type of primary care or key teacher system, with 43.9% (Q.29,  $n=198$ ) not offering a key teacher or primary care system for their infants and toddlers. The respondents who answered no (if they had key or primary children) indicated this was a result of their position held in their centre such as manager or team leader with 48% (Q. 32,  $n=82$ ) indicating that as team leaders or managers their centre would not allocate them a key group. The following comments reflect teachers' frustrations around the perception of infant and toddler teaching:

We don't have key or primary teachers and depending on which teachers or workers are on duty will determine the time spent with settling an upset child. We are often told by owner and the unqualified teacher who has been there longer than me, that the children can't be picked up when upset, they need to be more independent and we don't have the time to spend one-on-one. This changes when the two qualified teachers are working together (T/Q.37).

Education and understanding of infants and toddlers by other teachers is minimal, little room to accommodate their needs when on ratios. Our nursery practice stops at our door and it is not accepted elsewhere in the building. Infants and toddlers are a wonderful and challenging field to work in and it is not appreciated by many areas of society (T/Q. 37).

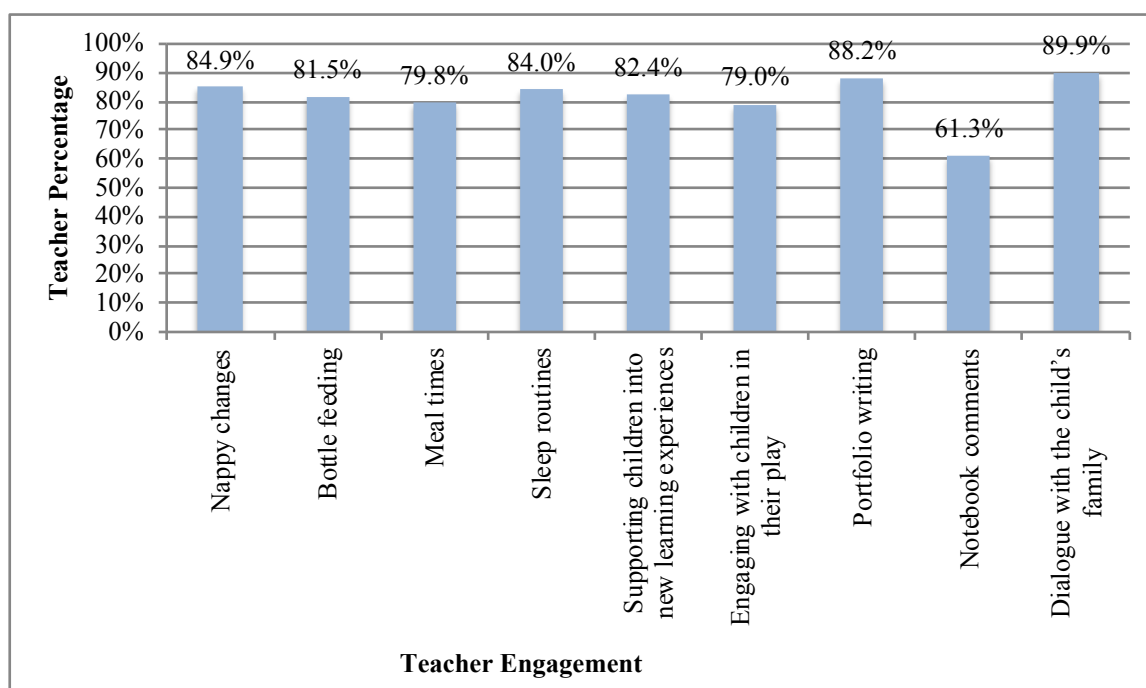
I would like to do primary care giving however this might be difficult in such a small team. We rely on the over-two teachers to cover breaks and non-contacts which effects the consistency of care for our children (T/Q.

Centre Director not strong enough in his ideas/values/philosophy around any age group, in particular infants and toddlers. Still a stigma of infant and toddler teachers being babysitters. (T/Q.58).

In the comments section respondents shared their beliefs of the importance of infants and toddlers getting to know everyone in their centres “We have a roster teacher responsible for them (infants and toddlers) each day, this way they get to know all the teachers in the centre” (T/Q.37). Several respondents also commented on how they allow time for infants and toddlers to connect to certain teachers, so will wait until this happens.

Because we are such a small consistent team it is important to us that the children become comfortable with everyone; also, as we have seen too many times how with some children this connection (primary or key teacher relationship) can be more detrimental to their anxieties (TL/Q.31).

The responses to the question regarding the main ways they would engage with their primary or key child, question 29 (*n*=119) teachers indicated they would undertake most care routines and play experiences with their key children (see Table 5.4).



**Figure 5.4. Q. 29 Teachers’ engagement with the infants and toddlers in their key group**

However, in the comments section these answers were somewhat undermined where respondents indicated that they would share some duties across the day but often indicated that one person would be responsible for changing all nappies and being in charge of sleep rooms on certain days. One team leader noted that she set the roster in a way that each teacher would cover different areas across the day, so all duties would be shared:

Each day we are set a different role (T/Q.30)

Do all the tasks in a one week rotation (HT /Q.30)

We do these tasks when settling the children during the transition phase (HT/Q.30)

These care routines may be carried out by other team members (HT/Q.30)

We are a small consistent team and we all get to know the children very well (HT/Q.30)

We offer choices such as would you like xx to change your nappy (T/Q.30).

I do the nappies, sleeps, meals and bottles in the beginning (HT/Q.30).

When asked about flexibility in their work (Q. 27,  $n=195$ ) the respondents shared that a large amount of flexibility was available to them. While 82.6% of respondents reported they were able to spend as much time as they needed to settle a child at arrival times, this percentage dropped (67.7%) when asked about flexibility of time spent at departure times. Several respondents commented that such work flexibility requires high levels of teamwork and commitment by the teaching staff. Others commented that they were unavailable to their key children at arrival and departure times due to roster constraints and working part time hours. The following Table 5.1 illustrates the flexibility teachers indicated would be available for them to spend with their key children across the day in specific activities.

**Table 5.1.**  
*Flexibility of Teacher Daily Practice*

Choose the options that best describe the flexibility you have in your daily work	
Spend as much time as you need with a child at arrival time	82.6%
Spend as much time as you need with a family at arrival time	82.6%
Spend as much time as you need with a child at departure time	67.7%
Spend as much time as you need with families at departure time	75.4%
Be able to follow the child's interest without constraint	76.9%
Put children to bed when you feel necessary	87.2%
Feed children when you feel necessary	85.6%
Spend as much time as you need to settle an upset child	93.3%
No flexibility	0.5%

## **Institutional plane**

### ***Organisational constructs***

There was a wide range of services represented in the survey cohort, private, corporate and community based, with just under half of these centres reporting that they did not follow a specific infant and toddler philosophy. However, an overwhelming influence in those centres that indicated they followed a specific philosophy were RIE or Gerber practices. There was a large focus on child-led practices but due to the ambiguity in the survey questions it is not clear if these respondents were identifying themselves as separate from the RIE or Gerber specific practices that have a strong child-led philosophy.

Teachers reported positively on their ability to have input into the review of their centre's philosophies and practices. There was some indication from several respondents that their infant and toddler written policies and practices were simply adaptations from the over-two area, made to fit for the infants and toddlers.

## **Institutional Plane Sub themes**

### ***Infant and toddler programmes and philosophies***

To investigate the organisational cultures of centres and explore the impact these may have on relationship development between the teacher, infant, toddler and family/whānau; the respondents were asked about infant and toddler specific philosophies, policies, procedures, and programmes. Just over half of the respondents reported using or following a specific infant and toddler philosophy as illustrated in table 5.2. It was in the comments section of this question where respondents highlighted the philosophy type they followed. A large group of respondents specified that they were following the RIE or Gerber philosophies. Only 50% of respondents (n=207) indicated they followed a specific philosophy for infants and toddlers. In the comments section of this question fifty-five teachers responded, and of that, thirty-two indicated that they followed the RIE/Gerber/Pikler philosophies.

**Table 5.2.**  
*Infant and Toddler Specific Philosophy*

Does your centre follow a specific philosophy for infants and toddlers?	
Yes	50.2%
No	49.8%

When asked about influences that impacted on their centre practices/philosophy, (see Table 5.6), a large number indicated that Emmi Pikler and Magda Gerber were of influence. RIE-and Gerber-influenced philosophies stood at 52.2% and the Pikler/Loczy influenced centres were recorded as 42.9%. The following comments reflect general points of view concerning the Pikler, Gerber influence on teacher practice:

Peaceful and respectful practice is a must for supporting children and parents alike and this is a beautiful way to settle new whānau into the centre as well as offering on-going support for long-term families. It can be

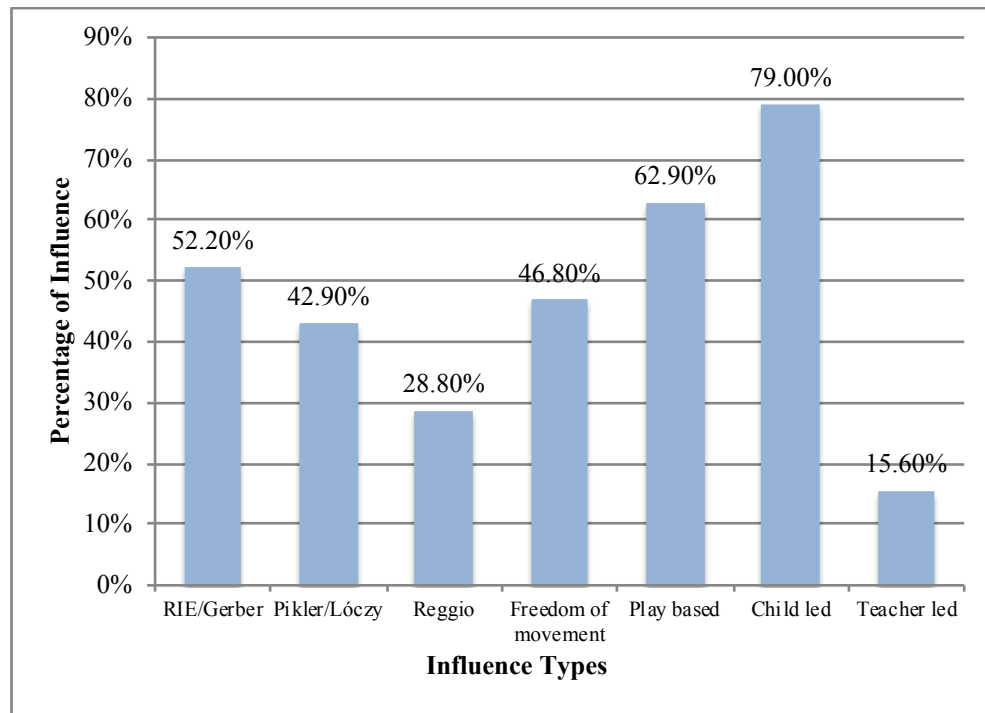
frustrating when people don't see infant and toddler teaching as 'teaching' but rather just care or even worse 'baby-sitting'. That is a perception I think still needs to change! (T/Q.25)

I am RIE fundamentals qualified but would like to study Pikler's work specifically (T/Q.12)

We follow the RIE philosophy as much as we can (T/Q.20)

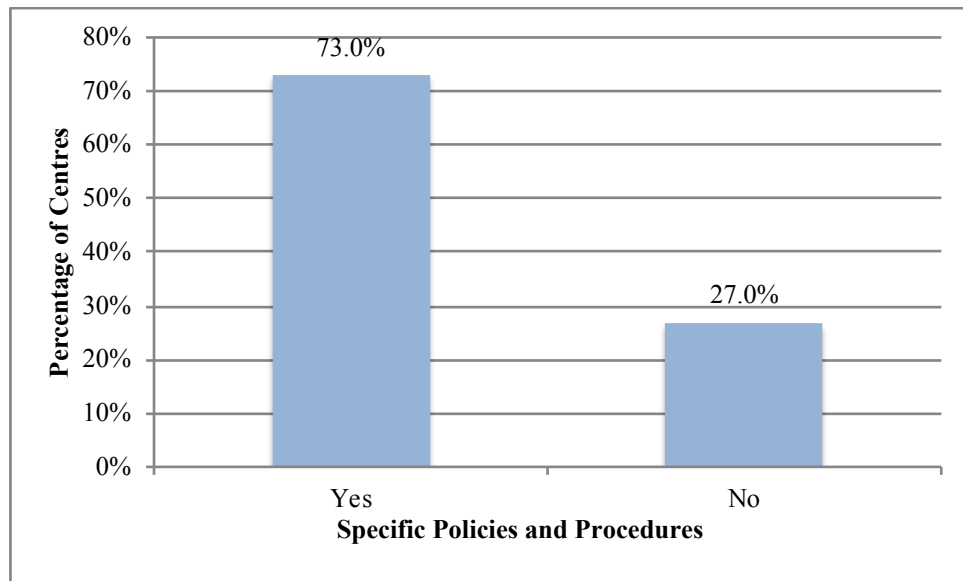
Are currently working towards implementing a more RIE based programme (T/Q.20)

There was also a large group (80.53%) who indicated an interest in further training around these philosophies; this figure is the combined percent of interest in either RIE/Gerber or Pikler/Loczy training (n=153). One teacher noted that she would be interested in all types of training as long as it went alongside their philosophy that is RIE influenced. There was also a high percentage 46.8% of centres that reported offering the freedom of movement philosophy. This philosophy is also based on the work of Gerber and Pikler. The highest percentage of influences was recorded as centres following a child-led philosophy (79%). Figure 5.5 indicates the influences on infant and toddler centres practices.



**Figure 5.5. Q. 21 Influences Impacting on Programmes and Practices**

Respondents were asked to report on any specific policies or procedures they may have in place in their centres (see Figure 5.6). A large percentage of respondents reported having specific infant and toddler policies and procedures in place, with the majority noting that these policies and procedures were in written form. However, there were many respondents who suggested that the policies (in particular) were written for the older age group, with some specific sections to cover infants and toddlers. Several respondents reported in the comments sections that they were working on or towards developing written documents for their infant and toddler philosophy, programme and/or policies.



**Figure 5.6. Q. 16 Policies and Procedures Specific to Infants and Toddlers**

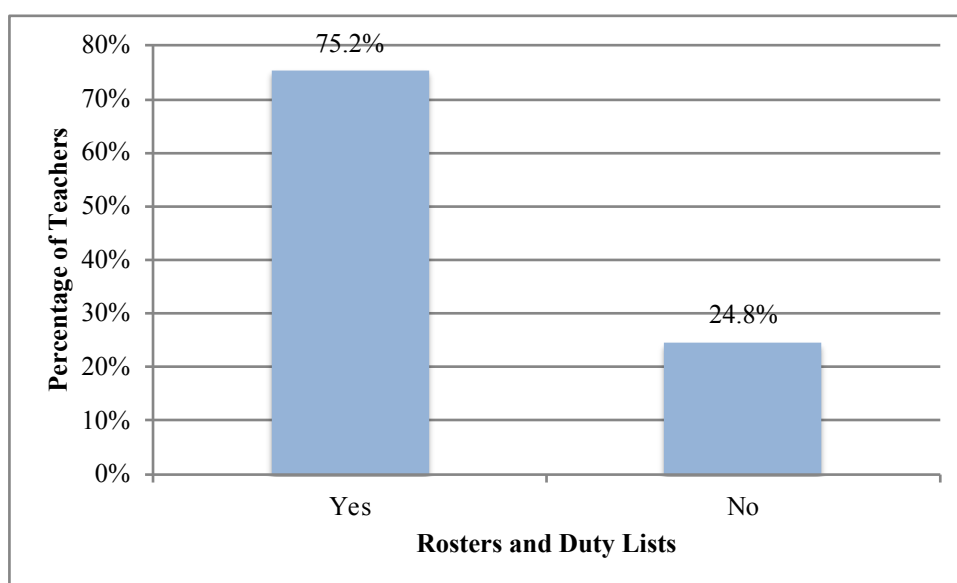
Centres which indicated they had written policy documents also commented that the policies and practices had mostly been written and reviewed by the teaching teams. Eighty-seven point five percent (87.5%) ( $n=121$ ) stated that these documents were designed by the teaching teams. There was a large percentage 89.44% ( $n=142$ ) saying it was the teaching teams who reviewed these written documents; it was not clear if the teaching teams included the over-two teams, or if it was just the under-two teams.

### ***Rosters***

When asked to share if the centres had rosters or duty lists the respondents indicated overwhelmingly that they used some form of roster or duty list (see Figure 5.7). The respondents also indicated that these rosters or duties rotated or changed on a regular basis, with 51% indicating that these would rotate or change on a daily basis. However, there was a large group (64 respondents) who skipped this question; the reason for this is unknown. There was also an indication of implicit rosters being implemented in some centres where teachers indicated that they had specific duties they would be responsible for across the day. Some of the reasons for having rosters were related to sharing duties fairly



and supporting the children to get to know all the teachers in the room across the various areas, such as nappy changing and sleeping. Other reasons for having rosters or rotating teacher duties was to change things up for the teachers so everyone gets a turn, when the senior teacher feels like the teachers need a change or to accommodate the over-two teachers who would often relieve in the under-two rooms.



**Figure 5.7. Q. 33 Rosters and Duty Lists for Teachers**

In the comments section teachers indicated that rosters would be changed or rotated in a variety of ways with some centres changing duties/rosters daily, weekly, monthly and by term (Figure 5.8). In one centre the teacher commented that the roster or duties changed when needed, as she was the only team member who worked full time in the nursery.

Respondents also indicated that while they did not have set rosters there were certain people responsible for particular duties across the day. It was also interesting to note that respondents reported duties or rosters changing or rotating when senior teachers decided or if the teaching teams wanted to change things around. There were only two

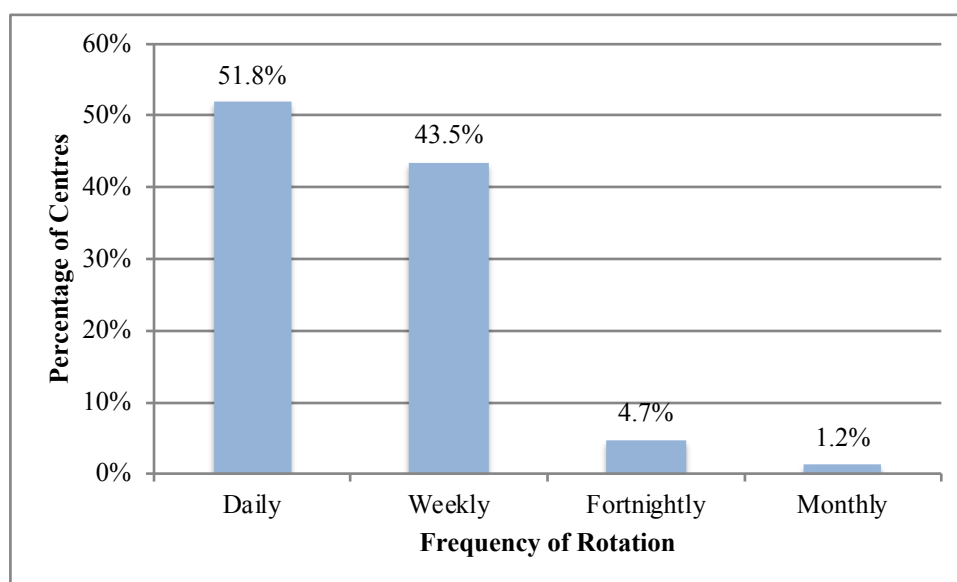
teachers who indicated they would change their roster to meet the needs of an upset child.

The following quotes are typical of responses:

Our roster has the staff rostered on infants and toddlers one day a week. As we are a mixed age centre the infants and toddlers interact with all staff each day. They do have a rostered teacher to be responsible for them each day. This way they get to know all the teachers in the centre - a primary caregiver system would only work if we had a completely separate area for the Under 2's (T/Q.37).

All duties are shared and rotated within the team (HT/Q.32).

We rotate each day over four areas (T/Q.32).



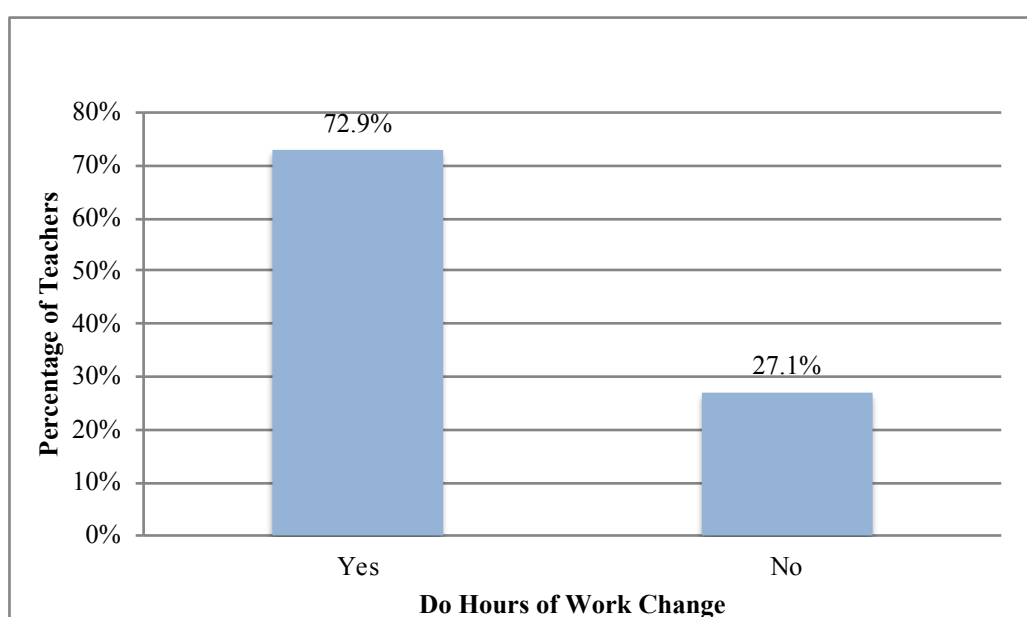
**Figure 5.8. Q. 36 Rotation of Rosters and Duty Lists**

The rotation of rosters to the degree reported is interesting when these percentages are contrasted against the percentages of teachers who had indicated how flexible their days were (see table 5.3). It could be that some centres provide flexibility in their roster systems, or teachers are reporting on perceived flexibility, as was observed in the case study centres.

**Table 5.3.**  
*Comparison of Rosters to Flexibility*

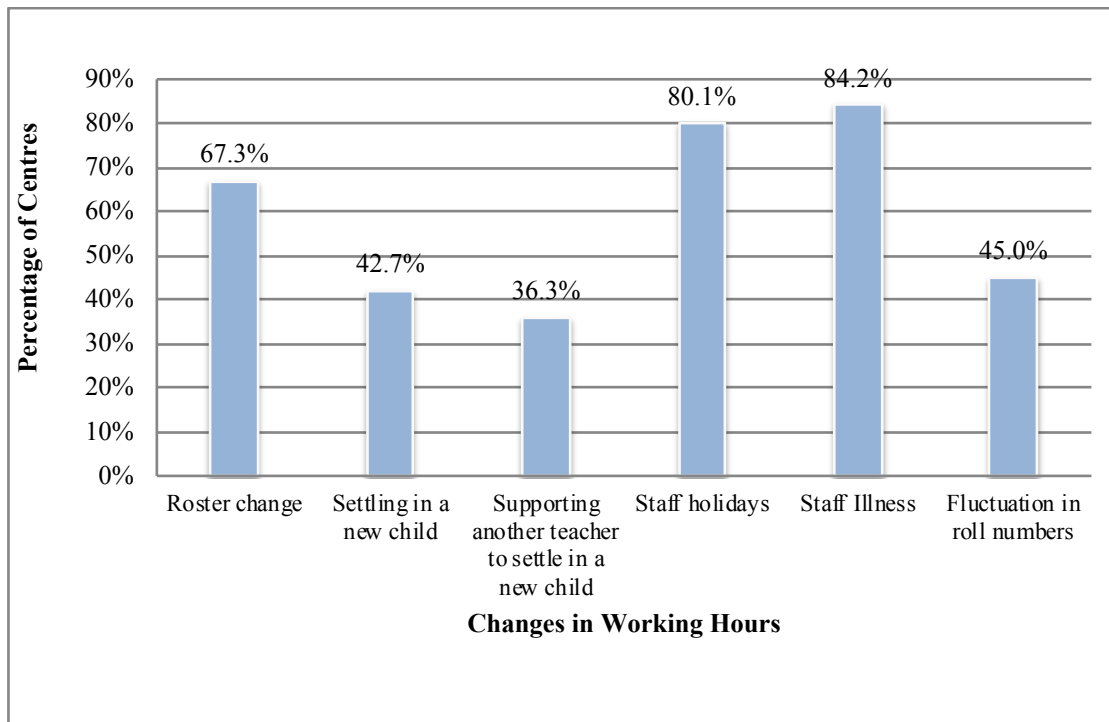
Centres who have rosters and duties lists	75.2%
Centres who rotate or change their rosters daily	51.76
Respondents who reported high levels of Flexibility in their day	98.78%

Teacher hours were also shown to change or rotate on a regular basis with 72% of teachers indicating their start and finish times could change, similar findings were identified in the case study phase.



**Figure 5.9.** Q. 23 Changes in working hours

There were various reasons for teacher's hours to be changed, with staff holidays and illness being identified as two main reasons. However, the rotation of start and finish times for teachers was closely tied to the use of rosters, with 67.3 % of teachers indicating their hours would change depending on which roster they were allocated to.



**Figure 5.10.** Q. 24 Reasons for changes in working hours

In the final question (37) the respondents were asked what they saw as being key issues around infants and toddler care and education. Thirty-six respondents indicated a concern over the current ratio regulation of 5 infants and toddlers for one teacher; the following quotes are representative of the comments made:

Numbers too high ratios too low (T/Q.37)

Ratios of 1 to 5 is just too high (T/Q.37)

Government need to regulate for better ratios for the infants and toddlers (HT/Q.37)

Staff child ratios are difficult to manage due to funding cuts by the government (T/Q.37)

Poor ratios make it difficult to offer best practice for our infants and toddlers (HT/Q.37).

## Summary

This chapter has presented the results from the online survey distributed to centres identifying as having infants and toddlers in full time care and education settings. The survey provided a further illustration of the current practices and organisational constructs currently in practice across Aotearoa New Zealand.

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate a strong similarity between findings across both phases of this study; similar influences on the abilities of teachers to create effective, deep and meaningful attachment-type relationships between teacher and child are evident in each phase. The three main similarities identified were the organizational constraints, such as rosters, shift rotations and unwritten duty lists; initial teacher education; and teachers' values and beliefs.

The key findings indicate that there is a perceived lack of support for infant and toddler specific ITE and professional learning opportunities. Respondents indicated concerns at the minimal infant and toddler teaching content in initial teacher education programmes, nation-wide.

There was some ambiguity in the findings, particularly where a large percentage of centres indicated they used rosters to manage their teachers' daily routines and hours of work, yet teachers reported having high flexibility in their daily practice. There was also a commitment by the teachers to ensure the children got to know everyone in their rooms, as well as the over-two teachers who at times would provide cover for non-contacts and breaks etc. There were also strong feelings of isolation and of being undervalued from other areas of the sector and from their own colleagues in the over-two areas. Frustrations were also shared about the struggle to provide quality experiences for the infants and toddlers when having to work with a ratio of 1-5.

The following chapter presents the findings of the case study juxtaposed with the findings from the national survey, providing a synthesis of the two phases of results. The discussion addresses the way in which the findings from this study answer the research questions, affirm or challenge the existing literature in the field, and shed light on current practices and future challenges.

## Chapter 6

### Discussion

The present study was guided by the research question: “In what ways do the organisational cultures in infant and toddler settings in Aotearoa New Zealand affect the ability of teachers to develop attachment-type relationships and nurture the needs of infants and toddlers? The following objectives and sub questions framed the research:

*Personal Plane:* The aim of the analysis in the personal plane was to discover what impacts on individual teachers’ abilities to form attachment-type relationships between infants and/or toddlers. Supporting questions in the personal plane ask: “in what ways are infant and toddler teachers enabled to engage in prolonged intimate attachment-type relationship opportunities with the infants and toddlers in their care?” and “in what ways are teachers enabled to manage their daily interactions?”

*Interpersonal Plane:* The aim of the analysis in the interpersonal plane was to improve understandings of how centres’ organisational cultures can impact on attachment-type relationship development between the infants/toddlers and their teachers in early childhood infant and toddler settings. Supporting questions in the interpersonal plane were; “in what ways does a centre’s organisational culture impact on attachment-type relationship development between teachers and infants, toddlers?”: “In what ways do relationship development opportunities (between teacher, infant/toddler) differ between centres’ organisational cultures?” and “how do centres’ organisational cultures foster relationship development for infants and toddlers from different cultures and/or with different learning needs?”

*Institutional Plane:* The aim of the analysis in the institutional plane was to identify national trends regarding teaching and learning for infants and toddlers in the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education sector. Supporting questions in the community/institutional plane were “in what ways do infant and toddler centres’ organisational cultures structure the teachers’ day-to-day practice and time management?” and “do infant and toddler centres have specific written programmes and/or curriculum documents, and if so who wrote these? And “in what ways do the structural components of quality care as measured by the ITERS-R rating scale relate to the opportunities for relationship development between teacher, and infant, toddler.

In this chapter the results are synthesised across the two phases of the study in order to address the research question and objectives. This chapter will highlight the alignment between the case studies (Phase One) and the national survey (Phase Two) and discuss similarities and differences; structured in three sections, each address one of the three planes of analysis: the interpersonal, personal and institutional, with the respective research question and sub-questions.

### **Personal plane**

The following discussion foregrounds the personal plane to discover some of the influences on individual teachers’ abilities to form attachment-type relationships with infants and/or toddlers. The objective in the personal plane was “to discover what impacts on individual teachers’ abilities to form attachment-type relationships between infants and/or toddlers?” Lee (2006) points out clearly that the relationship building process takes time and opportunity for the infant, toddler and teacher to develop understandings of each other’s behaviours and cues. Berthelsen and Brownlee (2007) identified how individual teachers’ values and beliefs play a large part in how relationships are valued and

consequently how they are developed. They argue that when values and beliefs stem from intuition and a teacher's view of what is 'best' for children, their practice is less likely to be of high quality.

***Personal plane objective sub question 1***

*In what ways do infant and toddler teachers engage in prolonged attachment-type relationship opportunities with the infants and toddlers in their care?*

The use of video filming in the current study allowed observation of critical times between the infant, toddler, teacher and family/whānau. The video clips made arrival and departure transitions visible and showed all infants, toddlers and families/whānau being greeted warmly and appearing to settle quickly into their centres. The parents appeared happy and satisfied with the arrival and departure transitions. However, the video evidence showed the arrival and departure transitions as generally hurried, with a short time frame of an average of five minutes per arrival. The quick arrival transitions, of course, could be related to families'/whānau commitments to be at their place of employment at certain times. It was also observed that teachers moved on relatively quickly to housekeeping tasks or other general duties after the family/whānau had left. This finding is of concern, as Recchia and Dvorakova's (2012) research suggests there needs to be a commitment by centres and teachers to having the time available to spend as long as they need, to engage with the process of attachment-type relationship development with the child, and not have to worry too much about structural issues such as duties or tasks.

Observations revealed that the conversations between teachers and families/whānau at arrival were more in-depth and lasted longer than at farewell. Conversations ranged from very general chat to more in-depth sharing of information. Most transitions for the infant/toddler appeared to go smoothly, with all the children settling quickly. The teachers



were warm and welcoming, although the process seemed without intentionality or planning, arrival times appeared to have a lack of focus, by the teachers, on attachment - type relationship development. Tensions were observed in the video footage where teachers were required to support numerous children and families/whānau during arrivals, serve breakfasts and be watching other children as they explored within the ECS setting, thus limiting the opportunities for attachment-type relationship development. Traum's research (2014) also reported that teachers struggled to attend to the multiple tasks that occurred during transition times. Teachers having specific practices to support children's transitions into the centre, such as supporting the child to wave to their mother at the fence (should be planned for), alongside consistent routines and familiar teachers, to meet the specific needs of each child (Traum, 2014). There was no evidence in any of the case study centres of intentionality of teacher practice for the children at arrival times. In one case study centre a teacher took a child to wave out the window to her mother, though it is unclear whether this was a well thought out planned strategy, as it was not observed at other times. However, the teacher may have planned for this specific practice, or it could have been an instinctive or intuitive action, but not shared verbally within the research.

What was observed in this current study were teachers using a variety of distraction methods to support the infant/toddler to settle. However, when using a distraction method, it was noted that teachers did not talk to the child about their feelings or emotions or name these but appeared to work more on supporting the child to stop crying by using distraction methods. Degotardi and Pearson (2014) and Traum (2014) suggest that having a thoughtful and intentional approach to settling children would enable teachers to invest time and energy and reap the benefits in the types of relationships that are formed and maintained. In this study however, the findings from the video clips show the teachers engaging in relatively short periods of time with the infants and toddlers at arrival and departure.

Organisational cultures, and teachers' values and beliefs can impact on teachers' development of attachment-type relationships in several ways. The values and beliefs of the centre and how these are enacted can constrain or limit teachers' abilities to take the time needed to forge these relationships. Such things as rotating staffing at the beginning and end of the day resulted in several children experiencing arrivals that were unsettling and possibly confusing; this practice also limits the opportunities for the time needed to support the level of intimacy in the process of attachment-type relationship development between, teacher and child. De Groot Kim (2010) reports that when teacher work shifts are irregular it is difficult for children and families/whānau to get to know teachers any more than at a superficial level, this thinking is highly relevant to the Aotearoa New Zealand context when it was clearly highlighted, in the case study centres and in the survey, that teachers hours of work would often change, thus impacting on the ability of teachers to provide the consistency and opportunity for meaningful relationship development to occur.

There was a strong belief in the importance of everyone knowing all the children with whom they work, in both the case studies and survey. The families/whānau also commented on the importance of all the teachers being known to their child. The families/whānau also suggest that a key teacher or primary care system would not be seen as optimal practice for them. However, the ability of teachers to develop deep and meaningful attachment-type relationships takes time and would require all teachers to engage with the all the children and their families/whānau at levels that would not necessarily be available within the confines a of a busy early childhood setting (Dalli & Kibble, 2010; Honig, 1998). Lee (2006) suggests that the development of deep and meaningful attachment-type relationships between the child and one or two particular teachers supports the child to develop a secure base and a strong sense of self and in turn,

the confidence to then develop strong relationships with the other adults in their ECS setting.

It appeared difficult for the teachers (who were juggling multiple tasks) to be more intentional in their practice, such as prioritising their availability to the child above that of completing tasks, thus perhaps limiting the opportunities for anything more than surface level relationship development to occur. This lack of availability could be seen as limiting each child's opportunity to be 'truly known' by at least one teacher in the environment. Degotardi and Pearson (2014) suggest, "an investment in time especially at periods of transition and relationship realignment will reap benefits in terms of how relationships are formed and the kinds of relationships that result" (p. 112). Such intentional investment of time during transitions times was not evident in the case study examples.

The comments regarding attachment-type relationships, across the two phases, were consistent. Teachers clearly articulated concerns for over-attachments, or teachers favouring or overindulging the children with whom they form attachments. Case study teachers were aware of attachment theory but felt the application of this theory into practice could result in more problems than benefits for the teachers, children and families/whānau. Teachers' own cultures, values and beliefs can directly influence the establishment of sensitive relationships between the teacher, infant and toddler (Johnston, 2011), it was in the Miro case study where the teachers and centre's culture and values directly influenced relationship development processes.

It appears that the view teachers (in both phases) held of attachment theory in practice is that its implementation would isolate children from other teachers, as there would be an exclusivity of care and relationship, where only certain teachers would engage with individual children. Parents too have expressed concerns about their children

becoming over-attached to their teachers in ECS (Cryer et al., 2000; Dalli et al., 2009; Dalli & Kibble 2010; Kibble et al., 2010).

Comments regarding attachment education or exposure to this theory in initial teacher education were also common across the phases. Teachers in both phases reported a lack of sufficient education around attachment, yet both groups reported having some training in this area in their initial teacher education programmes. These comments are of interest as they could call into question the quality, depth and value placed on attachment theory in practice in initial teacher education programmes and on the quality and availability of on-going professional development on attachment theory in practice. As Berthelsen and Brownlee (2007) suggest, the ability to take on new ideas or to develop critical thinking skills is highly linked to professional programmes (ITE and on-going professional learning). They suggest that these programmes should support the teachers' exploration of their existing beliefs and how these beliefs fit with new knowledge and understandings.

The comments regarding a lack of knowledge or understandings around attachment theory in practice would also suggest a reason for a lack of implementation across the sector. Degotardi and Pearson (2009) suggest that attachment theory has been used widely among practitioners as a useful tool for understanding the importance and nature of early attachments. They also challenge the exclusive use of this theory in early childhood services as it may "lull researchers and practitioners into adapting a narrow view of relationships, which could trivialise the complex, multifaceted nature and significance of children's relationships within early childhood settings" (p. 150). They go on to call for a much broader range of theoretical perspectives in ECS settings. This study, however suggests that teachers don't appear to use attachment theory to support their practice either explicitly or implicitly. In fact, it could be argued that relationship development in any

form other than by accident is a more common practice.

This study indicates that the teachers' misunderstandings of what attachment means in ECS practice, has led to the identification, in this study's data, of the bigger problem of avoidance of the implementation of attachment as a tool for relationship development. This finding suggests the ability to form deep, authentic attachment-type relationships is compromised. Results from teachers in both phases highlight an apparent confusion around attachment-type relationship development and a perceived lack of depth of understanding around intentionality of relationship development in ECS settings.

Individual teachers' abilities to engage in meaningful attachment-type relationship interactions are constrained by a lack of consistency, perhaps due to a lack of intentional planning in managing the teacher and child attachment-type relationships during the arrival transitions and across the day.

### ***Personal plane objective sub question 2***

*In what ways are teachers enabled to manage their daily interactions?*

Recchia and Dvorakova (2012) suggest that relationship development is a process; infant/toddler and teachers need time and opportunity to adjust to each other and to build relationships. The case study teachers all discussed the flexibility in their daily work with opportunity to spend as long as needed with children. While this contention was evidenced in some instances, generally the teachers seemed more focused on preparation of meals, activities and organisational type work. The survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that teachers had the ability to be flexible and be with children for as long as needed. However, in both the case studies and survey these comments were undermined when teachers also reported that their days were constrained and controlled by their roster systems, which could potentially limit their availability to the children.

The case study interviews and comments from the survey respondents highlighted staffing organisation as being more about the needs of the centre and/or needs of the teachers than the needs of the children and families/whānau. There was little to no mention of the needs of the children and families in connection to staffing hours and rosters. Several survey respondents reported teacher hours would be changed as a result of the roster structure, managing the part time teachers, and covering ratios. Johansson (2004) propose that enforced organisational conditions can undermine the teachers' abilities to meet the emotional and relational needs of the infants and toddlers in their care.

The case studies and the survey results showed some inconsistencies around rosters and their uses in centres. In one case study centre the Totara teachers were very happy to report on how they used a written roster system. The other two centres talked about not using rosters, however when questioned further about duties or teacher responsibilities it became apparent that there was an implicit roster being implemented in both the Rimu and Miro centres. These teachers discussed their structure to the day, where one teacher would generally do the nappies, one the bedroom and other teachers would be responsible for the children in the inside or outside areas. This structuring seemed to be related to when the teachers started their day; these practices were not recorded anywhere and as such were reported as not being a roster system. This indicates the impact that unwritten rules or organisational cultures have in influencing the day-to-day practices and availability of the teachers to the infants, toddlers and families with whom they work, thereby potentially limiting opportunities for attachment-type relationships and intersubjective attunement to develop.

The development of intersubjective attunement requires teachers to work in environments that promote opportunities for this to occur. Such opportunities are closely linked to a centre's organisational structures and include the freedom of teachers to commit

to joint attention episodes and full attunement without the disruption caused by rosters, duty lists and other imposed systems (White, 2009).

There were a large proportion (75.17 %) of survey respondents indicating the use of some form of a roster or duties list. Almost all of these respondents stated these rosters or duties would periodically change or rotate, and of these over half did so on a daily basis. This rotation of duties or rosters points to an area of practice that is worth investigating further, as these practices have the potential to create barriers for the development of meaningful relationships between teacher and infants, toddlers and families/whānau. Several survey respondents described that they rotate all teachers across the day, to ensure that the infants and toddlers get to know all the teachers in the environment. This evidence suggests many centres engage in practices where children pass from adult to adult, as they move from the person available to them at arrival time to the person on nappies, to the person in the sleep room, to the person at departure time, and so on. Howes and Ritchie, (2002) and Raikes (1993) agree that multiple caregivers or abrupt changes in caregivers have a disruptive effect on the infants and toddlers and can impact negatively on attachment-type relationships between them and their teachers.

Teachers need to work in conditions that support the interconnectedness of relationships and teachers' adherence to rosters or impeding organisational structures can obstruct and disrupt relational intimacy (White, 2009). Consistency of teacher availability at the start, end and during the day is also compromised when teachers rotate between the infant and toddler and older children's rooms. Rotating teachers starting and finishing times and centre area responsibilities can limit teacher availability to the infants, toddlers and families/whānau (de Groot Kim, 2010). It was observed in the case study centres how general housekeeping duties could also limit teacher availability at arrival and departure times.

Radford's (2015) study clearly showed how organisational cultures or ways of being can impact on the ability of the teachers to develop attachment-type relationships that would enable them to pick up on the very subtle cues as presented by children of this age. It was apparent in Radford's (2015) study and in this current study that teachers take their own centre's organisational cultures for granted and underestimate the impact that these hidden and implicit ways of being can impact on the lived realities of children's lives.

### ***ITE and professional learning***

A key finding in this study was the role of the teachers' ITE and on-going professional learning and the potential impacts that both the ITE and on-going professional development currently have in the effective preparation and on-going development of infant and toddler teachers. While this was not a direct focus of this study, the findings are certainly worth considering; ITE and professional learning are both areas where research has provided valuable insights into outcomes for infants and toddlers (Dalli et al., 2011; Munton et al., 2002). Specific ITE programmes or professional learning opportunities that emphasise intersubjectivity in infant and toddler pedagogy provide teachers with the ability to be critically reflective practitioners and to provide infants and toddlers with environments where they then experience sensitive, responsive care giving that is attuned to their subtle cues (Dalli et al., 2011). High levels of teacher education, including initial education followed by professional development, are necessary for quality outcomes with infants and toddlers (Munton et al., 2002). When teachers act as intersubjective partners and optimise opportunities for infants' and toddlers' learning and development, they interact in ways that promote heightened levels of intimacy, through an ethic of care and episodes of joint attention; this would be seen as providing quality practice (Dalli, et al., 2011).



Tout, et al. (2005) following an analysis of 16 large scale studies that explored connections between teacher professional development and quality programmes for infants and toddlers, found that further professional development was associated with better quality early childhood education programmes: “the work to date is clear that more education, more education with early childhood education content, and more training, are each associated with better quality early childhood environments” (p. 105). There are a number of qualities and attributes identified as being highly significant for the effective preparation of adults to work successfully with infants and toddlers. Dalli et al., (201, p. 112) point out five areas for consideration in the training of under-two-year-old teachers as being “i) emotional engagement; ii) critical reflection; iii) awareness of diversity; iv) a research/evaluation focus; and v) child development knowledge”.

There were clear links between phase one and two when looking at ITE and on-going professional development. Discussion across the case study interviews and the responses to the open-ended questions in the survey highlighted teachers’ frustrations regarding their perceived lack of specific pedagogical training for infants and toddlers. Carroll-Lind and Angus (2011) point out New Zealand’s lack of any established, formal guidelines for infant-toddler accreditation for early childhood professionals. They state that other countries have had these specialist qualifications for some time. Powell (2007) suggested that New Zealand should follow this lead by providing additional initial teacher education courses on infants and toddlers; she also suggested the implementation of a specific infant and toddler qualification.

Concern about the lack of specific teacher education programmes for infant and toddler pedagogy in Aotearoa New Zealand ECS were clearly expressed by both the case study teachers and the survey respondents and were inclusive of multiple teacher education

providers. The issue of infant and toddler content in initial teacher training programmes has been reported over a period of time; Australian researchers Macfarlane, Noble, and Cartmel (2004) called for further research into teachers' experiences in infant and toddler care and education and they suggested a need to reform teacher education. These concerns are recognised internationally, as Tout, et al., (2005) have argued that "the ECE field urgently needs better specification of the features of training that are important to quality of the early childhood environment, including an examination of content, intensity, and the auspices offering the training" (pp. 105-106). It is important to acknowledge however, that in the Aotearoa New Zealand context ITE programmes are changing, and infant and toddler care and education programmes are being enhanced within undergraduate and postgraduate ECE education programmes.

The availability of professional learning that focused on infant and toddlers was seen as concerning for the study participants. Other barriers identified were cost, lack of time, low priority and no interest. Teachers also identified distance as being a barrier for them to access infant and toddler professional development. There were remarks in the survey research that respondents felt there was a seemingly narrow focus on what professional learning was worthwhile attending. However, the respondents asking for professional development that was only reflective of the Gerber, RIE or Pikler methods undermined these requests by showing a somewhat narrow focus, however PL opportunities could also challenge the teachers to be critical reflectors of their own implementation of these practices. There were also several comments in this section of the survey regarding teachers only wanting to attend professional development that was reflective of their centre's specific philosophy. This raises concerns as to teachers not having their thinking challenged; quality practice for teachers requires them to reflect, and critically examine their practice (Larrivée, 2000). Key factors of quality practice lie in

critical reflection on practice, participation in shared inquiry and ongoing dialogue; such practices support and maintain high quality pedagogy and consequently, appropriate outcomes for infants and toddlers (Macfarlane, et al., 2004). Therefore, opportunities to engage professionally with others in infant and toddler learning that challenges and provokes teachers' thinking, can be seen as necessary for healthy teacher growth and development. Teachers investigating such topics as brain development, neuroscience, attachment and Aotearoa New Zealand indigenous practices with infants and toddlers could invoke personal and professional reflection and considerations of best practice for infants and toddlers.

While professional learning can provide teachers with appropriate strategies, this learning also needs to be backed up with organisational centre structures, which allow teachers to collaborate with their teams and be supported to explore new ways of being (Page & Elfer, 2013). It was apparent from their comments that the teachers felt the content of their past and current ITE and their on-going professional learning was and is, deficient of any meaningful content in regard to infants and toddlers in-group care settings.

The lack of availability of professional learning is concerning as Munton et al. (2002) argue that outcomes for infants and toddlers are enhanced where there are quality initial teacher education programmes as well as on-going professional learning opportunities; opportunities that have a concentrated focus on infant and toddler teaching and learning.

### **Interpersonal plane**

The following discussion foregrounds the interpersonal plane. The objective in this plane was to “develop understandings of how centres’ organisational cultures can impact

on attachment-type relationship development between teachers and infants and toddlers in early childhood infant and toddler settings”.

***Interpersonal plane objective sub question 1***

*In what ways does a centre’s organisational culture impact on attachment-type relationship development between teachers and infants, toddlers?*

When the survey respondents were asked to indicate key issues for infant and toddler care and education, high ratios were identified to be of serious concern. The teachers’ comments included the group size being too big and ratios too high. Several survey respondents reported they were unable to engage with the children deeply and meaningfully when ratios are so high. Teachers reported not being able to manage the infants and toddlers even basic needs with a ratio of 1:5. These concerns are supported by research that highlights infant and toddler ratios being a predictor of quality interactions, which enable the development of closer relationships and more opportunities for intersubjective attunement (Milgrom & Mietz, 2004).

Some survey respondents reported that their centres worked hard to keep a ratio of one teacher to three children. These comments were only from five respondents but show a commitment by some centres to improve the relationship opportunities for the infants and toddlers by keeping the ratios at a level that is more likely to support positive and meaningful interactions (Ghazvini & Mullis, 2002; Munton et al., 2002).

Survey respondents and case study teachers appeared extremely passionate about working with infants and toddlers, with a focus on care evident across both phases of this current study. This demonstrates a very real commitment by the teachers across both phases to provide the best (as they have identified) programmes for the infants and toddlers with whom they work. However, as Manning-Morton (2006) points out, people work with

infants and toddlers for a wide range of reasons, often with an image of themselves as caring, helpful and service oriented, whereas effective practice with infants and toddlers requires more than being passionate and caring, teachers need to be “critically reflexive and theoretical boundary crossers” (p. 50); this current study has shown a level of reluctance by teachers to be theoretical boundary crossers.

Teachers across the phases talked about respectful practices with infants and toddlers, although very few went on to describe what these could look like in practice. Most comments were about physical approaches, with little to no discussion on the emotional components of respectful practice. In the survey responses, this respectful practice was highlighted, with over half the respondents indicating a commitment to Gerber’s RIE or the Pikler method. However, teachers’ own cultures, values and beliefs can directly influence the establishment of sensitive relationships between the teacher, infant and toddler (Johnston, 2011). Therefore, respectful practice for one teacher, or one centre, such as allowing a child to cry for extended periods of time, may not be seen as a respectful practice from another teacher’s or centre’s perspective. Cooper, Hedges, & Dixon (2013) reported tensions between the implementation of RIE philosophy with its belief that learning dispositions emerge naturally and are individually constructed within the child’s development and that of Aotearoa New Zealand’s early childhood curriculum with its sociocultural interpretation of children learning through social connections. This large focus on the natural emergence of dispositions for learning through respectful care, as reported across both phases, suggests a need for further investigation.

Several comments from survey participants highlight tensions between management and teachers. Page and Elfer (2013) identified similar problematic features in their single intensive case study investigating the emotional complexity of attachment interactions in the nursery. They discovered intense negative emotion evident beneath the

surface of the infant and toddler teacher's feelings. These feelings stemmed from a sense of being underappreciated by colleagues, arbitrary decisions being made by management, ignoring the considerations of consistency and continuity.

Similar findings were found in this study where teachers commented about having to work with senior teachers who had been in the infant and toddler room for an extended period and were unwilling to consider other ways of working with these children. Qualified teachers also expressed their frustrations at working with long-term unqualified teachers who were unwilling to change or consider other ways of working with infants and toddlers. Teachers across both phases also reported feeling undervalued by the sector, colleagues and management.

Teachers expressed a passion for their work and espoused strong values and beliefs about providing best practice. However, it appeared, in both the case studies and the survey results, that the ability of the teachers to enact these quality practices was limited. The realities of poor ratios, senior members of teaching teams with little to no understandings of infant and toddler pedagogy, teachers' values and beliefs at odds with recognised best practice, lack of initial teacher education and a dearth of professional development opportunities impacted on practice. It is not surprising therefore, that Carroll-Lind and Angus (2011) suggested the need for greater emphasis to be given to the particular needs of infants and toddlers in early childhood education services in the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

A recent ERO report (ERO, 2015) also reiterates concerns around quality of service provided for infants and toddlers in ECS settings. The report on infant and toddlers identified variability between services and noted that only 12% of centres surveyed had a 'highly responsive' curriculum, with 44% providing what ERO defined as a 'somewhat responsive' curriculum. A further 43% provided a 'limited and/or not responsive'

curriculum. These figures indicate a rather small percentage of centres providing what ERO considers high-quality opportunities for infants' and toddlers' exploration and discovery. These findings are similar to that of Berthelsen and Brownlee (2007), who argued that while infant and toddler teachers are focused on the care aspect of their teaching, there is a gap between this focus on care and their focus on cognitive approaches. While these findings suggest that infant and toddler teachers do have a reasonable focus on care, the present study highlights concerns around the gap between the care and intentional relationship development, both of which are key factors in the child's ability to be an active explorer.

Case study centre Rimu was very explicit in the fact they chose not to use attachment theory in practice but failed to discuss what other processes they used to support the development of relationships. There was compelling evidence that teachers have no recollection of learning about attachment theory in their ITE or did not remember what attachment theory involves. It could be that having been exposed to the theory in their ITE programmes but not in their teaching practice resulted in this lack of retention. It is questionable whether there is enough emphasis placed on attachment theory and links between this theory and practice in initial teacher education and on-going professional learning programmes. Lee (2006) suggests early childhood teacher education programmes should promote the study of relationships and emotions and should provide "practicum courses that make theory and practice come together" (p. 148).

A consistent thread of a child knowing all their teachers in their environment was also apparent, as were concerns about the use of attachment theory in their centres. Both the case study staff and the survey respondents indicated a commitment to children having the same opportunities, being fair and ensuring everyone is treated the same. Each case study teacher talked about the importance of getting to know all the children in their

centres, as opposed to developing attachment-type relationships with specific children. The consensus across the three case study centres was for children to know all the teachers and to be able to connect comfortably with all these teachers in order for the early childhood experience to be seen as successful for the child. This thinking was echoed in the survey findings. Hopkins (1988) reported that the fear that individual attachments could result in inequity of care for the infants and toddlers and inequality of relationship, could result in teachers withdrawing from the children by minimising physical contact, or emotionally distancing themselves from the children.

Many respondents felt a key-person approach or primary care system was unrealistic because teachers cannot be available to the children all the time. Comments were made, about a key-person system being unfair or unequal as some children may be neglected, or others may get ‘too much attention,’ because of the variability of individual teachers. Several survey respondents also suggested that being in a small centre with only a small number of infants/toddlers and teachers would mean that primary or key teachers would not be necessary as the children would become familiar with all the teachers over time. However, the aim of the key teacher or primary care teacher is for infants and toddlers to have a secure base and close attachment-type relationship with a particular teacher, but not to limit or restrict children’s interactions with others (Elfer, Goldschmied, & Selleck, 2003). They go on to suggest that a baby can be delighted and responsive to the minute details of how a key figure in their life interacts and responds to them. However, if another teacher or someone unfamiliar with the child undertakes a care routine, no matter how sensitive and respectful the care is, the baby can be uncomfortable with the experience, and replace the feelings of delight with anxiety and distress. If a key or primary care teacher is not available there is an increased risk that intersubjective attunement may not have the opportunity to develop to its full potential. Inconsistent care



by multiple adults interferes with the ability of the infant/toddler to experience consistent, sensitive and responsive interactions thus impacting on their communication development (Stephen et al., 2003). Having a primary/key teacher is about the teachers adapting to the needs of the child, not the child having to adapt to the centre. As children develop these deep and meaningful attachment-type relationships, they become better positioned to develop the confidence to explore more freely and to build other relationships with additional teachers in their environment (Theilheimer, 2006). These points are valuable to consider when the amount of teacher inconsistency, as noted in both phases of this current research, indicates a concerning amount of changes for the children across anyone day.

These key relationships have also been proven to be helpful for the families/whānau as indicated by Dalli and Kibble (2012). However, comments from the case study centres display a level of confusion among participants and show an implicit misunderstanding of primary care/key teacher systems, and lack of understanding of the role of such programming in promoting the child's positive sense of self and resilience. It was of interest that all the families/whānau were desperate for someone to really love their child as they do or nearly as much as they do, yet few of the families/whānau saw the importance of a key or primary carer for their child.

This study suggests that a focus on everyone knowing all the children may be limiting the opportunities for intersubjective attunement to occur. White (2009) describes the idea of teachers "lingering lovingly" with the infants and toddlers so they can feel appreciated as unique personalities. This ability to spend time with and connect lovingly to the infants and toddlers is seen as another aspect of intersubjective attunement. The close relationship between teacher and infant/toddler is described as "a relationship of attentiveness, responsiveness and thoughtful consideration between caregiver and cared-

for” (Brooker, 2010 p. 193). The present study suggests opportunities for such attunement maybe uncommon in Aotearoa New Zealand centres.

Indicating a level of confusion around relationship development, the case study teachers in two centres identified the need or the importance of having a specific teacher available for the child in the first few weeks to ensure that some type of relational connectedness (mostly to do with the child becoming settled into the centre) would occur. This support appeared to be short lived and was withdrawn when a child appeared to be settled. The other centre felt as they had a small number of teachers this connectedness would happen naturally. However, Lee (2006) suggests it is debatable whether teachers who are not specifically tuned in, or in-sync, with the children are able to pick up on their cues effectively enough to support the transition process. The above comments provide some consideration within the Aotearoa New Zealand context as several survey respondents also suggested they would not need a primary or key teacher system as they would all get to know the children well. However, it could be argued that without an intentionality of relationship development focus, no matter what the size of the centre is, children could still miss opportunities to be truly known by at least one teacher in their environment.

About half of the survey respondents indicated that they worked with some sort of key teacher/primary care system. Of the teachers who indicated that they worked in this way, about a third indicated that this would only be until the child was settled. In the comments’ section of the survey, respondents reported a preference for the children in their settings to have functional relationships with all the teachers. Elfer, et al. (2003) however, argue that unless teachers are clear about what attention should be given to infants’ and toddlers’ specific relational needs, there could be a risk that critical, deep and meaningful relationships may not occur. The system of having just anyone changing nappies, putting

the child to bed or feeding the child a bottle, tends to result in generalised care. While this generalised care may be sensitive and considered, without continuity and consistency of relationships the child's very subtle cues maybe missed or not fully understood. This shared team care may allow for flexibility of staffing and opportunities for staff rotation, but it is not closely attuned enough to fully meet the needs of a particular child (Bain & Barnett, 1980).

Survey respondents shared concerns around children becoming too attached to a specific teacher, which could impact on their transitions to the over two areas and could limit the child's ability to develop resilience. This concern around children not developing resilience was also expressed several times by the case study teachers. The concerns expressed seemed to be around children becoming too attached to a particular teacher, which would mean the child would be too dependent on this person and therefore, not resilient. One case study centre also reported on how letting the child cry and not picking children up too often would also allow for resilience to develop. However, teachers' perceptions in both phases are inconsistent with the research literature on how resilience develops. A key factor in the development of resilience lies in the child's ability to feel that he or she is special, unique and worthwhile. This positive sense of self comes about through positive affirmation from significant adults in the child's life (Rutter, 2006).

These comments appear to reveal some confusion around resilience, what it is and how it is fostered in young children. Considering all the research available, (e.g. Meltzoff et al., 2009; Shonkoff, 2010) around attachment, brain development and emotional safety, it is surprising that so many teachers responded in this way; this suggests an area of initial teacher education and/or professional learning that could be strengthened.

Understanding that when a child is hurt or frightened, sad or angry, that being comforted helps them feel as if they are not alone with these, at times overwhelming feelings is a key skill for teachers to have in order to support the child's development of

resilience (Rolfe, 2004). If a child feels loved, supported, secure and accepted they will learn healthy ways to comfort themselves and others, as they get older. Early childhood teachers can promote resilience through the development of secure relationships that provide the child with positive emotional, social and cognitive experiences. Teachers can also provide support to extended families or other important people in young children's lives (Rolfe, 2004). However, the type of secure relationships required to support the development of resilience requires a particular focus and intentional approach, with both the time and space being made available through thoughtful organisational practice.

Of note was case study families'/whānau general preference for their children to not have a key or primary teacher, with concerns their child may become too attached being the main issue. These concerns are paralleled in other works (Hegde & Cassidy, 2004; Dalli et al., 2009) where families/whānau reported feeling threatened by the relationship between their baby and their primary carer. Families/whānau were also worried about the impact this primary or key teacher relationship could have on their relationship with their child.

On-going, consistent stable relationships between teachers, children and families are key components to quality infant and toddler pedagogy (Dalli, et al., 2011). Elfer et al. (2003) explain the importance of the key-person approach:

We believe, however, that the evidence about the nature of human relationships and the longing to form individual attachments, particularly for very young children, is overwhelming. For us the arguments against individual attachments, to do with feelings and organisation, become challenges to be overcome rather than reasons not to develop the key person approach (p. 9).

From a families'/whānau perspective, based on interview transcripts, the organisational cultural impacts on centre choice were seen as structural, such as environment, proximity of the centre, play areas and if the centre provided food. The more interpersonal influences included wanting to have older teachers in their centres. Older

staff members were viewed as being better able to relate to the families/whānau about childcare and development, based on their (teachers') parenting and past teaching experiences. Family/whānau previous connections to the centre (such as having had an older sibling attend) were also highlighted as being a key draw card, as these pre-existing relationships could enable family/whānau transitions into the centre to be more easily managed.

Families/whānau were, on the whole, very happy with their choices and felt their children were well settled and enjoying their time at their centre. However, families/whānau often did not know who all the teachers were and in two cases did not know the name of the person their child preferred. Family/whānau priorities were supporting infants' and toddlers' social skills, such as sharing, turn-taking, and simply being happy. Having someone love and care for their child was the most important consideration for all the families/whānau. Page (2011) discusses the difficulty in defining the term love within the early childhood context. She proposes a need for teachers to consider the emotional need of the infants and toddlers in their care and argues for the implementation of "professional love" into teacher practice (p.320).

### ***Interpersonal plane sub question 2***

*In what ways do relationship development opportunities (between teacher, infant/toddler) differ between centres' organisational cultures?*

There were some differences in relationship development opportunities between the case study centres where one centre Miro, had a commitment to not develop any sort of attachment programme, believing children should not be picked up or fussed over unless they really were distressed, this practice was seen by the teachers to promote the child's independence and resilience. The philosophy and practices exhibited in Miro were not

evident in any of their centre documentation. The values and beliefs of the team leader were strongly emphasised in her interview, and also by the newly employed teacher.

The other two centres operated a much more hands-on approach and children were comforted and supported during times of upset. The practices in Totara were based on Magda Gerber's (1998) work of respectful interactions. These expectations of practice were highlighted in their documentation. The practices that Gerber promoted have become a standard feature in many early childhood centres in Aotearoa New Zealand (Christie, 2010). This was evident in the national survey where many teachers purported using these methods with their infants and toddlers. While it is beyond the scope of this study to report on how widely this approach is being implemented across the sector, it is an interesting issue for further investigation and critique in that teachers may not have interpreted the philosophies correctly and therefore the implementation of these philosophies into practice may well be incorrect.

Similarities of practices that influence attachment-type relationship development between survey and centre based observations and responses were seen relating to the use of rosters. Two case study centres reported not using a roster system, however on closer examination it was obvious that rosters were being implemented, but in an implicit way. These practices (such as the implicit roster use) are often unexplored or simply not seen by the teachers or organisations. MacNaughton (2005) and Radford (2015) both suggest that what is ignored is often rendered more powerful, as it remains unexamined and difficult to challenge. This unconscious, unrecognised use of roster systems could be seen as a hidden curriculum where children experience ways of being and learn the way things are done by observing and internalising the reality of what happens around them (Radford, 2015).

All the case study centres were seen at times to have a larger focus on tasks, which at times would limit the teacher's availability to the child physically and emotionally; this

was most evident in the Rimu centre at morning arrivals. A focus on task-based practice appeared to be a common factor across the survey, by implication, where eighty per cent of centres reported having roster systems. Survey respondents shared how their roster systems would order their daily, weekly or monthly practices. Bruce (2004) noted that where rosters exist within early childhood settings teachers spend more time doing household and domestic chores. Rosters pull people apart; they separate the relationships with the child from the teacher by way of forcing the teacher to focus on one at the expense of the other (Fleer & Link, 1999; Deans & Bary, 2008).

The commitment by the teachers for good outcomes for the children and families/whānau was evidenced across all phases of the research. However, these good intentions appeared to be constrained, mainly due to the impact that both the explicit and implicit practices, particularly in the use of rosters, had on teachers' work.

### ***Interpersonal plane sub question 3***

*How do centres' organisational cultures foster relationship development for infants and toddlers from different cultures and/or with different learning needs?*

The case study centres were only able to provide a very limited amount of data regarding families/whānau from different cultures and no information relating to children with different learning needs. This could be due in part to the structure of the interview and the questions that were asked, plus the ethnicity of the children selected.

In all the organisational documents from the centres there were statements about being committed to providing environments that respected children and families'/whānau individual needs. In one interview with a family/whānau member the participant shared her feelings around having a child in the centre that had English as his second language. While the family in this case were happy with the type of relationships being offered her child,

Kultti and Pramling Samuelsson (2014) argue that each child should have the opportunity to develop his or her first and second language within the preschool setting. The A'oga Fa'a Samoa COI explored the importance of enhancing the use of a child's home language to support their identity within the Centres programme through the use of a Key Teacher system. Podmore, et al. (2006) discovered that,

Children's heritage language (Samoan) was shown to be important for cognitive learning. The vision of the Samoan grandparents who had the idea of establishing the A'oga Fa'a Samoa centre, the language and cultural immersion policy at the centre, and international research findings on bilingualism, all support the importance of young children learning to communicate competently in their mother tongue or heritage language (p. 4).

Based on this snapshot from one centre it appeared, that for this centre, the organisational cultural practices for infants and toddlers from a different culture were no different from those practised with all other children in the centre.

### **Institutional plane**

The objective in this plane was to “identify national trends regarding teaching and learning for infants and toddlers in the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education sector”.

#### ***Institutional plane sub question 1***

*In what ways do infant and toddler centres' organisational cultures structure the teachers' day-to-day practice and time management?*

The study has shown that teachers' daily work is structured in a variety of ways. There are overt systems such as rosters and duty lists, which address staff hours, non-contact times and break times. Individual centres will construct these systems in ways that aim to meet their specific philosophies and beliefs. However, Whites (2009) doctoral study



showed how teachers who moved away from strict timetables or confining rosters allowed for the development of attuned interactions. Another sizeable impact on teachers' abilities to develop attachment-type relationships is the more implicit practices, such as deeply embedded practices that have become the norm.

Survey respondents reported on some tensions between teachers' beliefs and centre culture. Frustrations were more evident with the survey respondents around centre management and perceived lack of appreciation for the infant and toddler teachers' work. This of course could be to do with the anonymity of the survey process, whereas the case study staff may have felt more constrained in their discussions. Page and Elfer (2013) point out several problematic features in organisational cultures, such as arbitrary management decisions that fail to consider continuity and consistency for children and families. They also note that the view held of under-threes staff as inferior to that of the teachers of three- to four-year-olds. The findings from the present study confirm Page and Elfer's (2013) findings, with both the case study teachers and survey respondents citing concerns around how they are valued as teachers by other members of their own centre and the sector as a whole.

An example of how implicit practices can influence teacher practice was highlighted in the case study centre Rimu, in which the strong centre culture observed did not align with the initial teaching education programme the teachers had experienced (one teacher being a new graduate). It appeared as though the assimilation of teachers into the more implicit centre culture allowed for the development of practices that, while seen as appropriate within this centre's culture, would certainly not have been taught in the initial teacher education programme. The practices at this centre had quickly become embedded in the teachers' repertoire, appearing to have quickly overridden her very recent training. A conclusion can be drawn that even the best teacher education programmes can be

overridden by a strong centre culture, and/or strong teacher beliefs. Enacted centre norms, such as practices and behaviours portrayed, can indirectly become a requirement of a centre's organisational culture (Radford, 2015). The impact of organisational culture on new graduates is an important area for further research (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2006).

Other areas of organisational culture that could impact on the ability of teachers to develop attachment-type relationships were decisions around primary or key teacher implementation. Tensions were shown to exist around the implementation of this approach in both case studies and survey. Several teachers had felt constrained in their abilities to implement new practices because of the values and beliefs of senior or long-term staff. The implementation of the above systems appears to be avoided for a number of reasons: it makes staff rosters more difficult; the arrangement is seen as restrictive; and concerns exist about the development of relationships that are perceived as being 'exclusive'. There is also a discourse of 'well this is the way we have done things here for a long time the children are happy so why change'. However, as Larrivée (2000) argues, it is the responsibility of the teachers to continually challenge and critically reflect on their underlying beliefs that drive their practice.

These reasons for avoiding primary care or key teacher approaches fail to recognise that use of primary care/key teachers in early childhood centres does not mean that each child is involved solely with one adult. Each staff member remains committed to the care of all children (Bernhardt, 2000). An organisation of primary care/key teacher simply ensures that no child is unconsciously ignored or marginalized (McCaleb & Mikaere-Wallis, 2005). The implementation of a primary care system requires a team approach in order for all the teachers to be able to work harmoniously to support all children's needs (Dalli & Kibble, 2010). The implications of these findings are that organisational cultures,

both, explicit and implicit, can create barriers in the ways teachers can be available to the children and families/whānau with whom they work.

### ***Institutional plane sub question 2***

*Do infant and toddler centres have specific written programme/curriculum documents, and if so who wrote them?*

It appears that while some centres do have some policies and or curriculum documents for infants and toddlers, there were many centres that did not have a specific philosophy for working with infants and toddlers. Where survey respondents indicated they had a programme a large majority of these noted that it is the teaching team who designed these programmes, with the teaching teams also doing the majority of the reviews. However, there was evident confusion in response to this question with many respondents suggesting the question was not clear enough for them to understand what was being asked.

One case study centre had a philosophy that was for all of their centres, but they also had a philosophy statement for the infant and toddler area. This statement was followed up with a list of expectations for their baby room teachers. Elfer, et al. (2003) suggested that by teachers collaborating and writing a description of key responsibilities and expectations specifically for the infant and toddler teaching staff, supports consistency and continuity of practices. All three case study centres indicated that the philosophy or documents were originally written by the owner of the centre in conjunction at times with the teaching teams. The centres all shared that when things get challenged or ideas suggested the teaching teams do have some say in the on-going development of their documents. However, this development was under the direction or control of the centre owners.

## Summary

This study has added a unique perspective to the understanding of teacher attachment-type relationship development with infants and toddlers within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Rogoff's (2003) planes of analysis were used as a framework for the research design, analyses and presentation of results. The ability to foreground attachment-type relationship development across the three planes allowed for an in-depth exploration of the study's objectives. Data collection in the two distinct phases using mixed methods supported the triangulation of data, allowing for consideration of similarities and differences between sources.

This chapter has presented a summary of findings across the two phases of the current study responding to the three core research objectives that guided the study. The practices typically adopted by infant and toddler centres have been explored, and challenges identified. An infant and toddler teacher attachment-type relationship is positioned as being influenced personally, interpersonally and institutionally. The chapter has explored the findings from three case study centres and provided links with survey data. Common impacts on teacher attachment-type relationship development and availability to the infants and toddlers (physically and emotionally) have been identified.

Final analyses suggest that there are, in general, similarities in practices and organisational cultures, across both phases of the research, which could impede teachers' abilities to develop close attachment-type relationships with the infants, and toddlers with whom they work. There was a consensus across both study phases of the importance of infants and toddlers having access to all the teachers in their environments and to avoid the use of a primary or key teacher programme, except for the settling-in period and the compilation of children's profiles. This narrow focus of relationship development is concerning as there should be a plan in place to support the child to feel connected to their

teachers in order to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness into the childcare environment; a procedure that ensures the connections infants and toddlers seek from their teachers is readily available (Dolby, Hughes & Frazier, 2014). These articulated values and beliefs around limiting or controlling teacher-child contact to avoid ‘over attachment’ are in conflict with current research, which argues that it is in the emotional investment and the intentional and consistent relationship where children form attachments outside the home environment, (Howe, 1999; Elfer, 2007; Dolby, Hughes & Frazier, 2014).

Overall there appeared to be a lack of depth in the centre documentation, less than optimal teacher education for teachers on infant and toddler relational pedagogy (as identified by most participants in this study) and organisational systems (such as rosters and teacher rotations) that were less than ideal for the implementation of identified best practice. All these constructs impact on teacher availability to the infant, toddler and families/whānau. Teachers’ values and beliefs alongside the centre’s values and beliefs impact on teacher availability or opportunity for deep attachment-type relationship development. Teachers found it difficult to work consistently and with continuity alongside the infants and toddlers. This impacts on their practices meaning they are less likely to be in-tune and sensitive to the needs of the children (Ruprecht, 2010). It is in this in-tune practice where intersubjective attunement occurs; this enables the development of emotional regulation in the infant and toddler and supports the wiring up of the brain for learning (Turp, 2006). The inability of teachers to engage consistently and with continuity with the infants and toddlers impacts on their ability to develop a secure base in the childcare setting. In turn this lack of secure base impacts on the development of infant and toddler positive sense of self (internal working model) (Rolfe, 2004).

Our knowledge of infant and toddler practices within the Aotearoa New Zealand context is somewhat limited. We have ERO reports from 2009 – 2015, a few doctoral

research studies, several Centre of Innovation projects along with a small number of Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) projects. Hence the bulk of the literature used in this study is from international sources. However, as Hinde (1997) suggests regardless of where a person comes from, early relationships form the blueprint for future development, these early relationships show us the way to be with others, how to care for others and how to feel about ourselves. Relationships also show us how to be within our own culture.

The next chapter reports the key findings, arguments and implications for future practice. These implications for teaching practice, early childhood services, ITE programmes, on-going professional learning are explored and then suggestions for policy considerations are given. The contribution of the study to the understanding of attachment-type relationships and teacher availability to infants, toddlers and their families/whānau in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand is articulated. In addition, the strengths and weaknesses of the study are identified and suggestions for centre policy and practice, alongside national initiatives and future research are proposed.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusions**

There is consensus across the research literature that responsive relationships are a vital component to quality infant and toddler pedagogy (Elicker, Ruprecht, & Anderson, 2014; McMullen & Dixon, 2009; Ruprecht, 2010). Although attachment-type relationships are seen as a desirable feature of interactions between teachers, infants and toddlers, such interactions can also cause concern. Teachers suggested that it is better for the infants and toddlers to get to know all the teachers in the environment and hence seemed to refrain from using organisational structures such as key teachers or primary carers. Their argument being that by not using such programmes would more likely expose the children to as many teachers as possible in their environment. These concerns however have resulted in practices being identified in this study that potentially constrain or limit opportunities to implement attachment-type relationships or to address any of these concerns; as a consequence, there appears to be a tendency towards care that avoids close attachment-type relationships. Elliot (2007) states “when caregiving is a task to be done, rather than an engagement with individual babies in unique contexts, it robs babies of their individuality and caregivers of their agency (p. 127).

This chapter highlights the key findings, arguments and contributions of the present study. The implications of these findings for teaching practice, early childhood services, ITE programmes and on-going professional learning are explored and then suggestions for

policy considerations are given. Finally, the study's limitations are acknowledged and suggestions for future research offered.

### **Key findings**

In this section the key findings are discussed in relation to the overall research question, which aimed to explore the ways organisational cultures in infant and toddler settings in Aotearoa New Zealand affect the ability of teachers to develop attachment-type relationships and nurture attachment needs of infants and toddlers with whom they work. The intent of the current study was to reveal attachment-type relationships between infants/toddlers and their teachers, through observing practice and documenting the lived experiences of teachers and families/whānau. Key findings provide understanding of the influences that interact and shape experiences. The results across the two phases of the research support the contention that the lived experience of attachment type-relationship development between teachers, infants and toddlers is the outcome of the unique convergence of multiple personal, interpersonal and institutional variables. The following table (7.1) illustrates findings across the three planes.



Table 7.1

*Findings across the three planes*

<b>Personal Plane</b>	Teacher values and beliefs (Phase 1&2) Teacher knowledge (Phase 1&2) Teacher preparedness (Phase 1&2) Family/whānau needs (Phase 1)
<b>Interpersonal Plane</b>	Rotation of teachers across areas (Phase 1&2) Lack of continuity (Phase 1&2) Task based practice (Phase 1)
<b>Institutional Plane</b>	Misalignment between practice and centre documentation (Phase 1) Use of rosters and duties lists (Phase 1&2) Teachers start and finish times changing (Phase 1&2) Tension between management and teachers (Phase 2) Assimilation of teachers (Phase 1&2)

The study illuminates how teachers' values and beliefs can override earlier education and training. Teachers' feelings of being unprepared for their work with infants, toddlers and their families/whānau was highlighted, suggesting a lack of content and critical reflection regarding infant and toddler pedagogy in their ITE and on-going professional learning. The study also showed a level of confusion for families/whānau as they struggled to align their need for a loving caring teacher against their fear of over attachments occurring between the teacher and their child resulting in the child being upset and unable to cope if the teacher was away.

Teacher rotations were arguably an inhibitor to the development of attachment-type relationships. The amount of teacher rotations across the infant and toddler areas was concerning when considering the importance of continuity and consistency for infants and toddlers in group care settings. An area that was highlighted in the case studies was how teachers focusing on task-based practices would be unavailable to the infants, toddlers and families/whānau.

Case study teachers and centre documentation claimed to be using a particular approach (key teacher, no rosters) however it was apparent that these claims were not in line with observed practice. It was often historical or established traditions that were found to be a determining factor on practice. Rosters and duties lists were shown to be a barrier to effective relationship development opportunities. Tension between teachers and senior leaders or management was identified as being problematic when it came to introduce new or different approaches to current practices; this was highlighted particularly in phase two of the study. Teacher assimilation into centre organisations and cultures was also identified across both phases.

The findings revealed how the hidden curriculum, or the unwritten rules, influenced teachers' daily practice with infants and toddlers. The study findings imply there is a gap between personal practice, and desired practice for infants and toddlers in group care settings and shows evidence of a disconnection between theory, recent research, identified best practice and actual practice in situ.

All of these findings were identified as impacting on the ability of teachers to develop intersubjective attunement with the infants and toddlers with whom they work. This is concerning as it is within these relationships that infants and toddlers are enabled to develop their secure base and a positive, strong sense of self within the ECE setting. The final analyses suggest that there is, in general, shared agreement across the case study centres and the national survey about the issues and constraints that impede or enhance teachers' abilities to develop attachment-type relationships between the infants, toddlers and their families/whānau. The findings of this study support the contention that infant and toddler teaching is a complex undertaking. While many rich and meaningful practices discussed by participants are reported, there are equally many indications of the struggles that participants face in infant and toddler teaching. While it is strongly accepted that

positive attachment-type relationships are a key component in the development of best outcomes for infants and toddlers, it is clear that such outcomes only emerge when contributing influences align positively, and this appears to often happen more by chance than by explicit design, if at all. The data from the case studies and survey indicate that the reality for some infants, toddlers, families/whānau and teachers, experiencing recognised best quality practice is not always possible

One of the challenging outcomes of the study has been in understanding the extent to which teacher unavailability is deep-seated in the hidden curriculum of rosters and duty constraints. These rosters, duties, values and beliefs have on-going repercussions for all participants involved. Providing quality care for infants and toddlers is entirely tied to the development of living relationships, relationships that cannot be constrained by rosters, duty lists or tasks, “All learning takes place in the context of relationships and is critically affected by the quality of those relationships.” (Norman-Murch, 1999, p. 2)

### **Contribution of this study**

This study makes a number of contributions to the existing knowledge of infant and toddler teacher practice by articulating the practices that are typically being used in day-to-day practice within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. The impact of organisational culture on teachers’ abilities to develop attachment-type relationships with infants and toddlers was identified as an under-researched area, especially in relation to the specific context of attachment-type relationship development in early childhood centres in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Combining qualitative and quantitative methods allowed the two phases of the research to yield an extensive range of data that captured the perspectives of the teachers, families/whānau, organisations and the infants and toddlers themselves (by way of video

recording). This study also added a unique perspective to the understanding of attachment-type relationship development through the use of Rogoff's (2003) planes of analysis as a framework for the research design, analyses and presentation of results. The ability to foreground specific elements such as personal perspectives, along with the interpersonal and the institutional perspectives allowed for an in-depth understanding of all these complex factors to be considered.

A significant contribution of the study was an understanding of the way in which these multiple personal, interpersonal and institutional variables are at work in shaping the complex experience of infant and toddler teaching practice. Through the teacher and family/whānau interviews, the observations (video recording) in the case studies, and the national survey, it became apparent that teacher practices are shaped by the convergence of multiple variables. It is these variables that influence the experiences and resulting outcomes for all participants; the teachers, the infants and toddlers' and for their families'/whānau.

### **Strengths and limitations of the present study**

A strength of this study was in its mixed method design. Undertaking QUAL-quant research enabled trends identified through the qualitative research phase to be utilised into the quantitative data-generation method, thus enabling the verification, or not, of these trends across both research phases. This provided a depth to the research findings that may have been missed using only one method (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

There are several limitations to the study that should be noted. In the quantitative phase of the study it appears that, for some respondents' particular questions were not as clear as anticipated; there may have been some misinterpretations of these in the data. In particular the question relating to centres' written infant and toddler programmes. This

study also limited the potential sample to full childcare centres and did not include Te Kōhanga Reo, or home-based care programmes, which could have limited the representativeness of the sample.

While the impacts that a centre's organisational culture has on attachment-type relationship development between the teacher, infant or toddler, was the focus of this study, it became evident that it was difficult to clearly identify the attachment-type relationship development to the depth anticipated. This was in part due to the complexity of attachment relationships and the study's wider focus on organisational culture. Personal inexperience as a researcher was also a limitation at times in this study. The failure to take full field notes as part of the data generation was costly, as these notes would have given further depth to the resulting discussion. Inexperience in writing a survey also was apparent when analysing the data from these questions, where some ambiguity was noted, although the survey had been piloted and trialled.

### **Implications and future research**

The study proposes several implications for teacher and centre practices with infants and toddlers and their families/whānau in ECE settings. While the literature review clearly identifies the significance of attachment-type relationships between teachers, and infants and/or toddlers as high-quality practice with infants and toddlers, the findings of this study suggest that there exists in many settings, a dire lack of understanding and clear philosophical and theoretical underpinnings that would support such best practice; also lacking is a will to apply on-going critical reflection on practice and on outcomes for all participants.

### ***Implications for teaching practice***

For teachers of infants and toddlers, the findings suggest that a focus on developing understandings of their practice of building attachment-type relationships with intentionality and thoughtfulness, would add significantly to best practice outcomes for all participants in the centres. Teachers should critically reflect on their personal values and beliefs to better understand their practice; engaging in a wide range of on-going professional learning focused on infant and toddler pedagogy is suggested as a way to promote teachers' critical reflection on their practice. Working collaboratively with colleagues and their organisation, teachers could create programmes that focus on the development of attachment-type relationships.

### ***Implications for early childhood services***

For early childhood centres, the findings suggest that they develop and write/document attachment-type relationship-based approaches which could include primary/key teacher programmes. Centres require policy and practices that align with identified best practice to provide for infants' and toddlers' specific needs. Infant and toddler settings should provide opportunities for children to experience secure attachment-type relationships that are in tune with their individual emotional, social and cognitive needs. Flexible schedules that allow for teachers to follow the child and their rhythms rather than a roster or duties list are also seen as being vital to support the ability of teachers to create attachment-type relationships.

Organisational cultures that are safe and open to critique and change need to be established in ECS, to promote the on-going development of best practices. Structural processes that will assist in the availability of teachers to the infants, toddlers and family/whānau, such as removing rosters, or duty lists and staff rotations for beginning and

end of the day would be a key focus of a centre's organisation. Centres should work to reduce the amount of daily teacher rotation in the infant and toddler areas to create consistency and continuity for the infants and toddlers; also consider ECS setting structures that involve multiple transitions across rooms, each with new staffing, every year or so of the young child's life. Provision of professional learning support alongside a supervisory programme to support teachers as they engage in the highly complex practice of infant and toddler teaching should be a priority.

The recognised valuable attachment-type relationships or emotional closeness can only be facilitated if practical organisational arrangements and an emotionally aware environment for staff are developed hand in hand. Such an environment, requiring both time and skilled group facilitation, is necessary to allow for and to nurture the attachment-type relationships within a professional and accountable context. The development of a learning community where teachers are enabled to collaborate, create shared understandings, critically reflect on practice improve teaching skills and therefore improve the outcomes for the children, should be a consideration.

### ***Implications for ITE and ongoing professional learning***

The findings also recommend that initial teacher education and professional learning programmes require a focus on infant and toddler pedagogy and attachment-type relationship development. Teachers require specific and specialised initial teacher education and on-going specialised professional learning. Degree level specialised education along with on-going professional learning opportunities are recognised as contributing to quality practice for infants, toddlers and their families/whānau. Opportunities for specialised teacher education for working with infants and toddlers, and

programmes that ensure there are close links between theories and practice for infant and toddler teaching, should be provided.

### ***Implications for policy***

Finally, the findings suggest that policy makers should improve regulations to ensure ratios for infants and toddlers are 1:3 for under two-year-olds and reinstate the 100% qualified teacher requirements (particularly for infants and toddlers). Financial and professional support to ensure all infant and toddler teachers have the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of on-going professional learning opportunities should be provided.

In looking to the future, it seems important for centres to consider the structures they have in place that either enable or constrain the development of attachment-type relationships. However, it is much more than this; developing the organisational structural and cultural practices will only make a difference for infants and toddlers when the teachers themselves have adequate, as a minimum, initial teacher education and on-going professional learning that provides deep understandings around infant and toddler relational pedagogy.

The results of this study challenge individual teachers, centres, organisations and ITE providers to address issues of infant and toddler specific pedagogical practice. Future discussion must also confront the need for greater investment in the education and on-going support of infant and toddler teachers.

The speed with which the sector's knowledge has grown regarding the social and emotional needs of infants and toddlers in group care settings, and in particular brain development, does not appear to have been kept pace with by government initiatives, national policies and actual teaching practices in infant and toddler centres across the country.



### ***Suggestions for further research***

Since a large group of teachers of infants and toddlers identified as being influenced by Gerber, RIE and Pikler philosophies, recommendations for further research could include the impact of these influences on teaching practice in infant and toddler centres in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It would be of benefit to look more closely at beliefs, values, perspectives and meanings assigned to attachment-type relationships among more diverse family/whānau and teacher populations (ethnic, cultural, socio-economic); among varying levels of teachers' expertise; and between diverse settings such as Te Kōhanga Reo, Kindergartens and in-home care programmes.

Further research on the impact that rosters and organisational constructs have on the abilities of infants and toddlers to connect meaningfully with their teachers is another area that warrants further exploration. It would also be of benefit to explore how centres who do use primary or key teacher programmes, support their teachers in this extremely complex and emotionally demanding type of work.

### **Summary**

This study has provided greater understanding of the ways in which organisational structures both explicit and implicit, teachers' beliefs, and initial teacher education and on-going professional learning all contribute to attachment-type relationship development between the teacher, infant and/or toddler.

The study reveals that participants share some similar beliefs about the purpose and best practice for infant and toddler practice, with comments such as respectful care, following the child's lead and understanding development. However, there was evidence that these shared beliefs do not always translate into practice in certain cases. The findings

of this study confirm that the ability of teachers to be ‘rightly’ available to the infant and/or toddler is actually a messy and complex situation that is influenced by many variables.

There was marked agreement across the two phases about the challenges that are experienced when working in infant and toddler settings. These challenges revealed a perceived crisis for infant and toddler teachers, who indicate they struggle to enact identified best practices when working in ratios that are far too high. There were also identified tensions between teachers and owners/managers, with a perceived disparity of values between the parties being shared by many participants. Many participants in both case studies and survey strongly emphasised a lack of preparation for teaching infants and toddlers in their initial teacher education programmes and an on-going lack of professional learning available to them post qualification.

The opportunity for participants to share their stories was particularly valuable in showing that many infant and toddler teachers are aware of the importance of their work, but are struggling to enact best practice within a climate of organisational constraints, a lack of depth in their training (both initial teacher education and on-going professional learning), and with, at times, a conflict of values and beliefs between teachers, owners/managers or senior team members.

This study also affirms the need for consideration of the individual teacher in the attachment-type relationship development with the infant/toddler. Teachers’ work with infants, toddlers and their families/whānau is not simply a professional exercise: it is also deeply personal, with associated feelings and emotions, values and beliefs, not only for the teacher, but also for the children and their families/whānau. The reality is unless teachers have the skills or enabling organisational structures to support them in this highly complex work there will inevitably be frustrations, misunderstandings, inappropriate practice and less than optimal outcomes for the infants, toddlers and their families/whānau.

The outcome of teachers' ability to create attachment-type relationships is high-stakes for the infants and toddlers in particular, determining their emotional, social and cognitive safety and wellbeing. Fostering positive attachment-type relationships between teachers and infants and toddlers is of prime importance as these attachment-type relationships are the building blocks for future healthy development (Ebbeck, & Hoi Yin Bonnie Yim, 2009). These relationships provide the 'blueprint' for on-going relationship development, as it is in sensitive and sustained attachment-type relationships where children's social and emotional learning is constructed. On-going, consistent and stable attachment-type relationships between teachers, infants, toddlers and their families/whānau are enablers of quality pedagogy (Ruprecht, 2010; Degotardi & Pearson, 2014). The on-going increasing participation of infants and toddlers in group care settings in Aotearoa New Zealand makes this consideration of prime importance.

Quality pedagogy for infants and toddlers is the outcome of an all-inclusive, constantly evolving process. It is a result of an intentionality of purpose where all the members of the learning community are working together to create shared understandings to enhance positive outcomes for the infants, toddlers and their families/whānau (Dalli, et al., 2011). This quality result cannot be just the actions of one teacher but requires the weaving together of the individual, the teaching team, the structure or organisation of the centre; a shared and understood philosophy and the environmental conditions. It is this strong weave that lays the foundations of quality pedagogy for infants and toddlers. The findings from this current study indicate that organisational cultures do play a significant role in the development of meaningful attachment-type relationships between teachers, infants and toddlers. These can be structural and overt such as written and adhered to roster and staff rotation practices. They can also be implicit such as the unwritten deeply embedded values, beliefs and practices that prevail over time. This study shows that a

centre's organisational culture can be either disabling or enabling of secure and meaningful attachment type-relationships between the teacher and child.

In conclusion, a contribution is offered here to our understanding of the complexities of attachment-type relationship formation within infant and toddler settings in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Using a personal, interpersonal and institutional lens, insights have been provided into the barriers and enablers of attachment-type relationship formation for our youngest children in early childhood settings.

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## Appendices

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## APPENDIX A

### A. Survey Questions

#### Introduction

Kia Ora,

My name is Raewyne Bary and I am currently undertaking studies for the Degree of Doctor of Education through Massey University. As part of my studies I have completed three case studies in infant and toddler centres in Aotearoa New Zealand and I am now surveying infant and toddler centres Nation wide in order to validate my findings thus far. I would really appreciate your support in this process. My request is for someone in your infant and toddler teaching team to please complete the attached survey, it is a simple survey aimed to take up as little of your time as possible while still generating the required data. I envision this survey to take approximately 5 minutes. Thank you for your support.

Raewyne Bary

Important information about this study |

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).



## Personal information

### 1. What are your current roles in the centre?

- ☐ Owner/manager/director
- ☐ Team leader/supervisor
- ☐ Head teacher
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Part time teacher
- ☐ In training teacher
- ☐ Relief teacher

Other (please specify)

### 2. Do you hold an Early Childhood qualification?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### 3. Please select the highest qualification held.

- ☐ In Training
- ☐ Certificate in ECE
- ☐ Diploma of Teaching ECE
- ☐ Bachelors Degree ECE
- ☐ Graduate Diploma Teaching (ECE)
- ☐ Post Graduate Certificate ECE
- ☐ Post Graduate Diploma ECE
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ Ph.D/Ed.D
- ☐ N/A

Other (please specify)

### 4. If you do not have a qualification please indicate your level of experience

	Inexperienced	Somewhat experienced	Very experienced
Experience:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**5. How long have you been working in ECE?**

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10 years and longer

**6. How long have you been working with infants and toddlers?**

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1 - 2 years
- ☐ 2 - 5 years
- ☐ 5 - 10 years
- ☐ 10 - years and longer

**7. Do you think that infant and toddler teaching is a specialized field?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**8. Have you undertaken any professional learning specific to infants and toddlers?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**9. If yes please select from the following list.**

- ☐ The infant and toddler brain
- ☐ Infant and toddler attachment
- ☐ Infant and toddler physical development
- ☐ Infant and toddler emotional awareness
- ☐ Curriculum issues for infants and toddlers
- ☐ Infant and toddler positive guidance/guiding behavior
- ☐ Infant and toddler social competence
- ☐ Infants and toddler literacy
- ☐ Infant and toddler numeracy
- ☐ Freedom of movement
- ☐ RIE training/Gerbera
- ☐ Heuristic play
- ☐ Treasure baskets

Other (please specify)

**10. Are there any barriers to gaining Professional Learning for infants and toddlers?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**11. Please indicate what barriers you feel impact on accessing Professional Learning for infants and toddlers?**

- ☐ Availability of infant and toddler specific professional learning
- ☐ Financial cost
- ☐ Time
- ☐ Low priority
- ☐ No interest

Other (please specify)

**12. What professional learning would you be interested in attending?**

- ☐ The infant and toddler brain
- ☐ Infant and toddler attachment
- ☐ Infant and toddler physical development
- ☐ Infant and toddler emotional awareness
- ☐ Curriculum issues for infants and toddlers
- ☐ Infant and toddler positive guidance/guiding behavior
- ☐ Infant and toddler social competence
- ☐ Infants and toddler literacy
- ☐ Infant and toddler numeracy
- ☐ Freedom of movement
- ☐ RIE training/Gerbera
- ☐ Heuristic play
- ☐ Treasure baskets

Other (please specify)

## Your Centre structure

### 13. What type of service is your centre?

- ☐ Community based/not for profit
- ☐ Community based/for profit
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Corporate

Other (please specify)

### 14. Does your centre offer full day or sessional day care?

- ☐ Full day
- ☐ Sessional

### 15. Does your centre have a written programme for infants and toddlers?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Other (please specify)

### 16. Who designed the programme?

- ☐ Owner/manager/director
- ☐ Senior teachers
- ☐ Teaching team

Other (please specify)

### 17. Does your centre have specific policies and procedures for infants and toddlers?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Other (please specify)

### 18. Who reviews this programme?

- ☐ Owner/manager/director
- ☐ Teaching team
- ☐ Senior teachers

Other (please specify)

**19. Does your centre follow a specific philosophy for infants and toddlers?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**20. Is the infant and toddler programme influenced by any of the following?**

- ☐ Gerber/Pickler
- ☐ Reggio
- ☐ Freedom of movement
- ☐ Play based
- ☐ Child led
- ☐ Teacher led

Other (please specify)

## Organizational Structures

### 21. Do you have set hours of work?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Other (please specify)

### 22. Do your hours of work ever change?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### 23. For what reason would your hours of work change?

- ☐ Roster change
- ☐ Settling in a new child
- ☐ Support another teacher to settle in a new child
- ☐ Staff holidays
- ☐ Staff illness
- ☐ Fluctuation in roll numbers

Other (please specify)

### 24. Who or what determines how your day is structured?

- ☐ Owner/manager/director
- ☐ Roster
- ☐ Duty list
- ☐ The team
- ☐ Head teacher/ team leader
- ☐ Your self

Other (please specify)

### 25. Do you have flexiability in your daily structure?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**26. Choose the options that best describe the flexibility you have.**

- ☐ Spend as much time as you need with a child at drop off time
- ☐ Spend as much time as you need with families at drop off time
- ☐ Spend as much time as you need with a child at pick up time
- ☐ Spend as much time as you need with families at pick up time
- ☐ Be able to follow the child's interest without constraint
- ☐ Put children to bed when you feel necessary
- ☐ Feed children when you feel necessary
- ☐ Spend as much time as you need to settle an upset child

Other (please specify)

**27. What influences how you manage your time during the day?**

- ☐ Roster expectations
- ☐ Staff/child ratios
- ☐ Group size
- ☐ The culture of the Centre
- ☐ Hierarchy of leadership
- ☐ Your position/role in the centre

Other (please specify)

**28. Do you have responsibility for specific children in your centre? (i.e. are you a key teacher or primary caregiver), If you answer no please go to question 31.**

- ☐ yes
- ☐ No

**29. Please select the practices that you would mostly engage in with your primary or key children.**

- ☐ Nappy changes
- ☐ Bottle feeding
- ☐ Meal times
- ☐ Sleep routines
- ☐ Portfolio writing
- ☐ Notebook comments
- ☐ Dialogue with the child's family

Other (please specify)

**30. How long are you responsible for the above marked duties? When you have answered this please go to question 36.**

	Until the child is settled	One week	One month	Three months	One year or more
Resposniable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**31. If your answer was no is this because of your role in the center such as manager or team leader.**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**32. Do you have a list of general duties or rosters that you follow?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**33. If yes please select the duties that you would generally be undertaking.**

- ☐ Nappy changing
- ☐ Outside
- ☐ Inside
- ☐ Kitchen
- ☐ Bedroom
- ☐ Other roster duties

Other (please specify)

**34. Do these duties,(rosters) change or rotate?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**35. If yes how often?**

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Fortnightly
- ☐ Monthly

Other (please specify)

**36. What do you see to be the key issues (good, bad or otherwise) around infant and toddler care and education in your centre?**

**37. Do you have anything else you would like to add?**



## Thank-you

Many thanks for your time, and I look forward to reading your reply.

Nga mihi nui  
Raewyne Bary

## APPENDIX B

### B. ITERS-R Subscales and Items

---

<b>Space and Furnishings</b>	<b>Interaction</b>
Indoor space	Supervision of play and learning
Furniture for routine care and play	Peer interaction
Provision for relaxation and comfort	Staff-child interaction
Room arrangement	Discipline
Display for children	
<b>Personal Care Routines</b>	<b>Program Structure</b>
Greeting/departing	Schedule
Meals/snacks	Free play
Nap	Group play activities
Diapering/toileting	Provisions for children with disabilities
Health practices	
Safety practices	<b>Parents and Staff</b>
	Provisions for parents
	Provisions for personal needs of staff
	Provisions for professional needs of staff
<b>Listening and Talking</b>	Staff interaction and cooperation
Helping children understand language	Staff continuity
Helping children use language	Supervision and evaluation of staff
Using books	Opportunities for professional growth
<b>Activities</b>	
Fine motor	
Active physical play	
Art	
Music and movement	
Blocks	
Dramatic play	
Sand and water play	
Nature/science	
Use of TV, video and/or computer	
Promoting acceptance of diversity	

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## APPENDIX C

### C1. Interview schedule parent/whānau



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

#### Questions for family/whanau interview

Name:

- How long have you been at this centre?
- Why did you choose this centre?
- Do you feel that you know the staff well?
- Does your child have a preferred teacher?
- If so how do you tell?
- And are you happy with this?
- What would you say is the most important thing for your child in a child care setting?
- How can this be supported by the teachers of the centre?
- Does the centre have a specific programme for infants and toddlers?
- What information were you given prior to starting at this centre?
- How do you see your role in this child care centre?
- What do you expect from the teachers in the centre?
- Do you feel like you know enough about what happens for your child in this centre?

## C2. Interview schedule staff



### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

### Questions for the teacher interview

Name:

Centre address:

Position:

Please can you share your training and work history with me?

Prompts:

- Do you have any specific training in infant and toddler care and education?
- Have you ever undertaken any training around attachment and or relationship development?

Can you define your centre's organisational culture?

Prompts:

- Please describe how the centre is managed?
- Are there "unwritten" expectations here about what you should do?
- How do people interact, communicate, get on with each other?
- Who makes decisions here/ how?
- What are some of the things you need to do in order to get on well here?
- How do you feel about doing those things?

What is the philosophy of the centre? (Or what is the centre here for?)

Prompts:

- Who wrote the centre philosophy?
- Who makes sure the philosophy is followed?
- How did you know about it?
- If staff don't follow the philosophy what happens?
- Who reviews the philosophy

## APPENDIX D

### D 1. Letter to Child Care Centre and or Centre Corporation (requesting permission for research)



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### Management Committee/Institution Letter of invitation

---

Kia Ora my name is Raewyne Bary and I am involved in a research project to fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Education Programme at Massey University.

I am writing to ask permission to invite teachers and family/whanau from the ... centre to participate in this research.

The objective of this research will be to look at organisational cultures in infant and toddler settings in Aotearoa/ New Zealand, and seek to understand the affects of these organisational cultures on the ability of the teachers to develop relationships with infants, toddlers and their families. The research project will involve case studies in three separate centres. The case studies will be followed by a national survey across Aotearoa/New Zealand to further verify the findings.

The research project in the ... centre will involve case studies of two children, their families and members of the ... centre's infant and toddler teaching team. It is envisioned that each case study child will be observed on approximately five occasions over a period in the region of three weeks. It is anticipated that to meet the needs of this project time spent in discussion with families/whanau and teachers (except for the one interview) will be no greater than the usual daily contact.

Consent and information sheets will be given to all families/whanau and staff of the ... centre.

I have included with this letter an information sheet outlining in detail the research project and a consent form.

Thank for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Raewyne Bary

#### **Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

## D2. Management consent form



### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for Life:

Relationship development with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary Researcher

#### Management Consent form

I/we give permission for Raewyne Bary to approach teaching staff and families/whanau to invite them to participate in the research project.

I/we understand that persons are under no obligation to accept the invitation to participate in or be involved in the study, and that declining to participate in the study will not disadvantage anyone in any way.

- I/We have read the information sheet and have had details explained. Our questions have been answered to our satisfaction, and I/we understand that i/we may contact the researcher and supervisors to request clarification about any aspect of the project.
- I/We understand that family/whanau and staff of the centre may be video and audio taped during interactions with research participants at the centre.
- I/We understand that I/we may withdraw the centre or any information provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data collection without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I/We understand that the results of this project will be published in whole or part and that copies of publications will be lodged in libraries.

I/We agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson  
Child Care Centre

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

#### **Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

## APPENDIX E

### E 1. Letter to Child Care Centre and or Centre Corporation (requesting permission for research)



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### Management Committee Information Sheet

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Kia Ora - my name is Raewyne Bary and I would like to invite you to participate in my research project.

This research is to fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Education Programme at Massey University.

The aim of the research is to gather information about the centres organisational culture and the impact this has on infant and toddler teachers' abilities to form effective, meaningful and authentic relationships with the infants, toddlers and their families. The research project will involve case studies in three separate centres. The case studies will be followed by a national survey across Aotearoa/New Zealand to further verify the findings.

Staff and families/whanau will be invited to be participants in this research as members of the ... centre. The research project will involve case studies of two children, their families and members of the ... teaching team. It is envisioned that each case study child will be observed on approximately five occasions over a period in the region of three weeks.

Should the teachers and families agree to take part in this project, they will be asked to participate in one interview. This interview will be for a period of a maximum of two hours and will be held towards the end of the project, at a time that is convenient for both them and the researcher. The interview questions will be based on observations and short video clips which will provide prompts for the researcher and guide the questions.

With permission from the management committee and participants, for this project, the researcher will also use information from teachers and family/whanau gathered verbally, as part of interactions on days that observations are being collected or when children are being observed in the centre. Additional information will also be gathered by means of video and audio taping. This will include focus children interacting with other children, teachers and the environment. The children will not be involved in any different learning experiences than would be usual. The observations are designed to explore the effect that a centre's organisational culture has on teacher practices relating to relationship development between teacher, child and family. Individual experiences in which teachers, children and other adults will take part for the research will include:

- Interactions in all programme areas of the planned and emergent curriculum.
- Routines involving transitions (drop off and pick up times).
- Informal and formal discussions.



In addition information will be gathered from formal and informal professional dialogue. If a child or a teacher is not one of the focus case studies, they may be a secondary participant as they interact with any of the focus children or teachers participating in case studies in the centre. The observations are designed to explore the impact that a centres organisational culture has on the teacher's ability to create effective relationships with children and families.

Video footage will capture snippets of a focus child's day, particularly arrival and settling in and pick up times with the least amount of disruption to the programme. Any other teacher or child in the childcare setting will only be videotaped if they are interacting with the focus child in the course of the settling in or pick up process. If requested, the video footage will be made available for viewing at a time that is suitable and participants have the right to have specific sequences of their interactions deleted.

Video footage of activities and interactions in the centre between children, teachers and the environment will promote and support critical reflection of learning that will generate further data for understanding and developing the centre's organisational culture. With explicit permission video footage may be included during the dissemination of the research findings and in teaching resources that may be accessed both locally and nationally. Participants will have the opportunity to view material prior to publication.

Confidentiality of persons in any video tapes used in this study by the researcher will be maintained by ensuring that no names of any persons are used. Video footage in presentations or resources will only be used with explicit permission of the teachers and family/whanau. Visual images allow viewers to gain a deeper understanding of the centres organisational culture and of teacher practices by providing an overall picture of interactions between children, adults and the environment.

As the Aotearoa/ New Zealand early childhood sector is relatively small it may be possible that the Centre will be able to be identified. Pseudonyms will be used in thesis and any publications, personal information about teachers, children and their families/whanau will only be used with explicit permission.

With permission from the management committee the researcher would like to undertake, at the centre, the Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale Revised edition (ITERS-R). This instrument is a criterion referenced rating scale designed to assess child care programmes that provide programming for infants and toddlers between the ages of birth to 30 months. The use of the ITERS-R could be of benefit to the centre as this rating scale is designed to look at the many components of quality provision for infant and toddler centres. The results of this rating scale could possibly be used by your centre to support your internal review processes. The results of the ITERS-R will be made available to the centre.

The information gained will be analysed by the researcher, shared with the research supervisors of the project and reported in the Doctor of Education thesis. Findings may be shared with the early childhood sector during and after the course of the project.

At the conclusion of the project, the video tapes and data will be held in secure storage at Massey University for a period of five years. A summary of the project findings will be made available to you.

## Participants' rights:

Please be aware that you are under no obligation to accept the invitation to participate in or be involved in this project. You may decline to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. If you decide, however to participate, then you have the right at any time to:

- Ask any questions about any aspects of the study at any time during participation
- Provide information on the understanding that the Centre name or any other Centre information will not be used unless you give explicit permission to the researcher.



- The Centre may withdraw from the research project, or any information that has been provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data generation, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- Provide information to the researcher on the understanding that confidentiality will be maintained.
- Be provided with a written summary of the study.

At the conclusion of the project, the video tapes and data will be held in secure storage at Massey University for a period of five years.

**Project contacts:**

If you have any concerns or questions about this study please direct them to the researcher or supervisors.

Researcher	Supervisor	Supervisor
Raewyne Bary	Assoc Prof Claire McLachlan	Dr Alison Arrow
Manager	School of Arts, Development and Health Education	School of Educational Studies
Hoiho & Tui Sections	College of Education	College of Education
Massey Child Care Centre	Massey University	Massey University
Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North	Palmerston North	Palmerston North
phone   06 356 9099 x 2354	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8957	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8609
email   raewyne.bary@masseychildcare.ac.nz	Email   c.j.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz	Email   a.w.arrow@massey.ac.nz

**Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

## E2. Staff information sheet



### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### Information Sheet – Staff

Kia Ora my name is Raewyne Bary and I would like to invite you to participate in my research project.

The management committee of your Centre has volunteered to take part in this study and has given the researcher approval to approach families/whanau and staff.

Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate.

#### What is the aim of the Project?

This research is to fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Education Programme at Massey University.

The aim of the research is to gather information about the centres organisational culture and the impact this has on infant and toddler teachers' abilities to form effective, meaningful and authentic relationships with the infants, toddlers and their families. The research project will involve two case studies in three separate centres. The case studies will be followed by a national survey across Aotearoa/New Zealand to further verify the findings.

This project at your Centre will involve case studies of two children, their families and all the members of the your Centre's teaching team. It is envisioned that each case study child will be observed on about five occasions over a period of approximately three weeks. It is anticipated that to meet the needs of this project time spent in discussion with families/whanau (except for the one interview) will be no greater than the usual daily contact. Consent and information sheets will be given to all families/whanau and staff of your Centre.

You will be invited to be a participant in this research as a member of your Centre's teaching team. Two children from your centre will be chosen to be involved alongside all the teachers. Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to participate in one interview. This interview will be for a period of a maximum of two hours and will be held towards the end of the project, at a time that is convenient for both you and the researcher. The interview questions will be based on observations and edited video footage which will provide prompts for the researcher and guide the questions.

With your permission, for this project, the researcher will use information gathered by means of observations, video and audio taping. This will include teachers interacting with children, other teachers and the environment. The observations are designed to explore the effect that a centre's organisational culture has on teacher practices relating to relationship development between teacher, child and family. Individual experiences in which teachers, children and other adults will take part for the research will include:

- Interactions in all programme areas of the planned and emergent curriculum.
- Routines involving transitions - drop off and pick up times.
- Informal and formal discussions.

The children and teachers will not be involved in any different learning activities than would be usual. However all teachers will have the additional time requirement of the interview.

Video footage will capture snippets of the teachers' day focusing on the children's arrival, settling in, and pickup times with the least amount of disruption to the programme. At your request the video footage will be made available for your viewing at a time that is suitable, and you have the right to have specific sequences of your interactions deleted.

Video footage of activities and interactions in the centre between children, teachers and the environment will promote and support critical reflection of learning that will generate further data for understanding and developing the centre's organisational culture. With your explicit permission video footage may be included during the dissemination of the research findings and in teaching resources that may be accessed both locally and nationally. You will have the opportunity to view material prior to publication.

Confidentiality of persons in any video tapes used in this study by the researcher will be maintained by ensuring that no names of any persons are used. Video footage in presentations or resources will only be used with explicit permission of the teacher and family/whanau. Visual images allow viewers to gain a deeper understanding of the centres organisational culture and of teacher practices, by providing an overall picture of interactions between children, adults and the environment. At your request the footage will be made available for your viewing prior to presentations and you have the right to have specific sequences of you or your interactions deleted.

As the Aotearoa/ New Zealand early childhood sector is relatively small it may be possible that the Centre will be able to be identified. Pseudonyms will be used in thesis and any publications, personal information about teachers, children and their families/whanau will only be used with explicit permission.

The information gained will be analysed by the researcher, shared with the research supervisors of the project and reported in the Doctor of Education thesis. Findings may be shared with the early childhood sector during and after the course of the project.

### Participants' rights:

Please be aware that you are under no obligation to accept the invitation to participate in or be involved in this project. You may decline to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. If you decide, however to participate, then you have the right at any time to:

- Ask any questions about any aspects of the study at any time during participation
- Provide information on the understanding that your name or any other personal information will not be used unless you give explicit permission to the researcher.
- Withdraw myself, or any information that I have provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data generation, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- Decline to answer any question.
- Clarify any of the transcripts made from the interviews and from the audio tapes.
- Ask the researcher to refrain from videotaping or audio taping you if you become uncomfortable or for any reason.
- Provide information to the researcher on the understanding that confidentiality will be maintained.
- Be provided with a written summary of the study.

At the conclusion of the project, the video tapes and data will be held in secure storage at Massey University for a period of five years.

Thank for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

**Project contacts:**

If you have any concerns or questions about this study please direct them to the researcher or Supervisors.

Researcher	Supervisor	Supervisor
Raewyne Bary	Assoc Prof Claire McLachlan	Dr Alison Arrow
Manager	School of Arts, Development and Health Education	School of Educational Studies
Hoiho Section & Tui Sections	College of Education	College of Education
Massey Child Care Centre	Massey University	Massey University
Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North	Palmerston North	Palmerston North
phone   06 356 9099 x 2354	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8957	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8609
email   raewyne.bary@masseychildcare.ac.nz	Email   c.j.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz	Email   a.w.arrow@massey.ac.nz

This research is guided by the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 and will adhere to all relevant Acts.

***Important information about this study |***

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*



### E3. Parent/whānau information sheet – non case study



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for Life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood setting

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### Information Sheet – Parent / Whanau Secondary participant

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Kia Ora - my name is Raewyne Bary and I would like to invite you to participate in my research project.

The management committee of your Centre has volunteered to take part in this study and has given the researcher approval to approach families/whanau and staff.

Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate.

#### What is the aim of the Project?

This research is to fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Education Programme at Massey University.

The aim of the research is to gather information about the centres organisational culture and the impact this has on infant and toddler teachers' abilities to form effective, meaningful and authentic relationships with the infants, toddlers and their families. The research project will involve case studies in three separate centres. The case studies will be followed by a national survey across Aotearoa/New Zealand to further verify the findings.

The research project with your centre will involve case studies of two children, and all members of the Centre's infant and toddler teaching team (selection of case study children will be based on date of enrolment). It is envisioned that each case study child will be observed on approximately five occasions over a period in the region of three weeks. It is anticipated that to meet the needs of this project time spent in discussion with families/whanau will be no greater than the usual daily contact. Consent and information sheets will be given to all families/whanau and staff of the your Centre.

With your permission, for this project, the researcher will use information from family/whanau gathered verbally as part of interactions on days that observations are being collected or when children are being observed in the centre. Additional information will also be gathered by means of video and audio taping. This will include focus children interacting with other children, teachers and the environment. The children will not be involved in any different learning experiences than would be usual. The observations are designed to explore the effect that a centre's organisational culture has on teacher practices relating to relationship development between teacher, child and family. Individual experiences in which teachers, children and other adults will take part for the research will include:

- Interactions in all programme areas of the planned and emergent curriculum.
- Routines involving transitions (including drop off and pick up times).
- Informal and formal discussions.

You will be invited to be a participant in this research as a member of the Centre. Two children from the Centre will be chosen to be involved alongside all teachers. As you and your

child are not in one of the focus groups you may, however, be a secondary participant as either you or your child interact with the focus children and teachers participating in case studies in your Centre. The observations are designed to explore the impact that a centres organisational culture has on the teacher's ability to create effective relationships with children and families.

Video footage will capture snippets of a focus child's arrival and settling in and then pick up times, with the least amount of disruption to the programme. Any other teacher or child in the childcare setting will only be videotaped if they are interacting with the focus child in the course of the settling in and pick up times. At your request the video footage will be made available for your viewing at a time that is suitable and you have the right to have specific sequences of you and/or your child's interactions deleted.

Video footage of activities and interactions in the centre between children, teachers and the environment will promote and support critical reflection of learning that will generate further data for understanding and developing the centre's organisational culture. With your explicit permission video footage may be included during the dissemination of the research findings and in teaching resources that may be accessed both locally and nationally. You will have the opportunity to view material prior to publication.

Confidentiality of persons in any video tapes used in this study by the researcher will be maintained by ensuring that no names of any persons are used. Video footage in presentations or resources will only be used with explicit permission of the family/whanau. Visual images allow viewers to gain a deeper understanding of the centres organisational culture and of teacher practices by providing an overall picture of interactions between children, adults and the environment. At your request the footage will be made available for your viewing prior to presentations and you have the right to have specific sequences of you or your child's interactions deleted.

As the Aotearoa/ New Zealand early childhood sector is relatively small it may be possible that the Centre will be able to be identified as a result. Pseudonyms will be used in thesis and any publications, personal information about children and their families/whanau will only be used with explicit permission.

The information gained will be analysed by the researcher, shared with the research supervisors of the project and reported in the Doctor of Education thesis. Findings may be shared with the early childhood sector during and after the course of the project.

## Participants' rights:

Please be aware that you are under no obligation to accept the invitation to participate in or be involved in this project. You may decline to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. If you decide, however to participate, then you have the right at any time to:

- Ask any questions about any aspects of the study.
- Provide information on the understanding that your name, or your child's name or any other personal information will not be used unless you give explicit permission to the researcher.
- Withdraw my child or myself, or any information that we have provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data generation, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- Decline to answer any question.
- Ask the researcher to refrain from videotaping you or your child if you become uncomfortable or for any reason.
- Provide information to the researcher on the understanding that confidentiality will be maintained.
- Be provided with a written summary of the study.

At the conclusion of the project, the video tapes and data will be held in secure storage at Massey University for a period of five years.

### Project contacts:

If you have any concerns or questions about this study please direct them to the researcher or supervisors.

Researcher	Supervisor	Supervisor
Raewyne Bary	Assoc Prof Claire McLachlan	Dr Alison Arrow
Manager	School of Arts, Development and Health Education	School of Educational Studies
Hoiho Section & Tui Sections	College of Education	College of Education
Massey Child Care Centre	Massey University	Massey University
Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North	Palmerston North	Palmerston North
phone   06 356 9099 x 2354	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8957	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8609
Email raewyne.bary@masseychildcare.ac.nz	Email   c.j.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz	Email   a.w.arrow@massey.ac.nz

#### **Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.



## E4. Parent /whānau information sheet – case study



### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for Life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood setting

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### Information Sheet – Parent / Whanau Case Study

Kia Ora - my name is Raewyne Bary and I would like to invite you to participate in my research project.

The management committee of your Centre has volunteered to take part in this study and has given the researcher approval to approach families/whanau and staff.

Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate.

#### What is the aim of the Project?

This research is to fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Education Programme at Massey University.

The aim of the research is to gather information about the centres organisational culture and the impact this has on infant and toddler teachers' abilities to form effective, meaningful and authentic relationships with the infants, toddlers and their families. The research project will involve case studies in three separate centres. The case studies will be followed by a national survey across Aotearoa/New Zealand to further verify the findings.

The research project with your centre will involve case studies of two children, and all members of the Centre's infant and toddler teaching team (selection of case study children will be based on date of enrolment). It is envisioned that each case study child will be observed on about five occasions over a period of approximately three weeks. It is anticipated that to meet the needs of this project time spent in discussion with families/whanau will be no greater than the usual daily contact. Consent and information sheets will be given to all families/whanau and staff of your Centre.

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to participate in one interview. This interview will be for a period of a maximum of two hours and will be held towards the end of the project, at a time that is convenient for both you and the researcher. The interview questions will be based on observations and short video clips which will provide prompts for the researcher and guide the questions.

With your permission, for this project, the researcher will use information from family/whanau gathered verbally as part of interactions on days that observations are being collected or when children are being observed in the centre. Additional information will also be gathered by means of video and audio taping. This will include focus children interacting with other children, teachers and the environment. The children will not be involved in any different learning experiences than would be usual. The observations are designed to explore the effect that a centre's organisational culture has on teacher practices relating to relationship development between teacher, child and family. Individual experiences in which teachers, children and other adults will take part for the research will include:



- Interactions in all programme areas of the planned and emergent curriculum.
- Routines involving transitions (including drop off and pick up times).
- Informal and formal discussions.

Video footage will capture snippets of a focus child's arrival and settling in and then pick up times, with the least amount of disruption to the programme. Any other teacher or child in the childcare setting will only be videotaped if they are interacting with the focus child in the course of the settling in and pick up times. At your request the video footage will be made available for your viewing at a time that is suitable and you have the right to have specific sequences of you and/or your child's interactions deleted.

Video footage of activities and interactions in the centre between children, teachers and the environment will promote and support critical reflection of learning that will generate further data for understanding and developing the centre's organisational culture. With explicit permission video footage may be included during the dissemination of the research findings and in teaching resources that may be accessed both locally and nationally. You will have the opportunity to view material prior to publication.

Confidentiality of persons in any video tapes used in this study by the researcher will be maintained by ensuring that no names of any persons are used. Video footage in presentations or resources will only be used with explicit permission of the family/whanau. Visual images allow viewers to gain a deeper understanding of the centres organisational culture and of teacher practices by providing an overall picture of interactions between children, adults and the environment. At your request the footage will be made available for your viewing prior to presentations and you have the right to have specific sequences of you or your child's interactions deleted.

As the Aotearoa/ New Zealand early childhood sector is relatively small it may be possible that the Centre will be able to be identified. Pseudonyms will be used in thesis and any publications, personal information about children and their families/whanau will only be used with explicit permission.

The information gained will be analysed by the researcher, shared with the research supervisors of the project and reported in the Doctor of Education thesis. Findings may be shared with the early childhood sector during and after the course of the project.

### Participants' rights:

Please be aware that you are under no obligation to accept the invitation to participate in or be involved in this project. You may decline to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. If you decide, however to participate, then you have the right at any time to:

- Ask any questions about any aspects of the study.
- Provide information on the understanding that your name, or your child's name or any other personal information will not be used unless you give explicit permission to the researcher.
- Withdraw my child or myself, or any information that we have provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data generation, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- Decline to answer any question.
- Clarify any of the transcripts made from the interviews and from the audio tapes.
- Ask the researcher to stop the audio recording at any stage of the interview for any reason.

- Ask the researcher to refrain from videotaping you or your child if you become uncomfortable or for any reason.
- Provide information to the researcher on the understanding that confidentiality will be maintained.
- Be provided with a written summary of the study.

At the conclusion of the project, the video tapes and data will be held in secure storage at Massey University for a period of five years.

## Project contacts:

If you have any concerns or questions about this study please direct them to the researcher or supervisors.

Researcher	Supervisor	Supervisor
Raewyne Bary	Assoc Prof Claire McLachlan	Dr Alison Arrow
Manager	School of Arts, Development and Health Education	School of Educational Studies
Hoiho Section	College of Education	College of Education
Massey Child Care Centre	Massey University	Massey University
Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222	Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North	Palmerston North	Palmerston North
phone   06 356 9099 x 2354	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8957	Phone  06 356 9099 x 8609
Email raewyne.bary@masseychildcare.ac.nz	Email   c.j.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz	Email   a.w.arrow@massey.ac.nz

### **Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

## APPENDIX F

### F1. Staff consent form



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for Life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary: Researcher

#### Staff Research Consent Form

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- I have read the information sheet and have had details explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may contact the researcher and supervisors to request clarification about any aspect of the project.
  - I understand that I may be video and audio taped during interactions with research participants at the centre.
  - I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data collection without being disadvantaged in any way.
  - I understand that I have the right to ask the researcher to refrain from video and audio taping me at any time during the interview and observations.
  - I understand that the results of this project will be published in whole or part and that copies of publications will be lodged in libraries.
1. **I consent/do not consent** to my interactions with children and other staff members being video or audio taped. I am aware that I have the right to review these observations and to listen/view the recordings.
  2. **I consent/do not consent** to the interview being audio taped
  3. **I consent/do not consent** to my professional dialogue with colleagues or the researcher being audio taped and for transcripts of the tapes to be used as research data. I am aware that I have the right to listen to these recordings. I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the discussions.
  4. **I consent/do not consent** for images and other data to be used for
    - Teaching resources and presentations yes / no
    - Conference proceedings and presentations yes / no
    - Publications and resources which may be developed for dissemination both locally and nationally. yes / no

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

***Important information about this study |***

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

## F2. Parent/whānau consent form – child non case study



### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### Parent/Guardian Research Consent Form Secondary participant

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- I have read the information sheet and have had details explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may contact the researcher and supervisors to request clarification about any aspect of the project.
  - I understand that the results of this project will be published in whole or part and that copies of publications will be lodged in libraries.
  - I understand that I may withdraw my child or myself, or any information that we have provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data generation, without being disadvantaged in any way.
  - I understand that I have the right to ask the researcher to refrain from videotaping my child or myself at any time during the observations.
  - I understand that I have the right to view any video footage taken of myself and/or my child prior to the footage being used in any dissemination.
1. **I consent/do not consent** to my child and myself being videoed as part of the research procedure.
  2. **I consent/do not consent** to my child being observed as part of the day to day activities in the centre (focusing on drop off and pick up times).
  3. **I consent/do not consent** for video images and other data to be used for
    - Teaching resources and presentations yes / no
    - Conference proceedings and presentations yes / no
    - Publications and resources which may be developed for dissemination both locally and nationally. yes / no

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Name	_____	Signature	_____	Date	_____
	Parent/Guardian				

Name	_____	Signature	_____	Date	_____
	Researcher				

***Important information about this study |***

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

A Whāriki for Life: Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings



### F3. Parent/whānau consent form – child case study



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### Parent/Guardian Research Consent Form Case Study Child

---

- I have read the information sheet and have had details explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may contact the researcher and supervisors to request clarification about any aspect of the project.
  - I understand that the results of this project will be published in whole or part and that copies of publications will be lodged in libraries.
  - I understand that I may withdraw my child or myself, or any information that we have provided for this project at any time up until the completion of data generation, without being disadvantaged in any way.
  - I understand that I have the right to ask the researcher to refrain from videotaping my child or myself at any time during the observations.
  - I understand that I have the right to view any video footage taken of myself and/or my child prior to the footage being used in any dissemination.
1. **I consent/do not consent** to my child and myself being videoed as part of the research procedure.
  2. **I consent/do not consent** to the interview being audio taped.
  3. **I consent/do not consent** to my child being observed as part of the day to day activities in the centre (focusing on drop off and pick up times).
  4. **I consent/do not consent** for images and other data to be used for
    - Teaching resources and presentations yes / no
    - Conference proceedings and presentations yes / no
    - Publications and resources which may be developed for dissemination both locally and nationally. yes / no

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Name	_____	Signature	_____	Date	_____
	Parent/Guardian				

Name	_____	Signature	_____	Date	_____
	Researcher				

***Important information about this study |***

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

A Whāriki for Life: Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings



## APPENDIX G

### G. Confidentiality agreement



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I ..... (Full Name - printed)

agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project .....

.....

..... (Title of Project).

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature:

Date:

#### *Important information about this study |*

***This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).***

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

## APPENDIX H

### H1. Authority for release of video footage parent/whānau



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF VIDEO FOOTAGE

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to view and amend the video footage taken of me.

I agree that the video footage reviewed by me may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

*Name* \_\_\_\_\_ *Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member

*Name* \_\_\_\_\_ *Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

**Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

## H2. Authority for release of video footage staff member



### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

## AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF VIDEO FOOTAGE

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to view and amend the video footage taken of me and/or my child.

I agree that the video footage reviewed by me may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/whanau

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

### **Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

## APPENDIX I

### I.1 Authority for release of tape transcripts parent/whānau



#### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/whanau

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

**Important information about this study |**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).*

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

## 12. Authority for release of tape transcripts staff member



### Doctor of Education Research Project

A Whāriki for life:

Weaving relationships with infants and toddlers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood settings

Raewyne Bary | Researcher

## AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

Important information about this study |

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).

Thank you for participating in this project. Your contributions are greatly valued and appreciated.

## APPENDIX J

### Email to perspective survey participants

Kia Ora,

My name is Raewyne Bary and I am currently undertaking studies for the Degree of Doctor of Education through Massey University. As part of my studies I have completed three case studies in infant and toddler centres in Aotearoa New Zealand and I am now surveying infant and toddler centres Nation wide in order to validate my findings thus far. I would really appreciate your support in this process. My request is for someone in your infant and toddler teaching team to please complete the attached survey, it is a simple survey aimed to take up as little of your time as possible while still generating the required data. This survey is anonymous and details of any centre will not be identified or reported on. I envision this survey to take approximately 5 minutes. If you have any queries about this survey please feel free to contact my supervisors:

Supervisor  
Assoc Prof Claire McLachlan  
School of Arts, Development and Health Education  
  
College of Education  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11 222  
Palmerston North  
Phone| 06 356 9099 x 8957  
Email | [c.j.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz](mailto:c.j.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz)

Supervisor  
Dr Alison Arrow  
School of Educational Studies  
  
College of Education  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11 222  
Palmerston North  
Phone| 06 356 9099 x 8609  
Email | [a.w.arrow@massey.ac.nz](mailto:a.w.arrow@massey.ac.nz)

The completion of this survey implies consent.  
Please click on the link to start the survey.

Thank you for your support.  
Raewyne Bary

Important information about this study |

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, Application 12/23. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern A, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8717, email [humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsoutha@massey.ac.nz).

