Communication between caregivers and children in an early learning center and children's self-esteem

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COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CAREGIVERS AND CHILDREN IN AN
EARLY LEARNING CENTER

AND

CHILDREN'S SELF-ESTEEM

by

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B.S., Montclair State College—Montclair, 1990

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
University of Montana
1993

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May 19, 1993
Date
This study explored the communication between caregivers and pre-schoolers. The caregiver participant population consisted of eleven student staff members (seven females and four males), one full-time female teacher and one female director. The participants ranged in age from nineteen to forty-two. Child participants consisted of fifteen girls and fourteen boys. The children ranged in age from three to five years.

Research questions sought to discover (1) how staff and children communicate with each other, (2) male/female staff variations when communicating with male/female children, and (3) whether communication by caregivers at the center appear to enhance or minimize the children's self-esteem.

Weick's (1985) soft technology of systematic observation and Denzin's (1973) bracketing methodologies were used to investigate communication between caregivers and children. Video and audiotaped observation was conducted and selectively transcribed. Two interviews and researcher experience were combined with transcriptions for triangulation purposes (Guba and Lincoln, 1975). Sorting the transcribed data revealed the following five communication themes: (1) child and staff centered actions (2) staff and child connecting behaviors (3) child and staff redirection behaviors (4) staff and child role orchestration and (5) self-esteem initiatives.

These findings indicated that caregivers and children used communication to: reveal their own perspectives or agendas; initiate and maintain their relationships through activity-communication; regain or change attention in conversations; carry out their assigned tasks or roles as a caregiver/teacher or child/student; and enhance children's self-esteem.

Regarding the issue of communication differences between staff and child gender, it was discovered that female children received more compliments from male staff. Female staff also paid more compliments to male children. Two types of compliments were present: possession compliments and ability compliments. Boys received more ability compliments than girls. Children also helped to set-up compliments through verbal attention remarks. Overall, it was observed that caregivers purposely attempted to enhance the children's self-esteem through communication.
Acknowledgments

The faculty, the students, the director, the teacher, the staff members, parents, children, and internal review board members at the University of Montana have all given me an enriching opportunity to research in a welcoming environment. Every sentence and utterance written in this thesis would not have been possible without their generous cooperation and assistance. Out of the many that made this major project possible, it is necessary to mention those who contributed their patience, skills, time and listening ears to my concerns.

First, it is important to note that my thesis committee members have been a significant part of my past year and one half of researching children and caregivers. First of all, my idea came into existence through the help of Sarah Mulligan. She had hired me at the childcare center where she was formerly the director. This is where my idea sprouted. She has been a wise mentor of child care issues and sparked this interest within me. She has given of her time generously to be a significant member of this project to its completion point.

Another member who has given inspiration to this thesis is Martha Einerson. She has continually demonstrated positive assurance that this project could be done.
when I first began it through her helpful and enthusiastic teaching methods. Her support has never dwindled and I appreciate it ever so much.

My committee advisor, Wes Shellen, has given his undaunted support of this project from the start. His continued assistance with editing the rough drafts and encouraging me every step of the way has been helpful. He's been patient and positive in moments where I had lost hope. His leadership skills have guided me to believe in my work more fully.

Steve Phillips, a teacher who gave me a chance through classes and the cooperative education experiences. Thanks for being helpful and empathetic. You are able to be sensitive to other's feelings and hopes. You've been another source of positiveness in my endeavors here at the university.

I have learned so much from all of you!

Special thanks go to Marcia Ronck and Kathy Decker for their assistance in making this project come to life. Your generosity, understanding, permission, and time have been priceless. Additionally, without the children's parents' unanimous consent and the IRB members' willingness to allow this project to become a reality, I would not be writing this. Thank you. Of course the staff members and children from the center need to be mentioned for their understanding and participation with the taping...
and filming.

Your welcoming attitudes will not be forgotten. You are all significant and genuine people. Keep caring for each other. Your cause is noble and left recognized.

Recognition also is given to my long distance family and friends who have been encouraging and close across the miles. My Mom and Dad have given me the inner strength to keep on going. My sister and brother have continued to be a part of my life and I consider myself lucky to have them as siblings. My long distance friends who have shown caring and love, Marie, Sal, Veronica, Debbie, Lisa, Lorraine, Hannah, and Joan, thanks for your warmth and optimism.

Lastly I want to mention a friend and family member who has been with me through every day of this major undertaking and has been my partner in many ways. He has consoled and coached me, been my 2 o'clock in the morning catalyst and companion, the unofficial computer printer fixer, my love, and soul mate, Michael. I could not have accomplished this terrific odyssey alone. Thank you for your endless support.
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VI. DISCUSSION

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Today, child care centers are the norm for American children. According to the Governor's State Child Care Advisory Council Plan for 1992, there are over 40,000 children in Montana who are cared for in out-of-home placements. It is predicted that by 1995, two-thirds of all preschoolers and four out of five school-aged children will have mothers in the work setting (S.O.S. America's Children Defense Fund, 1990). Still, today, no definitive needs assessment exists that defines the true demand for quality child services within the various forms of child care in Montana.

Why is it that there is no current state-wide plan that clearly states what is needed in determining the type and quality of child care centers for infants, toddlers, or preschoolers in Montana? From my own experience working in the child care setting, there were no mandated certification requirements for care giver training that needed to be met. Formal testing on child developmental and environmental issues that influence children was not part of my job requirement and not necessary to maintain my employment. My experience working with the children could have been enhanced, had this mandated testing been part of the
guidance in the form of verbal instruction at staff meetings as well as through reading the teaching manuals. The formal training had been partially fulfilled, yet partially non-existent, due to the new directorship at that center, as well as no state requirements yet in effect. Additionally, having all workers adopt the notion that a child care center is a place for fortifying the enrolled families' unity, rather than being thought of as a temporary family replacement service, would have truly been a significantly successful element. Above all, having this service to enhance a child's self-worth for those parents who are seeking competent care is advantageous for all.

**Statement of Purpose**

Belsky's (1980) call for study of what goes on within the child care setting qualitatively, still needs to be addressed:

So long as research efforts focus solely upon identifying the effects of day care, without concern for processes of influence, the information necessary for the redesign of programs for purposes of enhancing their positive effects will not be available to professionals working in the field of child care (Belsky, 1980, p. 87)
Belsky's (1980) "processes of influence" can be referred to as interaction processes. These interactions occur between adults and children who are enrolled in the care center. The interactionist viewpoint suggests that by three years old, children are able to systematically take one another's roles, manifest definitions of the self, create complex games, and manipulate adults into desired paths. Denzin's view, which incorporates the interactionist perspective of child development, suggests that ethnicity, religion, race, and age will not directly point out determined responses or developmental skills in childhood. Instead, it is the nature of the interactive experiences children are exposed to that molds their behavioral styles and abilities. Children, then, need to be taken seriously (Denzin, 1973).

Extrapolating the idea of Denzin's (1973) "interactive experiences" to the educational system, learning centers need to be constructed in a way that allow children to actively create and take part in their own learning experiences. The researcher would need to actively enter the child's world of behavior and thought. Experimental paradigms, fixed interview questions, and IQ tests that are standardized do not enter that world of a child (Denzin, 1973).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children also suggest in their position statement regarding four and five year old children that it is an inappropriate
practice to evaluate children only against a predetermined measure, such as a standardized group norm or adult standard of behavior. The NAEYC believes it is an unreal expectation to have children perform the same tasks and achieve the same narrowly defined, easily measured skills (NAEYC, 1982).

Further study of these interactive processes in child care centers can increase our understanding of the meaning behind typical child settings and experiences, and their potential impact for either improving or diminishing the children's future as well as their personality. Parents, professionals, and paraprofessionals need to learn means of increasing positive outcomes, and deflating the unfavorable effects, of an early learning center by honing their energy into the actual process of HOW caregivers interact with children (Honig & Wittmer 1984). This can be accomplished, in large part, by observing the communication process in those interactions, which is what this research begins to do.

Personal Experience Serving as an Impetus for the Issue

Originally, the motive for studying children and caregivers had been due to my own involvement as a program assistant with a child center in Missoula. The original intention was to arrange a field study within this child center and report on verbal and nonverbal communication between staff and children. However, a change in circum-
stances caused these plans to be abandoned. In methodological experimentation, realizing what needs to be accomplished is always a subjective valuation (Lindlof, 1992).

In this case, the "predicament in my own life world" (Lindlof, 1992, p. 27) led to the beginning of an organized inquiry of the types of interactions that can occur between caregivers and children. My dissatisfaction with the change in workplace philosophy, under the new directorship, led me to look elsewhere. I wanted to find others who were willing to understand the importance of self-esteem within children's lives as the primary concern; as opposed to having the center being a place of business. The search for a new site for my research ended at the University of Montana's child care center. This research will be discussed in greater detail under the methods section.

The literature on children and their caregivers, whether they be parents or employees within early childhood education, will be developed in the next section. Self-esteem and its definition will be discussed later in this review. The issues of parental discipline styles will then be encountered and its effects on children's self-worth. Finally, the review exposes studies involving various child care settings and the relationship of the care environment to the attending children's behavior.
Review of Literature

Children's Self-Esteem and Parents' Discipline Style

Self-esteem. Where does it begin in the life of a child? Some writers in the literature on self-esteem and self-image think it begins as early as when the infant is born (Phillips, & Bernstein, 1989). If this is the case, then an immense amount of opportunities exist during the course of one's lifetime to gain this necessary personal attribute.

Harry Stack Sullivan (1964) defined self-esteem as "interpersonal security" (p. 309). It is the inverse of anxiety. Sullivan's description of the self is an attribute that occurs between people. The self image seen in the metaphorical mirror has its foundation set through others' communication with the individual. Cooley's (1902) theory mentions one's self-conceptions are decided by reflections of ourselves in actual mirrors and "in imagination we perceive in another's mind (regarding) some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends and so on" (p. 152). Additionally, Cooley suggested that not all persons were equally effective in determining a person's "looking glass self." however that "the character and weight of that other in whose mind we see ourselves makes all the difference with our feeling" (p. 153).
To aid in understanding self-esteem more clearly, Wells and Marwell (1976) note that self-esteem concepts appear under an assortment of names. This potpourri of related names include terms such as self-love, self-confidence, self-respect, self-acceptance (or rejection), self-satisfaction, self-evaluation, self-appraisal, self-worth, sense of adequacy or personal efficacy, sense of competence, self-ideal congruence, ego or ego-strength, and Wylie's self-regard (1961). All of these terms define some foundational process of psychological functioning which can be described as either self-evaluation or self-affection, or as both (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

Self-esteem is the term most often used in giving explanations of observed phenomena. Even where other "self-regard constructs" are clearly operationalized and measured, the idea of self-esteem is used in describing the conceptual reasoning. Therefore, the self-esteem concept provides a common theme weaving through a diversity of approaches and styles (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Self-esteem holds on to two types of meaning: (1) it is the main idea to represent what Wylie calls "self-regard" (an all-inclusive label that is less theory bound and neutrally toned), and (2) a point of semantic and conceptual common ground between various viewpoints.

Conversely, self-esteem has particular uses within specific conceptual developments which are relative to...
these viewpoints. These two meanings appear to be separate from one another, yet they are used together by using "self-esteem" for both meanings. There are differing viewpoints which try to explain the same phenomena (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

Defining self-esteem simply is a difficult task due to the diversity and abstractness of the term. Aside from the need for a clear conceptual definition, it is also a word used in everyday language. The difficulty with this is that many conceptual viewpoints interchange the two types of definitions. Those involved in academia also retain some commonsensical notion of what self-esteem is, it almost seems unnecessary to include a definition of its nature and processes under which it works. Being that self-esteem is a hypothetical construct (formed by social scientists to conclude certain features of human behavior), it is unobservable (Wells & Marwell, 1976). According to the foregoing authors it would be a rather grave oversight, both for the demonstration of construct validity and for the development of further theory. However, since the purpose of this project is not to "measure" self-esteem, operationalizing the term is not necessary here.

Young children may not be able to make detailed verbal assessment about their self-worth. That is why interviewing children was not considered appropriate as a method in the present study. It must be stated that this
opinion of Wells and Marwell involving the inability of the children to consciously verbalize their self-worth is controversial. This ability of children to mentally construct and verbalize their self-worth, as sampled by those items designed to measure self-worth (ex. liking oneself as a person), is thought not to be "available to young children". The research shows that it is not until middle childhood (children between the ages of eight and twelve) that children can create meaningful and reliable judgements about self-worth, a finding that is consistent with the developmental literature on children's ability to form concepts (Harter, 1990).

It must be mentioned that self-esteem can sometimes be misunderstood as arrogance. A major difficulty with this kind of thinking that understands self-esteem to be inter- interchangeable with pride is that in an attempt to remove pride from oneself, one's children or anyone else who tries to be counselled or advised, one may also strip "self-confidence, self-worth and feelings of personal adequacy; and the debilitating effects of such an outcome have been well documented" (Buri, J.R., 1988).

Why is self-esteem so important? Simply put, having a positive self-image can enrich one's life since it makes us feel "lovable, valuable and worthy." (Phillips, 1989, p. 4). Individuals with great self-worth have the stamina to deal with life's hardships. "They are happy because they
are happy with themselves" (Phillips, 1989, p. 4).

What role does self-esteem play in the child's world? These feelings of self-worth have an impact on learning. A valued or a devalued opinion of one self through communication in relation to others' opinions of oneself in the surrounding environment will encompass the student experiencing their world a certain way. It is even thought by some educators that the way students see themselves and their abilities is the most important factor in achievement (Snyder, 1974). Phillips and Bernstein (1989) also agree that one's self-image is the heart of how a child learns, achieves, works, socializes and loves. Self-esteem can be considered a building block to one's self image or "self-picture".

Research has shown that persons with low self-esteem tend to be less creative and explorative (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965), to be less flexible (Boshier, 1969; Larsen & Schwendiman, 1969), to be less socially effective on the whole (Coopersmith, 1967), to be more prone to anxiety and neurotic behavior (Fitts, 1972; Harrow, et al., 1968; Wylie, 1961), to be more disposed to a variety of deviant behavior patterns, including dishonesty, delinquency, felonious behaviors, drug abuse, alcoholism, and homicides (Kaplan, 1982), to be less happy with one's belongings, friends, job, and life's circumstances (Scott & Stumpf, 1984), to be more prone to somatic symptoms
(Bachman, 1982), to be more likely to be suicidal (Braaten, 1962; Wilson, et al., 1971), to lose the gift of personal potential (Buri, 1988), to perform less effectively under stress (Schalon, 1968; Schraugher & Rosenberg, 1970), to be less employable (Reasoner, 1983) and to hold a greater social distance in interpersonal relationships (Fitzgerald, 1963).

Can one's self-esteem be affected by others? Last century, James (1890) stated that "(a) man's Social Self is the recognition which he gets from his mates," and "he has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares" (pp. 293-294). The image a child sees of themselves is contingent upon family members, caregivers and teachers that serve as the mirror through which a child sees themselves and then judges what they see (Maccoby, 1980). If the reflection noticed by the child is positive, the child will create a confident evaluation of themself. If the reflection is negative, the child will deduce that they are not highly valued. They are sensitive to the evaluations adults have of them and often adopt these as their own (Kostelnik, et al., 1988).

Can this abstract concept be taught? Sullivan (1953) stated that the self is built out of experience by ways of reflected appraisals. One's self-view is entirely a learned phenomenon. Sullivan believed that there were no
self-drives or potential selves. The "self-system" is characterized as a dynamism - "a relatively enduring pattern of energy transformations which recurrently characterize the organism in its duration as a living organism" (p. 103).

Following the development of this "self-system" throughout childhood, Sullivan saw the origin of the self-personification in a three part division of the child's experiences. He labeled them: "good me"; "bad me"; and "not-me". This division came about as an outcome of need-satisfaction or anxiety production (reinforcement) by the parents when the child acted in a certain way and noticed a parental response that was either one of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. From this process, the self-system grew as "an organization of educative experience called into being by the necessity to avoid or to minimize incidents of anxiety" (Sullivan, 1953, p. 165). It evolved into a process of evaluation which constitutes self-esteem (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

What kind of impact do parents have on their child's self-worth? The parental way of disciplining is a central component in the development of children's self-views. Dorr (1983) has noted that discipline may be looked at as serving certain particular functions. There is a triad of goals involving discipline. Initially, protecting the child from outside harm and the outcome of childish
impulsivity is considered. The next goal is to foster the psychological development of the child. A certain amount of order and routine is necessary for a child to gain the skills needed for academic achievement and success in the adult world. Children learn frustration tolerance by having to manage their desires and they build a moral structure by dealing with the consequences of their behaviors. Empathy is at times, taught through discipline. Lastly, discipline promotes efficient group functioning. Limits must often be placed on group activities to further, in an orderly fashion, on-task behavior (Dorr, 1983).

Could a certain type of parental disciplining style be harmful to children? The appropriate parenting style might have a significant effect on how children assess themselves. This could, in turn, have an impact on children and their abilities to deal with adult responsibilities (Elings, 1988). Children, who live with parents who use the authoritarian style are raised to feel that they cannot trust their own ability to reason or judge in (Brigg's, 1970). Inversely, Brigg's research shows children raised in an overly permissive environment are thought to have problems adjusting to the limits of the classroom and society.

How would certain styles of disciplining involve communication skills and self-esteem? This question is similar to the one asked by Applegate, Burke, Burleson, Delia and
Kline (1985): "How can the child's good intentions and need for self-esteem be acknowledged and affirmed if the child is to be reprimanded?" (p. 107).

Miller and Sperry (1968) state that language may have a "privileged role" in both parental socialization practices and the child's eventual acquisition of emotional meaning. Applegate, Burke, Burleson, Delia and Kline (1985) conclude that parent-child communication which deals with person-centered perspectives (communication elaborating on the emotions, motives, and intentions of those involved in situations), should assist in the psychological development of the child. In this circumstance, the child is implicitly made aware of the presence of subjective experience through reflection-enhancing communication. Illustrations of this type of parental communication are: "that name you called Billy really hurt his feelings and probably made him not want to ever play with you again: it's just like the time those big boys made fun of you and made you feel so bad: you made Billy feel just as bad, and you make me feel pretty ashamed of you" (p. 136). The degree to which reflection-enhancing communication expresses and promotes thinking about psychological status, and the organization, reasons, and outcomes of actions, then such communication can be expected to encourage social-cognitive development.

The authoritative-reciprocal parenting style, which is high in bidirectional communication, is defined as being
high on both the Accepting, Responsive and Child-Centered dimension and the Demanding and Controlling dimension (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Baumrind (1971) also states that the authoritative parent encourages verbal give and take, shares the reasoning behind her policy with the child and accepts the child's objections when the child does not desire to conform.

Bidirectional, or two-way communication involves parents and children conversing with each other as well as actively listening to each other. Kostelnik, Stein and Whiren (1988) note that adults pause long enough after making a comment or asking a question for children to reply, giving them time to collect their thoughts before responding. Adults display their attention through eye contact, smiling and nodding. They encourage children to further what they are saying by verbalizing such statements or queries as "tell me more about that" or "then what happened?". Such behaviors allow children to feel valued and interested.

Another possible way for bidirectional communication to flourish is for adults to converse respectfully with children. They hold off from interrupting children and give them the chance to finish what they are saying, either to the adult or another child. The voice tone used by adults is patient and amiable, and social pleasantries such as "please" and "thanks" are integrated into the verbal
exchange (Kostelnik, Stein & Whiren, 1988).

Conversely, the authoritarian parent, who uses power assertive techniques, is depicted as being high on the Rejecting, Unresponsive and Parent-Centered dimension, and the Demanding and Controlling dimension. Baumrind (1971) depicts the authoritarian parent as one who tries to mold, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in tune with a set standard of conduct. The parent does not encourage verbal exchanges, thinking that the child should accept the parental view for what is correct.

A research study done by Clayton (1985) involving the authoritarian dimension having an association with the belief in "the basic ideological polarity in Western thought" (Tomkins, 1965, p. 79): one's belief in the goodness or evilness of humans. Clayton (1985) researched parents' view on parenting and their outlook on the basic nature of human beings. Clayton revealed that those parents who scored highest on such authoritarian parenting variables such as: the importance of breaking the will of a child, irritability, the evasion of communication, and the control and dominance of the parent over the child held the belief in the basic badness of human beings. Clayton concluded that "parents who view others as basically immoral are relatively authoritarian in their child-rearing attitudes" (1985, p. 54). This implies a self-fulfilling prophesy of low self-esteem for those reared in the
authoritarian manner; since the belief in "goodness" and "badness" involves judging and possibly mistrusting others or oneself or both who are deemed as being "bad" if that label is placed upon the child by parents.

Adults who evade communication display a small amount or no interest in children's activities because they are in "a hurry, busy, engrossed in their own thoughts and endeavors, or tired...they walk by children without comment and fail to acknowledge their presence" (p. 29). Children interpret these behaviors as signals of apathy (Kostelnik, et al., 1988).

How can one characterize a child with low self-esteem? The children of authoritarian parents tend to lack social competence with peers, seem to withdraw, do not display initiative in social circumstances, and lack spontaneity. They show lesser evidence of moral structure and tend to have an external, rather than an internal, moral orientation. In boys, there is low motivation for intellectual performance. Studies also link authoritarian parenting with both low self-esteem and an external locus of control in children (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Buri, 1988). In Coopersmith's (1967) work involving boys in the fifth and sixth grade, authoritarian parenting was linked with low self-esteem in sons. Unfortunately no study involving girls was done then to determine any variations in the findings.
Loeb, Horst and Horton's (1980) research studied parents of fourth and fifth grade children with high versus low self-esteem. They found that a directive teaching style, where parents physically take over or give direct verbal orders/directions rather than use a style that left some liberty of choice to the children, was discovered more often in parents of low self-esteem children. Loeb and his colleagues stated that "high levels of parental authoritarian control will impart to children a sense that they are not trusted to undertake activities independently - that they are not considered competent" (Maccoby & Martin, 1983, p. 41).

What kinds of qualities do children with a high sense of self-worth possess? In contrast, Maccoby and Martin state that children involved in the authoritative-reciprocal style of parenting were noticed to be independent and "agentic" (i.e. manifesting self-assertion) in both the cognitive and social circles, socially amenable, able to manage aggression, self-confident, and high in self-esteem (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Buri, 1988).

Coopersmith (1967) revealed that parents of high self-esteem boys created higher standards for obedience and competence and consistently enforced these standards, compared to the parents of low esteem boys. Parents of the former group also involved themselves and their children in a "democratic" style of decision-making, which let the child-
ren question parental perspectives. Additionally, the boys of this group often felt that when punishment was given, it was fairly implemented. Maccoby and Martin (1983) suggested that "the weight of the evidence would appear to be that neither authoritarian control nor unalloyed freedom and permissiveness is the key to the development of high self-esteem in children" (p. 47).

Can control be considered a good thing? Pondering the meaning of "control", Maccoby and Martin (1983) presented a term that has a dual meaning. It appears that both the authoritative techniques, as described by Cooper-Smith, and the more restrictive authoritarian techniques could be recognized as control. There are grave differences, however. The authoritative control is firm control that has definite boundaries, but also has a degree of freedom and room for dialogue. This weaves the quality of warmth within control. The authoritarian method of control also has definite limits, however allows for insignificant amounts of freedom or room for dialogue. The child is anticipated to follow parental decisions and rules without inquiring about them. There is a lack of warmth involved with this control dimension (Elings, 1988, p. 11).

Conversely, permissiveness is sometimes depicted as the absence of control. Deciding what type of control is missing is necessary. Parents who engage in the indulgent-permissive pattern would seem to be associated
with higher self-esteem if control were to only be described as restrictions on the child's behavior (ie. authoritarian control). Maccoby and Martin noted studies that directly related restrictive, nonpermissive parenting to low self-esteem (Apolonio, 1975; Qadri & Kaleem, 1971). Another study, Baldwin et al. (1945), observed that children of restrictive parents were not only obedient and nonaggressive, but also "passive and colorless in their interactions" with their nursery school peers. The obedience was obtained at the expense of the children's spontaneity, creativity, and the more active aspects of social competence" (Maccoby & Martin, p. 44).

Yet, if control is broadened to include requests for autonomous behaviors (ie., authoritative or democratic control), more permissiveness might not necessarily be associated with higher self-esteem, as Baumrind's (1971) work concludes. She studied nursery-school children and concluded that permissive parents had children who seemed to lack social responsibility and independence. These are issues related to self esteem. A continuation of this study, involving these children at eight and nine years old, showed that they were low in cognitive and social areas.

How do adults handle their authority? In her study on parenting styles, Baumrind (1971) distinguished two types of authority. The first involved firm enforcement of
rules, and the latter type incorporated encouragement of independence and individuality. The second type was recognized by making age-appropriate demands of the children. (Emphasis needs to be placed on the developmental, as opposed to the chronological age). Baumrind's two types of authority became known as "control" (i.e., boundaries placed on the child's behavior) and "demandingness" (i.e., demands for age-appropriate behaviors or encouraging/pushing for autonomous behaviors) (Baumrind, 1971). Martin (1975) also made use of this research by integrating these parental behaviors stated above into his definition of restrictiveness.

The inverse of restrictiveness is the indifferent-uninvolved style which contains qualities of the Undemanding and Low In Control Attempts dimension (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Loeb et al. (1980) indicated in their study that involvement was correlated positively with the child's self-esteem. Therefore, parental neglect would, logically, foster low self-esteem in children.

Although the indifferent style and indulgent style exist, the studies involving preschool children neglected to make a distinction between the two styles. Because of this, the two styles will be contained within the heading of permissiveness. The authoritarian, authoritative and the permissive style will be discussed with regards to the following study involving Elrod & Crase's work (1980) and
Baumrind's study (1971).

In regards to *permissive* parenting, there was an overall lack of association with self-esteem. The only exception to this lack of association was found in Baumrind's (1971) study with *permissive* fathers and their daughters. When coupled with some degree of paternal rejection, there was an association with assertive and autonomous behavior in their daughters. This may go beyond socially accepted norms, and be seen as disruptive. The resulting effect on self-esteem is inconclusive, since no such result occurred with Elrod's and Crase's (1980) work. Additionally, the *authoritarian* style of parenting was never related to high self-esteem in either boys or girls in any of the research.

Could one type of disciplining style work for one gender and not the other regarding children? Attributes which were most typically thought to be related with the *authoritative* style of parenting were positively associated with self-esteem for girls in the Elrod and Crase study (1980). It was shown that when the mother's communication with the child is valued (including setting limits) and her teaching of empathy for others were both related to high self-esteem in girls. The Iowa Parent Behavior Inventory used by Elrod and Crase (1980) indicated that parental behaviors associated with high self esteem in girls included active interaction with the child, giving immediate
assistance to the child, and setting limits on the child. In addition the item, "help your child recognize another person's point of view," was positively related to self-esteem in the girls. Yet, some of the same qualities in fathers (such as paternal limit setting and giving immediate assistance to the son) was related to low self-esteem in boys. Baumrind (1971) discovered that authoritative parents had daughters who were more independent than the daughters of permissive or authoritarian groups. She stated that authoritative parents are likely to become the catalyst in the development of competence through responsible, independent behavior in their young children. Additionally, she proposed that authoritative parental behavior was clearly related with independent, purposive, dominant behavior in girls, but was only clearly related with the same behavior in boys when the parents were also nonconforming and authoritative (Baumrind, 1971).

Given the above data, it appears that the authoritative parenting style is the most desired parenting style for girls at this pre-school (3 to 5 years) age. In the study Elrod and Crase did, maternal behaviors were not related to their son's self-esteem. Yet, the paternal authoritative behavior was negatively associated to the self-esteem of their sons. Oddly however, boys were found to have higher self-esteem than girls overall.

These outcomes for pre-school children bring about the
possibility of important distinctions in the effects of parenting styles on girls and boys. For instance, in the future, when boys become men, there is a greater tendency for men to compliment women, rather than other men (Turner and Edgeley, 1974). It would be interesting to find out if this behavior was modeled by the mother's and father's influence and discipline style. Greater research needs to be conducted in order to gain certainty with these results.

The conclusion that young children do not express a sense of self-esteem must not be hastily made. Rather, it is Haltiwanger and Harter's (1988) recent research that supports the belief that young children "exude" a sense of overall self-esteem that has been displayed in certain behaviors within their repertoire. Even though young children are cognitively limited in verbalizing the concept of their self-worth due to results from self-reports, there are still means of observing the phenomenon of children's self-esteem as was noted in Baumrind's (1971) and Elrod and Crase's (1980) work with parents and children.

In my own work, we can begin to interpret a child's self-worth by observing the verbal and nonverbal behaviors between staff and children at a child care center. The various parental discipline styles have been explored and its relationship to self-esteem. The authoritarian, the indulgent and the indifferent parenting styles have been linked to a lack of high self-esteem.
Authoritarian parents and their moral view of others involving qualities of goodness and badness has been associated with low self-esteem. The authoritative-reciprocal parental style which encourages communication between adult and child appears to be favorable to the development of positive self-esteem. Communication involving the self would be a starting point for investigating the growth of a child's self-worth.

**Self-Esteem and Communication**

Can communication be used to change one's self-esteem? Noting Mead's (1934) thought, the process of responding to oneself as an object: self-conception (also referred to as self-image) is considered significant for the occurrence of "human-minded" behavior. This process is social, involving the mechanism of language (Wells & Marwell, 1977). Language is involved in behaviors that can incorporate self-esteem. Those who use language as a tool, can effect others' opinions of themselves. Mead (1934) and Sullivan (1953) stressed the significance of others' natural language (including gesture and paralanguage) in the advancement of children's self-concepts. Sullivan stressed the affective effects, particularly influences on self-evaluation, a main idea in all modern self-concept theories. Additionally, the presumption that laypersons' "personality theories" involve both the self and others are conceptualized in
terms of ordinary language (Livesley and Bromley, 1973; Bandura, 1981; Wylie, 1990).

In the classroom, teachers transport either enhancing or debilitating attitudes that frequently are created in what they say to children and how they state it. Teacher verbalizations are a main component in the extent to which children perceive themselves as valuable and competent or not (Kostelnik, et al., 1988). Participating adults in the early child care setting actualize the verbal environment. Its constituents include words and silence—how much caregivers say, what they say, how they talk, to whom they speak and how well they listen. "The way in which these components are played out dictates children's estimations of self-worth. Therefore, verbal environments can be described as either negative or positive" (Kostelnik, et al., 1988, p. 29). Thus, communication can alter one's self-esteem. The next area will deal with how communication and other qualities are part of the caregiver environment.

**Studies Involving Children in Care Settings**

Dr. Claire Etaugh (1984) stated that researchers have begun to examine how specific conditions of the child care setting affect children. She found these studies encouraging. Her opinion is a valid one, since recent
studies have been concerned on a variety of issues in child care from staff training to the type of verbal environment a child can be successful in. The issue of childrens' self-esteem also enhances the relevance of the quality of child care settings. This section deals with some of those studies involving the child care center attributes and how that influences the child.

For instance, The National Day Care Study researched a diverse group of licensed urban child care centers and found that for children under the age of three years, positive developmental results were linked with small group size, fewer children per caregiver, and caregiver training (Etaugh, 1984).

The significance of the caregiver-child ratio and caregiver training also was shown in the National Day Care Home Study (Fosberg, 1981), which looked at regulated and nonregulated urban family child care homes. These studies have found that quality child care include child care workers who are caring and responsive to children's needs and who provide intellectual and verbal stimulation (Fosberg, 1981). The staff who had child care training tended to display more teaching, language/information activity, music/dramatic play, and comforting. As the number of children in the home expanded, interactions of
all kinds between the staff workers and individual children decreased.

Studies of community based programs in New York City and Bermuda have reported that variations in the quality of care within a particular type of setting are more important than the type of setting itself. Clarke-Stewart (1982) found that, in the New York City Infant Day Care Study, within each type of care arrangement the quality of care was significantly related to children's social and intellectual competence. Clarke-Stewart then compared middle class two-to-four year olds, from a broad range of center and family care arrangements, with tots without child care experience. Children involved in the center experience scored consistently higher on measures of social, emotional and intellectual maturity than children in family child care, or at home with parents. Studies such as this one are basically descriptive. They can only suggest, not ratify, causal direction (Clarke-Stewart, 1984, p. 99). The limits of both family situations and child care quality have not been researched. Presently, the focus for my research is upon the child care center and its workings.

Keeping this in mind, Howes (1984) studied eighteen to twenty two month old tots and their caregivers in licensed child care homes and centers. She discovered that in both settings, caregivers who worked with fewer children, worked shorter hours, had fewer housework responsibilities, and
had more experience and training in child care and child development were those who provided more facilitative social stimulation, expressed more positive affect, were more responsive to the toddlers, and were less restrictive and less negative. Howes had not directly bridged the caregiver variables and child behavior. It seems that caregiver/child ratio and caregiver training among other factors were associated with a more favorable caregiving environment.

Research of child care effects in Bermuda (Schwarz, et al., 1981) similarly show that differences in the quality of child care environments have important effects on children's language, social, and emotional development. Interestingly Bermuda, which has a society like the United States in terms of social and economic conditions, has ninety percent of the children living there experiencing the regular child care center life by the age of two years. These child care environments vary along such dimensions as caregiver training, curriculum, child-caregiver interaction and so forth. A study of three to five year old Bermudian children in center care (McCartney, et al., 1982) found that children at the better quality centers, scored higher on measures of language development, intelligence, task orientation, sociability, and considerateness. These characteristics are all related to self-esteem indirectly, as noted earlier.
The NAEYC (1982) states that a major determinant of the quality of an early childhood program is the degree to which the program is developmentally appropriate. Their position statement describes both appropriate and inappropriate practices, such as teaching practices, within the early childhood programs. The NAEYC believes that the "correct way to teach young children (four and five year olds) is not to lecture or verbally instruct them" (p. 4). Rather, they prepare the environment so that it provides stimulating, challenging materials and activities for children. Examples of such activities to develop language and literacy involve listening to and reading stories and poems; taking field trips; dictating stories; participating in dramatic play and other experiences requiring communication: talking informally with other children and adults; and experimenting with writing by drawing, copying, and inventing their own spelling.

Aside from being developmentally appropriate, the child care center needs to have a verbal environment which is positive and mirrors a child's worth as being invaluable. Few child care professionals would purposefully behave in ways that damage children's self esteem. Yet, observations of early childhood settings, frequently display child care workers unintentionally using verbal patterns that propagate a negative verbal environment (Kostelnik, 1978; 1987).
Kostelnik, et al., (1988) illustrate a variety of acts that can contribute to a negative verbal environment: teachers paying superficial attention to what children have to say; adults speaking disrespectfully to children; teachers using judgmental vocabulary in describing children to themselves and others; staff members actively discouraging children from speaking with them; adults relying on giving orders and making demands as their primary means of communicating to children; adults asking rhetorical questions, so that no real answer is expected or wanted from the children; caregivers employing the children's names as synonyms for the words "no", "stop" or "don't"; teachers using unclear language such as "we need to put the puzzles in the puzzle rack," when they have no inclination to help out; or using childish language instead of relating on an equal status; or by using a diminutive form of a name ("Joey" instead of "Joe") when the child or parent prefers the other; and adults dominating the verbal interactions that occur everyday.

Regaining the idea of a positive verbal climate now, some ways in which this verbal environment is visible according to Kostelnik, et al., (1988) are: adults exhibiting warmth towards children and real interest in them by using language that reflects this positive way of behaving: greeting children when they get to the center; teachers emitting verbal and nonverbal messages that are in synchro-
nicity with each other: smiling at the child when giving praise or positioning themselves near the child at a similar height from the floor when the caregiver is showing interest verbally; adults giving out invitations to children to interact with them; adults using children's interests as a basis for conversation; adults planning or taking advantage of spontaneous opportunities to talk with each child informally; teachers evade using judgmental comments about children either to them or within their hearing; adults hold off from speaking when conversation would destroy the mood of the interaction: when they see children deeply absorbed in conversation with one another; adults focus their attention on children when they professionally engage with them and put off housekeeping work and personal socializing so that they are totally available for interaction with children.

Kostelnik et al., (1988) have stated that some caregiver behaviors elicited a positive verbal environment. Coincidentally, some of the constructive behaviors mentioned by Kostelnik et al., (1988) are also stated within the instructional video series entitled Self Dimensions Self-Esteem Video Series. For instance, when adults are needed to implement positive language toward the children, in "How do I tell you I like you?" (p. 1 paragraphs 2 & 3) positive verbal statements are emphasized in relation to disciplining as well as for staff "to communicate their own
positive feelings". In the video, "It's fun to be four", (pg. 2, paragraph 2) the narrator mentions the development of risk-taking on the part of the child, and the staff member "pointing out how he has managed to do better the second time".

Since there may be times when silence is therapeutic to one's esteem, especially when children are concentrating on a certain activity, the idea of allowing children to initiate activities while staff looks on quietly is recommended by the "Enter Toddling" (p. 2, paragraph 7) video. Conversely, when times of dialogue are necessary, in "Enter Toddling" (p. 3, line 22) in regards to developing children's self worth through language, the staff members take "every opportunity to talk to the toddler; every sensory activity is labeled."

Children being invited to interact with child care workers was an idea not only from Kostelnik and her colleagues research, but was also put into action by a child care worker in the video "It's fun to be four" (p. 4, lines 1-6) when she asks a child to volunteer for an activity she will do with the child. Additionally, the child's importance can be acknowledged by "getting down on the child's level and always where they can look eye to eye" (p. 2, lines 12-15) in "How do I tell you I Like You".

It should be noted that the assessment of behaviors will not be limited to those behaviors mentioned above.
There is no causal link which is being determined between children's self-esteem and certain specific staff behaviors. Rather, the purpose is to find staff and child behaviors that are reoccurring and emergent specifically at one particular child care center, which prove to be interesting and informative.

The role of positive verbal and nonverbal interaction between caregivers and children has repeatedly shown children's self-esteem enhancement. The significance of a positive verbal environment is that children realize that they are important. This helps their self-perceptions of competence and worth (Openshaw, 1978). Furthermore, children's self-awareness goes up as they have chances to express themselves, explore ideas, and interact spontaneously with other adults and their peers (Kostelnik, et al., 1988). These conditions help to develop the chance that children will see their caregivers as sources of support and comfort (Kostelnik, et al., 1988). Children, then, become more willing to accept the social learnings adults want to give them (Baumrind, 1977; Katz, 1977). These involve traditions, rules and how to get along with others (Kostelnik, et al., 1988). To conclude, adult behaviors that depict a positive verbal environment are synonymous with those cited as characterizing warmth, acceptance, respect and empathy (Coletta, 1977; Gazda, 1977; Rogers, 1961). All four characteristics help in the relationship-
building process and provide the basis for constructive child growth and development (Kostelnik, et al., 1988).

**Statement of the Problem / Need for Further Research**

The literature regarding children and their interactions with caregivers and children's self-esteem has been discussed. The body of literature on caregiver and child interaction and self-esteem communication is at the introductory phase. Further exploration of the communication behaviors between children and caregivers is necessary. Additionally, examination of verbal and nonverbal acts by caregivers and children which aid children's self-esteem needs to be investigated since past research has only begun to delve into this specific topic and concern. There are questions that require further study through observation at a child care center. Inquiries which are in need of detailed explanations are:

1. How do the staff and children communicate with each other?
2. Is there a distinction between the way staff communicate to the boys and the way staff communicate to the girls?
3. Does the communication by caregivers at the center appear to enhance or minimize the self-esteem of the children?

These global queries will be given attention in the results and data analysis section. At this point, the next section will be addressed, which is the methodology of this study.
CHAPTER 2

Methods of Research

A general groundwork of research involving young children, their self-esteem, and the role of communication between caregivers (whether they be parents or child care workers) and young children has been reported on. The goal of this chapter is to delineate how and with whom the investigation will be accomplished using a qualitative approach. The purpose of this research is to find descriptive patterns of the interactions between staff members and children at an early learning center.

It is necessary to decide the most beneficial route to explore research queries. We anticipate what is needed to learn of a study's interests and concepts through a strategy of "linking goals to the type, range, and sequence of methods to be used" (Lindlof, 1992, p. 51). Bailey (1985) mentions the descriptive approach process which tries to explicate how social phenomena "arose or came to be of interest" (p. 286) as opposed to analyzing the causes or outcomes.

Qualitative design is a unique and individual undertaking. It is freshly created each time the researcher starts. Lindlof (1992, p. 8) eloquently states the importance of interpretive methodology: "Our interest in communicative performances and practices - behavior characterized
by intentions and informed by orders of relational, cultural, and ideological significance, requires an inquiry that registers the fluid, fully participatory nature of social life." In other words, the foundation of such research is to find out members' interpretive processes and represent the participants in their own terms (Spradely, 1980).

The next endeavor is to provide information about the participants involved in the study. This will be followed by an explanation of the methods used to gather data on this topic. Lastly, the discussion focuses on the procedures for evaluating the information obtained for the eventual purpose of finding emergent themes.

**Participants**

The participants for this research project were child care workers and children from a local early learning center in Missoula, Montana. Eleven student workers (seven females and four males), one female teacher and one female director were volunteers for this study at a child care center at the University of Montana. The staff members' ages ranged from 19 years to forty-two. The amount of on-the-job training for workers ranged from five months to fifteen years.

The twenty-nine attending children (fifteen girls and fourteen boys) also participated in the study with parental
consent. The children's ethnicity varied from African-American to Native American to Caucasian. Children who were participants ranged in age from 3 to 5 years.

**Data Collection Materials**

The materials consisted of a field notebook (Lindlof, 1992) which contained a map (Denzin, 1978) of the childcare center; a portable tape recorder with external microphone attached for audio taping; a Hitachi video camera and tripod for videotaping; field notes and a flexible set of ten observation questions (see Appendix A) derived from observing the staff and children interacting. The reason for asking the flexible set of ten questions to staff members was to follow one of the procedures within the systematic observation method (Weick, 1985). An explanation of this method follows.

**Procedures**

Weick's (1985, p. 568) "soft technology of systematic observation" is used in this study. Specifically, this method of observation involves: "sustained, explicit, methodical observing and paraphrasing of social situations in relation to their naturally occurring contexts" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). As Weick did, it is necessary to understand the procedures by explaining the definition term by term. Then, an explanation of the specific procedures used by this researcher is provided which implements the systematic
observational method.

First, I as an observer engaged in the phenomenon for a prolonged period of time - "sustained" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). For this particular study, the phenomenon of staff and children was engaged in by the researcher for a period of one hour, one to two times per week for a period of eight weeks.

Next, I made self-conscious, and full, clearly expressed notations of how the observing is done - "explicit" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). There were eight hours of video recording and eight hours of audio recording completed at the observation site. One hour of audio-recording was devoted to an in-depth interview (Douglas, 1976, p. 15) with one staff member. This first involved observing the child care site while the staff member was working and then developing a flexible set of fifty questions, only some of which were asked during the interview. Additionally, self disclosure of my own experience in the child care field was revealed to establish rapport and trust. The remaining audio and video recordings focused on the staff and children interacting. Furthermore, I engaged in conversations with staff members about their interactions with the children and their activities at the center. The staff members were inquired as opposed to the children, since past research has indicated that young children are limited in their ability to consciously verbalize their self-worth.
(Harter, 1990; Wells & Marwell, 1976). I then went about the observing activity in an alert manner which allowed for "tactical improvisation" - "methodical" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). I inquired some staff members about their communication interaction using a set of ten questions (Appendix A). However, the inquiries were not limited to those ten queries. Conversations with the staff were also engaged in, which is involved in participant observation (Becker, 1970). Conversations were active when I did not look directly into the video camera, and there was a staff member nearby. It seems, from my pilot work, as well as a suggestion by a professional in the field of child care, that when I occasionally peered into the viewfinder (as opposed to continually) the staff seemed more at ease with the filming, especially since I was talking to them instead of being silent and viewing them. Additionally, conversations were started up when I had a question about how to interpret staff members' or children's actions. Thus, the inclusion of "tactical improvisation" (Weick, 1985) was also incorporated into the observations.

Next, I gave attention to the participants in ways that are in some sense standardized (Weick, 1985). This observer focused on nonverbal and verbal communication between children and staff members. However this observer was also individually trained (Weick, 1985). I had seen three videotapes dealing with communication between care-
givers and children and the enhancement of children's self-esteem. Additionally, as an employee, I had worked for a period of eight months within a child care setting. This is what was entailed in "observing" (Weick, 1985, p. 569).

The next step involved "paraphrasing" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). This observer textually constructed (Weick, 1985) the audiotaped and videotaped data into transcriptions. Then, simplifying, editing, imposing meaning on the observed data as well as omitting some data (Weick, 1985) was done. When viewing the videotapes and listening to audio tapes in their entirety once, this observer focused on re-occurring activities such as art-play time, which occur everyday in the morning and after nap time. This is an example of a teacher-directed activity. Next, eating periods were reoccurring and therefore selected as times when staff and children interact frequently. This can be considered another teacher-directed activity. Furthermore, disciplining interactions were also focused upon, again, a teacher-directed activity. Lastly, if there were any rare or unusual interactions between staff and children which were inquired about by this observer, such as a possible medical emergency, for example, these instances were transcribed. Children-initiated activities, such as pretend and free play times were also taken into consideration. Once this was achieved, Denzin's bracketing (1978)
technique was carried out for the thematic analysis. The emergence of themes from descriptive patterns were involved in this process (Denzin, 1978). An explanation of the thematic analysis is specified here:

1. All the data from the videotapes and audio tapes which displayed communication interaction between the staff and the children while engaged in art activities, mealtime, snack time, free play time, disciplining, and rare or unusual situations which staff were asked about by this observer as well as the staff member in-depth interview done in the pilot study were transcribed.

2. Next, I familiarized myself with the information gathered in the transcripts. This was accomplished by reading the transcripts thoroughly at least five times without taking any notes.

3. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, I brainstormed various broad subject headings. These headings were done in pencil and added as an addendum to the transcript material.

4. The third step involved rereading the data without notes another time using an unmarked copy of the transcribed material.
5. Next, bracketing was completed. This was the point where subject headings were created and marked in pencil in the margins of the transcripts that were rough draft copies. This matter involved locating and labeling subjects within the data. Any remote connections were bracketed. A thin pencilled line connected the data together that were repeated ideas. Some data was placed under two subject headings.

6. Then, on another unmarked page, identification of the intra-subject (subject-subject) headings was necessary. In this stage, fine tuning the analysis was the concern.

7. The next step made use of separate pages again. I employed index cards for this separation. This part involved using direct quotes and citing page and paragraph numbers and recording specific instances where these quotes fell under each subject heading. Searching for repetitive and illustrative excerpts was the goal here.
8. The next phase was the creation and development of themes within this work. Themes were the generalized statements which characterize the numerous instances located within the data set. The labeling of overarching ideas was carried out in this final part.

From that point, I "embedded the observing in the interdependency of place, actors and activities—[social situations]" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). Weick mentioned that social situations are created by a triad of interactants: a setting, people within the setting and "individual acts that fall into recognizable patterns" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). Weick (1985) suggested that these three forces are interconnected. This was translated to mean the relationship between the child care center, the child care workers, children, and observer, and the communication interactions which go on among all three elements were taken into consideration, connected, and reported within the transcriptions. For instance, if an interaction took place at the breakfast table between one female staff member, two male children and I, the verbal communication would be transcribed as well as the nonverbal communication and the fact that the teacher-directed interaction took place during the eating activity between two male children, one female staff member, and this observer would be recorded.
Lastly, I differentiated the background elements (Weick, 1985) by having taped at different times during the day as well as on various dates in time. This was done to specify contexts where people (staff members) do and do not perform certain activities (Weick, 1985).

The period from four to five in the afternoon was not taped or filmed, since this was a schedule conflict for myself. The taping and filming days took place on Fridays as well as Tuesdays, for the sake of scheduling feasibility on my part. The activity times included the opening of the center at seven-forty-five in the morning to nine in the morning. Then from nine in the morning to one in the afternoon taping and filming was carried out. However, this was conducted for a one hour duration only on a Tuesday or Friday in various weeks. Additionally, the afternoon period from one until four was also used on various days and again, for not longer than one hour tapings and filmings at a time. This was found to be suitable for myself and the teachers at the center. Additionally, it afforded me the opportunity to see shift changes and new staff members interacting with the children each hour.

The phrase "in relation to natural contexts" (Weick, 1985, p. 569) is used to allow for the inclusion of documents (Weick, 1985) such as transcripts of three instructional videos on children's self-esteem and commun-
ication. The transcript of an interview with one of the staff members (the full-time teacher) within the child care was also used as a document. Additionally, another interview with the director was also carried out, however not transcribed. These documents serve as substitutes for familiarity which still allowed this observer to "paraphrase" in the natural language (Weick, 1985) used by the staff members and children.

Guba and Lincoln (1975) suggest considering the technique of triangulation by different methods as a means of increasing the chances that findings will be deemed credible and reliable. The transcribed in-depth interview (Douglas, 1976) of the staff member mentioned above created a reliable information source as well as document. This in turn made the systematic observations (Weick, 1985) of the staff, children, and observer interactions used by this researcher more credible and reliable. Webb et al. (1966, p. 3) suggested that although triangulation by methods may be laborious, it is very much worth doing, since it makes data believable: "Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes. If a proposition can survive the onslaught of a
series of imperfect measures, with all their irrelevant error, confidence should be placed in it".

Having discussed the procedures for this study, from interviewing staff members in the child care to systematically observing (Weick, 1985) staff and children of a particular child care facility, it is necessary to move forward in the writing of this project by discussing the results. This upcoming section will incorporate excerpts from the transcripts of the pilot data (ie. a staff member's interview) as well as the data on verbal and nonverbal interaction between staff members and children and this observer. The excerpts will be quoted material from the children, staff and myself. Additionally, the activity the staff and children are engaged in was described using this observer's and staff's interpretations. The staff members', and children's pseudonyms were also used within the quoted excerpts.
CHAPTER 3

Results

This chapter focuses upon the data analysis using Weick's (1985) and Denzin's (1978) methods. Weick (1985) stated that "social situations are created by a triad of interactants: a setting, people within the setting, and individual acts that fall into recognizable patterns" (Weick, 1985, p. 569). This is translated to mean that the relationship between the place, the people and the communication interactions need to be linked by reporting on them within the results. Therefore, the first goal within this chapter will be to discuss the child and caregiver environment. Additionally, the selected video and audio interactions have been analyzed and will be presented using Denzin's (1978) bracketing method. Lastly, themes were elicited in the final stage and examples are provided of these emergent main categories.

Child Care Main Room

The natural starting place of this chapter is to introduce and describe the child care environment where the on-sight observations primarily took place. This is an invitation into the main room of the child center. It is where the staff member signs in and out of their hourly shift. It is where parents of children who attend

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the pre-school sign the daily attendance sheet immediately after stepping past the room's threshold. This is the same room where staff plan, serve, and eat the food available to them and the children. It is the primary interaction area between various staff members and children, who spend approximately six to seven hours in this enclosure. They gather together for art time, to sing and learn about each other, and simply to roam and engage in free play moments. A brief description of the main fixtures is discussed.

Three child-sized tables with accompanying child-sized chairs are stationary near the entrance way. They are utilized for various purposes. Art creations such as stuffed dinosaurs for hanging mobiles are made here as well as other art projects. Additionally, eating breakfast, lunch and snack foods are served and consumed at these tables. Furthermore, playing with board games and puzzles are also carried out here. At times, within the table area on the west side, there is an easel present for two children: one on one side of the easel, and the other child, directly opposite, to use for individual paintings. Lastly, a water table (a rectangular piece of mobile furniture which can be filled with water) is adjacent to where the easel stands. There are wash buckets during meal times that are situated on this water table for children and staff to place their used eating utensils and dishware in. There is a trash can present to discard unwanted food.
On the west side of the table area, two bulletin boards reside. The weekly theme is written upon the construction paper background and decorated with appropriate cut-outs amplifying the theme on the one bulletin board closest to the kitchen area. Examples of weekly themes are: "Everyone loves music". Another theme is "Dinosaur week". This bulletin board is displayed above the shelves and cubby area. There is a fish tank sitting upon the shelves and art supplies, blankets and sleeping mats reside within the shelves. The cubbies (lockers) and shelves extend to the carpeted area until it reaches the northern wall of the room. Above this shelf area is another bulletin board which does not change weekly. However, the cut-outs of the children resemble gingerbread cookies with the children's names on the figures. These images of the children, which are placed upon this board, change daily. This is the helper identification bulletin board. It displays names of children who chose to be responsible for various daily opportunities. Examples of such opportunities are: feeding fish or watering plants or being the line leader. Logically, the line leader is the first child in line when everyone is ready to go outside at approximately 11:30 and 3:15. The children can recognize their names on this board, especially since they have a choice of what responsibility they desire. Additionally, there is a drawing for each of the helper jobs.
There is a stereo-record player on the shelf below this bulletin board. The children learn new music via its use as well as when it is time to rest, since the music is also a signal to avoid talking loudly. Adjacent to the stereo are a variety of plants. Cactus, philodendron and hyacinth make up part of the indoor flora which the children water.

Along the northern wall there is a reading couch. This is where children can browse through a variety of children's literature present on a nearby bookshelf. The children create their own narrative of what is occurring in the story they are looking at. Other options that are utilized are staff or a parent reading with the child(ren) upon the couch during morning as well as afternoon hours.

On the far east side of the northern wall, there is a door which leads to the children's bathroom as well as a parent meeting room and another child center's play room. The bathrooms contain several toilets which are without stalls. There are also several child size sinks and paper towel holders which allow the children easy access to care for their own hygiene.

Back to the main room again, there is a child-size bed and table and accompanying chairs with dolls, dishes and artificial food to set a pretend play scenario alive. There is also a dresser which contains pretend play clothes for the children to wear. A pocket camera and play
telephone also exist in this area of the room. There is also a space along the eastern side of the room which has headphones for two children to listen to recorded music or look at picture books while they are busy listening to the audio tapes. Moving toward the entrance, there is a table staff can use to do independent art projects. Next to this table is a staff bulletin board and a bookshelf where staff members are able to fill out their time sheets.

On the other side of the walkway, directly across this bookshelf is where an indoor slide is assembled during the morning hours for children to play and climb upon. There are more shelves which store table games, such as erector sets or construction paper fish attached to paper-clips which test the children's skill of using magnets to lift the fish up in the air. There is an abundance of puzzles for children to play with as well.

The children also play with many molded-plastic animals. Farm animals to the less domesticated creatures, such as bears are also played with by the staff and children on the tan colored carpet area. The open carpet is the stage for children to momentarily transform into a polar bear or a lavender-haired pony or a pizza delivery person. This is also the area where circle times are engaged in by staff and children. Children learn what the letters B-I-N-G-O look and sound like. The children and
staff sing about the dog Bingo and Tony Chestnut. The children role play various dinosaurs. The children's chanting voices become the voices of hand puppets.

The carpeted area transforms into the children's rest area after lunch is completed. There is one area designated to those children who are planning on sleeping. This area is separated by the movable furniture which marks off an area for children who want to read or play rather than sleep. Once children are through sleeping, they put their shoes on again, (at times with the help of staff members), and begin to play on their own in the carpetless table area or join the children in the reading area. This behavior continues until staff raise the blinds and put on the lights. The sunlight emits from the large window along the western side of the room. This window provides children's parents, who are students as well, an opportunity to wave to their children from outside the building.

Lastly, the exit-entrance area of the main room is the space where the children's cubbies are stationed. This is also where the staff help to dress and undress the children of their outer-wear. It is also a simultaneous welcome and farewell point between children, parents, and staff members.

The background of the room floor plan has been provided. This detailed account is necessary to grasp the fact that this room is the primary interaction area between
the children and staff members. The approximate two out of nine hours spent outside the main room is for playground time or visiting a nearby on-campus location such as a staff member's dorm room.

Participants

It is now significant to report on a brief description of staff members and the children they care for because Weick's (1985) method asks that the participants be described since they are part of the triad of interaction. Staff members juggle roles of employee for the university, student, colleague to other staff members, instructor, disciplinarian, friend, coach, and comforting counselor at the child care center. Each staff member usually works on an hourly shift basis. There are work schedule changes each semester to comply with the alterations in one's school and personal life schedule.

Alternately, children manage the roles of being a student, friend, the recipient as well as the initiator of discipline acts, peer, consumers of the child care service, and players in the childhood fantasy dramas that unfold. These two groups of people join together each weekday morning at approximately eight o'clock and stay in each other's company until approximately five o'clock in the afternoon. Additionally, children also are scheduled to attend the center on set days. For instance, a child
might attend only on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

**Transcript Selection Method**

Since the caregivers and children have been introduced, the present focus is the audio and video tape transcripts and the themes which developed from the various transcripts. There was a selection process of the video and audio taped recordings at the child care center. Using the Weick's (1985) criteria of simplifying, editing, and imposing meaning on the observed data, the following interaction pieces had been transcribed. I focused on recurring activities such as art-play time, eating periods, disciplining interactions, since they were usually teacher directed activities. Any rare or unusual interactions were also transcribed. Children-initiated activities, such as pretend play scenes and free play times were also taken into consideration. Keep in mind that these interactions occurred on different dates.

**Morning Episodes of Interaction:**

1. Valentine's Day Bag Arrangement (7:30 - 8:30 am)
2. Making Pom Poms for the Lady Griz Game (8:00 - 9:00 am)
3. Breakfast time (8:15 - 9:15 am)
4. Playing Candyland Game (7:45 am - 8:00 am)
5. Bell Ringing Time at (8:15 am) / washing hands time
6. Friday videotape 3/12 (9:30 - 10 am)
7. Natalie with Joe and Jay 3/12 (9:45 am)
Afternoon Episodes of Interaction

8. Friday Lunch time/ Dinosaur Week 3/5 (12:15pm)
9. Videotape 2/26 (1:30 - 2:45 pm)
10. Art with “Jack” and the Children (2:15 pm)
11. Two children involved with an art project (2-9-93) (2:45pm approximately).
12. Self-play art time (no teacher supervision) (2:50pm approximately).

These particular transcripts were selected since they displayed verbal and nonverbal interaction periods between staff and children. Additionally, they depicted various clearly audible activities taking place. Next, a brief description of each of the transcripts is given. Pseudonyms of the staff and children are given for confidentiality purposes. Additionally, staff is abbreviated with an (s), child is abbreviated with a (c), male is abbreviated with a (m), female is shortened to (f), researcher is shortened to an (r).
### Table 1

**Description of Transcriptions**

**Interactions Between Staff and Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPISODE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;The Candyland Game&quot;</td>
<td>Jackie (fs) Chuck (mc)</td>
<td>Jackie and Chuck negotiate a time when Chuck can engage in a board game. Candyland. Jackie also requests Chuck to help with the chair placement job. This is a child-initiated and staff-initiated act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMCG JC.2:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. &quot;The Bell Ringing&quot;</td>
<td>Val (fs) Chuck (mc)</td>
<td>Chuck is asked to do the bell ringing ritual. Val compliments Chuck on the clothes he is wearing. This is a staff-initiated activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMBR VC.2:2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &quot;Breakfast Time&quot;</td>
<td>Steve (ms) John (mc) Dominic (mc)</td>
<td>John talks about a bedtime act he does. Dominic talks about his brother's pet iguana having died. This is a child-initiated activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMBT SJD.2:3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. &quot;Valentine Bag Day&quot;</td>
<td>Jackie (fs) Andie (fc) Chuck (mc) Amy (fc) Paula (fc) Brandy (fc)</td>
<td>The staff and children play together on an art display activity. This is a staff-directed activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMVBD JACAPB 2:4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Table 1

**Descriptions of Transcriptions**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. &quot;Making Pompoms&quot; UMMP KDLJC 2:5</td>
<td>Karen (fs) Dominic (mc) Lucy (fc) Jerry (mc) Chuck (mc)</td>
<td>Karen instructs the children how to make pompoms. She disciplines Chuck and Jerry for throwing puzzle pieces. This is a staff directed action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. &quot;Friday Videotape&quot; UMFV LDKCK 2:6</td>
<td>Laura (fs) Derek (mc) Kate (fc) Chuck (mc) Karen (fs)</td>
<td>The is a sharing issue among the children which staff try to facilitate among them. Chuck even tries disciplining.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tr>
<td>10. Art with Jack &amp; the children UMAJC JDTARK 2:10</td>
<td>Jack (ms) Dominic (mc) Anne (fc) Taylor (mc) Renee (fc) Katie (fc)</td>
<td>Jack involves the children in coloring and storytelling about their fathers and musical instruments. Staff and child directed activities are present here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Two Children and Art UMTCA STJL 2:11</td>
<td>Stacey (fs) Lynne (fc) Taylor (mc) Jillian (fc)</td>
<td>Stacey compliments Jillian and Taylor on their artwork. These are art-child-directed activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Self-play art time UMSP SRJGT 2:12</td>
<td>Stacey (fs) Rosemary (r) Jackie (fs) Gordon (mc) Taylor (mc)</td>
<td>Stacey describes how staff assist children. Taylor acknowledges his art work Stacey complimented him on. This is a staff directed activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The transcription abbreviations are based on Hopper's method (1992). The first two letters denote the University of Montana, the next set of letters take into account the title given to the transcription. Next, the actors' first initial (both staff and children) are included. Finally, the month the recording took place in is noted and the sequence the activity occurs in time is the last part of the abbreviation.
Denzin's Bracketing Method

From using Denzin's (1978) bracketing method, broad categories were developed after reading through the transcripts several times. These categories then separated into specific actions and were titled with intra-subject headings. When this breakdown was complete, five major themes emerged:

1. Child and Staff Centered Actions
2. Staff and Child Connecting Behaviors
3. Child and Staff Redirection Behaviors
4. Staff and Child Role Orchestration
5. Self-Esteem Initiatives

The following sections contain a detailed discussion of the above mentioned themes. There are excerpts from the transcriptions which display examples of the themes. These examples focus on specific communication behaviors that are particular in the way staff verbally and nonverbally communicate with the children. Children's communication with caregivers are also presented as examples. Then, the various activities staff and children engage in when communication occurs are given. Finally, explanations of the examples are given to help gain a greater understanding of the particular theme to which the examples are connected.

Child and Staff Centered Actions

The child and staff centered actions involved various child-staff communication behaviors. The child and staff
centered actions were initiated verbally and nonverbally by each of the two groups. These behaviors show distinctions in the way one group acts toward the other group. For example, a child demand is marked by an emphatic voice tone or a repetitive child or staff-centered verbal utterance. This behavior contrasts with the way staff members show their perspective, or centeredness: through staff requests and staff disagreement. Requests involve asking another individual to do an act without urgency. Staff disagreement is defined in this research as taking the opposite viewpoint of an opinion or fact given by another individual. To illustrate using the transcripts as evidence of child and staff centered actions, here is an excerpt from a lunch time episode. An example of a staff request is provided. Karen is the staff member and Courtney is the child.

UMLTDW KCJ 2:8

01 Karen: Can you take another drink of your milk please
02 Courtney? If you're all done, let's start dishes.

Conversely, lines 43 - 46 of the "Lunchtime" transcript, a child-centered action involves a different approach. Here is an example of a demand one child elicits regarding her lunch after Karen takes her dishes away. Notice the intensity of Jesse, the female child's words marked in capital letters which depict the difference
between adult and child requests and demands.

**UMLDW KCJS 2:8**

43 Karen: Come on (inaudible)

44 Jesse: I WANT my PIZZA (Jesse is clashing her bowls together).

45 Jesse: I WANT my PIZZA! (Jesse screams at Karen, while while Karen places Jesse's food in the garbage.)

46 Jesse: NOOOO I want to finish my pizza!

The **staff member's nonverbal action** of taking the leftover food away displays **disagreement** with the child's demand. The NOOOO above signals the child's **verbal disagreement**.

It would be presumptive to think that children only demand. They request just as adults do. **Children's requests** range from wanting to assist others to wanting help from another for themselves. An instance where this occurred in the Valentine's Day Bag arrangement transcript is presented. An excerpt is provided below in the teacher-directed activity. Lines 2 and 15 indicate **child centered requests**. Lines 1, 3, 13 and 16 indicate **staff requests**. Notice that Jackie's help request is reflected with a child help request and then followed by the staff child responsibility request.
UMVBD JACAPB 2:4

01 Jackie (staff): I want to be able to see all the Valentine bags.

02 Andie (fe.child): Can I help you spread?
03 Jackie: Yes (.) can you spread them out a little bit? (... 10 turns deleted)

13 Jackie: Can you take Bob’s down that way and put it on the end?

15 Chuck (male child): Which one's mine?
16 Jackie: Well you watch and see if you can find yours.

Staff disagreements are not limited to nonverbal language either. Line 130 shows a case of verbal disagreement is found in the "Art with Jack and the children" transcript. Anne, a child states another child's name incorrectly and Jack disagrees with this assertion and reasserts the child's real name.

UMAJC JDTARK 2: 10

129 Anne: He’s Andy.
130 Jack: No (.) I know Dom.

It would be difficult to provide examples for all the selected actions, since there are many instances of these behaviors. Therefore, particular examples were chosen because they are thought to be an outstanding example of the theme and others were not as interesting.
Therefore the other actions are simply listed for the sake of brevity and clarity. Other behaviors found within the child and staff centered actions theme are:

(1) children choosing the activity they want to be engaged in
(2) a child's emotional display
(3) a child having sleep difficulty
(4) a child's separation anxiety
(5) a child trying to manipulate staff into helping them when they are capable
(6) child equipment which helped the children know the activities are there for their own use (ie. drinking pitcher)

The various staff behaviors for this theme include:

(1) staff choosing activities for children to engage in
(2) staff creating activities for children to involve themselves in
(3) staff displaying verbal uncertainty
(4) staff whisper signal to indicate to the children that it is time for their rest period.

These various actions were all discovered within the video and audio transcripts. They represent the particular ways children and staff behave verbally and nonverbally toward each other. Lastly, these behaviors are representative of the way children and staff recognize each other's perspec-
tive. For instance, allowing staff and children chances to choose certain activities during the day allows both groups to understand each other's needs more clearly.

STAFF AND CHILD CONNECTING BEHAVIORS

The next theme developed from the staff and children passive and active interactions. The distinction between the passive vs. active categories dealt with the issue of "side-by-side" involvement. In other words, if the staff acted in an observer role, they were thought to be in a passive interaction with the children. However, if staff engaged in the activity with the child(ren) and were conversing with each other rather than solely eliciting requests and responses from each other, then, the staff would be considered actively involved. To illustrate this point more clearly, consider the example where a staff member is in the bathroom with the children:

UMV DJDA 2:9
05 Jackie: Hi Dawn (Dawn is the staff member.)
06 (3.0)
07 Dawn: (muffled word) Wash (She is standing near the sink where the girls are washing their hands).

Thus the theme of staff and child connecting behaviors comes into play, since these particular actions connected the child and staff with one another, whether
it was a procedural **supervised activity** (ie. children washing hands) or **staff and children playing** with something **together**, such as a cabin with Lincoln logs, illustrated in the example below:

**UMNC NDJJ 2:7**

17 Natalie: Here? (Natalie (staff) and Taylor (child) are making a log cabin. She places her logs on the structure. Taylor places his log on the cabin twice, but doesn't leave it. Rather he holds onto it and brings it close to himself.)

18 Natalie: That oughta work (. ) that looks good. (Taylor places his hand into the logs but holds onto his own log. Then he looks for another log near Natalie. Natalie points to Jay's area.)

19 Natalie: I think yeah. Jay's sittin on the front of it like eggs.

21 Jay: (He begins to smile.) Ee:::ggs?

In lines 17 and 18 Natalie expresses her opinion about the placement of the logs to Taylor. In line 18, she also gives Taylor verbal approval about the state of the cabin. The verbal and nonverbal **active interaction** is therefore present between Natalie and Taylor since they are both working on gathering wooden logs. She also tries to
cooperate with Taylor in line 19, by giving him the verbal confirmation that he's searching the right place for another log. Natalie also acknowledged Jay's presence by noticing he is sitting on a log. Natalie joked with him about the way he is seated and Jay reiterated her words, thereby acknowledging what she had just humorously stated.

Contrasting the above active involvement to passive involvement between the staff and children. Dawn and Jackie displayed passive involvement by Jackie greeting Dawn only and then continued to move onto another area past the bathroom. Dawn simply utters "wash" to the children, without washing her own hands. This above behavior is passive because there is no personal staff involvement with the hand washing. The passive as well as active involvement is present within the connecting behaviors between staff members and children.

Other Communication Behaviors found within the Child and Staff Connecting Behaviors Theme:

(1) children and staff are at times verbally quiet while eating their food.

(2) staff and children talk when more food or drink is asked for or recognized by the staff member.

(3) children and staff converse at the table when they are not preoccupied by eating.
(4) staff doing art projects which are different from what children are involved in, yet still talking with the children who are also doing their own activity.

(5) staff and children mealtime cleanup (staff sweeping the floor and dishes being dumped in the pails with staff help, respectively are passive interactions.)

(6) staff comfort behaviors (staff nonverbally communicating care for the children by rubbing their backs during rest time).

(7) staff and children doing art projects together.

(8) staff and child dialogue during free play time.

(9) staff and children multilogue (more than two speakers are talking occurring during a teacher directed activity, such as circle time.

(10) staff and children reading together.

(11) children reading by themselves.

(12) staff assisting children with dressing themselves (a staff member helps to tie a child's shoes).

(13) staff and children singing together.

(14) staff and children brushing their teeth individually yet staff coaching children how to do it.

(15) staff and children setting up the room together, (such as in the morning when chairs need to be taken off the tables).

(16) children and staff greeting each other.
This concludes the behaviors for this particular theme which emphasizes a bifurcation between the activities engaged in by staff and children together.

Staff and Child Redirection Behaviors

The next theme encountered involved staff and children's specific remarks. These statements were able to switch attention of all toward the person uttering the statement. For instance, a male child's (Dominic) verbal interjection which occurred at the breakfast table. It is the UMBT SJD 2:3 transcript which show the interruption by Dominic of the previous conversation, between John (another male child) and Steve (a male staff member). Notice the particular way Dominic interjects, by elongating the "e" vowel in "Heh" (line 5).

UMBT SJD 2:3

1 John: You know what I do when I go to sleep?
2 Steve: What?
3 John: I just wiggle myself.
4 Steve: You (inaudible)
5 Dominic: He:h. my brother's pet died (2.0)
6 Steve: What was it?
7 Dominic: It waz an 'guanwana he died.
8 Steve: Oh really (2.0) your iguana died?

(Key= the colon mark (:) indicates a prolonged sound of the letter that proceeds this symbol. (Jefferson, 1974).
Notice in line six, S abandons the conversation with John. John also does not further comment about his behavior. John has also heard Dominic's comment. Instead, Steve orients toward Dominic's verbal disclosure. Therefore, attention was redirected to Dominic, through his verbal interjection. John's earlier utterance was never discussed again during the breakfast time. It is interesting that the topic of sleeping preceded the topic of the death of the pet. It is uncertain whether the link was intentional on Dominic's part. Interestingly, the staff member assumed the iguana was Dominic's not Dominic's brother (line 8). Thus, Dominic's issue about his brother's pet dying took precedence and can therefore be considered part of the repertoire of child and staff redirected behaviors.

An example of the staff protectiveness behavior focuses around a game children want to play. However, the staff member wants this to be played at a later time. She is being "protective" by wanting all the children to partake rather than just the male child, Chuck, who asked solely.

UMCG JC 2.1

1 Jackie (female staff): Have these for breakfast
2 Chuck (male child): We want to play Candyland.
3 Jackie: (female staff): We're gonna play Candyland right after breakfast (.) we're
4 all gonna play (.) Yes (.)
In lines 3, 4 and 5, Jackie reserves the game for the whole group of children. In this particular instance, Jackie displays redirection over C's request in line 2. She delays his request with her own verbal request in lines 6 and 7. This request is followed through by Chuck, who begins taking down the kitchen chairs from the table after he asks again and Jackie gives him the same response. This time he accepts the responsibility since he asks again to find out if Jackie wants to join him and Jackie again replies a similar response in lines 13-15.

**UMCG JC 2.1**

12 Chuck: Oh you want to play Candyland with me?
13 Jackie: You know what (Chuck) (.) I would
14 like us to take the chairs down we can
15 play our Valentine game later.
16 Chuck: Wooah.

**Other Actions Involved Under The Child and Staff Redirection Theme:**

(1) child activity protectiveness (when a child verbally states they do not want another to share in their play)
(2) female child attention remarks (an utterance which serves to get the staff to help the child with an art activity: I'll make a pom pom).

(3) male child attention remarks (an utterance such as "Look it lookit" designed to have the staff member notice their skill in spinning a Lincoln log piece with their finger).

(4) child storytelling (storytelling is related to this theme since the child re-directs the story by asking questions of the storyteller.)

(5) staff verbal request

(6) staff humor

(7) staff disagreement

(8) child humor

(9) child disagreement

Staff and Child Role Orchestration

The fourth theme focuses on communication behaviors children and staff partake in to ensure verbal and nonverbal actions progress between the two groups and the daily routines are handled smoothly. To better clarify this particular theme, specific behaviors were elicited. For instance, staff disciplining is a behavior which helps the daily harmony to continue through the initiation of staff discipline words. Using the UMV DJDA 2:9 transcript, there is an example of staff and child role
orchestration through disciplining terms:

UMV DJDA 2:9
33 Rosemary: Now it's time to do your job (directed at Lynn)
34 Lynn: Yep.
35 Jackie: Use those walking feet and you know what your
36 first job is gonna be? To find your socks (3.0)

Lynn begins to start skipping toward the main room after my utterance in line 33. Jackie reminds Lynn that skipping is not allowed indoors by positively reframing the "taboo behavior" (Don't skip) into what is expected of the children, using their "walking feet". Another instance where positive reframing of discipline words happens is with children disciplining children.

In the UMFV LDKCK 2:6 transcript this is the case.

UMFV LDKCK 2:6
17 Derek (male child): What's di:::s? (He looks toward Kate 
(female child) but she does not respond. Chuck (a male 
child) comes over to the table and so does Karen (a 
staff member). Chuck moves close to the Lego pieces.)
18 Derek : Heh:: (. ) No:::
19 Laura (staff member): huhhuhhuh (laughing, she continues 
to staple the dinosaurs).
20 (4.0)
21 Chuck: You needa share! (Chuck is referring to Derek who wants to keep the Lego pieces all for himself.)

22 (2.0)

23 Derek: No:::uff

Derek is initially engaged in an individual play session. However, he is inviting Kate to become involved by asking her a question. Since she doesn't respond, he continues playing by himself until Chuck attempts to become involved with the toy building activity. Derek objects to Chuck's action of taking some play pieces. Laura responds with laughter since earlier in the transcription she requested that Derek share with Kate. However, now Chuck also wanted to become involved. Then Chuck verbally disciplines Derek. He reminds him in a positive rather than a negative utterance in line 21. For instance, Chuck could have said "Don't be greedy" implying that Derek is miserly. Yet, Chuck instead focused on the behavior Derek should be engaging in with his peers and friends: sharing. The outcome was refusal by Derek in line 23. This was due to Chuck's nonverbal way of disciplining. The way he said those disciplining words back fired his positive statement. Chuck emphasized needa share so that it sounded demanding. It is no wonder that Derek in reply stressed the negative statement in line 23. Had Chuck taken the approach of being less emphatic in his request, as Laura (the staff
member) had been earlier, Derek might have allowed Chuck to join in. Notice the difference in Derek's response:

UMFV LDKCK 2:6

05 Laura: =Derek (. ) you need to share these Legos.
06 Derek: Heh you wants=

Above, Laura's discipline words are met favorably by Derek offering Kate some Legos in line six. It is intriguing that Derek accepts Laura's request and not Chuck's proposal. Since Laura is a staff member and Chuck a child, role differences do have some bearing on this issue between the three people involved in this particular transcript segment. Derek may feel more compelled to oblige to Laura since she has an expected disciplinarian role. Whereas Chuck, even though he initiated discipline verbally, he is Derek's peer, who does not transform into the role of an effective disciplinarian even when staff allow him to utter those words.

Other Communication Behaviors Found Within the Theme of Staff and Child Role Orchestration:
(1) staff instruction
(2) staff and child listening
(3) staff and child explanation
(4) staff and child conversation initiation (Staff may start off asking a rhetorical question from the children.)
(5) staff and child(ren) welcoming each other
(6) staff and child story continuers (Child may question in the middle of a story: Why did he do that?)
(7) staff delayed child's request
(8) staff intermediary for children
(9) child(ren) and staff verbal responses
(10) staff and child(ren) asking for help
(11) staff and child(ren) questioning

Self-Esteem Initiatives

Most frequent in this fifth theme were children's ability and possession compliments among all the other sixteen self-esteem enhancement acts which were recognizable from the transcripts. First of all, children's ability compliments are positive statements focused on a child's task completion or being creative or just trying something they had not done in the past. Child ability compliments also involves task achievement they were requested to do or had self-initiated. Child possession compliments are positive statements uttered (usually by staff members about the child's attire or accessories. Examples of child possession compliments are provided below:

UMBRC VC 2:2

03 Val: (fe. staff): Chuck, I'm lovin this purple outfit you're wearin'. can I borrow it sometime?
05 Chuck: (m. child): Ahmm you got to get out of it so I'm
Val compliments Chuck on his clothes (possession) and Chuck replies to Val's question about using it, rather than accepting the compliment. Chuck's logical reply about not being able to fit in his clothes if Val wears them prompts an acceptance by Val (line 6). Another instance of a child possession compliment given by staff members occurs in the following transcript:

**UMAJC JDTARK 2:10**

020 Anne: These are my shoes.
021 Dominic: Jack.
022 Jack: These your shoes?
023 Dominic: Jack.
024 Jack: Ok
025 Dominic: Jack
026 Rosemary: humhum (start of a laugh)
->027 Jack: Pretty shoes (to Anne)
028 Dominic: Jack
029 Dominic: Jack!

Above, Jack *compliments* on the aesthetics of a female child's possession - her shoes. The child doesn't reply in the form of acceptance even though she drew Jack's attention to her footwear in the first place. Dominic
also tried gaining Jack's attention and was successful eventually after five attempts. The last try worked in engaging Jack in Dominic's plea to have Jack see his artwork. It was an emphatic demand used by Dominic that caught Jack's attention.

The other major verbal self-esteem enhancement statement was a child's ability compliment in line 30. During the UMLDW KCJS 2:8, Sandy (staff) who assists Larry (child) with toothbrushing. She compliments his ability to follow through on her request:

**UMLDW KCJS 2:8**

25 Sandy: Don't forget your tongue (She demonstrates by brushing her tongue. Larry follows Sandy's advice. Then Sandy points to the toothbrush basin which Larry then places his toothbrush into.)

- 30 Good Job.

Another example of a child's ability compliment is in the UMTCA STJL 2:11

06 Stacey (staff member): Niːce (She touches Taylor's (child) painting paper. Taylor has painted a red heart. He continues to paint.)

The above excerpt displays simultaneous verbal and non-verbal recognition of Taylor's artwork. The elongated vowel use (iː) in "nice" stresses a child's ability compliment.
The child's reaction is sustaining his momentum on his art project. From analyzing the data, boys received more ability compliments and girls received more possession compliments.

Other self-esteem initiative for children found within the various transcripts were:

(1) child learning (ie. Lucy learning how to assemble pom-poms).
(2) child opinion expression
(3) child activity completion
(4) child verbal confirmation
(5) child agreement/ acceptance
(6) child responsibility acts (ie. child feeding the fish).
(7) child generosity (ie. child giving staff member their work they created during art time.)
(8) staff verbal empathy
(9) positive language
(10) child verbal disagreement (ie. a child is able to take opposite views from staff or other children).
(11) staff touching child (ie. helping children to sleep by caressing their backs.)
(12) staff verbal approval
(13) staff recognition of the child
(14) child verbal empathy
(15) staff verbal confirmation
(16) staff appreciation
SUMMARY AND COMPARISON OF THEMES

The comparison of the five themes is ready to be addressed. First, a brief mentioning of the criterion attributes for each theme will be given to help with the differentiation of each of the five themes found. Then using the first theme, child and staff centered actions as the comparison point, a link to the four other overarching themes will be woven.

The child and staff centered actions theme incorporates verbal and nonverbal communication which focused on the staff or child's perspective of their own worlds and their own choices. The child and staff connecting behaviors theme relates to the communication behaviors within activities which the staff and children did together (active behavior) or activities which were done alone, yet the staff was nearby (passive behavior). Communication served as the base between the children and the staff's behaviors during various ongoing activities throughout the day. Child and staff redirection behaviors theme deals with the communication child(ren) or staff use to regain active involvement in their conversation after they had been in the background of the interaction. The staff and child role orchestration theme focuses around the various responsibilities the staff and children have toward each other and themselves. Communication was used to fulfill
the various activities and behaviors which were a part of this theme. Lastly, self-esteem initiatives theme was created from verbal and nonverbal actions which helped the children to gain a greater sense of self-worth.

In order to help understand what the themes are about more fully, a table is presented to display how the many communication activities and behaviors that are related to the five particular themes.

**TABLE 2**

**EMERGENT THEMES AND THEIR RELATED COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child and Staff Centered Acts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. child activity choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. child activity creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. child manipulation words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. child sleep difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. child request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. child verbal disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. child demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. children's equipment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child and Staff Connecting Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bathroom routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. children and staff eating quietly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. staff and children involved in individual art activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. children reading alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. staff comfort behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. staff and children playing individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. staff assisting children with dressing them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. staff and children brushing teeth together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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TABLE 2
EMERGENT THEMES AND THEIR RELATED COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD AND STAFF REDIRECTION BEHAVIORS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. child verbal interjection</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. staff verbal interjection</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. child protectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. staff protectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. female child attention remark</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. female staff attention remark</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. male child attention remark</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. male staff attention remark</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. child storytelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. staff storytelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. child emotional display</td>
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<td>12. child word play</td>
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<td>13. child humor</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. staff humor</td>
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<td>15. child disagreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. staff disagreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. child questioning</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. staff questioning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD AND STAFF ROLE ORCHESTRATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. staff instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. staff listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. staff disciplining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. staff explanation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. staff conversation initiation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. staff welcoming</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. staff intermediary words</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. child asking for help</td>
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<td>9. staff response</td>
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<td>10. child response</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. child free play</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. child listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. child disciplining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. child welcoming</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. child explanation</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. child story continuer</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. child conversation initiation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-ESTEEM INITIATIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. child learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. child opinion expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. child activity completion</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. child verbal confirmation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. child ability compliment</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. child possession compliment</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. positive language</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. child generosity</td>
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<td>9. child responsibility acts</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. staff touching child</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. staff verbal approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. child agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. staff empathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. staff appreciation</td>
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</table>

Having described each of the themes individually, now a comparison of them can be created. Examples of child activity choice and staff activity choice under the child and staff centered actions theme, there is a relationship to the communication behaviors found within the child and...
staff connecting behaviors. For instance, children reading alone and staff doing art projects separately from what children are involved in can be considered passive child and staff connecting behaviors. Both are considered connecting behaviors since they implement a sense of bonding through trusting in individual activity accomplishment. Simultaneously, these are instances where children and staff are choosing to do these activities (child and staff centered actions).

Next, the child and staff redirection behaviors theme will be expanded upon and compared with the child and staff centered actions. For instance, when a child chooses an activity, (child centered action) there is usually a child activity protectiveness (child redirection behavior). The child activity protectiveness (non-sharing of activity at a particular moment) is necessary for the child to hold onto the activity they decided to pursue in the first place. An example was provided earlier with Derek having limited tolerance with sharing his Legos with other children (UMFV LDKCK 2:6).

Child and staff centered actions theme is also related to the staff and child role orchestration theme. When staff members decide upon their activity choice, (staff centered action) it is taken for granted that the staff will then explain and instruct (staff role orchestration)
most of the interactions observed.

The only case observed where two-way verbal communication was not happening occurred during the lunch time excerpt (UMLDW KC JS 2:8). In this particular instance, there was an instance of the authoritarian discipline style present between Karen and Jesse. This particular discipline style involves dominance, control over the child and evasion of communication (Clayton, 1985). Karen had taken Jesse's leftover pizza away without telling her and thrown it in the trash without listening to Jesse's demands not to do so. The communication exchange was verbal and nonverbal between child and staff member, rather than the two-way verbal communication. By ignoring the child's demands about her food, Karen was disregarding Jesse's words, since Jesse had also ignored Karen's instructions. This in turn hurt Jesse's feelings and she verbalized this through her cries. The verbal reciprocity on the staff's account was absent. Additionally, as Kostelnik et. al (1988) noted in their own research regarding voice tone, the tone is patient and amiable, and social pleasantries such as "please" and "thanks" are integrated into the verbal exchange. This was missing from the exchange, since there were only actions present on Karen's part rather than words. Additionally, on the Jesse's part, her emphatic voice tone removed the opportunity of the interaction being a possible self-esteem enhancement interaction. However, there were many nonverbal
interactions that were beneficial to the child's self-esteem.

There were nonverbal exchanges where a respectful reciprocity was present. The caregivers had been comforting the children nonverbally through touch. Staff were hugging the children, rubbing their arms and backs, playing with them, holding the children in their arms, and kissing them. Caregivers also interacted by getting down to the child's level. In other words, they sat side by side with the children on tables as well as the floor. At times they were literally face to face with the children they were communicating with. They sometimes laid down next to the child when the child was resting and wanted to whisper to the child. This is also present within Kostelnik et al. (1985) research regarding communication and self-esteem enhancement. Staff were highlighting children's worth in many ways and in turn, children were recognizing their own potential as human beings.

With all these chances to enhance their own self-esteem, there is also one facet which is dependent upon other children as well as the staff. This is the issue of competition. From my own experience working at a childcare center, I noticed that competition could effect children's self-worth negatively if it was engaged in by the three to four year olds. There was a competition of who had the most recent and exotic toys, who could climb
the swings the highest, and who could make the most elaborate Lego creations.

When I had spoken with Tamara, the director of the child care I had observed, she relayed that she strictly plays down competition with the children. They are not encouraged to bring toys from home. Rather, they share all toys the center has made available to them. Sometimes for show and tell they bring in a book or a possession that relates to the theme of the week. However, there is no comparison competition verbalized by the staff. Also, any activities done inside or out do not involve competition. For instance, children assemble in a line with a designated line leader so that they do not compete who will be first in line. The downplay of competition between peers seems to help the children with respect for each other.

Children's self esteem is significant since it helps children's stamina to deal with life's hardships (Phillips, 1989). There were various struggles children had to deal with at the child care center: from separation anxiety of parents to having their feelings hurt by other children or adults or even being physically unsafe because other children tried to fight with them. If a child is able to attain a sense of self-worth, they can feel less lonely when parents are distanced from them. They can feel less threatened by other children, since they are able to have self-respect and will let the others know that they need to stop hurting
them. The children at this particular center did seem to have a sense of self-worth and verbalize it when they feel endangered. The children are able to let the staff know when something is bothering them. The staff do respond with caring and help to problem solve with the children or give the children the verbal go ahead that they can do a task for themselves.

Interviews and Self Experience as Support for Findings

Lincoln and Guba (1975) were mentioned in the methods chapter for their use of triangulation. It is a method used to ensure reliability of data findings. Having discussed research themes as one information source, three interview excerpts from a staff member, Jackie of the child care center is also incorporated as the second leg of the triangulation. Lastly, my own experience as a staff member of a child care center was used to provide further support for my findings. I had mentioned earlier examples of competition as a self-esteem minimizer, this was observed through my past experience. Additionally, having worked outside of the campus setting for about nine months, it is interesting to note that the ratio of male staff members to females is even lower than the population of males to females at the on-campus setting. When I had worked as a part-time caregiver, there was only one male staff member who was present, compared to six females. This is very different from the four males present at the on-campus
setting. Additionally, there were no children who had been physically or mentally challenged at the on-campus center. In my own work experience, there were several children of various ages which had impairments such as blindness or Down's syndrome. These children had special needs that had to be addressed on an individual basis. These needs varied from such activities as separate feeding times, a child being placed in a wooden stander for the purpose of gaining muscle strength to help the child position their legs in an upright position, bottle feeding, and diapering.

Since the age ranges of the children at the on-campus site was three to five years and no child had special needs, no child had to be bottle fed or diapered. The interaction between children or adults with special needs was absent in the on-campus setting. Everyone seemed to be a part of the group at the campus child care. They all shared in similar activities throughout the day. There was a lack of individual attention for a prolonged period of time, for instance, a half an hour, with any one child, since there were over twenty children present that wanted some attention. Reading time on the couch appeared to be the time when a possible one-on-one interaction could take place or during nap time when children were rubbed and held. Given the fact that the program had a daily routine which was followed, the children were transported from one
activity to the next as a group. At times, a few children were slower than the rest. For instance, during lunch and snack time, the child(ren) stayed behind until the staff member either took their food away (on one occasion) or verbally suggested she finish soon. Only one instance existed where a child decided to remain inside while the rest of the children went outside to play in the sand. This was somewhat different from the child care center experience off-campus.

There, the children were allowed to take their time without staff supervising and when they were ready, left the table and did their own choice activity; whether it was to join the whole group or remain separate. An individual choice of finishing their meal and letting the staff member know rather than having staff make that decision or influence it in some way by verbally suggesting that they finish up soon was not exercised at the child center off-campus. Lastly, there was a looser time activity-structure overall, because of the attention to twelve children's individual needs being given. Therapists and parents were also decision makers of the daily activity scheduling for the child.

The on-campus childcare center, from my observations, had the staff deciding the activity schedule and children deciding whether to follow the structured activity or do their own thing. Here again, the population of children and the structured activity schedule during the morning
hours and part of the afternoon hours impeded the amount of individual attention which could have been given at the on-campus setting.

Future Research

This study was an opportunity to become part of the child care center experience. Looking back upon the research done, it is necessary to find out greater information about the influence of staff compliments on children's self-esteem; particularly, in regards to gender-crossing compliments and its effects. Additionally, other verbal and nonverbal behaviors such as children's and staff attention remarks need to be expanded upon with its link to self-esteem.

More general study needs to focus on the loose or strict activity structure of a program and how that may have an impact on children's and caregivers' communication interactions. Similarly it would be intriguing to find if there a difference between morning activity communication and afternoon activity communication and structure of activities at the childcare center.

Furthermore, studying the gender differences of male and female staff members and how this affects the communication and self-esteem between male and female children needs to be considered further, especially since the number of male staff in off campus childcare centers is even less
than the on-campus setting. In fact, doing studies in off-campus settings where children with special needs are present requires investigation. It would be interesting to discover how the caregivers and children verbally and nonverbally interact in such a setting. Lastly, how children's age has an impact on communication between caregivers and children at the off-campus settings also necessitates attention.

The study of children's and child care staff's relationship is still in its infancy. My hope is that future communication researchers as well as myself will continue to discover children and caregivers as human resources who are invaluable to the study of communication and children's self-esteem.
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Self-Dimensions Inc. 4314 46th St. Lubbock, TX 79413


Nashville, TE: Counselor Recordings and Tests.


Governor's State Child Care Advisory Council Plan 1992


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Child Consent Form

Attention Parents

Dear Parents:

In accordance with IRB (Internal Review Board) conditions, I need your signatures one last time. This consent form is specifically to gain your permission to film and audio tape your child, as well as having them involved in the data analysis of the study. If your child becomes uneasy with the filming or taping, I will be glad to stop taping and filming at that point. If you prefer not to have your child involved in any way, either by filming or taping, please state so at the bottom of this letter in the space that is provided for your name. I will make arrangements to do my taping when your child isn't present. By signing your name and your child's name below and marking the "yes" column, you are agreeing to have your child filmed, taped, and involved in the data analysis of my study on communication between the children and caregivers. If you do not want your your child to participate, please state so in the space below with your signature and your child's name next to the "no" choice.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Casano

"YES" / "NO" / PARENT(S) 'S SIGNATURE (S)/ CHILD'S NAME
APPENDIX II
Staff Consent Form  
2/19/93

Dear ASUM Child Care Staff:

Hi! I am writing to ask your assistance by volunteering to participate in my communication study. Your viewpoint on children's self-esteem or their feelings will not be inquired about in front of the children. I am interested in listening to and taping your perspective on the role as a staff member and the role communication plays between you and the children. All information you provide will be kept confidential and your anonymity will be guaranteed by using a pseudonym. If you are interested in finding out the results of this research, I would be glad to leave a copy at the center for you to read once it becomes available in May. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this research. My office phone is 243-6604. If you would like to leave me a note, my mailbox is in LA 346.

Your signing at the bottom means you consent to being filmed and taped and you are also willing to answer any questions about the communication interaction between yourself and the children which does not deal with the children's self-esteem or feelings. Remember all information is voluntary, so if you do not want to answer any questions, that's your privilege.

Thanks for all your help,

Rosemary Casano

1. 2.

3. 4.

5. 6.

7. 8.

9. 10.

11. 12.

APPENDIX III

Transcription Key

The following key is provided to help with understanding the transcript symbols. It is based on the transcription method employed by Gail Jefferson (1974) and Robert Hopper (1992).

:  -> The colon refers to an extension or elongation of the sound immediately prior to the colon. ie. s:: -> is an sss sound.

=  -> Equal signs generally indicate "latching", or "no interval between the end of a prior and start of a next piece of talk." It is used for the relationship of a next speaker's talk to a prior speaker's talk. ie. Rosemary: Do you mind being taped?=

Jack:  = No

(0.5)  -> Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in tenths of seconds. This symbol is used between utterance (talk) of adjacent speakers. It is also used between two separable parts of a single speaker's talk.

[  -> A single bracket is used to indicate overlapping words of two or more speakers. ie. Jackie: oh [yes

Ro: [wow

( . )  -> Single parentheses with a period between them indicate a pause shorter than two-tenths of a second.
It starts as a whisper, then from the hush of warmth it becomes a soft basking melody.

Its graceful journey from a soothing lullaby culminates into a smile and then...

Then the bursting crescendo of genuine laughter resounds throughout the rooms of the world.

It emanates from the many miniature voices and bodies as well those who had once been young.

There is nothing else like it on this planet and we don't have to go anywhere to see it.

It is the gift we all want for the holidays and throughout the year.

It is self love, self worth, self esteem. The kind of love we want to show and give too.

It is the sharing of this caring that makes us relish the moment it arrives and changes us for Life.

by

Rosemary Leili-Casano