THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

The Literacy Environment of a Daycare Centre

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, The Literacy Environment of a Daycare Centre submitted by Frances Kay Hurley in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

Because literacy learning in the context of the daycare
setting has been a relatively unexplored research issue, this
research project sought to describe the literacy environment
of a daycare centre. During the exploration of this broad
issue through ethnographic research techniques, questions
concerning the nature of storybook interaction, the oral
language environment, the incidence and nature of play, and
other instances of literacy learning emerged and were
addressed.

The researcher was a participant observer and was on
site for 132 hours over a six-month time period. The
researcher studied three caregivers and 14 daycare children
to answer storybook, caregiver:child oral interaction, play,
and other literacy-related questions but focused upon one
four-year-old girl to answer child:child oral interaction
queries.

The findings of this study suggest that many potentially
literacy-enhancing occurrences happened in the daycare
centre. The caregivers: read to the children daily, mediated
environmental print, exposed the children to the letters of
the alphabet, facilitated situations which encouraged
symbolic and other play types, modelled the functional value
of literacy, exemplified positive attitudes toward literacy,
pointed out similarities and differences in the environment,

and provided controlled access to a plentiful supply of writing materials. Additionally, there were data to suggest that the daycare children were being prepared for the social demands of mainstream education through the caregiver's insistence on polite, mannerly behavior. In spite of these occurrences, the environment could not be described as being wholly conducive to literacy learning: The children were rarely engaged in extended conversations and rarely interacted during storybook sessions except to sometimes respond to literal-level questions. To enhance literacy development, the researcher suggests a program of on-site inservice training for daycare caregivers.

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Dedications

I dedicate this thesis to Louis Charles Jezsik, for support and assistance throughout this project that was far beyond the call of duty. I also dedicate this thesis to the family that provided the inspiration: Jane Hurley, Frank Roach and their children, Megan and Christopher.

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Chapter I

Overview

Recently researchers (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982;
Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Taylor, 1983, for example)
have determined that children, living in a literate society
such as ours, make many discoveries about and advancements
toward literacy prior to formal academic instruction; these
preschool literacy-related discoveries seem to be
intricately connected with later success or frustration
with literacy acquisition in school. A child's parents are
among the most important factors in helping the child to
make preschool literacy-related discoveries and therefore
have a major effect on the child's process of literacy
acquisition. Yet, for many Canadian children, daycare is a
fact of life: non-parental supplementary child care is a
feature and a requisite of our society (Cook, 1984).
Daycare caregivers may replace, at least in terms of time,
the parent to an appreciable extent. Therefore, it is
appropriate to study daycare in relation to literacy
learning but to date, this issue is largely unexplored.
The major purpose of this research project was to describe
the literacy environment of a daycare centre.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework
Prior to the 1970's, the idea that children were not

developmentally ready to read and write until the age of 6 years was prevalent among many early childhood teachers. This idea was widely accepted for a number of related reasons. First, Morphett and Washburnes' (1931) conclusion that the teaching of reading should be postponed until children had reached a mental age of 6.5 years was "almost universally accepted" (Gentille, 1983, p.171). Second, reading and writing were defined by how closely adult standards were imitated (Mason & Allen, 1986). Third, the process by which one learned to read and write was thought to be one of learning hierarchical subskills so that cumulative knowledge of all subskills resulted in reading and writing. One of the fundamental subskills was an understanding of grapheme to phoneme correspondence (Chall, 1967). These understandings of reading and writing in concert with research methodologies which focused upon the control and manipulation of discrete, isolated variables led to the asking and answering of research questions which largely continued to propagate the already held idea that children were not ready or able to read and write before age 6.

Since that time, many of these ideas have changed. First, a range of criticisms have been directed toward the Morphett and Washburne (1931) study. As a result, the idea of mental age as the sole determining factor effecting readiness to read is no longer predominant. Second,

researchers in the 1980's have developed broader definitions of reading and writing. The "fit" between adult standards and what a child offers is now seen to be less significant than the child's movement along a continuum toward both an understanding of the functions of reading and writing and how to read and write. And naturalistic research methods, which may focus on what the child is trying to do, have allowed researchers to examine and begin to understand children's knowledge of literacy and related undertakings (Mason & Allen, 1986). Research, proceeding in this manner, has examined notions of preschool literacy learning with an emphasis on "emergent literacy."

Emergent literacy represents "a new perspective which stresses that legitimate, conceptual, developmental literacy learning is occurring during the first years of a child's life" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. 28) largely due to the influence of the home literacy environment. Parents, as purveyors of this environment, are thus instrumental in their children's preschool literacy learning (Brailsford, 1986; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Glazer, 1989; Harste, Woodward, & Burke 1984; Heath, 1983; Juliebo, 1985, 1987; Luyan & Wooden, 1984; McGee & Richgels, 1990; Rasinski & Fredricks, 1988; Snow, 1983; Strickland & Taylor, 1989; Sulzby & Teale, 1989; Taylor, 1983; Teale, 1986; Vukelick, 1984). Some researchers (Brailsford, 1986; Heath, 1983;

Juliebo, 1985, 1987; Morrow, 1989; Teale, 1986) have asserted that preschool literacy learning may be strongly connected with later success or frustration with literacy instruction in school.

A composite picture of the literate home environment emerges from the research literature. In this environment, parents engage their children in extended conversations, they read to their children and help them to determine the functional nature of print through the joyful unforced inclusion of literacy events of functional value within the context of everyday life. In this environment, parents have expectations for their children's literacy development. Usually, it is the parents' intent to enrich their children's lives and chances for success, but the parents rarely see themselves as teachers and the instructional aspect of literacy learning in this environment is clearly subjugated to the loving closeness that the vehicle of literacy interaction allows (Taylor, 1983).

How a composite picture of the home literacy environment compares to that of the daycare literacy environments in which many Canadian children spend much of their preschool lives is unknown. Herein lies the guiding research concern: If preschool children make many discoveries about literacy and literacy-related issues in the home environment and if these discoveries influence

later success or frustration with literacy acquisition, then what happens to preschool literacy learning for daycare children. In short, what is the literacy environment of daycare? This question was addressed in the context of one daycare centre through a naturalistic research design using ethnographic techniques.

Problem

The purpose of conducting this research was to investigate the literacy environment of a government-approved daycare centre. To develop understanding of this broad question, the following subquestions were asked:

1. What is the oral language environment of the daycare centre?

2. What is learned about literacy through play in the daycare centre?

3. What is the nature of storybook interaction in the daycare centre?

4. What other instances of literacy learnings are occurring in the daycare?

Significance of the Study

This study has theoretical significance because it

provides insights into a virtually unexplored area: the literacy environment of a daycare centre. Thus, it adds to the current body of emergent literacy literature.

Exploring this problem has practical significance because daycare caregivers may benefit from a deeper understanding of how literacy has been and can be involved in a daycare program. The research findings may offer direction to caregivers in terms of encouraging situations which allow literacy learning to take place. Daycare children may in turn benefit from an environment which is conducive to literacy learning.

Limitations of the Study

Factors 1 and 2 were identified as affecting the transferability of the findings of this study while factor 3 was identified as affecting the credibility of the research findings.

1. Among the range of daycare settings available, the research site daycare centre may not be typical.

2. Among preschool children's oral language capabilities, the oral language informant's oral language capability may not be typical.

3. Although precautions were taken to reduce the impact of the researcher's presence, her presence may have affected the caregivers and the children.

Following this introductory chapter, chapter two

provides a review of the related literature. Chapter three then presents the research methodology while chapter four offers a presentation and discussion of the data. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the study, a final discussion, the implications of this study for practice and recommendations for further research.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

In this chapter, a review of the research literature relevant to the topic of literacy learning in the preschool years is provided. In the first two sections of this review, studies which have examined a wide spectrum of literacy-related behavior in the context of the family setting are addressed. In these sections, research concerning what mainstream parents generally do to encourage literacy learning is offered followed by a review of studies which have addressed the question of what nonmainstream parents do with regard to their children's literacy learning. In the next three sections of this review of literature, studies which have addressed particular variables which impact on preschool literacy learning are addressed. In order of presentation, these variables are: storybook reading, oral language, and play. It should be noted that the predominate focus of the review of literature is upon the impact of the parents on a child's literacy learning but that where possible this literature has been complemented with daycare research findings. Daycare-related oral language studies are found in the oral language section of this chapter.

Mainstream Family Literacy

In the following section, studies which have examined
a wide spectrum of literacy-related behavior in the context
of the mainstream family setting are addressed. As shall
be seen, the theme of a parent, unaware of his/her role as
a reading or writing teacher yet providing literacy
experiences for the child in a secure emotional
environment, recurs throughout this literature.

Taylor (1983) offers substantial evidence to support
the claim that parents can promote their children's
literacy acquisition. Taylor studied six middle-class
white American families over a period of three years. Each
family had a child who was judged to be successfully
learning to read. The literacy acquisition process of
these children as affected by the family was the focus of
the naturalistic investigation.

"The individual biography and educative styles of the
parents" were judged to be "the dominate factors in
determining the literate experience of children in the
home" (p. 23). Based on these factors, the parents
commonly wished to provide their children with a better
learning experience than they had had. For example, a
father who had been exposed to harsh discipline as a young
person learning to read and write, maintained that his
child would learn in a happy, free environment. Similarly,
a mother who could not remember being read to as a child

read frequently to her child. In addition to the common theme of parents providing for their children the opportunities for literacy they themselves had missed, there were other significant common factors which contributed to literacy development.

In all families, the parents did not consciously provide reading and writing instruction. Instead, the unforced, natural inclusion of literacy activities "within the fabric of everyday life" (p. 87) provided a loving and encouraging social context that was conducive to learning. In this atmosphere, parents helped the child to discover the functional nature of print. This was accomplished initially by the parents' mediation and interpretation of environmental print for the child. Additionally and importantly, the parents modelled everyday literacy activities such as reading recipes, paying bills, writing shopping lists and responding to letters. Through observing and engaging in these simple literacy activities, the child realized that literacy functions to organize daily living and to mediate social interaction among people. In addition to helping the child discover the functional nature of print, parents modelled reading and writing for enjoyment. They read daily to the child and focused on different genres. Parents provided the physical implements necessary for writing activities and encouraged daily writing. The focus of these activities was social in

nature. The parents were patient and encouraged literacy-
related queries. Finally, the parents verbalized the value
of literacy.

In summary, literacy developed as a social process of
functional utility. The child learned and developed an
awareness of written language forms and functions through
the socially significant literacy activities in which they
engaged.

Juliebo (1985) conducted a four-month naturalistic
inquiry into the literacy world of five preschool children.
For purposes of this paper, the study of one of those
children, Wendy, will be reported. The investigator sought
to describe the intentions of Wendy's parents, the parent-
child interactions and the subsequent effect on the child's
developing literacy. Following this phase of the
investigation, Juliebo immediately conducted a ten-month
study of the child's literacy development in the context of
a kindergarten classroom. During this time, she continued
to study the home setting. From Juliebo's research, a
telling portrait of the parents' effect on the child's
developing literacy emerges.

In many respects, Juliebo's data serve to support
Taylor's. For example, the parents positively influenced
literacy development by exposing the child to many age and
developmentally appropriate experiences. These activities
were appropriate primarily because the parents allowed the

child to initiate most activities and only directed attention toward them for as long as the child was interested. These experiences were not looked upon as instructional, even though instruction was evident. For example, during one observed story reading session, the mother encouraged prediction, echo reading and focused the child's attention on the print. The literacy situations were characterized by love, sharing and enjoyment. Furthermore, the child was encouraged to experiment with literacy and was rewarded for such endeavors. The parents encouraged purposeful reading and writing on a daily basis and modified their language so that it was better understood by the child. They focused Wendy's attention on meaningful print in the environment and were excellent models of literacy. Finally, Wendy's parents reflected an extremely positive attitude toward literacy and schooling.

In addition to supporting Taylor's work, Juliebo focused and elaborated on the parents' (or literate others) mediation of literacy activities. She asserted that for a successful mediation to occur, both the mediator (parent) and the recipient (child) must exhibit intentionality: For example, during a storybook interaction the parent may ask the child to move closer and to look at the pictures. The child may smile, move closer to the mediator, and look at the pictures. In this case, both mediator and recipient appear to have the same intention, that is, to engage in

the storybook interaction as described. Furthermore, the
intention of the mediator must transcend the immediate
needs or concerns of the recipient. If, for example, the
child is hungry, the need to eat will be greater than the
need or desire to participate in a literacy activity. In
such a case, the mediation will probably not be successful.

In addition to these characteristics of intentionality
and transcendence, Juliebo reports that the interaction
must be endowed with meaning. The mediator must convey a
feeling of competence to the learner; the mediator must
choose an age-appropriate cultural learning experience and
the major emphasis must be on an interest shared by the
mediator and recipient. Mediated learning experiences were
evident in Wendy's parent-child interaction.

Wendy moved toward literacy at an accelerated rate as
compared to her classmates. Juliebo concluded that Wendy's
progress in literacy could be almost entirely credited to
the influence of the parents.

Brailsford (1986) also concluded that the parents'
mediation of print is intricately linked to a child's
discovery of the functional nature of print and the
subsequent development of literacy. The researcher studied
three children who entered kindergarten with a well-
developed knowledge of the reading process, High Print
Awareness (HPA), and three children with a more restricted
knowledge of the reading process, Low Print Awareness

(LPA). These children were studied from September to February of their kindergarten year. The purpose of the study was to determine the interconnections among knowledge acquired about reading, home and school literacy contexts, and print-related interactions. During this time, Brailsford made observations, collected documents and conducted parent and key informant interviews. The investigator deduced significant differences between the HPA and LPA children's interaction with their parents.

The HPA children experience print as an integral part of their lives. With the guidance of their parents, these children participated in reading and writing activities that were a natural and useful part of everyday life. These children were read to on a daily basis and storybook time was a cooperative time of physical closeness. During these times, the parents asked few questions but eagerly responded to child-initiated questions often linking textual ideas to everyday experiences. As a result of the "print mediational strategies" employed primarily by the parents, the HPA children were readers-in-progress. During the course of the year, they moved toward more self-regulated control of print, began integrating semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues, and began a more decontextualized reconstruction of meaning from the linguistic context of text itself.

In direct contrast, the LPA children did not

experience print as an integral part of life. Storybook reading was not a regular practice and the little reading that was done was not characterized as interactive. That is, parents read the story; the child simply listened. Additional print-related interactions were confined to infrequent formal work periods in which decontexualized reading and writing skills were practiced. The LPA children did not follow the same reader-in-progress route as the HPA children. For these children, reading became a disconnected, meaningless activity. The children learned to view reading as a "subject in grade one" which could only be mastered through recognition of isolated letters and words. Without the appropriate emphasis on meaning, the children became confused, frustrated and exhibited avoidance behavior toward print.

Not only do parents play a role in their children's literacy learning during the latter preschool years as suggested by the aforedescribed studies, but parents also may impact on their children's literacy learning in the very early years. Luyan and Wooden (1984) provide such evidence.

Luyan & Wooden (1984) investigated the reading, writing and language behaviors characteristic of 18-month old children. Two children were chosen with the expectation that both would "exhibit behaviors indicative of natural cognitive and environmental learning, as well as

developmental characteristics of familial socialization
practices" (p. 3). The children, a boy and a girl, were
given familiar books to examine. The researchers observed
both the independent behavior of the child and the
interaction among the child and the family. The
investigation of the child's writing was managed in a
similar way. The researcher provided the children with
writing implements and again observed each child
independently and interacting with other family members.

Even at this young age the children exhibited the
emergence of reading and writing-like behaviors. Both
children exhibited knowledge of book handling (e.g. page
turning), could indicate the end of a story and could label
pictures in the books. They indicated knowledge of
directionality and horizontal, vertical and circular forms.
Finally, they sat in a reading- or writing-like position.

The researchers assert that the parents were
instrumental in these developments. They claimed that as a
natural part of family life, the parents provided direct
experiences that enhanced the child's acquisition of
literacy. For example, the parents read storybooks and
engaged the child in scribbling activities and encouraged
their children to engage freely in increasingly independent
literacy behaviors such as looking at books and pretending
to read. The parents responded positively to these
literacy attempts. The researchers concluded that the

parents had created a loving, accepting environment that was conducive to exploratory literacy learning.

Vukelick (1984) summarizes many of the major points put forth in this review of literature. She suggests that a parent may enhance literacy acquisition by following these suggestions: read to your child daily; be a good literate model; provide books for your child; build a supportive reading atmosphere at home; talk and listen to your child; exemplify a positive attitude toward literacy; provide purposeful literacy-related experiences such as library trips; capture reading opportunities in the environment; provide contact with paper and pencils; address your child's interests and point out similarities and differences in the environment. Rasinski and Frederick (1988) complete this summary by adding that the type and quality of parent-child interaction is important.

In summary, parents have many ways of impacting upon their children's literacy learning. The purpose of this research project was to determine the literacy environment provided by a daycare setting. The mainstream home literacy environment as portrayed by the research literature provided numerous points of comparison through which the daycare literacy environment could be discussed.

Nonmainstream Family Literacy

The research cited thus far has dealt with middle-

class, mainstream parents and children. Now, the research addressing nonmainstream parents' influence on their children's literacy will be addressed.

Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines (1988) conducted a five year ethnographic study which focused upon the familial context in which young Black children living in urban poverty were becoming literate. There were four families involved in this study. As participant observers, the researchers observed the children at home and at school, recorded conversations, took photographs and collected materials that had been drawn or written by the children and their families. The researchers concluded that the children were exposed to and used literacy in ways very similar to Taylor's (1983) suburban families and Heath's (1983) townspeople: children were read to; family members received books for presents; magazines, books, and newspapers were brought, shared and discussed among older people; paper and writing implements were available; social and organizational messages and lists were sent back and forth between family members; children's homework was checked and help was given if necessary and, in some cases, children had the opportunity to watch a parent study. In summary, the family members were "active members in a print community in which literacy [was] used for a wide variety of social, technical, and aesthetic purposes, for a wide variety of audiences, and in a wide variety of situations"

(p.200). In this context, the children in this study were successfully becoming literate.

Teale (1986) studied a related issue but his conclusions were not as definite as Taylor and Dorsey-Gaine's. Teale investigated the relations between home background and the preschool literacy development of low-income children. The researcher used income level (less than $10,000 per year for a family of four), ethnicity (Anglo, Black, Mexican-American) and sex to select 24, 2.5-3.5 year-old subjects. The researcher was an observer participant. He collected field notes, made audiotapes and conducted interviews and less formal conversations with parents, subjects and siblings. On the one hand, Teale claims to have conducted longitudinal naturalistic observation, but does not state the length of the investigation. Without this information it is difficult for the reader to assess the trustworthiness of the results. On the other hand, Teale fully describes the extent and nature of the children's literacy experiences across different participant structures and domains of activity. Based on his observations, Teale calculated that the lowest amount of literacy interaction experienced by a child was five hundred hours per year. Other children experienced five times this amount of literacy interaction. He concluded that interaction even at the lower rate, especially with literate parents, may provide the child

with direct experience in the motives, action, operations and routines of literacy; these experiences may help the child develop new understanding about the functions, uses and "how-to" of reading and writing. However, Teale warns that parents clearly interact with their children in qualitatively different ways, and questions whether this has different consequences for children.

Heath (1983) conducted an ethnographic study from 1969-1978. As a result of this study, she offered much insight into the question of how parents interact with their children in qualitatively different ways and what the results of such interaction may be. During a period of government mandated racial desegregation, Heath studied the effects of the preschool home and community environment on the learning of language structures and uses which were needed in classrooms and job-settings. Three communities in the Piedmont Carolina's were studied: a white working-class community called Roadville, a Black working-class community called Trackton and a mainstream community of Black people and white people referred to as the Townspeople. As a participant observer, the researcher recorded field notes, audiotaped conversations, and videotaped interactions. In all segments of the investigation, Heath was as unobtrusive as possible and conducted her work in accordance with what was culturally normative. For example, Heath did not audiotape until the

mid-1970's when cassette players and audiotaping became common within the communities being investigated.

Heath deduced that the foremost factor in determining academic success, including literacy acquisition, was transmission of culture from parent to child. Culture is important because the way a child knows and expresses knowledge is culturally determined. This "way with words" must be the same as the schools' if the person is to experience academic success. Unfortunately for two of the three groups studied, their culturally determined way of knowing and expressing knowledge was not the same as that of the schools. Therefore, the young children belonging to these groups did not experience academic success. Furthermore, Heath concluded that during the preschool years, it is the quality, as judged by mainstream standards, not the quantity of parent-child interaction that helps to determine academic success. Finally, Heath claimed that parents who show an active interest in the school life of the child, and relate the school and home, affect academic development positively. These points will be elaborated through a more detailed presentation of the three study groups.

Roadville children's lives are culturally prescripted; from very early in life, parents demand that children fill their culturally predetermined role. In other words, a child must become a polite listener and must speak only

under appropriate conditions. Additionally, parents demand that speech relate absolute reality. Roadville parents read nursery rhymes, alphabet books, and collections of one- and two-line descriptions of animals and familiar objects but children are not exposed to sustained narratives. In response to these readings, children are expected to memorize passages and provide convergent answers to questions. Furthermore, Roadville children frequently hear oral testimonies as to the value of reading, but have little experience seeing parents reading or writing extended prose.

Due to the nature and quality of these interactions, Roadville children have a limited readiness for school. Because schools expect and reward good manners and conformance to particular roles, the Roadville children experience initial success in school. However, the knowledge gained in parent-child related activities is not advantageous. For example, the parents' emphasis on short reading activities, followed by parent-initiated questions with convergent predetermined responses do not help the child when he/she is required to synthesize parts into wholes (main ideas) or provide divergent responses to questions (for example, What is another way the story could have ended?). Furthermore, once a child is in school, Roadville parents feel that the education of the child is the sole responsibility of the school. The parents do not

interact with the school or partake in related activities such as assisting a child with homework. By separating school from the rest of the child's life, the child is unable to make the meaningful and important link between life inside and outside the classroom. Seeing no connections among what the child already knows, what he or she feels he or she needs to know and what the school demands, the Roadville child soon falls behind in school, usually biding his time until school can be legally terminated and a family can be started.

Trackton children follow a different route to the same destination. Parents provide the child with numerous opportunities for oral interaction but the child is expected to listen, to observe and to organize language for him or herself. When oral language has developed sufficiently, the child is encouraged by his or her parents to participate in the culturally sanctioned practice of teasing and taunting others. Success or failure in this practice largely determines one's position in the community social order.

In addition to the use of language which is different from the mainstream, Trackton children also learn to respond to questions in a nonmainstream way. Literally accurate responses to many questions have little value. Instead, children are encouraged to respond with creative answers that show an understanding of the non-literal

meaning of a question and the relationship between the questioner and the respondent. For example, an older man asks "What's that like?" referring to a flat tire on a neighbor's car. The young man politely responds "Doug's car, never fixed" (p. 104).

Additionally, the parents expose their children to little print and do not provide models of either reading or writing of extended prose. They do not expound the value of reading and writing. Finally, the children are rewarded by their parents in an unpredictable manner; the child does not know from moment-to-moment what behavior will be rewarded or punished.

As a result of these early childhood processes, Trackton children are unprepared cognitively, linguistically and socially for the demands of mainstream school. The children are baffled at the school's manner and use of speech, and the obviously different systems of values and rewards. Trackton children fall quickly into a pattern of failure and drift through school hoping to escape with a diploma.

In contrast to the experiences of Roadville and Trackton children, the Townspeople prepare their children for school in essentially the same mainstream way as previously reported by Taylor (1983) and Juliebo (1986). Once children enter school, the home and school are carefully linked by the parents so that each environment

reinforces and supports the other. Most children from Townspeople families learn to read and write and are successful in school.

In summary, it appears that when children are introduced to life, language and literacy in a mainstream way, success with literacy acquisition is experienced. Part of the mandate of this study was to determine if the experiences (the reading of sustained narratives, for example) normally associated with mainstream culture were offered by the caregivers to the daycare children.

Storybook Interaction

As evidenced by the previous review of literature, parents reading storybooks to their children is a recurring theme in the research literature. Studies which focus specifically on preschool storybook reading will now be discussed.

Sulzby and Teale (1987) guided a three year descriptive research effort which concentrated upon "how parents read to their preschool-aged children and what it is that young children seem to internalize from being read to" (p. 2). The researchers observed parent-child book reading in eight families. Four of the families had low incomes, while the remaining families had middle incomes. Of each group of four families, two families were of Mexican-American heritage and two families were of Anglo

heritage.

As a result of this research, six generalizations were advanced. To begin with, Sulzby and Teale declared that variation in language and social interaction is characteristic of storybook readings and that furthermore, except in a very general sense, no one text mediation strategy can guarantee ultimate reading achievement in school. Second, the researchers asserted that storybook reading is a socially constructed activity between the parent, the child and the text; the language and the social interaction that surround the text are as much a part of the storybook reading as the text itself. Third, the language and social interactional characteristics of the storybook reading change as a function of the child's age and familiarity with the text. For example, the interaction may be less dialogic as a child is able to listen for longer periods of time. Or as a child becomes more familiar with a text "as the child or children [gain] more worldly experience and linguistic facility, and even as the emotional or physical state of the participant [changes] from reading to reading" (p. 65) the language and social interaction associated with storybook reading will change accordingly. Fourth, the researchers concluded that storybook reading interaction becomes internalized as children read the same book repeatedly. During repeated storybook reading, a parent provides appropriate support

and assistance so that a child is able to participate in a reading event and learn from it. Fifth, children seem to internalize the patterns of storybook reading from being read to and spontaneously engage in story book reinactments. Finally, and very importantly, the researchers emphasized storybook reading as an integral part of family life: parents offer storybook reading as comfort, as a part of play and as a cultural ritual but do not offer storybook reading in an overt attempt to teach reading skills. Some of Sulzby and Teale's conclusions are consistent with the earlier work of Doake (1984).

Doake (1984) studied the reading development of four preschool children as it occurred in the natural setting of the home. The children ranged in age from 2.11 to 5.5 at the beginning of the study. The researcher, a participant observer, visited the research site collecting fieldnotes, audiotapes and parents' daily observation notes over a period of seven months. During this time, the child participants moved from a "generalized global control of whole stories to an increasingly finer control" (p. 560).

In agreement with Sulzby and Teale (1987), Doake concluded that for the children in his study, reading was an integral, positive part of family life. The process of learning to read was directed and regulated by the child with the parents acting as facilitators rather than instructors. Doake determined further a number of

conditions that seemed to be important if children were to
develop positive and powerful attitudes towards books.
Doake (1984) asserted:

> The parents should exhibit and convey positive
> feelings of enjoyment of books and reading. They
> should be prepared to read to their children
> frequently and for increasingly longer periods of time
> from very early in the children's lives. An adequate
> supply of good quality books should be readily
> accessible to the children who should be permitted to
> select some favorite stories. If younger siblings are
> read to in the company of older siblings, care should
> be take to allow the younger siblings to participate
> in the reading at an overt level on an equal basis
> with the older sibling. (p. 573)

Furthermore, the researcher offered suggestions regarding
the reading techniques of the parents. He suggested that
the parent should adjust his or her rate of reading so that
the child may participate in the reading encounter. Also,
as Sulzby and Teale (1987) asserted, parents should reread
stories. In the rereading of stories, Doake (1984)
claimed, the parents made:

> seemingly intuitive attempts to encourage the child to
> participate. If the parent consistently encouraged
> the child to participate without being demanding, the
> child engaged in playing the role of reader; however,

if the parent corrected the child, reading-like

behavior was reduced if not eliminated. Questions

were aimed at increasing the child's involvement and

were never extended to the point of interfering with

the child's enjoyment. (p. 534)

Finally, it was Doake's contention that the children in his

study, all of whom experienced preschool reading under

these positive conditions, came to view learning to read as

a joyous activity of functional value.

In addition to longer term studies such as Sulzby and

Teale (1987) and Doake (1984), many other researchers have

investigated particular aspects of storybook reading

through studies of shorter duration. These studies offer

salient clues to the development of the whole storybook

reading picture; a number of these studies will now be

described.

Ninio and Bruner (1978) conducted a study which

focused upon the picture book "reading" of middleclass,

English mother and child dyads. Each dyad was videotaped

during picture book reading in their respective home

settings. The videotaping took place over a one year

period. The researchers chose one dyad as representative

of all dyads and then examined the appropriate videotapes

in detail. The child in the chosen dyad was age 8-months

at the beginning of the videotaping and was age 18-months

at the end. The researchers concluded that the mother

established a routine dialogue around the activity of picture labelling. The routine involved:

(a) one participant getting the other to focus his or her attention on a picture; (b) attempting to get the other participant to label the picture; (c) if this is done, providing positive or negative feedback on his or her performances; (d) if this is not done, the first participant providing a label for the picture. (Snow and Ninio, 1986, p. 119 describing Ninio & Bruner, 1978)

Ninio (1980a) replicated these findings in another study in Israel. The researcher again focused upon the picture book "reading" of mother-child dyads. The forty Hebrew-speaking dyads were either low-SES persons of Asian or North African origin or high-SES people of European origin. Each dyad was observed once in the home setting. During the observation each dyad interacted with 3 books which the researcher had brought into the home specifically for this reason. The average age of each child was 19 months. Ninio concluded that all mothers in this study established routine dialogue around the activity of picture labelling. Ninio concluded further, however, that the teaching styles of the low-SES mothers differed from that of the high-SES mothers. The low-SES mothers did not exhibit skill in eliciting active labelling from their infants. In the researcher's opinion, this probably

resulted in the low-SES infants' productive vocabularies being less firmly established than the high-SES infants productive vocabularies.

While Ninio (1980a) appears to be suggesting a socioeconomic status-related connection, Sulzby and Teale (1987) asserted that:

> one of the reasons for including both lower and middle income families (in their study) was to see if any characteristic patterns of mediating books for young children could be associated with socioeconomic factors .... they found however, that differences among families could not be accounted for simply in terms of income level .... Rather, a more complicated pattern emerged, showing that individual differences in style of interaction were products of a number of factors in the family and personality of the individuals involved. (p. 69)

The findings of Heath and Thomas (1984) agree with Sulzby and Teale's position. Heath investigated parent-child storybook interaction in an unusual way. The researcher was involved in the writing activities of a grade nine class. Among the members of this class was a 16-year old Trackton resident named Charlene Thomas. Charlene was the mother of two children and early in the school year she was forced to drop out of school. In an effort to motivate a high school dropout to keep reading and writing, Heath and

the classroom teacher encouraged Charlene to read to her youngest child, to audiotape the readings and to write a summary of the child's play immediately following the reading. The researcher provided Charlene with books, audiotapes and a tape recorder. These items and the activity of book reading were foreign to her household. The study progressed for one year. The tapes and summaries were given to the researcher who compiled a profile of the child's preschool literacy learning. While Trackton parents do not exhibit the same routines and patterns of talking, reading and writing as mainstream school-oriented parents, Charlene "found her own way to numerous literacy strategies" (p. 67), which resulted in her son's achievement of preschool literacy awareness. Heath proposed that the major factors associated with this uncommon success were Charlene's motivation, the introduction of literacy artifacts, the literacy event of book-reading, and Charlene's use of simplified language. The researcher concluded that, in this case, a more mainstream approach to literacy acquisition was successful during the period of investigation.

In another attempt to better understand storybook reading and why it may influence literacy development, Hayden and Fagan (1987) investigated a different aspect of storybook reading. The study was designed to investigate how parents of high and low print aware children

contextualize stories for their children in terms of their prior knowledge. Storybook reading interactions were tape recorded.

The researchers found that parents of high print aware children routinely contextualize stories within the child's own world knowledge and experience which "may be providing a sense-building support system for their children" (p. 160). "The parents reached into the life of the child to find concrete instances which related the decontexualized concepts presented in the text" (p. 164) to help the child interpret stories in light of their own experience. By doing this, Hayden and Fagan assert, the parent demonstrated to the child that reading is a meaning-getting process in which "one may gain knowledge from the print but one's understanding of it lies within one's own experience" (p. 164). This understanding may account in part for their children's advanced literacy development upon entering school. Conversely, the parents of low print aware children did not routinely contextualize stories for their children. This type of storybook reading experience may partly account for these children not advancing in literacy development at the same rate as the high print aware children.

The final storybook-related research to be reported is that of Snow and Ninio (1986). In 1986, Snow and Ninio joined forces to reveal more about storybook reading.

Snow and Ninio (1986) reanalyzed their previous
research (Snow 1983; Snow & Goldfield, 1982, 1983; Snow,
Nathan & Perlmann, 1985; Ninio, 1980a, 1980b, 1983; Ninio &
Bruner, 1978):

> on the interaction between parents and their preschool
> children during book reading in order to reveal how
> children are inducted into literacy and especially how
> they are tutored in the special rules that hold for
> literate, but not for face-to-face encounters. (p.
> 121-2).

As a result of this process, Snow and Ninio put forth seven
"contracts of literacy" or basic rules which children must
learn relating to the use of books and the meaning of
texts. The rules are: (1) books are for reading, not for
manipulating; (2) in book reading, the book is in control,
the reader is led; (3) pictures are not things but
representatives of things; (4) pictures are for naming; (5)
pictures, though static, can represent events; (6) book
events occur outside real time; (7) books constitute an
autonomous fictional world. Parents help the child to
establish these rules through considerable direct teaching,
through modelling, by paying attention to and encouraging
appropriate interaction with the text while discouraging,
ignoring and/or reprimanding inappropriate interaction.
Finally, Snow and Ninio asserted that parents help their
children by pointing out the real-life relation and

relevance of symbols.

In summary, while there is a measure of disagreement among researchers on the subject of the relative influence of SES on how parents may interact with their child during story reading, other areas of story reading-related research indicate accord. In general, parents act as facilitators during a process in which the reading of favorite stories is an integral, positive part of family life. A portion of this research undertaking examined the provision and character of storybook reading interaction and experience as offered by daycare caregivers to the daycare children.

Having discussed literacy learning in the general context of the family, and more specifically within the context of storybook experience, relevant oral language studies will now be described.

Oral Language

Relevant oral language-related studies will now be offered. The literature provides evidence not only of what a parent may do to encourage oral language development, but of what a daycare worker may do to encourage the same.

Wells (1986) tracked the language development of thirty-two children from "shortly after their first birthdays until the last year of their primary (elementary) schooling" (p. 14). As a result of this longitudinal

study, the researcher had much to say about language and literacy development. For purposes of this review of literature however, only selected portions of the research proceedings and findings will be offered.

During the preschool phase of this investigation, the children were observed and tested every three months; the children's abilities to comprehend and to imitate the sentences of a simple story were tested. Daily verbal interaction was recorded via a tiny microphone that was worn consistently by each child. The microphone recorded the child's interaction at intervals during the day; the child (and the child's family) did not know when the microphone was recording. Parent interviews were also conducted to elicit information regarding the home environment and the parents' views of child rearing. Through this procedure, the researcher sought to determine first, if there was a general sequence of language development and second, the influence of the home environment on language development.

Wells concluded that language development does follow a general pattern, and most importantly in terms of the present investigation, that the ways in which a parent interacts with his/her child can influence language development. Wells (1986) claims that:

What seems to be more important is that, to be most helpful, the child's experience of conversation should

be in a one-to-one situation in which the adult is
talking about matters that are of interest and concern
to the child, such as what he or she is doing, has
done or plans to do, or about activities in which the
child and adult engage together. The reason for this
is the fact that, when both child and adult are
engaged in a shared activity, the chances are
maximized that they will be attending to the same
objects and events and interpreting the situation in
similar ways. This means that they will each have the
best chance of correctly interpreting what the other
says and so of being able collaboratively to build up
a shared structure of meaning about the topic that is
the focus of their interselective attention. (p. 44-
45)

Based on these research findings, Wells (1986) offered four
ways in which a parent can facilitate such purposeful
conversation. The four principles that were suggested
were:

to treat what the child has to say as worthy of
careful attention; to do one's best to understand what
he or she means; to take the child's meaning as the
basis of what one says next; in selecting and encoding
one's message, to take account of the child's ability
to understand -that is, to construct an appropriate
interpretation.

(p. 28)

Wells' emphasis on the importance of an adult conversing with a child about a topic of interest and concern to the child substantiates the earlier work of Snow (1983). In an expository article in the Harvard Educational Review, Snow claimed that "semantic contingency" is important in literacy acquisition. An adult's response to a child's literacy-related statement or query is semantically contingent if, first and foremost, the topic which has been initiated by the child is addressed. "Topic initiations by adult speakers and attempts to switch the topic from one introduced by the child constitute semantically noncontingent speech, and the frequency of such utterances in parent's speech correlate negatively with children's gains in language ability" (p. 167). The adult's response should answer the question, clarify or elaborate on the statement. Examples of semantic contingency to literacy behaviors include answering questions about letter and number names, clarifying word spacing concepts and giving help with writing upon request.

The role of meaningful dialogue in language development was similarly espoused in a study which specifically focused upon the language environment of a daycare setting. Rodgers, Perrin and Waller (1987) conducted a 5-month study in a university laboratory child

care centre in a small, midwestern American town. The study involved a teacher who had guided 6-week to 6-year-old children over her 7-year career. The teacher had been "evaluated by children, parents, teachers and administrators as outstanding" (p. 18). The twelve boys and six girls being observed were aged 3-5 years old and were children of either university students, university faculty members or professionals in the community. The final questions considered in this study were: "What is the relationship between the teacher and children?" and, "What is the type and structure of teacher questioning?" These questions were asked to "provide some insight into how language development and learning through language exchange can be facilitated in child care, preschool and kindergarten settings" (p. 18). Through the course of the investigation the researchers determined that the teacher's open and trusting relationship with the children created an essential platform for extended dialogue and meaningful language exchange. The researchers concluded further that the teacher listened attentively to the children's utterances and responded with "questions which encouraged open, extended conversations; eschewed questions which solicited brief, factual answers; and maintained relatively long, natural, and child-centered conversations with the children as opposed to brief, contrived dialogues" (p. 1).

The final study to be reported is that of Nurss, Hough

& Goodson (1981). The researchers' findings complement those of the studies quoted thus far.

Nurss, Hough and Goodson (1981) were among the first researchers to address literacy-related questions in a daycare environment. The purpose of their research was to determine whether the language environment provided in the daycare centres was conducive to prereading and language development. To determine this, the researchers observed the usual daily activities of 8 children in 2 daycare centres; 4 children were from each centre. One group of children were from Black families of lower socioeconomic means. The second group of children consisted of 3 white and 1 Black persons of middle to upper-middle socioeconomic status. In both centres the staff: child ratio was 1:4. The children were aged 4.6 to 5.2 at the time the language data were collected. In addition to the researcher's observation, sources of data included the individual subject's oral description of a picture and the individual subject's telling of the story evoked by a wordless picture book. The researchers asked questions to assess further the child's understanding of the picture and the storybook. Measures of vocabulary (number of words, number of different words, type-token ratio) and syntax (number of garbles, T-units, contractions, prepositions, compound T-units and mean T-unit length) were also recorded. The results of the study indicated that the children "were able

to describe a picture or tell a story with a variety of vocabulary and relatively long syntactic structure. However, they had only a partial comprehension of the pictures, and they did not have a well-developed sense of story" (p. 29). Specifically, the children's description of the picture was limited to the labelling of items, descriptions of actions and attributes of objects, and, the telling of the story showed no plot, emotion or consistency of tense. The researchers placed this lack of expressive language use in the context of the daycare centres' language environment. They surmised that the preponderance of teacher-directed activities which emphasized the asking of questions with "accurate verbal response(s)" (p. 30) and the "large group experiences primarily (involving) either listening to the teacher talk or experiencing no language at all" (p. 30) gave little opportunity for expressive language development. Additionally, the researchers put forth the opinion that storybook reading when used primarily as a large group "transitional" or "quieting" activity rather than as an activity used to stimulate language and discussion, gave the children little opportunity to develop language skills and story sense. In summary, the language environment of the daycare centres was not wholly conducive to prereading and language development.

In the oral language studies reported in this review

of literature, conversation, that is, dialogue, was
considered necessary for furthering oral language
development; oral language is the foundation of the
literate acts of reading and writing. Additionally,
dialogue was considered a primary means of learning about
the world; knowledge of the world includes both literacy-
related knowledge and the other "schematic" knowledge that
is necessary for text understanding. One of the purposes,
then, of this research endeavor, was to determine the
presence or absence of dialogue in the daycare setting,
place this interaction in the context of other observed
language, and to discuss all observed oral interaction as
it may impact on the process of literacy acquisition.

"One of the richest settings for studying children's
use of language is natural, ongoing, social play" (Yawkey &
Miller, 1984, p.96). For this and other literacy-related
reasons, the structure and nature of play in the daycare
will be studied in this research effort. Relevant play-
related studies are therefore related in the following
section.

Play and Literate Behavior

The importance of play in the lives of children has
not always been recognized. Schmid, writing in the 1800's,
offered:

play of whatever sort should be forbidden in all

evangelical schools, and its vanity and folly should

be explained to the children with the warnings of how

it turns the mind away from God and eternal life, and

works destruction to their immortal souls. (Schmid,

cited in Gross, 1901, p. 399)

Rubin (1980) claims that some still consider play to be

"developmentally trivial and educationally irrelevant"

(p.viii). Contrary to this point of view, others regard

play as a dominant and important activity in the lives of

children. Froebel (1887) claims that "play is the purest,

most spiritual activity of man" (p.54). Gross (1901)

similarly proposes that play "affords a reaction from the

stress and strain of life ... and ... satisfies the

natural demand for pleasure" (p.399) and furthermore gives

"opportunity for free, self-originated activity and

practice to the physical and mental capacities" (p.399).

Liebermann (1977) espouses the place of playfulness, "with

its component parts of spontaneity, manifest joy and sense

of humor" (p. 124) in everyday living. Levy (1978) posits

that play unifies the mind, body and soul and claims

further that when these aspects of human behavior are

integrated, the most can be made out of life's experiences.

In general, many experts now think that play is

instrumental in cognitive, social, physical and emotional

development (Rodgers and Sawyers, 1988).

　　With specific reference to the role of play in

literacy acquisition, Rodgers and Sawyers (1988) state
"although play is not a necessary condition for learning
language and literacy skills, play is probably the best
environment for these abilities to thrive" (p.64).
Glickman (1979) also argued this position. He hypothesized
that the reason for young children's declining scores in
language, reading, and writing achievement tests was the
declining occurrence and quality of children's play in both
the home and school setting. Passive activities such as
watching television or memorizing letter names were, in
Glickman's estimation, inadequate preparation for the
symbolic and linguistic skills necessary for success on
achievement tests. Glickman's solution to this problem -
let the children engage in free play. A number of studies
which investigated the role of play in literacy acquisition
will now be reviewed.

Influenced by Glickman's hypothesis, Pellegrini (1980)
observed the free play of thirty-seven male and twenty-nine
female kindergarten children of mixed socioeconomic
backgrounds to determine the intercorrelation between
different types of play, gender and SES on achievement in
language, reading and writing. Play was categorized as
functional, constructive, dramatic or games-with-rules.
The researcher observed no instances of games-with-rules.
Achievement was measured according to a standardized test
routinely administered to the kindergarten subjects. The

researcher determined "the 3 levels of play (functional, constructive and sociodramatic) were highly related to the achievement variables, whereas the demographic variable (sex and gender) appeared to be generally unrelated to the achievement variables" (p. 532). Furthermore, "the highest mode (of play) observed was dramatic play and it was the best predictor of achievement" (p. 535). To explain these results, Pellegrini suggested that the cognitive demands of play are similar to the cognitive demands of language, reading and writing. For example, dramatic play requires that the child use the symbolic medium of language to "redefine player's roles and propose functions in the process of creating a fantasy play theme" (p. 534). During this, the child enacts the process by which symbols are defined and interpreted: meaning is assigned to arbitrary forms. The "becoming conscious" of this concept, Pellegrini reports, is key in literacy acquisition. The researcher concluded that environments must be created that allow children to engage in many forms of free play.

McCune (1985) succinctly clarified Pellegrini's argument for the significance of symbolic play. In her work on language production and symbolic play, McCune claimed that while more prerequisite skills and experience are required for language production than for symbolic play, the ability to symbolize is the shared cognitive basis for development in both domains. During symbolic

play, the pretend act represents an underlying knowledge of the correspondence between a signifier and the signified. This, McCune claims is "equivalent to the use of some entity existing in the object world" (p. 70); therefore, pretend play should enhance language production.

Pellegrini (1985) continued his investigation of symbolic play in a correlation study entitled "Relations Between Preschool Children's Symbolic Play and Literate Behavior." In this study, the researcher examined the extent to which aspects of symbolic play (symbolic transformations, social-cognitive organization, decontextualized organization and conflicts) related to literate language. Specifically, the researcher advanced four hypotheses: ideational transformations are positively related to explicit language use; social play is positively related to literate behavior; the organization of children's decontextualized play is directly related to their literate behavior and conflict resolution is positively related to literate behavior. To test these hypotheses, the researcher observed twenty randomly chosen subjects and noted instances of play and literate behavior. Correlation coefficients were calculated and step-wise multiple regression analyses were computed. The researcher concluded that while there was an apparent relationship between symbolic play and literate behavior, the directionality of the relations was unclear and further

research was therefore necessary.

Wolf and Pusch (1985) examined another aspect of literate knowledge as exhibited and developed through play. They researched children's notions of autonomous text. In particular, they described children's strategies for protecting the text of play episodes (that is, oral narratives) from the intrusions of the "real" contextual world. For example, a child is playing with a doll. The child is describing what the doll is doing, "Barbie is very tired so she is going to sleep," for example. In the midst of the play episode, the child's mother calls the child for dinner. The question becomes "How does the child respond to the intrusion of the `real' contextual world in the middle of a play episode?" To find out, the researchers studied nine children between the ages of 1 and 7 years. The children were visited weekly between the ages of 1 and 3, and twice a month between the ages of 3 and 7. Each visit lasted approximately two hours and focussed upon a variety of structured and unstructured play situations. The role of the researchers was one "of an interested adult partner (providing) a kind of focus and scaffolding for narrative activity" (p. 69). As a result of this role, the data presented is, in the researchers' opinion, comparable to parent-child play data. The children in this study had "language histories which are filled with experience of hearing print: They have been read to, their parents

recite familiar stories on long car rides, they retell these stories to younger siblings" (p. 75). The researchers assert that these powerful models of discourse, characteristic of literate culture, help a child to be "sensitive to the expectation that a text can and often should stand apart from contextual events" (p. 75). The children exhibited understanding of this concept of autonomous text. In particular, the children showed three strategies which controlled the impact of contextual events on their fictional or "play" texts. Wolf and Pusch (1985) claimed:

> at first, an intrusion has the effect of momentarily fusing the contextual and textual worlds. Slightly later, the play text can withstand interruptions -but by absorbing them. At the close of the preschool years, a child can explicitly acknowledge just how she wants a particular interruption viewed in relation to the fictional text she is developing. (p. 75)

The researchers concluded that there is continuity between this understanding of text autonomy and the later written texts that the children will work on in reading and writing during formal school instruction; "children whose training dovetails with tasks and materials of formal schooling" (p. 75) may be advantaged in later literacy learning.

In summary, although the evidence is far from conclusive, there appears to be a relationship between

play, especially symbolic play, and literate language,
knowledge and behavior. Part of this research undertaking,
then, involved the determination of potential literacy-
related learnings during play.

Chapter Summary and the Relationship of the
Research Literature to the Research Project

As evidenced by the foregoing review of literature,
the preschool years are a time during which many literacy-
related variables impact upon the child. The oral language
environment (especially adult:child conversation), the
allowance for play (especially dramatic play), storybook
reading, as well as a range of other literacy-related
occurrences emerge as factors influencing preschool
literacy learning. While the preschool home literacy
environment has been investigated by many researchers, the
literacy environment of the daycare setting is largely
unexplored. The purpose of this research study was to
describe the literacy environment of the daycare centre.
To do this, the oral language environment, play, storybook
reading and other literacy-related occurrences in the
daycare were described as observed and then discussed in
light of what is known about the home literacy environment.

Chapter III

Methodology and Design

In this chapter the design of the study is described. Included in this chapter are descriptions of the conceptualization of the research project, ethnographic research, the procedures of the study, the context of the study, and the data analysis methods.

Conceptualization of the Research Project

The study was designed to provide insight into the literacy environment of a daycare centre. It was conceptualized as the result of two dominant influences.

The first and most dominant influence was a young family of whom the researcher was a frequent and interested observer. The researcher watched this family, fascinated by the role that literacy-related activities seemed to occupy within the boundaries of everyday family life. Literacy-related activities seemed to provide a vehicle for a host of interaction and emotion between the parents and children. Although the parents were keenly aware of the importance of providing literacy encounters for their preschool children, the ongoing literacy-related interaction observed transcended the simplistic explanation that these parents were readying their children for later academic learning. There was something more. As the

researcher watched the children's lives unfold, emerge, and develop within the dominating context of literacy-related activities, she began to reflect upon the role of the family in literacy learning and the role of literacy learning in family interaction.

As the researcher pondered and reflected upon these relationships, she came upon Family Literacy. This book became the second influential factor in the conceptualization of the research question. Family Literacy contained a summary of a three-year naturalistic study of the literacy world of six young families. The researcher/author, Taylor (1983), pointed to the tremendous impact that family members, especially parents, had had on the children's literacy learning. Taylor concluded that literacy learning occurred as part of the natural "fabric of everyday life" (p.87) and that much of literacy learning occurred "at the very margins of awareness through the continuously diffuse use of written language in the ongoing life of the family" (p.7).

Reading Taylor's findings in combination with the earlier reported "family observation" caused the researcher to wonder what literacy learning was like for a preschool child who was not at home with his or her parents. The question was raised: What happens to preschool literacy learning when a child spends much of his or her day in a daycare environment? When the researcher perused the

research literature for an answer to this question she was met with a paucity of studies. Collectively these studies were limited in number and only partially addressed the issue of preschool literacy outside the home. Because of this, the researcher decided that this general research direction should be pursued. Furthermore it was determined that because of this lack of research evidence, a mainstream, middleclass situation would be studied so that a basis for later comparative studies could be developed. Accordingly, the research question was refined to: What is the literacy environment of a middleclass daycare centre?

With this general research question in mind, research methodology was contemplated. The proposed research question required the exploration of context-based multidimensional social interaction in which the subject's version of the world is of paramount importance (Guthrie & Hall, 1984); therefore, naturalistic research using ethnographic techniques was judged a suitable research methodology. In the following section, ethnographic research is briefly described.

General Description of Ethnographic Research

Ethnography is a naturalistic research process which is "based on the belief that each culture has a unique world-view and ways of assigning meaning to human behavior" (Guthrie & Hall, 1984, p.92). The task of the ethnographic

investigator then, is to discover the sociocultural knowledge that people are using to organize their behavior and interpret their experiences (Bloom & Green, 1984). The ethnographer must endeavor to grasp the native's point of view, the native's relation to life and the native's version of his or her own world. A significant task of ethnography is "to make explicit what is implicit and tacit to informants and participants in the social setting being studied" (Spindler, 1982, p.7). In the final analysis, the ethnographer seeks to comprehensively describe what actually goes on (Spindler, 1982).

During the ethnographic research process, the researcher immerses him or herself in the social setting of a culture for a prolonged period of time. An open-ended inquiry is conducted which produces an indepth and often revealing account of everyday life. In conducting this open-ended inquiry, the investigator searches for the underlying meaning of complex social interaction. To understand the underlying meaning of complex social interaction, the researcher observes the participant. The participant is viewed as the expert: the person who can help the investigator understand what is happening and why. The participant's actions, both commonplace and deviant, are therefore observed with great interest. Ethnographers credit `deviant' behavior with explaining situations just as easily as representative `normal' behavior, so both

types of behavior are actively pursued in an attempt to discover meaning. This search for meaning within the context of the whole social setting is the ultimate concern of the ethnographer and is the unique and prominent strength of this research process (Bloom & Green, 1984; Spindler, 1982).

Because of the fit between the research question and ethnography as just described, it was decided that the research question could be pursued most adequately through naturalistic research using ethnographic techniques. It was then time to consider logistic problems. Logistic concerns such as gaining access to a suitable research setting and gathering preliminary information about the site had to be resolved before the next stage of the investigative process could begin. In the next section of this chapter, the researcher's search for a research site is described.

Locating a Research Site

The researcher's intention was to investigate the literacy environment of a mainstream, middleclass daycare centre. To ensure that the chosen daycare centre was mainstream and middleclass, the daycare centre had to meet three qualifying conditions. First, the daycare centre had to be government approved. This stipulation served to assure that the daycare centre met the minimum, mainstream

qualifying standards required by the Government of Alberta. Second, the daycare centre was to be chosen from the northwest area of Calgary. The northwest area of Calgary is a predominantly middleclass area; choosing this area helped to ensure that the majority of child participants had middleclass socioeconomic status. Finally, because the researcher wished to observe a mainstream daycare setting, the chosen daycare could not cater predominantly to special need groups, for example, exceptional children.

Having set these qualifying conditions, the researcher consulted the "Calgary Yellow Pages" (the business telephone directory) to construct a list of potential research sites. The researcher subsequently contacted potential daycare centres by telephone. The researcher spoke to the person in charge of each daycare centre. Upon identifying herself and briefly explaining the purpose of the call, the researcher requested a meeting at the daycare centre if, and only if, the daycare manager expressed interest in the research project. One-third of the 9 daycare centres contacted encouraged a later meeting; researcher visitation appointments were made accordingly. While visiting the second daycare centre, the researcher located an appropriate social setting.

The preliminary visit with the research site daycare manager.

The owner/operator/chief caregiver of the chosen daycare setting sounded interested in the study during the preliminary telephone conversation. She suggested a meeting the following afternoon at 1PM (while the children were sleeping). When the researcher arrived promptly the following afternoon at the appointed time, she was greeted by the owner and led down a short flight of stairs, through an immaculate eating room to a bright and airy kitchen area where they sat to discuss the research project. At the meeting, the researcher presented herself and the research project in as non-threatening a manner as possible. The researcher told the daycare manager that she was a graduate student interested in preschoolers and that she wished to know more about the process by which preschoolers get ready to read and write. The researcher stressed that she did not wish to evaluate anyone; rather, she wished to learn from the caregivers and children. Furthermore, the researcher stressed that she would interfere as little as possible with the normal functioning of the daycare setting; the researcher would observe the everyday normal activities and interaction of the daycare, would take notes on what was observed and would interview each caregiver for approximately one hour. The daycare manager was also told that she would have an opportunity to read and discuss the

interpretation of all observations and would also have an opportunity to read and comment upon the report prior to presentation. The interpretation of all observations would be member checked. A research report would then be written. The research report would ensure the anonymity of the daycare and all participants. Initially, the owner did not have any questions but responded that she had previously had students from Mount Royal College (who were enrolled in a daycare caregiver program) spend time observing in the daycare and, if the researcher also wanted to observe the daycare it would be fine.

At this point, the researcher sensed that the daycare manager was truly receptive to the project so she began to query the daycare manager about some necessary issues. Questions pertaining to the daycare's hours of operation, the number of years that the daycare had been operating, the lengths of time that the children had been in this daycare, the type of jobs held by the daycare children's parents, the daycare manager's educational background and how receptive she thought that the other caregivers and parents would be to the researcher's presence in the daycare were asked. The researcher intended that this meeting be not an inquisition but a gentle and polite information seeking meeting between two people who did not know each other but who, conceivably, would be spending a great deal of time together in the future. The responses

were favorable. As a result, the researcher felt reasonably assured that the daycare itself and the majority of the daycare children would remain for the duration of the study. Additionally, most of the children's parents seemed to hold middleclass-type jobs in fields such as teaching and business. This satisfied the research criterion that the child participants hold middleclass socioeconomic status. Above all, the researcher sensed that this somewhat shy but obviously knowledgeable and experienced woman would be supportive of the research endeavor and that the researcher would be welcome at her daycare centre. Within 1.5 hours, the daycare manager had read and signed a research site consent form. The researcher then gave the daycare manager consent forms to be signed by the parents for the daycare children. The other potential research site visit was cancelled.

Pilot Study

Prior to the initial observation period, a two-day pilot study was conducted. The pilot study was conducted at a site different from the site of the actual study. The pilot study site was (as was the research site) a government funded daycare centre in the northwest area of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The purposes of the pilot study were for the researcher to gain experience taking observational notes and conducting interviews, and to

determine the feasibility of the three research aids which were designed by the researcher to guide portions of the research process.

The first research aid to be fieldtested was a set of interview questions. The questions were to be used as guidelines in conducting semistructured interviews with daycare workers and management personnel (see Appendix A). During the pilot study the researcher used the interview questions to conduct one sample interview with one daycare worker. In this interview the questions, as formulated, elicited a wealth of salient information. Additionally, when the interviewee, a respected and experienced caregiver, was asked to comment on the interview, she responded that not only were the questions clearly stated and relevant but they were open ended enough to allow discussion of an infinite range of ideas. The open-ended, discussion-encouraging interview questions were therefore judged by the researcher to be adequate.

The second and third research aids to be fieldtested were designated the "Caregiver Coding System" and "Child Coding Systems" (see Appendices B and C). These coding systems had been developed to guide but not to the limit portions of the researcher's specific observation and documentation of caregiver and child literacy related interactions. The specific literacy-related interactions listed in the coding systems were based on what parents

routinely do to enhance their children's literacy development as presented in the research literature. It was thought that in addition to guiding the researcher's observation and documentation of caregiver and child literacy-related interactions, the coding systems would add a quantitative component to the research process thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the research findings.

According to each of these coding systems every child or adult literacy-related interaction would be noted. The amount of time spent on a specific interaction would be recorded and general comments about the interaction would be made. During the pilot study, each coding system was fieldtested for four hours. As a result of the pilot study, both the "Caregiver Coding System" and "Child Coding System" were deemed inadequate for use in this study. The judgement was made primarily because these coding systems stressed numbers (number of minutes, number of interactions) at the expense of quantitative information about the interaction. These systems necessitated a hasty attempt to note all literacy-related interaction and the associated time of interaction leaving little time to comment "contextually." As a result, vitally important contextual information was not being recorded. In other words, while these coding systems were fulfilling the role of a quantative, perhaps for some, trustworthiness enhancer, the systems were actually serving to limit the

researcher's understanding of the literacy environment.
Accordingly, the "Caregiver Coding System" and "Child
Coding System" were eliminated from the research design in
favor of full-time participant observation.

In summary, the pilot study served to check the
adequacy of the research aids and to refine the research
design accordingly. Furthermore, the pilot study provided
the researcher with some practice in interviewing and data
collection.

Research Procedure

The research procedure followed the ethnographic
research cycle. The six month ethnographic procedure took
place in two phases.

During the first phase, the researcher engaged in a
four week general observation of the entire daycare centre
context. The researcher was on site for seven to nine
hours per week. (The average waking time of a child in
this daycare was twenty-three hours per week.) During this
phase, the researcher strove to attain a suitable rapport
with the caregivers and children (see sections entitled
Rapport with Caregivers and Rapport with Children).
Additionally, the researcher familiarized herself with the
setting and began to construct contextual description. The
researcher did not record fieldnotes at this time: the
recording of fieldnotes may have interfered with the

rapport building process so the researcher wrote reflective notes following each research site visit. The reflective notes were predominantly guided by the broad question: What is the literacy environment of a government-approved daycare centre?

The second phase of the research process took five months. In this phase, the researcher observed for 100 hours. The observational time was apportioned evenly over the daycare centre's operational hours. In this phase, the ethnographic research cycle was repeated many times. Each new cycle was driven by the discovery and formulation of new questions or "working hypotheses". These emergent questions were more specific in focus than the initial broad research question. The major questions which emerged and therefore "drove" the researcher's collection and analysis of data were: 1) What is the oral language environment of the daycare? 2) What is the incidence and nature of play in the daycare? 3) What is the nature of storybook interaction in the daycare? and, 4) What other instances of literacy learnings are happening in the daycare?

Observation of the participants.

The researcher observed all children and caregivers to answer caregiver:child oral interaction, play, storybook,

and other literacy-related questions but chose one girl as
a child oral language key informant to answer questions of
child:child oral language. It was decided to primarily
track the language of one child because of task
manageability. In other words, given the overall mandate
of this research endeavor and a limited time frame, the
researcher could not develop an extensive language profile
for more that one child. The criteria for choosing the
child were two-fold: first, she was chosen because she was
very unlikely to stop attending the daycare. Second, and
just as importantly, she was in many ways typical of the
daycare population in terms of general oral language use:
she had quiet moments as well as less-quiet moments but
usually made her voice heard when necessary. Choosing an
oral language informant on this basis does not lead to the
presentation of the entire child:child oral language
picture but will, however, allow the reader an excellent
sense of Jenny's oral language world. From this, a sense
of child:child oral interaction in the daycare may be
inferred.

Data collection procedure.

As the initial research question and the later
emerging research questions dictated, the researcher
observed and recorded detailed description of the
activities of the people, the physical characteristics of

the social situation and what it felt like to be part of the scene. To assure that situational context was adequately understood and captured, the researcher halted the process of fieldnote taking every fifteen minutes for five minutes. During this time, the researcher observed carefully to reestablish the context. The fieldnotes were added to accordingly. Chains of events were observed more than once to allow the multiple reality of the contextual situation to unfold (Spindler, 1982).

The researcher audiotaped particular storybook sessions, caregiver-child interactions and child-child interactions. The audiotapes and the transcriptions offered the researcher the possibility of looking back and examining more closely otherwise lost situations.

The researcher collected pictures that the children had colored as referential data. It should be noted, however, that this source of data was scarce. This data source was scarce because the children routinely took everything that they made in the daycare centre home with them. To frequently disrupt this routine would not only have gone against a principle tenet of ethnographic research (that is, to disrupt the social setting as little as possible) but may have additionally proved upsetting for the caregivers and children.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the daycare manager and daycare workers. The

interviewees were asked to share their views on daycare and to provide some relevant personal data (e.g. educational background, reason for becoming a daycare worker). These data contributed to the overall construction of context. The interviewees were audiotaped and the interactions transcribed to guarantee referential adequacy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data sources and analysis.

Data analysis was conducted throughout the research project as categories of data emerged. The emerging categories were: 1) oral language data, 2) play data, 3) storybook data, and 4) other instances of literacy-related learnings. While these categories facilitated manageable analysis, analysis of one category was always done in light of analysis of other categories. Furthermore, there was considerable reanalysis of earlier data because of later findings. Data analysis was done in this way so that the complex pattern of related events and interaction in the daycare could be understood more fully and so that "thick description" would result.

The data sources for the oral language category were the researcher's observational fieldnotes of oral language interaction, audiotapes and transcriptions of caregiver-child interactions and child-child interactions, and an audiotape and a transcription of an interview with the

chief caregiver offering her view of oral language in the daycare. The analysis of these data consisted of determining the function and nature of both child:child interaction and caregiver:child interaction. The child:child language was analyzed according to Halliday's (1975) language function categories while the caregiver:child language was categorized as categories emerged from the data.

The data sources for the play category were the researcher's fieldnotes of play in the daycare, audiotapes and transcriptions of child-child interaction during play, and audiotapes and transcriptions of an interview with the chief caregiver in which she had put forth her opinion of the role of play in a preschooler's life. The analysis of these data consisted of determining the literacy-related learnings observed in play situations in the daycare.

The data sources for the storybook category were the researcher's observational fieldnotes of 30 storybook events, audiotapes and transcriptions of 8 storybook reading
sessions, and audiotapes and transcriptions of interviews with the daycare workers in which the daycare workers offered their perspectives on storybook reading in the daycare. The analysis of these data consisted of determining the chief caregiver's explicitly stated philosophy of storyreading, determining pre- and post-

storybook reading activities and determining ongoing storybook reading-related trends. A stopwatch was used to time pauses during storybook reading.

The data sources for the "other" category were the researcher's observational notes, a collection of the children's colored pictures, and audiotapes and transcriptions of daycare worker interviews in which the workers spoke on a wide range of issues. Analysis of these data consisted of determining the fit between what a parent may do to enhance literacy learning as evidenced in the research literature, and what was being done in the daycare.

Description of the Daycare Centre

The daycare centre is located on a quiet cul-de-sac in northwest Calgary. Mostly small, older homes occupy the neighborhood, but as is the trend in other older Calgary neighborhoods, larger, new homes are beginning to replace the older homes. This trend is due mainly to the prime location of this neighborhood; it is close to the University of Calgary, The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and is not far from Calgary's downtown core. The daycare centre occupies the lower half of the owner's split-level residence but has its own entrance. There is a fenced-in backyard play area with a slide, bicycles and other assorted outdoor toys. There is a playground and a

public park within a child's walking distance. (See
Appendix D for the physical organization of the daycare
centre.)

Description of the Daycare Children

In all, 14 daycare children were a part of this study.
There were 6 children present from the beginning to the end
of the study, while the other children were present for
lesser periods of time. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Description of the Children

name	sex	A	B	C		D	E	F
Clara	F	5	2yr	n/a		y	n	ECS
Heather	F	5	1yr	n/a		y	n	1
Jimmy	M	5	2yr	n/a		y	n	ECS
Jenny	F	4	2yr	n/a		y	n	n/a
Jamie	M	4	2yr	n/a		y	n	n/a
Cathy	F	4	2yr	n/a		y	n	n/a
John	M	4	n/a	Nov	88	y	Sandy	n/a
Sandy	M	3	n/a	Nov	88	y	John	n/a
Ashley	F	3	1mon	n/a		n	n	n/a
Karl	M	3	n/a	Dec	88	y	Laura	n/a
Matthew	M	3	n/a	Jan	89	y	n	n/a
Jacques	M	2	n/a	Jan	89	n	n	n/a
Kim	F	2	n/a	Feb	89	y	n	n/a
Laura	F	1.7	n/a	Dec	89	y	Karl	n/a

A = Child's age at the beginning of the study (Oct., 1988)

B = Length of time the child had spent at the daycare previous to Oct., 1988.

C = Arrival of child to the daycare if not present at the beginning of the study.

D = Was the child present at the end of the study?

E = Was there a sibling present, if so, whom?

F = If the child attended school, what grade was he/she in?

n/a = not applicable

The Structure of the Day

There were three caregivers: Greta, Carol and Mary. There were always two caregivers present during the daycare's operational hours. Every morning Greta was present to greet and exchange necessary information with the parents and children who begun to arrive at 7:30 AM. The second caregiver arrived at 8:30 AM and upon arrival greeted Greta and the children and then began to prepare the morning snack. By 9:00 AM most of the children had arrived and settled into one of two weather-dependent routines.

If the weather allowed play outside, the day would proceed more-or-less as follows.

Arrival - 9:00	Freeplay
9:15 - 10:45	Freeplay outside (usually in a nearby park)
10:45 - 11:30	Structured Activity (usually coloring)
11:30 - 12:00	Storytime (sometimes included music)
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 2:30	Naptime
2:30 - 3:00	Sit-down activity (e.g. puzzles, toy play)
3:00 - 3:15	Afternoon snack
3:15 - 3:30	Storytime (sometimes included music)
3:30 - Departure	Freeplay

If the weather did not allow play outside, the day would proceed in the same manner except for changes in the morning schedule.

      9:15 - 9:40   Music / Movement Exercises
      9:40 - 10:30   Structured Activity
     10:30 - 11:30   Freeplay

The early childhood services children were walked or driven to and from school as necessary, while the grade one child came to the daycare before school, for lunch, and after school.

Parents begun to arrive at approximately 4:00 PM. As the children were readied for the trip home, Greta again spent time speaking with the parents. All the children had usually left by 5:30 PM.

Rapport with the Caregivers

The goal of the study was to capture the literacy interactions and happenings as they occurred in the normal circumstances of daily life. For this reason, it was essential that the caregivers felt comfortable enough to conduct their daily routines normally. To establish this collaborative relationship (Lupart, 1984) the researcher presented herself and the study in as non-threatening a manner as possible. The researcher attempted to be extremely friendly, spending one-third to one-half of each

of the earliest visits drinking coffee and chatting with individual caregivers. While much of the chatter pertained to the children and daycare issues, local and personal happenings were also discussed. As a further part of "fitting in" with the social situation, the researcher dressed appropriately in casual clothing for the world of child care.

Perhaps the most important factor in establishing a productive rapport was the clear establishment of the researcher's task: to learn from the caregivers and children rather than to evaluate. During the first month of the study, this purpose was consistently explained. Additionally, to provide the caregivers with evidence of this fact, the caregivers were encouraged to read and question the observational fieldnotes. In fact, the researcher explained that she would be grateful if the caregivers would read and comment upon what had been written. As a result of this invitation, the caregivers read the fieldnotes from time to time during the first two months of the study. They seemed neither impressed nor dissatisfied with what they had read and eventually seem convinced that the researcher was indeed carrying out her stated purpose to describe rather than evaluate. The daycare manager commented, "I'm happy to discuss things with you but I only want to read it when you are finished."

Following this "getting to know you" phase the

caregivers seemed ready to accept the researcher as a friendly sort who was going to be in the daycare for an extended period of time. The caregivers continued to carry on their daily routines with what the researcher came to understand as seemingly little pretense. Satisfied that an appropriate rapport had been established and would be maintained, the researcher relaxed and enjoyed the friendship and knowledge that the caregivers and the children had to offer.

Rapport with the Children

The goal of the research endeavor was to describe the natural, everyday literacy occurrences of the people in the daycare. To do this, the researcher had to establish a natural relationship with the children. The children had to feel comfortable in the researcher's presence but had to come to understand that the researcher was there "to take notes" not to give care or play with them.

In the beginning, the researcher was introduced by the daycare manager as "Miss Fran." The children were told that "Miss Fran will be with us through the fall and the winter." The researcher smiled at each child, asked their names and how they were. The children responded, sometimes shyly, but accordingly. For all the children, introducing a new adult into their lives seemed relatively

unproblematic. Most children immediately accepted the researcher and began to argue over who would hold the researcher's hands during the impending walk to the playground. The "accepting" children displayed, from time to time, acts of "showing off" as children are apt to do around new people. The two children who seemed shy with the researcher, became less shy after the researcher spent special time talking to them about their families, their pets and their hairstyles as individual situations necessitated.

Following this initial rapport-building phase, the researcher adopted a routine in which she would talk to the children upon entering the research site. Then she would "settle in to" observation and fieldnote taking. During this time, she would recognize the children's conversational glances and smiles with a smile, a nod or a brief comment. For example, if a child approached the researcher and commented, "Miss Fran, look at my new frog," the researcher would smilingly respond, "That is a lovely frog." Most of the time this sort of response would satisfy the child, the child would then move on to something else and the researcher would resume her observation and notetaking. The researcher did not assume a position of either authority or mediation. In situations in which a child approached the researcher as if she were a caregiver, the researcher referred the child to one of the

caregivers.

Within the first two weeks, the researcher became a relatively stable fixture at the daycare centre. The alternating displays of shyness and "showoffness" dissipated and, for the most part, the researcher was left to observe and take notes.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Credibility.

There were several steps taken during the research proceedings to ensure that the findings and interpretations were credible. First, the researcher spent a prolonged period of time in the research context. Prolonged engagement allowed the researcher to develop an extensive basis from which to interpret data. Additionally, prolonged engagement allowed the researcher to develop a rapport with the caregivers and children such that they felt comfortable with the researcher's presence and would therefore behave naturally.

Second, as particular issues emerged in the study, they were focused upon and studied indepth. Such persistent observation helps to ensure the credibility of research findings.

Third, data from multiple sources (fieldnotes, audiotapes, interviews, and referential data such as the children's colorings) were compared to determine if

evidence from two or more sources indicated the same findings. Such triangulation of data helps to ensure that research findings and interpretations are credible.

Fourth, the researcher discussed emerging data, interpretations and hypotheses with the chief caregiver. Such member checking provides an external check on the inquiry process and increases the credibility of research findings and interpretations. Emerging findings and interpretations were also discussed with a Professor of Language Education.

Finally, much raw data were kept on audiotapes. This allows the possibility of checking interpretations against the raw data and therefore serves to enhance the credibility of research findings.

Transferability.

For transferability of research findings to take place, the researcher must fully describe the context of the research setting so that this context may be compared to other contexts to which a transfer of the research findings may be contemplated. To provide such full or "thick description," the researcher has: 1) provided a description of the daycare children, the caregivers and the daycare centre itself; 2) provided an explanation of how

the oral language informant was chosen, and 3) provided
information on the variety of data sources utilized in this
study.

Dependability and Confirmability.

Dependability and confirmability were established
simultaneously through an audit inquiry. The auditor was a
Master of Education candidate with a specialization in the
area of early childhood education. She was knowledgeable
in both preschool literacy learning and research within the
naturalistic paradigm.

The researcher introduced the auditor to the research
project through an explanation of the research problem, the
methodology employed and the record keeping system. The
auditor then examined the researcher's field notebook,
reflective journal, audiotapes and transcriptions to
determine consistency between raw and analyzed data, and to
determine if the storybook interaction presented in this
report was truly representative of storybook interaction in
the daycare. Part of the overall process involved the
listening to audiotapes and checking the accuracy of
transcription. Following this, she inspected and
interpreted the raw data. Finally, the auditor's
interpretations were compared to those of the researcher's
to determine the degree of consistency. A 90% degree of
consistency between the auditor's interpretation of data

and the researcher's interpretation of data was attained
and it was determined that the reported storybook
interaction was representative of storybook interaction in
the daycare. This procedure was completed on approximately
ten percent of the data.

Chapter Summary

In summary, the researcher observed a government-
approved middleclass daycare centre for 132 hours over a
six month time period. During this time, naturalistic
research procedures using ethnographic techniques were used
to collect, analyze and interpret data. Data sources were
the researcher's observational notes, a collection of the
children's colorings and, audiotapes and transcriptions of
storybook interaction, caregiver:child interaction,
child:child interaction and daycare worker interviews. The
data analysis was on-going and involved the "piecing
together" of data from all sources. As questions emerged
from the data, they were investigated more completely
during later observations. To ensure the dependability and
confirmability of research findings, an audit was
conducted.

Chapter IV

Description and Interpretation of the Data

Chapter four presents the description and interpretation of the data. The study was designed to develop an understanding of the literacy environment of a daycare centre. To develop this understanding oral language, play, storybook reading, and other literacy-related occurrences were studied.

In the first section of this chapter the caregivers are described. In the second section of this chapter, the oral language environment of the daycare is presented. Child:child oral interaction is described and within the context of this presentation, play is discussed. Caregiver:child oral interaction is then presented. In the third section of this chapter the incidence and nature of storybook reading in the daycare are addressed. A discussion of the caregiver's explicitly stated philosophy of storyreading is followed by an explanation of the observed pre-reading activity. A representative storybook session is then presented followed by an explanation of the observed post-reading activities. In the final section of this chapter, a range of "other" literacy-related occurrences is described and discussed.

Description of the Caregivers

There were three female caregivers at the daycare. Each will be discussed in turn.

Greta, the daycare owner and chief caregiver, is an energetic woman who enjoys hiking, swimming, and walking. She received early childhood training in her native Germany. This training consisted of three years of schooling subsequent to the finishing of high school. Subjects studied included developmental psychology, English, music, dance, storytelling, gymnastics, and arts and crafts. This qualified Greta as a kindergarten teacher in Germany. Following this training, she worked with children of varying ages and later immigrated to Canada. As a young mother she decided to buy and operate a daycare centre so that she could earn an income while caring for her son. She has now operated the daycare for twenty years. She stated that while her work is exhausting, she enjoys it. Greta is present at the daycare during all operational hours and she is clearly a stable entity in the lives of the daycare children. Because Greta is the daycare owner, manager, and chief caregiver and because she maintained a fulltime presence at the daycare, her conception of daycare has guided the functioning of the daycare centre to a great extent. Her major ideas about daycare were as follows.

She claimed that children should not attend daycare

until an age of 2.5 - 3 years. While she does provide care
for some children below this age, she states that previous
to this age "a young child needs individual attention,
care, (and) love" so that the child may learn to talk,
walk, and develop generally. The ideal adult:child ratio
for these learning processes is 1:1, she claims, and this
she suggests, is clearly not possible in the daycare
setting. She adds that ideally children should spend only
5-6 hours per day in a daycare. This time, she asserts,
would allow for socialization and growth in independence
while allowing the child ample and necessary "quality" time
with the family. She stated further that in spite of what
she personally feels is best, some children must spend as
many as 10 hours per day in the daycare and that some
parents are too tired at the end of the work day to offer
the child "quality input." Accepting this situation as it
is, Greta claims that the daycare must then take
responsibility for much of the child's physical, mental,
and emotional development. She feels that growth in these
areas can be accomplished if the caregiver:child ratio is
low and that this ratio can be determined according to
individual "caregivers' energy, output, and
qualifications." When hiring other caregivers, Greta looks
for patience, friendliness, and an ability "to relate to
children." She also claims that because of the demands of
the job, potential caregivers need to have a lifestyle that

will allow them to be "well-rested" and "aware" at work.
Finally, Greta says that she hires "older women who do not
mind mixing housekeeping, cooking, and childcare duties."
Other literacy-related aspects of the chief caregiver's
philosophy of storybook reading will be explained in a
later part of this chapter.

Carol, a second caregiver, a young child-loving
grandmother with a grown family, has worked at the daycare
centre for three years. Carol claims that she became a
daycare worker because she wanted a part-time job (she
works for one-half of the daycare's operational hours) that
would offer "something different" everyday in contrast to
the office bookkeeping job that she held previous to
becoming a daycare worker. Carol, who often hugs and holds
the daycare children, says that her experience raising six
children has prepared her for her daycare position but that
if short (one to two hour) childcare courses were offered,
she would probably participate. She claims that daycare
workers stand in for mothers and therefore the children's
physical and emotional needs must be provided for.
Patience, she claims further, is the most important quality
for a caregiver to possess.

Mary, a third caregiver, is also a young grandmother
and was relatively new at the daycare having begun her
half-time job shortly after the beginning of this study.
She replaced another caregiver, Betty, who had been at the

daycare for eight years. Mary's childcare experience, like that of Carol's, resulted from the raising of a family and also like Carol, she claimed that patience was the most important quality for a caregiver to possess. Mary was affectionate toward the children.

Having described the caregivers, issues more specifically related to literacy will now be addressed beginning with the topic of oral language.

Oral Language

Language is the vehicle through which humans negotiate and understand the world. For the older person, able to think symbolically and to "internalize speech" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.27), full sentences spoken aloud are only necessary for interpersonal communication and when dealing with a difficult subject at the intrapersonal level. For the young person with as yet no capability to internalize speech and reflect on the world through an internal medium, the world must be negotiated largely through dialogue with older more knowledgeable people (Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1986) and partly through interaction with other children (Smith & Connolly, 1981). Through dialogue the child gains both literacy-related knowledge and the other "schematic" knowledge that is necessary for text comprehension and, in the process of negotiating the world through dialogue, the child concurrently learns about language (Wells, 1986); oral language is the foundation upon which the literate

acts of reading and writing are based. To understand what a child is learning about the world, including what is being learned about the related issues of language and literacy, the child's language environment must therefore be explored. Part of this research project's overall mandate was to explore the language environment of the daycare. Specifically, this research project sought to determine the presence or absence of dialogue in the daycare setting, to place this interaction in the context of other observed language and to discuss observed oral interaction as it may impact on literacy acquisition.

Oral language permeated every area of daycare life and there was a discernable pattern of language in use. The presentation and discussion of such language use is divided into three major categories. The first category of data presentation and analysis consists of language used for communication among children. Typical dialogues among children during play are related and discussed in terms of Halliday's (1975) language functions and in terms of the literacy-related implications of the play type. The second category of data presentation and analysis involves the specific use of language during mealtimes. The final category consists of language used for caregiver-child communication. This category of data is further subdivided into maintenance language, enabling language, musical language, imaginative language, questioning language,

language to discuss, and language to provide instructional exposure. Throughout these presentations, potential connections between language and literacy are discussed wherever possible in light of what is known in the home language environment as presented by the research literature.

Child:Child Oral Interaction

Oral language is the foundation upon which the literate acts of reading and writing are based; how this foundation is built and developed must therefore be seen as an issue effecting literacy learning. It was, however, beyond the mandate of this study (given limitations of time) to examine language development per se but as part of describing the overall oral language environment of the daycare, the researcher sought to describe the language use (as determined by Halliday's (1975) system of analysis) of one daycare child and the milieu that evoked this language. While doing this does not answer the literacy-related question of how this language capability developed, allowing the reader this information may contribute to the overall construction of the language environment of the daycare which in turn may contribute to the presentation of the literacy environment of the daycare. The language situations during freeplay of Jenny, a 4-year old daycare child, will be discussed. The children at the daycare were

allowed considerable time to partake in free play; at least
2 hours or 36% of the child's waking day was allotted for
freeplay. During freeplay, the children had the
opportunity to talk frequently and in fact, most of the
children's oral language took place during this time. For
this reason Jenny's interaction with other children during
freeplay is the focus of this discussion. First, the
general context of freeplay will be described. Then, the
language use evoked by two freeplay situations will be
elucidated and discussed in terms of literacy learning.
Finally, the potential literacy-related implications of the
play types observed during freeplay (independent,
cooperative and dramatic) will be discussed.

Context of freeplay.

With regard to the context surrounding freeplay
situations in the daycare, observation revealed three
substantive points.

First, during freeplay the children were allowed to
engage in a plethora of activities within the constraints
of an already established rule structure. The rules were
minimal in number and focused upon the safety of the
children and the organization of the daycare. Two examples
of such rules are: 1) No jumping off the top of the large
plastic cube. 2) Put away one toy before getting another.
All children were aware of and usually obeyed these rules.

Second, the influence of the wide array of toys, games, puzzles, coloring books, dress-up clothing, gym equipment, and "pretend centres" was noticeable. Wells (1986) and Hawkins (1967, cited in Cazden, Baratz, Labov, & Palmer, 1981) claim that in addition to a speaker and a listener, discourse partners must share a conversational topic if a true dialogue is to take place. Providing the daycare children with this array of items appeared to allow for limitless and natural stimulation for conversational topics among children.

Third, throughout all observation of freeplay situations, the role of the caregivers was consistently that of a loving, largely-noninterfering adult presence. The utterances issued by the caregivers were brief and were usually one of four types:

1) gentle reminders that a child should put one toy away before beginning to play with another toy;

2) questions to determine how a child was feeling;

3) general questions and comments to determine how the play situation was proceeding and;

4) questions to determine if a child required help, and follow up dialogue if a child did need help.

This sort of interaction allowed the children to play freely, seemingly secure in the knowledge that an adult was nearby if an adult presence became necessary for love, attention, reinforcement, and\or support. This warm, risk-

allowing environment would seem conducive to learning.

These contextual conditions would seem characteristic of the home environment during freeplay episodes; therefore, it may be that the language evoked under these circumstances is similar to the language evoked during freeplay in home environments with more than one child. Language use during freeplay is the topic of the following section of this chapter.

Language use during freeplay.

To understand this milieu and the concomitant language use that it evoked, two representative dialogue situations will be reported. Jenny's utterances in both dialogues are analyzed according to Halliday's (1975) language function categories. The representative dialogues are offered followed by a discussion of the connection between the exhibited language use and literacy learning.

During the first reported language situation, there are seven children and two caregivers present in the daycare. Three girls are playing with Barbie dolls in the playroom, while the four boys are in the eating room playing with toys and games. One caregiver, Carol, is in the kitchen doing housework while the other caregiver, Greta, is moving back and forth among the playroom, the eating room, and the kitchen. The reported dialogue begins approximately two minutes into the play situation. Jenny,

Clara, and Cathy are seated on the floor. They surround a
large pile of Barbie doll clothes and each girl has a
Barbie doll.

Dialogue 1

1 Jenny: I forgot my clothes [informative]. Can you give
    me some clothes? [instrumental]   (Clara hands Jenny
    some Barbie doll clothes. Jenny begins to dress her
    Barbie doll)
2 Jenny sings: I've got to get my housecoat.
    [informative]
    (Cathy sings something back.)
3 Jenny: Cathy, I've got to get this thing off.
    [informative] (pulling at the Barbie doll's clothes)
    I'm bare naked. [informative] (Jenny giggles at the
    sight of the nude doll)
4 Cathy: Jenny, I'm washing your hair. (as she smooths
    Jenny's ponytail) First, I'll need some shampoo.
5 Jenny: I need to go to bed. [imaginative/informational]
    (Aware of Cathy playing with her hair but still
    speaking for the Barbie doll, Jenny puts her Barbie
    doll to bed. In the Barbie doll's character Jenny
    then continues) Leave me alone, Patricia.
    [imaginative/instrumental] I'm trying to go to bed.
    [imaginative/instrumental]
    (At this point Miss Greta and the boys enter the room
    in which the girls are playing)
6 Greta: These girls are playing nicely. Maybe I'll give
    you five minutes (more) to play before we go out.
    (Jimmy and Johnny play with Lego blocks. Sandy and
    Stephen play with larger Lego-type blocks. Cathy and
    Jenny are now hugging each other.)
7 Jenny - Cathy: Don't knock me down. [instrumental]
    (they both giggle and sit up) We have to put this
    stuff on the table. [regulatory]
    (Jenny and Clara move the Barbie dolls to the table.)
8 Jenny - Cathy: You're not playing. [personal]
9 Cathy - Jenny: I'm just watching.
10 Jenny - doll: Go to sleep sweetheart.
    [imaginative/regulatory] (said as if the move from the
    floor to the table may have disturbed the Barbie doll.
    She then sets out all the Barbie doll clothes.)
11 Jenny - Fran: Miss Fran, can you turn these the right
    way? [instrumental] (handing the researcher a pair of
    Barbie doll pants that are inside-out. The researcher
    took the jeans and began to turn them right-side out

with a pen.)

12 Jenny - Fran: Why aren't you talking? [heuristic] (the
researcher smiled and continued turning the pants
right-side out.)

13 Jenny - Fran: I saw you and Miss Betty at the Christmas
party. [interactional] Miss Betty is very nice and
she works at another daycare. [informational]

14 Jenny - Clara: Look Clara. [regulatory] Miss Fran's
using a pen. [informational] (Jenny then pulled out a
pair of leotards from the Barbie clothes pile.)

15 Jenny: These are panties. [informational] Pantyhose.
[information] These panties don't go under these.
[personal] (referring to the jeans)

16 Jenny - Clara: Mom, these jeans don't fit, they're
ripped. [imaginative/informational]

17 Clara - Jenny: O.K.

18 Jenny sings: 69 degrees. 69 degrees. [song]

19 Cathy - Jenny: Here you go. Your jeans are fixed.

20 Jenny - Cathy: Thank you. [interactional] (she does not
look up) Just put them there. [regulatory]

21 Jenny: When it gets warm, I put this on.
[informational] (holding up a tennis dress)

22 Jenny - Fran: Can you put the arm in the tennis dress?
[instrumental] (the dress is put on)

23 Jenny: She's beautiful. [personal] Gorgeous. [personal]
(Jenny continues to play rather independently of her
friends. Clara is also playing with a Barbie while
quietly singing: "It is 69 degrees." Cathy is also
playing nearby with a Barbie.)

24 Jenny - Carol: Can you help me get this red elastic
off? [instrumental]

25 Carol - Jenny: Where is your Barbie going? (as she
removes the elastic.)

26 Jenny - Carol: Her feet are going to blow off because
she is going outside without shoes.
[imaginative/informational]

27 Carol - Jenny: (laughing) There are, are they?

28 Jenny - Clara: (with a baby voice) Mom, is it time to
go out? [imaginative/heuristic (no verbal response
from Clara although she is looking at Jenny) You say:
Bedtime baby. [imaginative/regulatory] Say: Today was
the concert at my daycare. [imaginative/regulatory]

29 Clara: Bedtime. It's bedtime. You have to go to bed
baby.

30 Greta: It is time to slowly clean up.

31 Jenny - Clara: (puts the doll in the Barbie case)
Clara, can we play this later? [interactional]

32 Clara: (nods)

Table 2: Summary .Chart of Dialogue 1
According to Halliday's Functions

type of utterances	number of utterances
Interactional	3
Personal	4
Instrumental	5
Heuristic	2
Regulatory	6
Informational	14
Imaginative	9 *

	34

*As indicated by the transcript, there were 9 utterances
that had another function within an imaginary context.

As can be seen from this dialogue, and the
accompanying summary chart, Jenny used language for a
variety of reasons; in fact, according to Halliday's
language function categories, all language functions were
evident. Additionally, the caregiver, Greta, was in close
proximity throughout the entire play event but only
interrupted to comment briefly on how "nicely" the girls
were playing and to suggest that it was time "to slowly
clean up."

In the second reported dialogue situation, Jenny is
playing with Jimmy. The group has just returned from an
outside walk and they have settled immediately into a
freeplay situation. The seven children and one caregiver,
Greta, are in the eating area, while the other caregiver,
Carol, is making lunch.

Dialogue 2

1 Jenny - Jimmy: Sandy said I could play with Panda.
      [informational] (Jenny looks at the panda) Say you
      were playing outside with your friends, Panda.
      [imaginative/
      regulatory]
2 Jenny - Jimmy: You can play with Rudolph.
      [interactional] (gives Jimmy her stuffed reindeer)
      Rudolph play with me.
      [imaginative/instrumental]
3 Jimmy - Jenny: O.K. Let's pretend that we are cousins.
4 Jenny - Jimmy: Cousins? [heuristic]
5 Jimmy - Jenny: And we go to the playground.
6 Greta: You have 15 minutes before lunch. You don't
      have to hurry but you slowly have to clean up.
      (Jenny and Jimmy set the stuffed animals aside and
      begin to play with large Lego-type blocks. Their
      conversation continues.)
7 Jimmy - Jenny: Which ones do you need?
8 Jenny - Jimmy: I need one, two. [instrumental] I need
      another one for right here. [informative]
9 Jenny - Jimmy: I need something for the top.
      [informative]
10 Jimmy - Jenny: I can't give you any more.
11 Jenny - Jimmy: I need these things for the top.
      [informative]
12 Jimmy - Jenny: I can't give you any more.
      (Jenny takes some other blocks)
13 Jimmy - Jenny: Yes, you can have that.
14 Jenny - Jimmy: What can I have? [heuristic]
      (Jimmy does not respond but continues to build his
      blocks higher.)
15 Jenny - Jimmy: You have lots of blocks. [informational]
16 Greta: It's time to clean up
17 Jenny - Greta: No. [personal] (said in a whining voice
      but she smilingly proceeds to clean up)
18 Greta - Jimmy: It will soon be time for kindergarten.
19 Jimmy: Good.
      (Jenny and Jimmy put all the blocks in the appropriate
      containers. Jenny moves to the dinner table while
      Jimmy puts the containers on the appropriate shelves.)
20 Greta: Thank you for cleaning up. You did very well
      today.

Table 3: Summary Chart of Dialogue 2
According to Halliday's Functions

type of utterances	number of utterances
Interactional	1
Personal	1
Instrumental	2
Heuristic	2
Regulatory	1
Informational	5
Imaginative	2 *

	12

*As indicated by the transcript, there were 2 utterances which had another function within an imaginative context.

As can again be seen from this dialogue and the accompanying summary chart, the freeplay situation elicited the use of all of Halliday's language functions. Again, the caregiver, Greta, was in close proximity to the freeplay situation but did not interrupt except to briefly suggest the length of freeplay time yet available and that the children should "slowly clean up."

From these representative dialogues a picture emerges in which Jenny played freely with other children and an array of stimulating toys in a secure environment with minimal interference from caregivers. In this milieu, wide oral language use, as evidenced by the use of all Halliday's functions, was utilized as a means of negotiating her world of play. These findings may be interpreted to mean that the daycare's provision of a secure stimulating environment which allowed substantial

freeplay with minimal interference from the caregivers evoked, according to Halliday's system of analysis, wide and complete oral language use thereby potentially furthering Jenny's linguistic skill. Because the literate acts of reading and writing are largely dependent on linguistic skill, the exhibited oral language use may enhance Jenny's process of literacy acquisition.

In addition to eliciting wide oral language use, freeplay encouraged a range of play types each of which had potential literacy-related implications. Observation revealed that children played by themselves, children played cooperatively with a toy or a game as the focus of their attention, and children involved themselves with dramatic play. Although the potential impact of these play types is not wholly related to oral language (the subject of this chapter section), they will be discussed now because of their evidence in the preceding dialogues.

Independent play.

Independent play was a type of play frequently observed in the daycare. A very brief example of such play occurred in dialogue 1, turn 23. On this occasion, Jenny ignored her playmates although they were playing in close proximity and focussed instead on the Barbie doll in her hand. She appeared to be completely absorbed with the Barbie doll, as evidenced by her direct gaze at the doll as

she uttered, "She's beautiful, gorgeous" without addressing
this utterance to anyone. Furthermore, she did not seem to
expect a response as evidenced by her subsequent failure to
readdress the comment as would be expected if a first
attempt at eliciting a response was not successful. While
this example of independent play was very brief, similar,
longer incidents of independent play with building blocks,
puzzles and other toys and games were frequently observed
in the daycare. Although the given example does not
provide direct evidence of literacy learning, it may be
said that this type of play may allow the child some
private time to independently negotiate a part of his/her
world which may increase the child's understanding of the
world; the literate act of comprehending text is largely
dependent upon an understanding of the world.

Cooperative play.

Play in which the children played cooperatively with a
toy or a game as the focus of their attention was another
type of play frequently observed in the daycare. This type
of play is exemplified in dialogue 2, turns 7-15, during
which Jenny and Jimmy played with Lego-type blocks.

Smith & Connolly (1980) claim that children learn from
one another; therefore, such child-child interaction can be
viewed as another means of negotiating, exploring, and
understanding the world, including at times the world of

literacy learning. Although this example does not provide
direct evidence of literacy learning, it does provide an
example of the children cooperatively, and if not
cooperatively at least politely, negotiating their way
through a child-child play interaction. The daycare
children are clearly expected to play in this manner:
Cooperative play was routinely reinforced by all caregivers
through comments such as "Well, aren't you two playing
nicely" and "Aren't you good children, playing together so
nicely" while uncooperative play was received with
questions and comments such as "Is this the way we play
here?" or "Oh Jenny, you usually play so nicely. What's
the matter today?" Through this interaction the children
are, in effect, being asked to practise a mainstream way of
doing things that will be acceptable to most school
teachers at a later time in the children's lives. When
there is a fit between a teacher's mainstream expectations
and what a student offers, there is a greater probability
of success in school, including success with literacy
(Heath, 1983). Viewed from this perspective, this sort of
play is not only useful because children learn from one
another by playing together, but this type of play is also
a means of transmitting the values of mainstream culture,
the result of which may be success with literacy
acquisition in school.

Dramatic play.

The final type of play to be reported is that of
dramatic or symbolic play. In this type of play something
in the real contextual world, the child him or herself, a
friend, or a doll, for example, comes to stand for or
signify something other than what it normally represents.
In this play type, the child temporarily assigns new
meaning to an already understood entity. For example in
dialogue 1, turn 16, Jenny assigned Clara, another daycare
child, the role of her mother by uttering, "Mom, these
jeans don't fit. They're ripped." In turn 28, Jenny moved
the dramatic situation further along by actually telling
Clara what she should say in her new role as a mother.
Jenny said to Clara, "You say: Bedtime baby. Say: Today
was the concert at the daycare." This was but one of the
many dramatic or symbolic play situations observed in the
daycare; several points must be elucidated.

First, McClune (1985) claims that while more
prerequisite skills and experience are required for
language production than for symbolic play, the ability to
symbolize is the shared cognitive basis for development in
both domains. During symbolic play, the pretend act
represents an underlying knowledge of the correspondence
between a signifier and the signified. This, McClune
claims, is "equivalent to the use of some entity existing
in the object world" (p.70), as is required for language

production; therefore, pretend play should enhance language production. Because reading and writing are language based processes, the processes of learning to read and write should be enhanced accordingly.

Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) claims that "the creation of an imaginary situation is not a fortuitous fact in a child's life, but is rather the first manifestation of the child's emancipation from situational constraints (p.99). Freedom from situational constraints, Pellegrini (1980) posits, allows a child to use the symbolic medium of language to "redefine player's roles and propose functions in the process of creating a fantasy play theme" (p.534) as Jenny did in the given example. During this redefinition, the child enacts the process by which symbols are defined and interpreted: meaning is assigned to arbitrary forms. In other words, through symbolic play the child "acts out" the idea that meaning can be arbitrarily assigned to an entity in the real world. The "becoming conscious" of this concept through symbolic play, Pellegrini reports, is key in literacy acquisition because this same notion is the basis for understanding printed language: arbitrarily assigned visual symbols, or signifiers, represent an entity in the real world. Clay (1975) refers to this eventual understanding of the symbolic nature of language, as knowledge of the "sign concept." Clay, in agreement with Pellegrini, claims that knowledge of this concept is

necessary if progress with learning to read and write is to be made. It may be said, then, that during the many observances of dramatic play, the children may have been developing this literacy-related awareness.

Finally, Jenny's speech during dialogue 1 provides evidence that she can deal with intrusions from the real world on her imagined dramatic world. From the beginning (turn 1) of dialogue 1, Jenny had been speaking for her doll ("I forgot my clothes. I've got to get my housecoat", for example). She had just put the doll to bed when Greta and the boys entered the room. Because the boys then began to play on the floor with Lego-blocks, Jenny suggested that the dolls and doll clothes be moved from the floor to the table. After the dolls had been moved, Jenny switched to a mother-like voice and said, "Go to sleep, sweetheart" (turn 10) as if the move from the floor to the table may have disturbed the doll's sleep. Wolf and Pusch (1985) claim that the ability to deal with real-world intrusions in an imaginary situation is linked with the literate notion of text autonomy and that this aspect of literate knowledge is exhibited and developed through play. The evidence that Jenny can deal with intrusions from the real world on her imaginary dramatic situations may be viewed as evidence that Jenny is developing the literate notion of autonomous text. Wolf and Pusch assert further that there is continuity between this understanding of "text autonomy and

the later texts that the children will work on in reading and writing during formal school instruction; children whose training dovetails with tasks and materials of formal schooling" (p.75) may be advantaged in later literacy learning.

Dramatic play, then, may have enhanced the development of language production, knowledge of the symbolic nature of language and knowledge of text autonomy. These are literacy-related developments.

Summary.

In summary, freeplay was a dominant activity in the daycare; at least two hours or 36% of the child's waking day was devoted to freeplay. During this time, the children had the opportunity to play with a wide range of toys and games in the presence of a loving, but largely-noninterfering adult presence. Children played independently, children played with each other with a toy or game as the focus of their attention, and children created dramatic play situations. As a result, wide oral language use was utilized by the oral language informant, Jenny, to explore and negotiate the world of play, and through this exploration, the symbolic and linguistic skills necessary for literacy learning were potentially enhanced. Additionally, through the vehicle of cooperative play, the mainstream values of politeness and cooperation

were potentially transmitted to Jenny.

Oral Interaction During Lunchtime

The nature of the oral language interaction changed
during mealtimes and snacks; eating accounted for
approximately 1 hour or 18% of the child's waking day. The
chief caregiver expressed the opinion that during mealtime
the children must concentrate on eating, rather than
chatting, so as a rule, as soon as the food was served all
conversation ceased.

The following representative lunchtime interaction
occurred subsequent to the just reported freeplay situation
involving Jenny and Jimmy. All children have put away
their respective toys and have settled at the eating table
with their hands folded ready to recite their mealtime
prayer.

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1  Group:  God is good, God is great, and we thank Him for
      our food.  By His hands we must be blessed.  Give us
      Lord our daily bread.  Amen.
      (following prayers Greta joins Carol in the kitchen.)
2  Greta - Carol:  Where is my salad?  I made a salad!
      (Miss Carol laughs and passes Miss Greta the salad.
      Miss Greta then calls from the kitchen.)
3  Greta - group:  How many shrimps do I have today?
      (The children count and recount the number of children
      at the table as Greta and Carol continue to prepare
      lunch.  From counting one another, the activity shifts
      to playing "give me five" in which a child raises
      his/her hand, palm facing another child, and says
      "give me five" at which time the responding child
      raises his/her hand and slaps it against the first
      child's.  As is customary, when the food arrives, the
      counting and playing stops immediately.)
4  Jimmy - group:  When you eat in a restaurant, you have
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to be nice when you are eating.
(No one responds to Jimmy's comment. The other
children concentrate on eating their lunch while the
caregivers concentrate on the serving of the meal.)
5 Carol: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Seven little rascals.
(Carol counts the children in a sing song voice and
then moves back into the kitchen to serve dessert.)
6 Greta - Stephen: Stephen, please eat slowly. There is
no need to rush.
(The meal progressed with no child-initiated
conversation.)
7 Greta - Sandy: Sandy, you don't like carrots? Just
leave them if you don't like them.
8 Greta - Laura: Let Miss Greta help you Laura. (As
Greta helps the 19-month old Laura to eat.)
(At the end of the meal, Christie arrived.)
9 Greta: Hello Ashley. How are you today? Everyone say
"Hi, Ashley."
10 Children: Hi, Ashley.
(Greta proceeded to serve Ashley's lunch. The other
children continue to eat, then, with little comment
proceed to the bathroom to get ready for nap time or
school, as is the routine.)

During this and most other lunchtimes, the children's

silence as they ate, juxtaposed against the caregivers'

cheery dispositions and loving offers of assistance was

striking. The children clearly knew and most often met the

chief caregiver's expectation that lunchtime was a quiet

time of eating.

With reference to specific interactions within the

context of the lunchtime event, it should be noted that the

prayer session (turn 1) could be seen as a choral speech

activity in which each child seemed to strive to know and

to enunciate the words in time with the group. Choral

speech is an activity utilized by school teachers;

therefore, such previous experience may ready the children

for school. Second, the counting game (turn 3), which was

inspired by Greta's playful question: "How many shrimps do I have today?" may be seen as an educational event woven "into the fabric of everyday life" (Taylor, 1983, p.87) which may naturally encourage the learning of information which may be helpful at school. Moreover, the caregiver's urges to "eat slowly" (turn 6) and to "say Hi" to an incoming child (turn 9) may be viewed as mainstream manner instruction. Heath (1983) claims that the child who is best prepared for mainstream education is the child who brings with him or her a certain "way of knowing." Part of this "way of knowing" involves knowledge of what constitutes "good" mainstream behavior. Knowledge and practice of "good" mainstream behavior may allow the student to present himself or herself in a positive and acceptable manner to the teacher. The teacher's expectations of the child may then be greater than those expectations for children with less knowledge of what constitutes suitable mainstream behavior. The child's school performance may then fulfil the teacher's expectations leading to general school success including success with literacy acquisition, while the child with little knowledge of mainstream behavior may be destined to a life of school failure.

In summary, the link between oral interaction during lunchtime and literacy learning is not direct: Although the daycare children experienced little oral interaction

during lunchtime, the children have been exposed to
information and situations which may ready them in varying
ways for school. Such previous experience may positively
influence the children's later school experiences and may
therefore have a concomitant influence on literacy
acquisition.

Caregiver:Child Oral Interaction

There was much oral interaction among caregivers and
children in the daycare. Observed language was used for a
variety of reasons and some language forms clearly
dominated the language environment. Those forms that were
dominant as well as those forms of language that were
judged particularly important for literacy-related reasons
will be defined, exemplified and discussed in light of what
is known through the research literature about language use
in the home environment; the important issue of language
used to discuss is covered in this chapter section.
Potential connections between language use and literacy
learnings will be put forth throughout these presentations.

Maintenance language.

Language used to meet the children's fundamental needs
for food, warmth, sleep, performance of bodily functions,
and security was the most dominant form of language
observed. Utterances in this category ranged from queries

as to how the child was (for example, "How are you today, sweetheart?") to requests to come to the dinner table (for example, "It's lunchtime." or "We'll be having lunch in five minutes.") to inquiries as to the most recent trip to the bathroom (for example, "Jacques, have you used the washroom yet?") to admonishments to play safely (for example, "Clara, please don't jump off the top of the cube" or "Jimmy, you know that you are not allowed in the kitchen. There are hot things. You may get burned."). In answer to these utterances, the children usually responded with a direct, simple verbal response or performed the required behavior.

The preponderance of maintenance interaction in the daycare environment is consistent with language use in the home environment as observed by Wells (1986). Wells claims: "one of the most striking features that is common to all families is the repetitiveness of the everyday life of a young child. Meals, dressing and undressing, and the performance of bodily functions provides the content of talk in sample after sample ... In all families, too, there was a concern with safety - both the child's and that of other members of the family" (Wells, 1986, p.15). While there is obvious consistency between this aspect of the language environment of the daycare and that of the home environment,

the relationship between maintenance interaction and

literacy learning is less clear. The relationship can be explained through Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs.

Maslow claims that the provision for a person's physiological and security requirements allows a person to grow and mature in various ways. Having provided for these fundamental physiological and security requirements, largely through the vehicle of maintenance language, the caregivers have offered each child the latitude to pursue other concerns, including those concerns which may result in literacy learnings.

Enabling language.

Language used to enable daycare activities to proceed in a manner and a timeframe agreeable to the caregivers was also a dominant form of language observed. Four examples of such language use will be offered.

One example of enabling language occurred as the chief caregiver, Greta, instructed the children to form a circle before a participation song began. From the interaction, it is apparent that for the participation song to proceed as planned, not only must a circle be formed in a particular area of the room but that the smaller children must hold hands with the older children.

Greta: O.K. There. We have a <u>big</u> circle today. Adam can
     you go between the little ones because they have a
     hard time holding onto each other? Can you close up
     the circle please? O.K. We have a big one today,
     good. (pause as the children move into a circle) We
     need some more room, can you all come a little bit in

front? More in front here. The front is here. The back is over there. Come over here please.

Subsequent to this interaction, a circle was formed, the younger children held hands with the older children and participation in the singing of a number of songs proceeded. Additionally, through listening to these utterances, the children have been exposed to the concepts of circle, front and back, and have gained further experience with following directions.

A similar example of enabling language occurred as the chief caregiver, Greta, was circulating around a table at which all the children were seated. Each child was licking colorful stamps and placing them on a sheet of construction paper so as to create "a beautiful picture." The caregiver assisted each child as the need for help became evident.

Greta: Nice. See. Now put some on here. (pause) Sandy, just lick your stamps once. Just lick it once. Only once, otherwise it won't glue. O.K.? Can you do it, John? (pause) Just try it Jordon, you will be able to do it. Just lick it a little bit and put it on. Do you have the right side? Yeah, O.K. Now (pause). She licked it good off (off good). (Greta laughs) See, I don't necessarily want to lick what you have licked, you have to put in on! (Greta laughs again) O.K.? There we go. Nice.

Through listening to these and subsequent similar utterances, all the children participated in and seemingly understood the activity so that at the conclusion of the activity, each child had created by his or her own admission "a beautiful picture." In addition to the

caregiver's language enabling this activity to proceed, the activity itself may have provided incidental learnings. Licking stamps and placing them on a sheet of paper may enhance hand-to-eye coordination which is a necessary prerequisite for the literacy activity of writing. Furthermore, through listening to these utterances, the children have gained further experience with following directions.

A third example of enabling language occurred as a caregiver, Mary, appeared to notice that one of the children, Jenny, was having difficulty putting together a puzzle. The caregiver, who had been circulating around the playroom, observing and speaking briefly with individual children, stopped and sat next to Jenny. She pointed to a particular puzzle piece and said, "This is the eye. What goes around the eye?" Jenny momentarily looked at the caregiver, then proceeded to build the puzzle from the starting point that Mary had offered. With the puzzle building activity now proceeding in this manner, Miss Mary stood up and moved to another child. For Jenny, listening to this utterance had allowed the developmentally-sound activity of puzzle building to proceed and in the context of this activity to potentially develop literacy-related learnings such as spatial awareness. The final example of enabling language to be related occurred as the children were coloring and decorating construction paper Easter

eggs. As one child, Heather, finished her creation, smilingly she showed it to Greta. As Greta looked at the Easter egg, she said, "That's good. That's wonderful! Now you can do another one." Heather replied, "I'll do a red one," as she picked up a red Easter egg and proceeded to decorate it. In this case, language enabled the activity to fill the allotted time frame. By partaking in this interaction, the child gained further experience with colors in the context of an activity that she appeared to enjoy.

The given language situations exemplify the type of interaction which dominated much of the structured portion of the children's day; structured activity occupied 1.25 hours or 23% of the daycare child's waking day. Enabling language did function to allow planned activities to proceed as smoothly as possible for the allotted amount of time. And, within the context of these activities, the children while not interacting orally to any extent, may have learned a range of concepts (circle, color, spacing etc.) and behaviors (singing and direction following) which may enhance or assist the process of literacy learning.

There may be reason for concern, however, if the structure of the day in the home environment and the concomitant language involved as reported by Wells (1986) is compared to the structure of the day in the daycare environment and the concomitant language observed. In the

home environment, the child partakes in the necessary

activities of eating and sleeping, spends time engaging in

freeplay, and may watch a little television. To this

point, the home child's and the daycare child's day is very

similar. However, the daily structures clearly differ in

the amount of time spent engaging in structured activity.

The child in the home may or may not engage in craft-making

or coloring or puzzle-making under the guidance of a

parent, whereas the child in the daycare experienced this

type of activity and language as exemplified in the

foregoing examples for approximately 1.25 hours everyday.

In the home environment, children typically underfoot,

spend much of the equivalent time helping parents with

routine household tasks such as preparing lunch or

polishing the furniture or picking up groceries. "These

shared activities can provide particularly rich

opportunities to learn about the activities themselves and

about the words by which to refer to them and also about

the way in which language functions to guide them" (Wells,

1986, p.53). Wells claims further that such shared

activity typically results in the following type of

interaction:

> [Simon, age 4 years 9 months, is helping his mother to
> make a cake.]
> Simon [wanting to grate a lemon]: Can I do that?
> Mother: Well, you can try. But it's not very easy.
>   You can tear your finger if you're not careful.
> Simon: What do you mean "tear"?
> Mother: Well, if your finger gets too close to the
>   grater, and you're going too fast, you can catch

it on the sharp part and scrape the skin off.
Simon: I'll be very careful.
Mother: Hold it like that [she puts the grater in
Simon's hand and then gives him the lemon].
[Five seconds of concentrated effort follow, at which
point the lemon slips out of Simon's hand into the
bowl.]
Simon: Oh dear!
Mother [mock anger]: Oh deary me! Whatever shall we
    do?
[Mother hands back lemon; Simon continues to grate.]
Simon: Look, it's coming off.
Mother: Yes. You have to turn it [the lemon] round.
    Because when you've got it [the rind] all off one
    part, you have to turn it round to get the rest
    off. Let me show you.
Simon: No. I can do it. [He tries to turn the grater
around.]
Mother: No. You turn the lemon round, not the
    grater. You see, you've got it off there, so
    you've got to take it off another part now.
[Ten seconds of grating]
Simon: You do it now.
Mother: Thank you. That was a help.

Here Simon is not only learning to cook and testing
the limits of his own competence, he is also learning
how to talk about some of the activities involved.
(Wells, 1986, p.53)

This type of extended dialogue in which an adult and a

child interact to attain a common goal was not observed

during structured activity in the daycare. This may mean

that the time "given" in the home environment to learning

about the world through language and concurrently learning

about language through worldly experience during practical

activities such as cooking is not replicated in the daycare

setting.

Musical language.

Musical language was another dominant oral form in the

daycare; group singing was an everyday practise for at
least 10-15 minutes or 5% of the child's waking day. The
frequency of singing in the daycare may be attributed to
the chief caregiver's Early Childhood training program in
which music was presented as a legitimate and necessary
form of expression for young children. The children sang a
wide range of music from well known "classics" such as
"Frere Jacques" and "Sweetly Sings the Donkey" to more
contemporary music such as "Five Little Monkeys."
Seasonally-appropriate songs, ("Rudolph, the Red-Nosed
Reindeer,") songs which required movement, ("Head,
Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,") and songs which were
individual children's favorites were also sung.
Additionally, songs were brought to the daycare centre by
daycare children who attended primary school for half the
day. The songs learned in school were performed and taught
to the daycare group by the school-aged children. In
addition to caregiver-initiated group singing, there was
considerable impromptu singing; for example, a group of
children who were tidying the pretend-kitchen area began a
chorus of "Yankee, Doodle Dandy." Similarly, as a child sat
coloring, a quiet rendition of "Twinkle, Twinkle" was sung.

The first presented example of song in the daycare
involves a caregiver-chosen participation song during which
the group must form a circle with one child in the middle.
The lyrics of the song change according to the color of the

child's shirt and when the phrase "show me some motion" is
sung, the child in the middle of the circle performs an
action of his/her choice, such as stomping his/her feet,
which the group imitates. The caregiver then chooses
another child to enter the circle and the process is
repeated. This interaction took place immediately
following the singing of a song about elephants.

Greta: Now can we have all the little elephants face the
    circle again. And we are going to have Stephen in the
    middle. (Stephen moves to the middle of the circle
    while the children join hands.)
Greta and the children begin to sing: There is a blue boy,
    in the rain tra la la la.   There is a blue boy in the
    rain tra la la la.   There is a blue boy in the rain
    tra la la la la for he likes sugar and I like plums.
    Show me a motion tra la la la la. Show me a motion
    tra la la la. Show me a motion tra la la la la. For
    he likes sugar and I like plum.
Greta: Very good! Now we have Clara!
The singing continues: There's a white girl in the mist
    tra la la la la. your feet. There's a white girl in
    the mist tra la la la la. (Greta interjects: Come on
    you guys!) There's a white girl in the mist tra la la
    la la. For <u>she</u> likes sugar and I like plums. Show me
    a motion fa la la la la. Show me a motion fa la la la
    la. Show me a motion fa la la la la. (Greta
    interjects: Everybody up! Everybody up!) For <u>she</u>
    likes sugar and I like plums.
Greta: Now Adam. Everybody up. Up Kim. Up is up. Up
    on your feet.
The singing continues: There is a grey boy in the rain,
    tra la la la.   There is a grey boy in the rain fa la
    la la.   There is a grey boy in the rain fa la la la la
    for he likes sugar and I like plum. Show me a motion
    tra la la la la. (Greta interjects: Up and down.)
    Show me a motion, tra la la la la. Show me a motion
    fa la la la la (Greta interjects: Stop!) For she
    likes sugar and I like plum.
Greta: You want to have a turn Stephen. He has a yellow
    shirt on, so we have a yellow boy this time. Kim you
    can fit in too, somehow.   Just watch what he is
    doing. Everybody help singing.
The singing continues: There is a yellow boy in the rain
    tra la la la.   There is a yellow boy in the rain tra
    la la la la.   There is a yellow boy in the rain tra la

la la la for he likes sugar and I like plums. Show me
a motion tra la la la la. (Greta interjects: Turn
around Stephen) Show me a motion tra la la la la show
me a motion tra la la la la. Show me a motion tra la
la la la. For he likes sugar and I like plum.
Greta: That was pretty good. Now we will close this circle
off.

In the context of what seemed to be a very enjoyable
experience, concepts of color, up versus down, and pronoun
referents (he, she) were incidentally taught.
Additionally, the children gained further experience with
following directions.

The second example of song in the daycare involves the
singing of a song that the children knew much better than
the caregiver.

Greta: Do you remember what Betty, Miss Betty, taught you
      that umh (pause) five little monkeys jumping on the
      bed. Remember that?
Children: Yes. No.
Greta: You liked that so much. Do you want to sing it?
Jimmy: I know. I have it on tape.
Greta: O. K.
They sing: Five little monkeys jumping on the bed. One
      fell off and bumped his head. (child's voice in the
      background: I have that on tape too.) Mummy called
      the doctor and the doctor said no more monkeys jumping
      on the bed.
Greta: Now four, four.
They continue singing: Four little monkeys jumping on the
      bed. One fell down and bumped his head. Mummy called
      the doctor and the doctor said no more monkeys jumping
      on the bed.
Greta: Now three, three.
They continue singing: Three little monkeys jumping on the
      bed. One fell down and bumped his head. Mummy's
      called the doctor and the doctor said no more monkeys
      jumping on the bed.
Greta: Now we have only two left.
The singing continues: Two little monkeys jumping on the
      bed. One fell off and bumped his head. Mummy called
      the doctor and the doctor said no more monkeys jumping
      on the bed. One little monkey jumping on the bed. He

> fell off and bumped his head. Mummy called the doctor
> and the doctor said no more monkeys jumping on the
> bed.
> Greta: And what happened then? What was the last verse?
> Can you remember?
> Child: Yeah.
> John: (loudly) No little monkey
> The others join in: jumping on the bed none fell off and
> bumped his head.
> Greta: What happened then?
> John: Mamma called the doctor and the doctor said put
> those monkeys straight to bed.
> Greta: And that was the end of that verse. See, I forgot
> that, that was very good that you remembered.
> John: I have that on tape, that's why.
> Greta: Oh, that is why, I never listen to tapes because I
> have no time.
> Stephen: I have it on tape too.
> Greta: Very good, so you can always help me when you
> listen to your tapes.

Most notable in this interaction is the caregiver's

willingness to "step aside" and facilitate the song session

while allowing a child the leader's role.

With regard to the incidence of song in the ideal home

literacy environment, the researcher could uncover no

research addressing the issue. It could be assumed,

perhaps, that some parent-child singing and sing-a-long

records, audiotapes and television are a part of daily life

in many literate home environments, but, a judgement cannot

be made at the present time on how the musical environment

of the daycare, with daily music session and spontaneous

sing-songs, compares to the musical environment of the

home. With regard to the connection between song and

literacy learning in general, it may be that the experience

of singing is similar to book reading experience. The

tools of the written word -words, phrases, sentences, rhythmic language, plot lines, punch lines and story structure, for example - are also parts of song. Furthermore, just as stories are meant to be comprehended and remembered, so are songs. Viewed from this perspective, song may be considered an enjoyable, accessible means to an experience that is similar to reading, and therefore, may be seen as potentially enhancing literacy-related learnings.

Imaginative language.

Language used for imaginative purposes was another dominant form of language observed. Caregivers regularly "entered into" children's imaginative situations and imaginative language was utilized accordingly.

A representative imaginative language situation occurred as Jenny and Sandy sat playing with toy cars and a model gas station.

```
Jenny:  You play with me.
Mary:   OK.
Jenny:  This is your car.  (Jenny gives Mary a toy "Miss
        Piggy" car.) How much gas does she need?  What would
        you like?
Mary:   Oh, about five dollars.
Jenny:  There you are. (as she pretends to fill up the car)
Mary:   Thank you, sir. (Mary takes a toy truck and
"drives"
        i.e. pushes it to the gas station.)  I'm a farmer.
Jenny:  What do you need?
Mary:   I need some gas for my car.
Jenny:  (laughing) You need some milk for your cows.
```

(Laughing, Mary moves on to another child while Jenny continues to play with the toy cars, the gas station, and from time-to-time, Sandy, who is also playing in the same area with toy cars.)

This "in-and-out" sort of interaction is consistent with Wells' (1986) observation of the home environment in which parents periodically and momentarily "enter into" imaginative situations with their children. Promoting the development of the imagination is relevant to literacy learning because the act of reading requires that the reader imagine the experience being related by mere ink marks on a page (Rosenblatt, 1978) to the happening in a world different from the actual world that the reader presently occupies. Imagination is clearly required so that this understanding of reading as a decontexualized (Pellegrini, 1985) or disembedded (Olson, 1984) event may be developed and the necessary leap from an "actual world" to a "possible world" may be accomplished (Bruner, 1986).

Questioning language.

Language used to question was also a dominant form of oral interaction in the daycare; caregivers used language of this type with the seeming intention of encouraging a child to speak factually about his or her life. Children did not initiate or utilize this language form to a great

extent as Wells (1986) claims that children in the home environment do. Additionally, the daycare children did not use this form of language to initiate literacy-related inquiries as children in the home environment routinely do (Brailsford, 1986; Heath, 1983; Wells, 1986).

For example, on a Monday morning as the children finished their morning snack, the caregiver questioned the children about their weekend activities.

1 Greta - Jenny: What did you do on Sunday, Jenny? Did
     you go to church?
2 Jenny - Greta: No, I watched T.V.
3 Greta - Jenny: Did you go outside?
4 Jenny - Greta: No, I played with my friends inside.
5 Greta - Johnny: Did you play outside? (no response)
6 Greta - Sandy: Did you play outside, Sandy?
7 Sandy - Greta: I went to the zoo.
8 Greta - Jimmy: What did you do on Sunday?
9 Jimmy - Greta: I went to the school to paint. My dad is
     allowed to paint. I had two friends over.
10 Greta - Jimmy: Oh, so you had two friends over.
11 Greta - Group: Who went outside?
12 Jimmy - Greta: You know my bunny? I was outside with my
     bunny.
13 Greta - Jimmy: I see.
14 Greta - Matthew: Did you go to church? I know you went
     to church, I saw you there. (Jordon nods his head)
15 Greta - Group: Let's sing a morning song...

Throughout this interaction the tone was friendly and the caregiver's personal knowledge of individual children was apparent. For example, Jimmy's comment that he went to "school to paint" was understood without further clarification because the caregiver knew that Jimmy's father is a teacher who is involved in a range of extracurricular activities. Similarly, the caregiver's direct knowledge of Matthew's attendance at church was

evident. Also apparent in this example was the caregiver's interest in the children as evidenced by her attempt to speak to many of the children; of the 9 children present, the caregiver directed a question toward 5.

Rodgers (1987), Snow (1983), and Wells (1986) agree that knowledge of and interest in individual children's lives are fundamental prerequisites to engaging children in dialogue but claim further that child-initiated comments or questions such as "You know my bunny ..." should be capitalized on so that what the child knows and is interested in forms the basis of collaborative dialogue in which language is used by the adult and child to jointly construct meaning. Dialogue is then a means to explore and expand the child's world (including the child's literacy world) and in this process the child concurrently learns about language. In the given representative example, although the prerequisites of interest in and knowledge about the children were evident, the caregiver's conversational agenda, seemingly that of determining who played outside and who went to church, did not result in a conversation. There were, however, rare interactions that resulted in a conversation. One such interaction is related in the following section.

Discussion language.

A much less-frequent form of oral interaction in the

daycare was that of discussion in which the caregiver allowed a child-initiated comment or query to form the basis of an extended conversation.

In the following example, a child's question about the Shriner's circus elicited a wealth of interaction. From the starting point of a child-initiated query, this interaction proceeded through a short series of caregiver-initiated questions to a interaction pattern that was distinctly different from most other observed interactions.

1 Jenny-Greta: Remember at the circus? Remember when the (garbled) going around and around? That part was funny.
2 Greta-Group: O. K. lets hear about the circus. Who went to the children's circus yesterday? Matthew did, hands up Matthew. You went to the circus, hands up. Did you go to the Circus? No. Did you go to the circus? (garbled)
   Listen. What was very good in the performance?
3 Jimmy: I saw something very good. They have these different swings. It was, uhm, ah, uhm.
4 Greta: That is a trapeze. They swing back and forth and then they change.
5 Jimmy: And then them jump down.
6 Greta: They jump down.
7 Greta: Girls or guys?
8 Clara: Girls and guys.
9 Jenny: The girls help the guys.
10 Greta: The girls help the guys, I see.
11 Clara: And one time one boy went up.
12 Greta: Yes, Clara. They swing and then he did a flip and hung on to another person, right?
13 Jenny: Remember, Clara, remember, when the girl was on the thing. She was pulling on the thing the guy was holding with his feet on the rope.
14 Clara: Yeh.
15 Jenny: That was my favorite.
16 Jimmy: I liked the cannon.
17 Greta: The cannon was very exciting, wasn't it? (Clara speaks about the cannon, but the utterances are garbled)
18 Greta: And what did you see at the circus, Sandy?
19 Sandy: Lions and elephants.

20 Greta: What did the lions do? (no response) Sandy what
      else did they do.
21 Sandy: They danced.
22 Greta: They danced! Really!
23 Sandy: Yup!
24 Greta: What else did the lions do? (Pause) What did
      the elephants do? (pause)   What did the elephants do
      Clara?
25 Clara: One got on top of the other behind the ears, he
      bit close to the ears.
26 Greta: On top of the other! O. K.
27 Clara: And the other one was pulling on the tail with
      the trunk.
28 Greta: And did the elephant go up in the air?
29 Clara: No! Not this time, they just stood down.
30 Jimmy: When the thing was turning up again the guy went
      in and we had to plug our ears.
31 Greta: From the noise?
32 Jimmy: Then the guy went underneath.
33 Greta: No one had an accident?
34 Clara: No, but there were some there and they were
      rocking up. The elephants did too.
35 Greta: What other animals did you see besides the
      elephants and the tigers? Horses, there should have
      been horses, they usually have horses.
36 Child: And dogs.
37 Greta: See, they had more than two animals: horses,
      tigers and elephants. No lions. This one didn't have
      any lions.
38 Jimmy: But tigers are called lions.
39 Greta: No honey, those are different things, honey.
      The tigers have stripes and the lions don't. Tigers
      are not called lions. They are two different species.
      They are both cats, but they look different. They are
      from the same family, cat family. O. K. One has
      stripes and one doesn't. A male lion has a big mane,
      all that hair!
      (The conversation continues with one child's singing
      drowning out the conversation).
40 Clara: Do you know what? The boy and the girl were
      playing soccer with the (unintelligible word).
41 Jimmy: They were playing football.
42 Greta: Yes.
43 Clara: And they were trying to play catch with the
      little (unintelligible word). And the girl, one fell
      off and then we saw her underwear.
44 Greta: You did? Oh well.
45 Jimmy: And you know what else? The girl went out and
      she went to the guy and tripped him.
46 Greta: Yeah?
47 John: And the guy followed her and she put the basket
      on the guy.

on the guy.
48 Greta: Yes.
49 John: And then he fell down (John, Jenny, Clara and Ray
    laugh). That was funny.
50 Greta: That was funny. (laughs) O.K.
51 Clara: Do you remember when (laughing) when they, when
    the guy was carrying the balloon around and then the
    girl.
52 Jimmy: (interrupting) I was talking about that
already.
53 Clara: And they were chasing and then they crashed and
    then, the the game was over.
54 Greta: Oh, I see.
55 Jimmy: One time, when the dogs were being bad, when
    they were eating, the girl went like this (waving his
    hand like a whip) to the dog.
56 Greta: And the dogs would go back to their places.
57 Clara: Yeah.
58 Jimmy: No. They, she gave it to a guy and the guy said
    something.
59 Greta: Oh, I see. and, what else, was very
    interesting? (pause)
60 Mary: Did they have a clown.
61 Children: Yes.
62 Greta: Yes? And they were real funny?
63 Clara: And they played a little magic. They just
    pretended that they were doing a little magic.
64 Jimmy: That was real magic.
65 Greta: Was it?
66 Jimmy: Yeah. Remember when they put the magic star
    thing in the thing and they blew it out but it didn't
    change and they did it again and then it changed to
    (pause).
67 Clara: No, it didn't.
68 Jimmy: Yes, it did.
69 Greta: O.K.! O.K.! Jimmy, Clara saw something else.
    Don't let's fight about it. Let's sing a song -
    Sweetly sings the donkey at the break of day. (The
    children join in).

There are a number of salient issues evident in this
not-often-observed type of interaction. First, the topic
was child-initiated and was one that most children were
knowledgeable about; six of the nine children present had
attended the circus. Rodgers, Perrin and Waller (1987),
Snow (1983), and Wells (1986) claim that true dialogue is

more likely to evolve when the conversational topic is one that a child is knowledgeable about and interested in. Second, the caregiver may have legitimized pursuing this conversational topic by asking semantically contingent questions. Third, the caregiver-asked questions were ones to which only the children could provide the answers: the caregiver could not have predetermined answers in mind because she had not attended the circus. These true requests for information rather than known-answer-questions or requests for display of knowledge usually serve to move a conversation forward (Nurss, Hough & Goodson, 1981; Rodgers, Perrin & Waller, 1987; Tizard & Hughes, 1984; Wood & Wood, 1983). Fourth, the caregiver's remarks were non-evaluative and were spoken as if the caregiver could not stand the suspense or excitement of what the children were relating. This seemed to encourage the children to continue sharing their experience. This seeming invitation to share one's knowledge and experience of the world is a response that Calkins (1986) advocates when dealing with young children's early writing attempts; a teacher's non-evaluative excitement about a young student's writing propels the writing forward. Perhaps similar excitement about a speaker's message also serves to propel the conversation further. It is also notable that in a number of instances, the caregiver excitedly repeated the child's exact words (turn 26: "On top of the other!", for example).

This is not unlike Graves' (1983) notion of "receiving the work." Graves claims that a writer needs to hear his/her own words so that a teacher should "give back" the ideas of the piece in the same words as the child has used; this act is somehow reinforcing and serves to "nudge" an author's writing onward. Perhaps "receiving" a speaker's words and quoting them back is similarly reinforcing. These cumulative conditions are largely consistent with the conditions which elicit dialogue in the home as observed by Snow (1983) and Wells (1986).

In fact, under these cumulative conditions, 5 of the 6 children who had attended the circus participated in a dialogue with the caregiver and one another; through this a mental picture of the circus was collaboratively built. In the process of collaboratively building "a shared structure of meaning" (Wells, 1986, p.45) the child participants potentially learned more about the world and about language use. Learning more about the world is connected to literacy learning in that knowledge of the world is requisite to the literate act of comprehending a text. Learning more about language use is connected to literacy learning because oral language use is the basis for reading and writing; furthering knowledge of language use may establish a stronger foundation for these literate acts. There is, however, one substantial difference between this dialogue and dialogues routinely observed in the home.

The difference between this dialogue and dialogues in the home is that home dialogues are often one-to-one between parent and child. In this individualized circumstance, the child may have a greater opportunity to learn about the world through the vehicle of language because while dialogue, or conversation, with and\or among other children is a means to learn about the world, dialogue with an older more knowledgeable person is the predominant means through which a child comes to understand the world, including the world of literacy learning (Bruner, 1971; Wells, 1986). Therefore, the value of the home one-to-one interaction may be greater than the interaction in the daycare.

Of further interest is the fact that this interaction happened at the end of a scheduled activity (a craft session). Data suggests that a child-initated comment or question put forth before a scheduled activity would probably not have led to a conversation as evidenced in the following example.

```
1  Child:  Joey threw up outside.
2  Greta:  Yes, I know.  He has been very sick.  We have to
           take him to his vet because he will have to go.
           He has been very sick.
3  Child:  Why does he have to go to the veterinarian?
4  Greta:  That's where we go.
5  Child:  My dog goes to the vet.
6  Greta:  O. K. we are going  to have Adam on the outside.
           On the outside we play one little elephant fell
           in singing.  O. K. everyone help singing.
```

Although the topic of dogs and veterinarians was

clearly one that interested at least 3 of the children, the topic was not developed. While the caregiver's limited response may be comparable to parent/child conversation at home in the similar situation of having to meet a schedule, it may be that because the daycare does have a more rigidly fixed agenda than the home, that topics of interest to particular children are not often addressed and developed into what may be considered true conversation as is reported in the home environment.

Language to provide instructional exposure.

Language was used to provide instructional exposure to topics such as the alphabet, number, colors, and shapes.

A representative example of such language use occurred one afternoon just as the children were finishing their afternoon snack. While the children sat at the table, Greta stood in front of them holding a stack of cards with the letters of the alphabet prominently displayed and a corresponding picture. She said, "Now, we'll sing the alphabet." As the children happily "belted out" the alphabet, she quickly showed the alphabet cards. Upon completion of the song, she slowly went through the cards, asking individual children what the letter was and what the accompanying picture was. If the child answered correctly, which was most often the case, Greta said, "Very good" or "That's right." If the child did not offer an appropriate

response (saying for example, "that's an ant with funny legs" for an octopus picture) Greta would say something equivalent to: "No, sweetheart, this is an octopus" and move on to next alphabet card. This interaction lasted for approximately 8 minutes. Knowledge of the alphabet is an important literacy-related learning.

Similar instructional exposure sessions were offered using the color, number and shape charts on the wall. These are concepts that are taught later in school. Therefore, exposure to these concepts may assist later school learning.

This type of quick exposure to such concepts is clearly in keeping with the chief caregiver's explicitly stated philosophy of exposure to, rather than lengthy instruction in such concepts. The chief caregiver expressed the feeling that "real" or lengthy instruction is the responsibility of the school. While parents in the home literacy environment usually do not utilize flash cards and charts to expose their children to these concepts, they do provide exposure to these concepts through, for example, books. For the daycare children, exposure to these concepts in what appeared to be a relaxed, happy environment may assist literacy and other school learning.

In summary, maintenance language was a dominant form used by the caregivers to ensure that the children's

physiological and safety needs were met. The use of this language form, similar to that of parents, allowed learning, including literacy learning, to potentially proceed. There was substantial musical and imaginative language in use by the caregivers and the children in the daycare. This may have enhanced literacy learning. Language which provided instructional exposure was a less-dominant form of language used by the caregivers and it provided the children with exposure to a range of concepts taught later in school. Enabling language allowed the daycare activities to proceed in a manner and timeframe acceptable to the daycare. During the activities that this language form enabled to continue, literacy-related learnings may have occurred but children were not actively involved in oral interaction. Similarly, through the dominant language form of questioning, in which the caregivers expressed an interest in and a knowledge of the children, the children were required only to listen and display rudimentary knowledge of a subject. Discussion, which allowed and encouraged participation by the children was a language form rarely observed.

While all forms of language are necessary and/or helpful in the previously indicated ways, if children are to learn about the world through the medium of language and correspondingly learn about language through use "what seems to be more important is that, to be most helpful, the

child's experience of *conversation* should be in a one-to-
one situation in which the adult is talking about matters
that are of interest and concern to the child" (Wells,
1986, p.44). This type of interaction was largely absent
from caregiver-child interaction in the daycare centre.

Summary of Oral Language

The children were allowed at least 36% of their
daycare centre day for freeplay. During this time, the
caregivers acted as facilitators and the children had many
toys, games, and activities with which to play. The
children played independently, played cooperatively, and
played "symbolically." As a result, wide oral language use
was used as a means of negotiating the world. During the
18% of the day that was spent eating, the children
experienced little oral interaction but were exposed to
information and situations which may positively influence
their general school experience and may therefore, have a
concomitant influence on literacy learning. During the
rest of the day, the dominant language form of maintenance,
musical, imaginative, and the less dominant form of
language to provide instructional exposure were viewed as
forms of language which potentially enhanced literacy
learning. The preponderance of enabling language and
questioning language, and the concomitant lack of language
to discuss were considered not to offer the child an

extensive means of learning about the world through language and concurrently learning about language through worldly experience.

Storybook Interaction

Storybook reading was an everyday occurrence at the daycare. To determine what the daycare children learned about literacy through storybook reading, 30 storybook sessions were observed and 8 storybook sessions were audiotaped and analyzed so that a true storybook picture would emerge. To present storybook reading as it happened in the daycare, first the chief caregiver's philosophy of storybook reading, as explicitly stated by the caregiver, will be explained. From this starting point, the activities that immediately preceded the story reading will be described. Then a representative story session will be described and discussed at length to exemplify story reading in the daycare and to reveal on-going storybook reading-related trends. Finally, activities which followed storybook reading will be described. In these presentations, the potential impact of the event on literacy learning will be discussed wherever possible in light of what is currently known from the professional literature about what a parent may do to enhance preschool literacy learning. While this discussion method is helpful in that it serves to illuminate interactional patterns, it must be recognized that it is improbable that even the most conscientious of parents would always match favorably with this hypothetical ideal.

The Chief Caregivers Explicitly Stated Philosophy of
Storyreading

To understand the nature of the storybook experience,
the chief caregiver's philosophy of the role that storybook
reading plays in the daycare centre must be described.
This need be done because as Garland and White (1980)
suggest, "it is not the mere presence of and participation
in an activity or interaction that is of importance, rather
the importance lies in the nature of the experience. What
ultimately determines the nature or quality of the
experience are the assumptions and goals underlying the
day-to-day running of the daycare" (p.19).

The chief caregiver overtly expressed the view that a
parent reading to a child is very important, more important
than, for example, a parent working overtime so that the
child could have expensive clothing. With regard to
reading in the daycare, she asserted that children should
be read to daily and that the daily reading sessions should
continually offer new stories so that the reading of
storybooks does not become boring. She asserted further
that it is the elementary school's job, rather than the
preschool's job, to teach reading: the role of the
preschool is to expose children to books and to provide 2-3
minutes of daily exposure to topics such as the letters,

colors, numbers, and shapes. Finally, the chief caregiver
stated that stories should be read before expected quiet
times, such as lunchtime, so that the children are given
the opportunity to "calm down". Observation of storybook
interactions between the caregivers and children offered
the researcher the opportunity to determine the fit between
the chief caregiver's expressed views and what actually
occurred; observations confirmed there was considerable
consistency between the two. Each of the caregiver's
storyreading opinions will now be elaborated.

"Children should experience daily reading."

First, in agreement with the chief caregiver's
expressed view, the children were read to almost daily: of
36 observational periods, 30 included caregiver-read
storybook sessions. Moreover, there were usually both
morning and afternoon storybook reading sessions.
Researchers (Brailsford, 1986; Doake, 1984; Taylor, 1983;
for example) who have investigated the role of parent-child
bookreading in early literacy development agree that daily
reading to preschool children has value at some level and
that the actual value of the daily reading experience may
be contingent upon what actually occurs during the reading
event. Sulzby & Teale (1987), for example, point out that
while there is no single pattern of interaction which will
guarantee absolute literacy success, there are factors

which are consistently associated with such achievement. Although the chief caregiver did not offer an opinion relative to these factors, some of the factors commonly associated with literacy success were evident during storybook interaction. A detailed discussion of the presence and absence of these factors will follow during the elucidation of the representative storybook interaction.

"Repeated rereading of books is boring."

Second, the chief caregiver asserted that new books should consistently be offered. New books were offered almost every day; repeated readings of books were not evident. However, many researchers (Doake, 1984; Sulzby & Teale, 1987, for example) would put forth the position that repeated readings of favorite storybooks are necessary so that children may participate in reading events and learn from them. As will be discussed later, child participation was minimal. Additionally, researchers have shown that repeated readings are responsible, at least in part, for the development of a sense of story structure and a sense of story structure is thought to enhance story comprehension (Marrow, 1985). Sulzby & Teale (1987) claim that a knowledge of story structure may result in storybook reenactments. Storybook reenactments were not observed in the daycare. Moreover, the researcher observed two situations in which the children exhibited an apparent lack

of story structure: During the reading of an animal
storybook the caregiver stopped the storybook reading to
take one of the children to the washroom. She did not
subsequently finish the story. Although, the children had
apparently been listening intently to the story previous to
the interruption, no one appeared to notice that the story
was unfinished. The children began to play or ready
themselves for lunch. It could be hypothesized that the
children were bored or were not enjoying the particular
story or that they wished to play or have lunch more than
they wished to finish the story but it would seem, given
that the children had been listening intently to the
beginning of the story, that at least some of the children
would question the abrupt mid-story ending. Similarly,
during the reading of another storybook, the story session
abruptly ended mid-story, without any of the children
expressing knowledge that the story was indeed unfinished.
Part of the story provided an explanation of ringing school
bells. Following the author's explanation, the chief
caregiver, who had been listening to the storybook,
interjected "the bell means it is time to line up for
dinner". With this, one of the older children ran quickly
to the area in which the daycare children lined up for
dinner; the other children followed suit. Again, it may be
hypothesized that the children wished to have lunch more
than they wished to finish the story or that the child who

first lined up had misunderstood the chief caregiver's interjection. However, it would again seem that, given the children's apparent interest in the story previous to the chief caregiver's interjection, at least some of the children would question the abrupt mid-story ending if they had a sense of story. This possible lack of story structure understanding may be attributed in part to the absence of repeated story readings.

"Preschool reading should not be primarily

instructional."

Third, the chief caregiver asserted that the role of the preschool teacher is not an instructional one: in the opinion of the chief caregiver, the role of the preschool teacher is to expose children to books and to provide 2-3 minutes of exposure to the letters, shapes, colors, and numbers. Both were evident. The children were exposed to a wide variety of storybooks on topics ranging from Santa Claus to Donald Duck to bears to Eskimos to "green eggs and ham". The children were exposed to a limited selection of poetry in the form of nursery rhymes, and were provided with 2-3 minutes of instructional exposure to the letters, shapes, colors, and numbers (a further explanation of instructional exposure is offered under subtitle: Language to Provide Instructional Exposure in the Oral Language section of this chapter). Most preschool literacy experts

would agree in principle with the notion of not teaching preschoolers to read per se and would agree that exposure to a variety of storybook topics and differing genres is a valuable undertaking. Most experts would concur further that it is not formally the job, or the understood role of the preschool parent to teach reading, but that parents in literate home environments do tend to provide instruction on varying aspects of reading; this reading instruction is generally carried out without a conscious attempt to teach reading. Observation of the caregiver-children storybook experience revealed this sort of unintentional reading instruction to be taking place in addition to the aforementioned exposure. A discussion of this aspect will follow later in this chapter.

"Storybook reading is a quiet, calming activity."

Finally, the researcher overtly expressed the opinion that "children must be read a story before lunch so that they can calm down." The morning storybook session was a quiet, transitional activity sandwiched between the noise of free play and the expected quiet of lunchtime. The afternoon storybook session was not consistent with the chief caregiver's stated notion of storybook reading as a calming activity before expected quiet times, as storyreading was nestled between the relative quiet of "sit-down" activities and the roar of free play. Regardless of the seeming inconsistency, both morning and

afternoon storybook sessions could be characterized as quiet activities. Some researchers feel that storytime should be a social time (Sulzby & Teale, 1987; Taylor, 1983) in which children are encouraged to participate in the encounter (Doake, 1984) to stimulate language development and story sense (Nurss, Hough, & Goodson, 1981). However, storytime as a social activity was not evident.

Summary.

In summary, through determining the fit between the caregiver's explicitly stated philosophy of storybook reading and what actually occurred in the daycare, a picture emerges in which children were usually read to daily. Stories read differed from day to day. The sessions were not consciously instructional and were quieting activities. Some evidence suggests that the children may have lacked a sense of story structure.

The chief caregiver's explicitly stated philosophy of storybook reading, the fit between this philosophy and what actually occurred, and the evidential results of this interaction provide but a starting point for more complete understanding of storybook interaction in the daycare and the literacy learnings which took place as a result. For a more complete understanding, the observed storybook sessions will now be discussed, starting with the context

before the actual reading event.

Context Before Reading Events

The time, the place, and the closeness of the reading event.

Storybook reading was a routine activity in the daycare: as noted earlier, of 36 observational periods, 30 included caregiver-read storybook sessions. Storybook reading sessions generally followed a morning free play session and an afternoon sit-down activity session. There was deviation from this routine only when previously inclement weather conditions cleared so that, as the chief caregiver stated, "play in the fresh air became possible." Apart from this deviation, storybook reading was routine. The caregiver would announce that "it is storytime". The children were then expected to put away in the appropriate location whatever toys, puzzles or games they had been using and to go to the room where storybooks were generally read. (See Appendix D for the physical organization of this room.) The children were expected to sit on the floor, facing the storyteller, with their legs and arms crossed. The caregivers did not strictly enforce the body position rule as long as the children were paying attention. This allowed the two school-aged children to cuddle the younger children if they wished. Often the school-aged children would sit with a smaller child in

front of them, with their arms wrapped around the smaller child's chest; the smaller child would lean on the older child while watching the storyteller and the storybook. The researcher did not observe the caregivers telling the older children to cuddle the younger children, but did observe the caregivers positively reinforcing the older children's interaction with the younger children. For example, as the children were settling previous to the start of a storybook session, an older child, Clara, said to a younger child, Sandy, "Sandy, put on your shoe", as she nudged him into a position in which she could cuddle him during the reading of the storybook. The caregiver, watching the interaction, said, "Thank-you, Clara." Holdaway (1979), Taylor (1983), and Doake (1984) claim that the physical closeness which characterizes parent-child storybook reading contributes to the ultimate success of the reading encounter. If the researchers' common claim is accurate, then it follows that a similar feeling of physical closeness must be also established during events in which lone adults read to groups of small children if the reading event is to be equally successful. Perhaps the caregivers were intuitively establishing this by allowing older-child/younger-child closeness.

Finally, the storyteller usually sat on a child-sized chair within one-half meter of the children. This close proximity may help to establish the "visual intimacy" often

lost in group reading events (Holdaway,1979).

Storybook choice.

There was usually some discussion of book choice. Sometimes the discussion would concentrate on the children's choice of a book from all available books in the daycare. At other times, the children were asked to choose from two titles.

For example:

Storyteller: What would you like to read: Goofy or

The Lady with the Alligator Purse?

Older children: Goofy.

Younger children: Goofy (echoing the older children).

Less often, the book was chosen by the caregiver. Sometimes, the caregiver-chosen books had seasonally-appropriate subject matter; for example, books with Halloween, Easter, or Christmas themes. At other times, the book choice of the caregiver could only be described as eclectic.

It should be noted that individual children brought personally-owned books and library-owned books to be read at storytime. These books were always read during storytime and special mention was made of who brought the book and where it came from.

For example:

    Storyteller: We'll read Jamie's library book today.

    Some researchers (Doake, 1984; Taylor, 1983, for example) would agree that allowing the children to choose the majority of books for storytime reading while allowing for some caregiver-chosen books is a suitable balance which is consistent with what occurs in the home literacy environment. This practice may encourage children to become more personally involved with the reading event. Additionally, these researchers would agree with the principle of reading books from the children's personal and community libraries. In doing this, an important connection between reading at home and reading outside the home may be made. Additionally, when the library is mentioned as the source of the reading material, some children are being introduced to the notion of a library while others, already familiar with the library, may come to understand the importance of the library to the wider community. Some researchers, however, would caution against consistently meeting the demands of vocal, older children, at the expense of less-vocal, younger children as was evident when the younger children echoed the book choice of the older children. Doake (1984), for example, cautions that special efforts must be made toward

accommodating the interactional needs of younger siblings when they are read to at the same time as older siblings.

Other activities and interactions which preceded the reading event.

There was a range of activities and interactions which took place between the time that the children sat down and the start of the storybook reading.

On rare occasions, the storyteller would begin the story without an introductory comment.

On other occasions, the storyteller would introduce the story by setting up an expectation as to how the reading event would proceed. For example, "I'll read this and show you the pictures." This sort of statement may allow the child the luxury of listening to the story, secure in the knowledge that he/she will be able to see the pictures at regular intervals. The security of knowing what to expect may enhance the enjoyment level of the reading event.

On more frequent occasions, the storyteller would lead the group in a number of child-chosen songs. This activity would be consistent with Holdaway's (1979) notion of "tuning in", in which songs are sung prior to the reading of a story in an effort to ready the children for the reading ahead. (For a more detailed description of music in the daycare, see Musical Language in the Oral Language

section of this chapter.)

At other times, the storyteller would request days-of-the-week information.

For example:

    Storyteller: What day is it?

    Children: (various responses)

    Storyteller: Monday, that's right. Who can say the days of the week?

    Children: (led by the older children, the group recites the days of the week)

While this sort of exchange does not impact directly on the success of the storybook encounter, it could be viewed as a vocabulary/conceptual development exercise which may positively and indirectly influence general literacy development.

At still other times, the storyteller would ask the children to tell the group of their weekend activities or what foods had been eaten for breakfast or supper.

For example:

    Storyteller: What did you have for breakfast? John?

    John: cereal

    Storyteller: Clara?

    Clara: eggs

    Storyteller: Jenny?

    Jenny: toast

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Storyteller: O.K. we've all had a good breakfast.
               That's important. Now, we'll read the
               story.

Asking children to recall events and details from
their real life experience may help them to do the same
with storybooks. Since recalling events and details from
storybooks is a literal-level comprehension skill,
practicing this skill, albeit in a different context, may
positively enhance this reading (literacy) skill. (For a
more detailed discussion of language used to question, see
Questioning Language in the Oral Language section of this
chapter.)

Still at other times, the storyteller-initiated
interaction could be characterized as the activating of the
children's story-appropriate schemata. For example, before
telling a story about kittens, the storyteller asked: Who
has kittens at home? The children were then called upon
one at a time to tell the group if they had a cat or dog at
home. Similarly, another storyteller asked: "Who goes to
the supermarket?", before beginning a story about the
supermarket. The interaction proceeded as follows:

Storyteller: Who goes to the supermarket?

Child 1:   me

Storyteller: What do you see?

Child 1:   toys

Child 2:   ice-cream

Child 3:   vegetables

Child 2:   You put groceries in a cart.

Finally, just before the storybook was about to be read, the storyteller would sometimes offer comments to direct the attention of the younger, inexperienced children toward the event at hand.
For example:

Storyteller: Jacques, look over here.
              I have a book here.

Some researchers (Snow & Ninio, 1986, for example) would say that the caregiver is teaching the child a contract of literacy: stories are for reading and/or listening to. Additionally, it seems that through comments such as these, the storyteller is teaching the children what the literacy event of group bookreading is about, i.e. you look at the book, listen to the words and hear a story.

Summary.

The children were comfortably seated close to the storybook and the storyteller. The children were also physically close to one another. The storybook choice was often that of the children, with the older children's choice routinely heard and accepted. A range of somewhat supportive interactions took place prior to the actual storybook reading.

The Representative Storybook Session: Mary Poppins

In the following section, a representative storybook session will be related and discussed. The actual story text and the interaction among participants is centred. The researcher's interpretation of the interaction and a discussion of the related literature follows each interaction. In this presentation method, when story text immediately follows interaction rather than the interaction being immediately followed by the researcher's interpretation, this indicates that the caregiver did not pause between interaction and the return to storytelling. When there is a pause, it is indicated by a number indicating the length of the pause in seconds followed by the initials "sp".

Context.

It is a typical winter morning at the daycare. Nine children and two caregivers (Greta and Mary) are in attendance. Previous to the storybook session the children have been involved in free play activities. In the midst of the free play activities there had been an incident. Stephen had been taking a smaller child's blocks and had not responded to the caregiver's requests to give them back, so he had been serving a three minute "time-out" on the stairs. He was still crying and asking for Laura's blocks when Greta announced that it was time to clean up so

that storytime could begin.

After putting away all the toys and games, the children walked or ran into the room in which storytime was usually held. Greta sat on a child-sized chair so that while not sitting on the floor, she was close to the children. The children sat in a semi-circle close to Greta on the shiny, tiled floor.

The storybook session.

Greta stated "Laura, you move close to me." In response, Laura and her older brother Stephen moved close to Greta. Greta later explained that these children had not been read to at home so she wanted them close to her so that they could see the pictures. Clara, an older child, held Sandy, one of the younger children.

When the children had sat down for storytime, Greta picked up the book that the other caregiver, Mary, had brought. The book, from the library, was about Easter and Easter was fast approaching. In spite of Mary's good intentions a decision was eventually made not to read the book as it was viewed as being too long and difficult for the "audience" in the eyes of Greta.

> Greta: Miss Mary brought us a book about Easter. (Greta opens book and flips through the first number of pages.)

> Greta: (looking at Miss Mary who is standing at the back of the room) Ohh Miss Mary, this book is awfully long. (pause) This book is awfully

long.

Mary: Too long to read?

Greta: Yes, oh yes. It is for school age because it is all about (pause) religion and everything.

Mary: Oh

Greta: And we don't have that kind of audience. (Mary nodded as if she understood and Greta began the process of choosing another book:

Greta: OK, what would you guys like to hear? You want Dr. Suess books?

Clara: I want Mary Poppins.

Greta: You would like Mary Poppins.

Jimmy: I want Dr. Suess.

Greta: OK, we can take turns. One now and one in the afternoon. Where's Mary Poppins? Is it over there?

While Greta has asked the whole group what they would like to read, it is the oldest two children who respond before Greta says that the "quota" of daily stories has been taken. This does not give the younger children a chance to choose a story but does send the message to everyone that they do have a choice and that if you voice your choice early in the decision-making process, your choice will be addressed in turn.

Greta: I can't find Mary Poppins right now (as she searches the book)

Jenny: Here's one. (taking a book off the children's table)

Clara: The purple one. (referring to the book in question)

Mary: Here's one about Peter Rabbit, one about a rabbit. (searching the other book shelf)

Greta: Yes (in response to Clara's comment) (The older people, Mary, Greta, Jenny, and Clara, collaborate to find the book, while the other, younger children watch the proceedings. When the book is found, about one minute, the children settle in approximately the same positions around Greta.)

Greta: And do you know the story about Mary Poppins? (pause) What is it about?

Clara: Well, it's... it's... (pause)

Greta: It's beautiful. Yes, OK.

Clara: Yeah (simultaneously with Greta's "Yes")

Greta: Here is a book about Mary Poppins. (as she turns to the first page of the story)

In this interaction, Greta may not have allowed enough "wait time" for Clara to gather her thoughts and answer the question. Additionally, because Greta is not familiar with this book, she can not provide an "advanced organizer" and simply says that the story "is beautiful". The children are not shown the cover nor are they encouraged to predict what the storybook may be about.

Greta: Here is a book about Mary Poppins.

Story: Mary Poppins, the new nanny, had just taught Jane and Michael a game called: "Well began is half done or tidy up the nursery."[sic] It was so much fun that when it was over and the nursery was neat as a card of new pins, Michael wanted to do it all over again.

Greta: Do you like to clean up? (1.64 sp)

Clara: Yeah

>Greta: You do like to clean up.
>
>Stephen: I like to go (sweeping motion with his hand)
>
>Greta: You want to go like (sweep) all done. Magic wand and all done.
>
>Stephen: And, I clean up like this, I go.
>
>Greta: Oh, I see. I bet you could go like this. I just never see you clean the place but usually cleaning up takes a bit longer. (During the last two comments, Stephen and Greta's voices together)
>
>Greta: OK

This interaction appears to be an attempt on the part of the caregiver to contextualize the story event of housecleaning within the child's own world knowledge and experience. Hayden & Fagan (1987) contend that the parents of high print awareness children routinely contextualize stories for their children. These researchers have hypothesized that in the decontextualized experience of storybook reading the contextualization of stories may provide "a sense-building support system for children" (p. 162). The ultimate success of the caregiver's attempt at story contextualization may hinge on the caregiver making a connecting comment between Stephen's experience and the story. On this occasion, this was not done.

>Greta: "Nonsense," said Mary Poppins, "Spit Spot, time for an outing in the park," and Michael and Jane in their hats and coats followed at her heels out through the gate and into...
>
>Stephen: I have that on tape.

Greta: OK OK that's very good.

Story: out into cherry tree lane. Once outside in the lane, Mary walked on quickly, Jane and Michael had to skip to keep up but at the entrance to the park she stopped; for there was Bert: the jack-of-all trades.

In this interaction, the caregiver recognizes a child's legitimate comment but quickly resumes the storytelling so as not to interrupt the flow of the story.

Greta: What is a jack-of-all-trades? (1.44 sp) What is a man who sells everything: buttons and trousers and skirts and candy. He sells everything? (.93 sp)

Story: Bert was down on his knees on the sidewalk making pictures in colorful chalk. Today he did (a picture) the sidewalks ...

Greta: But a jack-of-all-trades is someone that sells or that does everything, he can fix everything or he sells everything or another thing or ... name for jack-of-all-trades is when all you do many jobs, when you can do many, many things or you sell many things, you are a jack of all trades.

In this interaction the storyteller attempts to provide an explanation of the term "jack-of-all-trades". Because this term was salient in order to complete comprehension of the passage, the storyteller may have done well to teach this unknown term. However, as evidenced by the storyteller's definitions of the term, the storyteller seemed unsure of the exact definition of a "jack-of-all-trades", so the explanation of the term may not have served to enhance comprehension.

Greta: And today he was doing what? (1.72 sp)

Jenny: Pictures

Greta: Painting pictures on the?

Jenny: Sidewalk.

Greta: The sidewalk

In this interaction, the storyteller, through
questioning, is asking the children to attend to the
details of the picture. This may, according to Snow and
Ninio (1986), help to teach the children that the meaning
of the story can be gleaned from the pictures, and that
pictures though static, can represent events. These two
notions constitute two-sevenths of the rules or contracts
of literacy that Snow and Ninio claim that parents teach
their children. It should be noted that the child who
answered the questions was an older child who had
positioned herself as close to the storyteller as possible.

Story: The pictures were lovely. There was one
of boats on the river, and another of the circus.
Not a very large circus but still there was a
lion, and a tiger, and a man on a cycle. Michael
stopped to admire it but Jane strolled on. All
at once, she stopped. "Oh, this is a lovely
one," she said, "I'd like to go there." (5.5 sp)

Greta: Can you see the picture? (.53 sp)

Child: Yes

Sandy: I see a tree.

Greta: OK. Just one moment. What part of the
pictures can you see? (1.27 sp) pictures of
boats and what else? (1.04 sp)

Jimmy: Trees

Greta: Trees.   And?

Clara: Grass

Greta: Grass, OK, meadows

Jenny: And meadows

Greta: That's right.   Lots of pictures.

In this interaction, the storyteller is again drawing the children's attention to the pictures, but this time she simply asks the children to say aloud the elements of the picture; she does not direct the children to use the picture cues to make sense of the story even though an understanding of the pictures may enhance story comprehension.   Snow & Ninio (1986) may view this as a missed opportunity to teach two important picture-related rules of literacy: pictures are for meaning, and, pictures though static, may represent events.   By her final comment, Greta additionally puts forth the notion that an understanding of a picture involves the naming of the separate elements within the picture: "That's right.   Lots of pictures."

> Story: "An typical English countryside," said Bert.   "What's more so you can see it [sic]. There's a little country fair down the road and over the hill.   Quite a suitable spot for trouble and high adventure I should say."   "May we go too, Mary Poppins? "Please take Michael" "I have no intention," said Mary Poppins, "of making a spectacle of myself, thank you."

> Greta: She didn't want to go, let's see what happens.

> Story: "Then," said Bert with a wink for Michael
> and Jane, "I'll do it myself." "Do what?" asked
> Michael "A bit of magic," said Bert, and taking
> each child by the hand, "It's easy. You wink, you
> think, you do a double blink and you cross your
> eyes and jump." "Really," sniffed Mary Poppins,
> but she put up her umbrella and away they all
> went straight into the typical countryside.

In this interaction, the caregiver summarizes the
preceding text ("she didn't want to go") as many parents
may do and then wonders what will happen next. The latter
comment may teach the children two important concepts.
First, from this comment and the subsequent immediate
reentry into the reading of the storybook, it is apparent
that the story must be read if the group is to find out
what happens. This, Snow & Ninio (1986) claim, is a
seminal rule or contract of literacy that parents often
teach their children. Second, by making this sort of
predictive comment, the caregiver is, in a sense, sending
the message that reading is a predictive hypothesis-making
process rather than a receptive, passive process. Some
researchers (Smith, 1973, for example) would agree with
sending this message.

> Greta: That's a way to go. You see a picture
> and you want to disappear in the picture. You
> want to live but it's just magic, but you can
> only do that in your dreams. (.5 sp)

In this interaction, the storyteller appears to do two
things. First of all, she summarizes the complex plot line
in which the characters have left their real world and have

entered a magic "storybook-picture world". Parents often summarize or retell complex plot lines so that their children's comprehension of the story is not impeded. Secondly, the storyteller may be teaching the children that books constitute an autonomous fictional world: another contract of literacy that parents routinely teach their children according to Snow & Ninio (1986). The ultimate outcome of the interaction may depend on the clarity of the caregiver's statement.

> Story: It was a beautiful spot. Green and quiet and sparkling with sun. Bert and Mary Poppins were dressed to suit. Bert was given an entirely new outfit of clothes. And best of all a straw hat. Mary Poppins was dressed (shhh) in the height of fashion from her white coat bonnet to the diamond shining on her shoes. Jane and Michael looked just as elegant. (3.99 sp)
>
> Greta: Are you sure you saw the movie? (.5 sp)
>
> Clara: Yes, I'm sure.
>
> Greta: You did. And you liked it? (5.20 sp)
>
> Clara: Yes.
>
> Story: "I thought you said there was a fair," said Michael who was not impressed by fine clothes. "So I did," Bert answered with a smile. "Down the water and over the hill. Don't you hear the music of the merry go round?" And all at once ..."

In the first part of this interaction, the caregiver asks the child, Clara, who had requested the book on the basis of seeing the movies "Are you sure you saw the movie?" This interaction appears to convey the caregiver's realization that this particular story is not a classic

rendition of <u>Mary Poppins</u>, as she had perhaps expected, so she wishes to confirm that this rendition of Mary Poppins was indeed the movie that Clara had seen. When the researcher later checked this interpretation with the caregiver, the caregiver affirmed the interpretation, saying: "Books come from everywhere," meaning that in addition to the daycare-owned books, both other caregivers and children brought books to the daycare and that she could not be familiar with all books previous to their use during storybook reading. For a parent not to be familiar with a storybook previous to a reading session may be a routine situation. The notion of books coming from many sources would be applauded by many researchers.

The caregiver then asked: "And you liked it?", waited 5.2 seconds for a positive response, then continued with the storybook reading. The caregiver appears to consider Clara's judgement regarding the enjoyment value of the book before preceding with the remainder of the storybook session. Consideration of the child's prospective enjoyment of a book is a consideration that parents may offer.

Greta: Can you sit down because Stephen get [is] a bit short? (meaning that Stephen is not able to see over a child that is standing up so the child must
sit down)

Story: Don't you hear the music of the merry go round?" And all at once they did, so over the hill went Michael and Jane. "My," said Mary

Poppins, as Bert took her arm and they skipped
down to a little country home, "I might be having
my day out." This is quite a holiday...
scrambled... in song. (8.60 sp before the page
is turned) Now the animals of the countryside
came out to see Mary Poppins. The lamb its heart
so light, the cow all brown and white, the horse
so good and great and the bees all come to say to
wish her a jolly holiday.

In this interaction, the caregiver stops the reading
momentarily to ask a child who is blocking the view of
another child to sit down. The child who was standing sat
down, the situation was quickly resolved, and the reading
session immediately resumed. In a group reading situation,
this sort of quick directive may be seen as an efficient,
largely non-interruptive means of dealing with individual
problems.

Greta: Look at what a good time they have. Look
they have a picnic too.

This interaction followed an approximate 6 second
pause during which the children have been looking at the
pictures. In this interaction, the caregiver
enthusiastically summarized the preceding text: "Look at
what a good time they have". Then at the same time that a
child tried to respond to the caregiver's summary, the
caregiver directed the groups' attention toward a detail (a
picnic basket) of the picture. Summarizing and directing a
child's attention toward a picture are behaviors that are
consistent with the behavior often exhibited by parents;
however, many parents may allow and encourage their

children to respond to both parent-initiated comments and
the pictures.

> Story: " Nothing makes a holiday complete," said
> Bert, "like a spot of afternoon tea." He waved
> his arm and there before him in an open place
> filled with sunlight stood a tea puddledom.
> "Slightly pink," said Mary Poppins. That was
> what she said when she was especially pleased.
> Soon they were seated at the best table with
> waiters popping about to serve them.
>
> Greta: What did the waiters serve? (3.10 sp)
> What do you think?
>
> Child: Flowers.
>
> Greta: No, you wouldn't eat flowers. You might
> decorate the table with flowers. What would he
> serve? (1.9 sp)
>
> Child: Hungry.
>
> Greta: Tea. Tea and maybe some biscuits (2.8
> sp)
> Story: "Now then," said Mary Poppins studying
> the menu, "what would be nice? Oh, they have
> some raspberry and frosted cakes and tea."
>
> Greta: Even more fancy.
>
> Story: "Anything for you," said Mary Poppins. "I
> would especially like a pink one." "Order what
> you will."

As with a previous interaction ("Do you like to clean
up? Do you like to clean up?") the caregiver asked the
question twice before the children answered. The question
was asked in the past tense so that according to the
picture clues, the child who responded that "flowers" had
been served by the waiter was indeed correct. However, in
the caregiver's next utterance it became apparent that the

caregiver had meant the question to be phrased in the
future tense and the children were to answer what the
waiter may serve (i.e. What <u>would</u> he serve?"). The
caregiver then did not respond to a supplementary attempt
to answer her question ("hungry"), and proceeded to offer,
what seemed in the caregiver's estimation, the correct
response ("Tea. Tea and maybe some biscuits"), even though
in the next line her response was proven to be only
partially correct. After reading this line the caregiver
offered the thought "even more fancy" meaning that what the
waiter had served was "even more fancy" than what she had
expected that the waiter would serve. While this
interaction may model a reader making a prediction about a
text and then reading to confirm or refute the prediction,
the "even more fancy" statement was expressed so that it
seemed to be part of the text, which may have left the
children with the notion that when the caregiver asked a
question, a convergent, correct response was indeed
expected.

  Greta: Just leave it please.

  This caregiver-initiated interaction again displayed
the caregiver's discipline method during storybook reading:
deal with situations as they arise, quickly, quietly, and
then immediately resume the reading of the story.

    Story: "There will be no bill. It's a
    complimentary."

> Greta: What is a complimentary? (1.5 sp)
> It is on the house. They don't have to pay
> anything. It's all free.

Although this word was incorrectly pronounced, this caregiver-initiated interaction was an example of the caregiver providing a definition of an unknown word, a strategy often used by parents. It could be argued however, that a parent may have intuitively used the semantic clues already present in the text (i.e. "There will be no bill") to help the child sort out the meaning of the specific unknown word while teaching the child a generalizable word identification strategy, that is, when you do not know the meaning of a specific word, you can use the surrounding semantic clues to determine the meaning.

> Story: When the tea was finished, Bert and Mary
> waltzed away. It was much too jolly a holiday to
> walk in the usual way. Down the hall they went
> to the merry go round. (2.54 sp)
>
> Greta: What are they doing? (2.37 sp) What are
> they doing? Sandy: Dancing
>
> Greta: Dancing, that's right.

In this interaction a caregiver-initiated question is asked twice which elicits a literal-comprehension level-response from a child. The child's answer is then judged correct by the caregiver. Parents do focus their children's attention on literal-level "readings" of the pictures but also ask questions at other comprehension levels.

Story: The merry go round is ...(scrambled)...
They leave the hall and land gracefully on the
horse's backs. Jane and Michael were ever so
pleased to see them. "Imagine that Jane, our own
private merry go round. Oh this is such fun."
"Very nice," said Jane, putting on a fine air.
"Very nice, that is, if you don't want to go
anywhere." (9.70 sp) "Who said we're not going
anywhere?" said Mary Poppins with a toss of her
head. And she headed toward a little garden.
"Right Oh, Mary Poppins" he smiled, and he lifted
his cap, and he chose the tallest horse on the
merry go round machine. And off on their horses,
tummity - tum across the countryside. In the
distance a hunting horn sounded. "Come follow
me," Mary Poppins called over her shoulder, and
away they all went to the call of the horn past
the huntsmen and hounds.

Greta: What are hounds (3.02 sp)
Dogs. Have you ever heard of hounds. Hounds are
dogs.

In the interaction, the caregiver asks the meaning of
a word, and then provides a definition of the word which
the children can understand. The comprehension of this
word is essential for understanding the text. As suggested
earlier, parents routinely provide their children with this
sort of assistance. However, a parent may attempt to
elaborate the notion of a fox hunt for the child, if the
child had little-to-no understanding of such an event. As
was revealed later in conversation between the researcher
and the children, most of the children had no concept of
the role of a hound in a fox hunt.

Story: As they galloped on past, Bert reached
down and scooped up a fox. They were travelling
so fast that the children scarcely noticed that
Mary Poppins had left their side.

Greta: Look at the fox hunt.

In the interaction, the caregiver's comment serves to focus the children's attention on the picture, as a parent would, and perhaps through telling the children that the picture conveyed a fox hunting scene, to build their fox-hunting schema, again as a parent may.

> Suddenly Mary Poppins was in the middle of a fox hunt and being Mary Poppins she won. (4.62 sp) While Mary Poppins received congratulations on her splendid victory, Jane and Michael watched from the top of a fence where they sat eating taffy apples with Bert. And it was there that the first raindrops fell.
>
> Greta: Ever go on a picnic and the rain came down on you? (.82 sp)
>
> Child: No.
>
> Greta: No. Then you're lucky. We don't get that much rain here except in the spring time.

In this interaction, the caregiver-initiated question was an attempt to contextualize the events of the story in the children's life experience. As in previous attempts at contextualization, the ultimate success of the caregiver's attempt at story contextualization may hinge on the caregiver making a final, connecting comment between life experience (hers if not the children's) and the story. This was not done.

> Story: There was a flash of lightning then a sudden downpour. They all huddled closely under Mary Poppin's umbrella. All around the countryside seemed to run together.
>
> Greta: The mud caked together and everything

seemed muddy and creamy. It all came together
and look like one ocean. It was very, very
sloppy muddy. OK (4.85 sp)

In this interaction the caregiver explains the phrase
"run together". Explaining this phrase, necessary to story
comprehension, is what a parent may do.

> Story: They all huddled close under Mary
> Poppin's umbrella but all around the countryside
> seemed to run together. Mary Poppin's pretty
> bonnet melted and the diamonds vanished from the
> buttons on her shoes. Jane and Michael looked
> politely away. Why there was the park. They
> were standing on the sidewalk just around the
> corner from Cherry Tree Lane. And on the
> pavement Bert's drawings were melting into wide
> puddles of rain. (4.74 sp)
>
> Child: (laughs)
>
> Greta: Did you hear what I said? What happened?
> Can you tell me what happened? Can you tell me
> what happened Clara? What happened? (4.48 sp)
> What happened? They had a lot of fun at first,
> but what came down then? (1.70 sp)
>
> Jimmy: Rain.
>
> Greta: Rain. That's right. And what did they
> do? (1.40 sp)
>
> Jimmy: They put up an umbrella.
>
> Greta: They put up an umbrella and then huddled
> under the umbrella, right? And what happened to
> the picture on the sidewalk?
>
> Child: Well (child speaks: "they melted" at the
> same time as Greta)
>
> Greta: They melted away. They ran away. The
> puddles ran away.
>
> Story: "Oh Bert," said Mary Poppins "all your
> fine drawings." "There are more where they came
> from Mary my dear" said Bert, and he smiled as if
> in his eyes she still was a lovely lady.

In this final interaction, the caregiver asks 5 times: "what happened?", and then asks for a literal-comprehension level recall of the sequence of events which followed the characters having "a lot of fun at first". The oldest child provided answers which were judged correct by the caregiver. Then the caregiver finished answering her own questions in a louder voice than the child's attempts. Some researchers maintain that other types of questions (main idea, imaginative, evaluation-type questions, for example) should also be asked and that children should be given more response time.

Discussion of Trends Apparent in the Representative Storybook Session

From an analysis of the interaction which occurred in this representative storybook session, a number of trends become clear. These trends will be discussed as followed. First, the child-initiated interactions will be discussed. Then, the caregiver-initiated interactions will be discussed. The later interactions will be subdivided into discipline-related interactions, story contextualization-related interactions, questions which did not elicit a response, and questions which did elicit a response.

Child-initiated interaction.

Of the 19 interactions that took place in this

storyreading, only 1 interaction was initiated by a child. Brailsford (1986) has shown that during parent-child storybook interaction in which children developed high-print-awareness and became readers-in-progress, parents asked few questions but responded eagerly to child-initiated queries and comments. Heath (1984) provides complimentary evidence: She asserts that during less-than-ideal parent-child storybook interaction, parent-initiated questions dominate storybook encounters. In her study, a parent-initiated questioning pattern resulted in children experiencing a limited readiness for school.

<u>Caregiver-initiated discipline-related interaction.</u>

Of the 19 interactions that took place, only 2 interactions, or about 10% of the total interactions, were discipline-related. This seemingly low statistic may indicate that the caregiver has clearly established a code of acceptable and non-acceptable conduct for storybook sessions. In fact, the researcher observed many instances throughout the observation period in which the caregiver explicitly made known the expected code of conduct. The rules of conduct taught were: Sit still, face the storyteller, and look at the pictures when they are shown. For example, a new child, Sandy, was sitting not facing the storyteller previous to the start of a particular reading event. The caregiver said, "Sandy, turn around". There

was no response from Sandy, so the caregiver physically turned him around and said, "You must turn around for the storybook." Sandy faced the storyteller for the storybook session. Additionally, the researcher observed the older children frequently caution the younger children as to correct behavior during storybook reading. Previous to the reading of Mary Poppins, for example, Clara, an older child, cautioned Sandy, a younger child, to stop playing with his slipper and to sit up and pay attention to the impending storybook reading. The older children's demands were remarkably consistent with those less-frequent demands imposed by the caregiver. This may indicate that the caregiver clearly put forth expectations but largely allowed the children to police the system. In that the children generally adhered to the expected code of conduct as evidenced by the given discipline-related statistic, this discipline management system may be considered successful. Furthermore, with particular reference to the discipline-related utterances made during the reading of Mary Poppins, the utterances may be viewed positively because in a minimum length of time with minimum further disturbance, "problems" were resolved and the storybook reading resumed. On the other hand, it may be argued that the controlled (i.e. not spontaneous) atmosphere resulting from this management system may reduce the positive impact of the storybook reading event. Characteristic of all

positive parent-child storybook reading sessions is the joyous, spontaneous atmosphere of give-and-take between parent and child. This type of atmosphere was absent from the daycare reading sessions.

Caregiver-initiated story contextualization-related interaction.

Of the 19 interactions which took place, 2 interactions, or about 10% of the total number of interactions, were attempts by the caregiver to contextualize the story in the life experiences of the children. As suggested beforehand, researchers such as Hayden & Fagan (1987) claim that positive parent-child storybook interaction is characterized by such contextualization. However, the overall success of the caregiver's contextualization efforts may be questioned because, in addition to the earlier noted lack of an explicit connection between the contextualization attempt and the story itself, it should be noted further, that in each contextualization attempt, only 1 child responded. The question then becomes: Does such interaction with 1 child have a "carry-over" or vicarious contextualizing effect for the other children? In other words, can the children make the transfer to their own experiences? While it is conceivable that contextualizing the events of a story in the life experiences of one child may have the

effect of contextualization for some other children, it seems highly improbable that creating a support-system based on one child's personal experience will serve to contextualize the story and thereby enhance story comprehension for all children. However, in this study, there was no evidence to support or deny the success of the contextualization effort for the children.

Caregiver-initiated questions which did not elicit a response

Of the 19 interactions that took place, the children did not respond to 8 (or 42%) of these questions. Four (or 21%) of these interactions concerned questions or comments about vocabulary. The caregiver allowed a response wait-time of 1.5 to 5 seconds in all cases, but in the end the caregiver provided a definition or elaboration of the necessary vocabulary concept in question. In the other four interactions which did not elicit a response from the children, wait-time was 0 second.

Caregiver-initiated questions which did elicit a response.

Of the 19 interactions that took place, the children responded to 8 of these interactions (42% of the total number of interactions). Of these interactions, 2 interactions have already been discussed under Caregiver-

initiated story contextualization-related interaction. The remaining 6 interactions could all be classified as caregiver-initiated literal-comprehension level questions.

Comprehension is thought to occur at 3 levels: the literal, the inferential and the critical. How each level ranks against each other level and how these modes interact is the subject of some debate. However, there is agreement that a literal understanding of a text is important at some level with the "traditionalists" claiming that a literal understanding of a text is "essential to the development of a sound foundation in comprehension" (Cheek, Flippo, & Lindsey, 1989, p.123). Asking questions, then, as the caregiver did may serve to enhance the literal understanding of this story.

With regard to the skills associated with the literal-level of comprehension, the caregiver was able to encourage the recall of detail, the recall of specific characters' actions, and the recall of the sequence of events. In the process of asking literal-comprehension level questions, the caregiver drew attention to the picture clues. Through drawing the children's attention to the picture clues, the children may come to understand or further their understanding that pictures should be attended to; Sulzby and Teale (1987) claim that a parent should show a child what to attend to. Indeed, during the approximate 5 seconds given to look at each double-page of the storybook,

most, if not all children would gaze intently at the pictures. In this picture gazing, the children may come to realize, or further their realization, that pictures provide semantic support for the words being uttered. Furthermore, upon sufficient picture gazing, they may come to understand, or further their understanding of Pellegrini's (1985) notion of "frozen discourse" with specific regard to pictures. In other words, the children may come to understand the story as being somehow "frozen" in the pictures of the storybook, separate from the reality of the daycare time and place. Finally, asking the children to look at the pictures may intensify the enjoyment of the experience for the children. For all these reasons, the asking of literal-level comprehension question while drawing attention to the picture clues may help a child learn about literacy.

There are some researchers (Lapp & Flood, 1986, for example), however, who may feel that this questioning did not go far enough. First, the questions asked required the use of only a few of the skills related to literal-level comprehension; other literal-level comprehension skills were left unexplored, for example, extracting main ideas or understanding stated cause-and-effect relationships. Second, comprehension questions at the inferential and critical levels were not addressed. The emphasis on literal-level comprehension questions is, however,

consistent with the question patterns of many classroom teachers. Lapp & Flood (1981) claim that in the early school years, 78.8% of questioning in schools is at the literal-level at the expense of encouraging inferential and critical thinking.

Ignoring inferential and critical level questions, while emphasizing literal-level comprehension questions which require convergent answers may lead to less well-developed divergent response capabilities. Since divergent thinking is associated with problem-solving ability, less well developed divergent response capability may result in less well developed problem solving ability. Reading and writing are problem solving tasks; therefore, an ongoing emphasis on literal-level comprehension questions may hinder literacy development.

Furthermore, the continual demand for convergent or correct answers may establish a non-risktaking environment. In all 6 literal-level question responses, the respondent was an older child who could provide an unquestionably correct literal-comprehension level answer based on either picture clues (e.g. And today he was doing what?) or definite personal knowledge.

For example:

   Greta: Are you sure you saw the movie?

   Clara: Yes, I'm sure.

   Greta: You did. And you liked it?

Clara: Yes.

Moreover, when a child did respond, the correctness of the answer was immediately assessed by the caregiver. For example:

Greta: What are they doing?

Sandy: Dancing.

Greta: Dancing. That's right.

Holdaway (1979) claims that there are many way of responding to a child's answer so that the group may recognize the acceptability and desirability of divergent responses. For example, a response to the child's "dancing" comment may have been, "Dancing. That's a good answer. They certainly look like they are dancing. What other words could we use to describe what Bert and Mary Poppins are doing?" This sort of questioning may lead to divergent thinking on the part of the children and may help to establish a secure, risk-allowing environment, both of which are helpful to early literacy learning.

This pattern of adult-initiated questions followed by a child's convergent, correct response was characteristic of a community of people studied by Heath (1983). Heath concluded that this question/response pattern did not help the children to synthesize parts into wholes, and therefore contributed to a diminished understanding of main ideas and was responsible, in part, for these children's limited readiness for school.

Furthermore, Nurss, Hough and Goodson (1981) claim that a preponderance of caregiver-directed questions which require "accurate verbal responses" may be linked to a lack of expressive language ability.

In summary, this representative storybook interaction exhibited a number of trends. First, there was a low (5%) incidence of child-initiated interaction during storyreading period. Second, there was a low (10%) incidence of caregiver-initiated discipline-related interaction. This interaction allowed discipline "problems" to be quickly and effectively resolved but the observed system of discipline management did not allow the joyful, spontaneous atmosphere characteristic of the home environment. Third, in 10% of the interaction the caregiver attempted to contextulize the story events in the life experience of the children as parents in the home environment do. The effect of such contextualization was questioned, however, because of a lack an explicit connection between the contextualization attempt and the story itself and because the story events were not contextualized in the life experiences of all the children. Fourth, there was a 42% incidence of caregiver-initiated questions which did not illicit a response. Half of these questions concerned vocabulary; parents in the home environment provide vocabulary assistance. In the case of the other caregiver-initiated questions that did not

illicit a response, the children were allowed a response wait-time of 0 seconds. Finally, 31% of the storybook interaction involved adult-initiated literal-level questions which required a convergent correct response.

Activities and Interactions that Followed Storybook Reading

There was a range of activities and interactions that followed storybook reading in the daycare.

An absence of follow-up activities.

Sometimes the storybook ended without a follow-up activity. This usually happened when, for one reason or another, the storybook session had been a struggle. For example, during the reading of The Supermarket, Sandy, a younger child, was clearly disinterested in the story. In spite of the caregiver asking Sandy to sit next to her and despite the caregiver's attempts to bring the child into the storybook session by asking him questions, Sandy was still inattentive. This caused a wave of restlessness and inattention among the other children. When the story was over, follow-up activities were absent: The group simply disbanded. At other times, follow-up activities were absent because it was necessary to quickly finish the story because lunch was ready to be served. At still other times, as previously mentioned, there was not a follow-up activity because the story group disbanded before the end

of the story. Most researchers would put forth the notion
that follow-up activities are essential for ultimate
enjoyment and understanding of the literacy event, but that
in the context of normal family life, situations arise from
time-to-time that do not allow for storybook follow-up
activities.

A range of follow-up activities.

Follow-up activities were observed during some
storybook sessions. These activities will now be
discussed.

Three times during thirty storybook sessions, what
followed the storybook encounter could be characterized as
question and answers or comments. The three situations
will be described followed by a general comment pertaining
to all three situations.

Situation 1 followed a story about Santa Claus. The
interaction proceeded as follows:

Greta: Do you think Santa would stop and play with
           your toys?

Children: Yes.

Greta: What would everyone like for Christmas?

Children: various answers

Greta: Santa does not always bring you exactly
           what
           you want - maybe next year - because he
           has so many houses to go to.

Situation 2 directly followed a Goofy storybook in

which the two main characters argued the relative
difficulty of housework versus out-of-house work. The
interaction proceeded as follows:

> Greta: What did you learn from that? (no pause)
> Housework and fieldwork are both hard but most
> importantly you have to know what you are
> doing. Now we'll have lunch.

Situation 3 followed a story about animals. The
interaction proceeded as follows:

> Greta: Did you like the story?

> Clara: Yes.

> Greta: Good. Clara can you and Jimmy sing that song?
> (The children know what song Greta is referring
> to and begin to sing)

Most researchers would agree with the principle of
allowing questions, answers, and comments following the
reading of a storybook but may suggest greater child-input
and "response"-encouraging questions.

At other times the story was followed by song. At
times the song was related to the story content, for
example, the singing of <u>Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer</u>
following the reading of a tale about Rudolph. Similarly,
following <u>Crosspatch</u>, a book about farm animals, the group
sang <u>Old MacDonald</u>. While some of the children could
probably connect or relate the song to the story, it is
probable that at least some of the younger children were
left to listen to a story and then sing some songs without

determining the connection for themselves. The ultimate
success of such activity may rest upon the caregiver making
a connecting comment. At other time, favorite songs were
sung following the storybook reading. It is difficult to
assess the worth (to the actual literacy event of storybook
reading) of the singing of unrelated songs. It could be
said that when the children enjoyed the songs, the overall
feelings of individual happiness may contribute to warm,
positive feelings toward the event of bookreading, which
is, in most researchers' opinions, integral to early
literacy learning.

In summary, the children experienced a range of
sometimes supportive activities and interactions following
storybook reading. Sometimes there was a follow-up; this
is in keeping with normal family life. At other times the
caregiver asked the question or made a comment that did not
encourage extended response from the children. At other
times songs were sung. The value of song to the literacy
event of story reading was questionable.

Summary of Storybook Reading

In summary, a picture emerges in which children were
usually read to daily. The children were comfortably
seated close to the storybook and the story teller. The
children were also physically close to one another. The
storybook choice was often that of the children, with the

older children's choice routinely heard and accepted. The sessions were not consciously instructional but many ideas potentially related to literacy were taught. Stories read differed from day to day and were quieting activities; children initiated little interaction and often did not respond to caregiver-initiated interaction. Caregivers often asked literal-level questions which required convergent, correct responses. There was a range of sometimes supportive pre-and post-reading activities and the atmosphere could not be characterized as joyful.

Other Literacy-related Occurrences

In addition to literacy related issues of oral language, play, and storybook reading there were other literacy-related occurrences in the daycare. In order of presentation, these categories of data are: 1) the caregiver as a literate model; 2) the exemplification of positive attitudes toward literacy; 3) the provision of purposeful literacy-related experiences; 4) reading opportunities captured in the environment; 5) the pointing out of similarities and differences in the environment, and, 6) the provision of the physical implements necessary for writing.

The Caregiver as a Literate Model

There were many instances of the caregivers modelling

the functional value of literacy. As the children played
or were engaged in a sit-down activity, it was common for
the caregivers to sort through and read the mail, write and
post the next week's lunchtime menu, or skim the daily
newspaper while keeping a watchful eye on the children.
Additionally, a homemade song book was frequently read
(sung) from and record jacket covers were read and
commented upon. Once a month one caregiver would engage in
bookkeeping activities for part of the morning. In the
home environment parents model everyday literacy activities
such as reading recipes, paying bills, writing shopping
lists and responding to letters. Through observing and
engaging in these simple literacy activities, children
realize that literacy functions to organize daily living
and to mediate social interaction among people (Brailsford,
1986; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983, 1988).

Furthermore, in the home environment parents model
reading and writing for personal enjoyment (Taylor, 1983).
In the daycare centre, the caregivers engaged in personal
reading only during the last hour of the children's
sleeping time.

The Exemplification of Positive Attitudes Toward Literacy

As previously described, caregivers routinely read to
the children and model the functional value of literacy.
There was, however, no direct verbalization of the value of

literacy. On occasion, parents in the home environment verbalize the value of literacy (Taylor, 1983).

The caregivers did, however, verbalize the value of school. Caregiver Mary's comments to the younger children as the older children left for school were typical of the comments made about school: "School is a wonderful place. You'll really enjoy it and learn lots of important things." Additionally, the caregivers were concerned about the children's activities and progress in school. The children routinely showed the caregivers their schoolwork and the caregivers responded with interest and praise. The children's parents often discussed school progress with Greta and sometimes asked for advice. For example, one child's parents asked Greta for advice with regard to placing their child in a French immersion early childhood classroom. Because the child's first and native language was Polish with English being a second, and in Greta's opinion, not-well-established language, Greta recommended that the child be placed in an English early childhood classroom. The child's parents, both veterinarians, followed Greta's advice. Heath (1983) claims that parents who show an active interest in the school life of the child, and relate the school and home, affect academic development positively. Furthermore, in literate home environments once children enter school, the home and school are carefully linked by the parents so that each

environment reinforces and supports the other (Heath 1983; Juliebo, 1985; Taylor, 1983).

Provision of Purposeful Literacy-related Experiences

As previously described, there were many literacy-related experiences provided. Storybook reading, contact with the tools of literacy and instructional exposure activities, for example, were provided. Taylor (1983) singles out trips to the library as being a particularly purposeful literacy-related experience. The daycare children did not visit the library but did, as previously described (see Storybook Choice), brought library-owned books to the daycare to be read at storytime. These books were always read during storytime and special mention was made of who brought the book and where it came from.

Reading Opportunities Captured in the Environment

There were many examples of the caregivers capturing reading opportunities in the environment. One day as the chief caregiver and children walked through a side street to the playground, a "Shell" hot air balloon flew overhead. As the children gazed into the sky, Greta said, "Who owns it?" Jimmy responded, "The gas station." "How do you know?" questioned Greta. "It's shaped like it," said Jimmy. "Yes, and it says `Shell' on the side. Do you see it?" Greta elaborated.

Similarly, as the children and the chief caregiver walked a different route to the same playground, a child said, "That's where the mean dogs lives." The caregiver asked, "How do you know?" Another child responded, "Because that sign there says `Keep Out.'" "That's right, the `Keep Out' sign tells us that a dog that bites lives there," Greta reiterated.

Other typical examples of capturing reading opportunities in the environment include the caregivers reading the children's sweatshirts and drawing the children's attention to the "alphabets" in their soup. Harste, Woodward & Burke (1984) and Taylor (1983) claim that the interpretation of environmental print by parents for preschoolers is a dominant and important means of helping children to determine the functional nature of print.

Pointing Out Similarities and Differences in the

Environment

There were a few examples of the caregivers pointing out similarities and differences in the environment. In an already quoted dialogue (see Language to Discuss) Greta pointed out the similarities and differences between tigers and lions.

```
Jimmy:  But tigers are called lions.
Greta:  No honey, those are different things honey.  The
        tigers have stripes and the lions don't.  Tigers are
        not called lions.  They are two different species.
```

> They are both cats, but they look different. They are
> from the same family, cat family. O. K. One has
> stripes and one doesn't. A male lion has a big mane,
> all that hair!

Similarly, Mary explained what makes a mannequin

similar to and different from a human being. She said,

"Well it's like a person. It looks like a person except it

is made of plastic. It doesn't move. And the people in

stores use it to sell their clothes. They put nice clothes

on it so that the people will see how nice the mannequin

looks and want to buy the clothes."

A more frequent situation in which similarities and

differences were pointed out to the children resulted from

the rule that every child, if capable, had to put away one

toy before getting another. Sometimes this rule was not

followed and resulted in toys being left for one or two

children to put away. The caregivers would point out which

toys belonged where, for example, "Jimmy, you put the lego

blocks in the container on the shelf. Jenny, you separate

the food products (referring to the artificial pieces of

food from the "pretend" kitchen centre) and put them where

they belong." The older children appeared to take pride in

this job designed for "the older kids" and in the context

of this activity may have been establishing an elaborate

classification system or schema. Parents in the home point

out similarities and differences in the environment and in

the process build and expand the child's understanding of

the world (Taylor, 1983).

The Provision of the Physical Implements Necessary for Writing

There was a plentiful supply of paper, crayons, pencils, and markers in the daycare. These items were controlled in that the children were offered these materials for a given period of time while seated in a particular area for a set activity (most often a coloring activity) during structured activity time. Parents in the home literacy environment provide the physical implements necessary for writing activities according to Juliebo (1985) and Taylor (1983) but Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) claim that children should have easy (not controlled) access to writing materials. Furthermore, Juliebo (1985) and Taylor (1983) claim that parents should encourage daily writing. The encouragement of daily writing was not observed in the daycare.

Summary of Other Literacy-related Occurrences

In summary, the caregivers modelled the functional value of literacy but given the constraints of their jobs could not model reading and writing for enjoyment. The caregiver's exemplified positive attitudes toward literacy through the experiences provided but did not directly verbalize the value of literacy. They did verbalize the

importance of school. The caregivers did provide many purposeful literacy-related experiences but did not take the children to the library. The caregivers did capture many reading opportunities in the environment and did point out some similarities and differences in the environment. The caregivers provided controlled access to a plentiful supply of writing materials.

Chapter V

Final Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

Chapter five presents a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings. Additionally, implications for practice and recommendations for further research are discussed.

Summary of the Study

Because literacy learning in the context of the daycare setting has been a relatively unexplored research issue, this research project sought to describe the literacy environment of a daycare centre. During the exploration of this broad issue through naturalistic research using ethnographic techniques, questions concerning the nature of storybook interaction, the oral language environment, the incidence and nature of play, and other instances of literacy learnings emerged and were addressed.

The researcher was a participant observer and was on site for 132 hours over a six-month time period. The researcher studied three caregivers and 14 daycare children to answer storybook, caregiver:child oral interaction, play, and other literacy-related questions but focused upon one four-year-old girl to answer child:child oral interaction queries. The child oral language informant was

chosen on the basis of her unlikeliness to stop attending the daycare and the researcher's perception that the child's oral language use was largely typical of the children in the daycare.

Data sources for this study were the researcher's observational notes and reflective journal, a collection of the children's colorings as well as audiotapes and transcriptions of storybook interactions, caregiver:child interactions, child:child interactions and daycare worker interviews. Data analyses involved the "piecing together" of data from all sources and was conducted throughout the study as categories of data emerged. The "picture" which emerged from the data analysis was compared, wherever possible, to a composite picture of the home literacy environment as presented by the research literature.

The findings of this study suggested that children were read to daily. The children were comfortably seated close to the storybook and the storyteller. The children were also physically close to one another. The storybook choice was often that of the children, with the older children's choices routinely heard and accepted. The sessions were not consciously instructional but many ideas potentially related to literacy were taught. Stories read differed from day to day and were quieting activities; children initiated little interaction and often did not respond to caregiver-initiated interaction. Caregivers

often asked literal-level questions which required convergent, correct responses. There was a range of sometimes supportive pre-and post-reading activities and the atmosphere could not be characterized as joyful.

Furthermore, the children were allowed at least 36% of their daycare day for freeplay. During this time, the caregivers acted as facilitators and the children had many toys, games and activities with which to play. The children played independently, played cooperatively, and played "symbolically." As a result, wide oral language use was used as a means of negotiating the world. During the 18% of the day that was spent eating, the children experienced little oral interaction but were exposed to information and situations which may positively influence their general school experience and may therefore have a concomitant influence on literacy learning. During the rest of the day, the dominant language forms of maintenance, musical, imaginative and the less-dominant form of language to provide instructional exposure were viewed as forms of language which potentially enhanced literacy learning. The preponderance of enabling language and questioning language, and the concomitant lack of language to discuss, were considered not to offer the child an extensive means of furthering oral language development and understanding of the world, including the world of literacy learning.

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that the caregivers modelled the functional value of literacy but did not model reading and writing for enjoyment. The caregivers exemplified positive attitudes toward literacy through the experiences provided but did not directly verbalize the value of literacy. They did verbalize the importance of school. The caregivers did provide many purposeful literacy-related experiences but did not take the children to the library. The caregivers did capture many reading opportunities in the environment and did point out some similarities and differences in the environment. Controlled access to a plentiful supply of writing materials was allowed, but daily writing was not encouraged.

Discussion

The goal of this research effort was to describe the literacy environment of a mainstream daycare centre. However, in attaining this description, much more than literacy was observed of course; the provision for the children's basic needs was observed at length. Because in the researcher's opinion, the provision for the children's basic needs is so very much more important than the provision for literacy learning, this issue will be addressed before a final discussion of literacy learning in the daycare.

In terms of a human being's basic needs, these children were well-cared for. The children were well-fed; they were encouraged but not forced to eat the nutritious meals offered, and extra servings were always available. They were allowed ample sleeping time on comfortable cots in a well-ventilated room. The daycare itself was very clean and it provided a safe environment. The daycare children's lives were regular and predictable, and the daycare workers, who in two out of three cases had been at the daycare for a number of years, were often affectionate and were always close at hand. These conditions must be considered exemplary because nutrition, cleanliness, physical safety, and affectionate attention are central considerations of the daycare situation (Maynard, 1986). Furthermore, the provision for a person's physiological and security requirements allow that person the opportunity to grow and mature physically and cognitively (Maslow, 1954). This said, a final discussion of the literacy environment of the daycare will be offered.

Literacy learning does not occur because of any one (or two or ten, for that matter) event(s), but is instead the result of a myriad of interconnecting and overlapping factors which slowly help a person to make sense of the arbitrarily established world of reading and writing. The nature of these interconnecting factors is aptly described by Taylor (1983) who claims that events which add to one's

"storehouse" of literate knowledge are happening much of the time and are "woven into the fabric of everyday life" (p.87) This research effort strove to reflect Taylor's understanding of how literacy learnings are acquired through its constant quest to determine the potential connections between what was observed in the daycare and literacy learnings. However, in the final analysis, a careful reading of the research literature seems to reveal five factors which are of the greatest importance to literacy learning. The presence or absence of these five factors in the daycare centre will now be discussed. It should be noted that the presentation order of these factors is not indicative of rank according to importance.

First, the research literature consistently points to the importance of adults engaging children in conversations (Bruner, 1971; Rodgers, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1986) about topics that the child is interested in and knowledgeable about (Snow, 1983; Rodgers, 1987; Wells, 1986). This is important because conversation is an excellent means of learning about the world (including the world of literacy), and in this context, children learn about oral language which is the foundation of the literate acts of reading and writing. Addressing a topic that the child is interested in and knowledgeable about encourages the child to participate actively in the conversation, thereby maximizing learning through conversation. As

suggested in chapter four, although there were forms of language that were necessary and forms of language that were potentially helpful to language and literacy development, extended caregiver:child conversations were uncommon in the daycare.

The nature of caregiver:child interaction in this study is largely consistent with the nature of language use in the childcare centres studied by Nurss, Hough, and Goodson (1981). These researchers reported that the four-year-olds in their study spent most of their time in groups primarily "listening to the teacher talk or experiencing no language at all" (p.30) with teachers who did not encourage conversation. In contrast, these results are not consistent

with the findings of Rodgers, Perrin, and Waller (1987) who focused upon a daycare teacher who had been "evaluated by children, parents, teacher and administrators as outstanding" (p.18) and who "encouraged open, extended conversations .... and maintained relatively long, natural, and child-centered conversations with the children as opposed to brief, contrived dialogues" (p.1).

Second, studies on storybook interaction in the literate home environment (Brailsford, 1986; Juliebo, 1985; Luyan & Wooden, 1984; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Teale, 1986; Wells, 1985) overwhelmingly report upon the joyous interactive nature of parent:child storybook

reading. As was suggested in chapter four, although storybook reading in this study exhibited many positive characteristics, the reading event could not be characterized as joyous or interactive; perhaps this was necessarily the result of large group management.

Third, many researchers (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Heath, 1983; Heath & Thomas, 1984; Juliebo, 1985; Luyan & Wooden, 1984; Morrow, 1989; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Teale & Sulzby, 1989) claim that children should be provided with ready access to the tools of literacy (books, pencils, paper, for example). In fact, Harste, Woodward & Burke (1984) present a picture of the literate home environment in which children literally trip over such tools as rooms are scattered with wide-open books and half-written playnotes. Such relaxed access seems to promote use throughout the day. As was suggested in chapter four, such ready access was not provided but instead controlled access to writing materials was allowed; reading material was utilized as the caregivers read stories during storytime. Perhaps such controlled access is required in the group situation because of organizational manageability.

Fourth, researchers (Bissex, 1980; Brailsford, 1986; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Heath, 1983; Juliebo, 1985; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988) agree that understanding the functional nature of print is of

great importance to literacy learning. As was discussed in chapter four, as the caregivers modelled literacy through reading the mail and writing lunch menus for example, as they pointed out and interpreted environmental print, and as they read to the children, the children may have been determining the functional nature of print.

Finally, Heath (1983) argues very persuasively for the necessity of preparing children for the demands of mainstream education if general success with school (including success with literacy learning) is to be attained. Heath claims that the child who is best prepared for mainstream education is the child who brings with him or her a certain "way of knowing." Part of this "way of knowing" involves knowledge of "good" mainstream behavior. Knowledge and practice of "good" mainstream behavior may allow the student to present himself or herself in a positive and acceptable manner to the teacher. The teacher's expectations of the child may then be greater than those expectations for children with less knowledge of what constitutes suitable mainstream behavior. The child's school performance may then fulfill the teacher's expectations leading to general school success while the child with little knowledge of mainstream behavior may experience less success with school and literacy learning. Heath's ideas are echoed by Green and Harper (1982) who claim that appropriate student roles will be called for and

must be displayed in instructional lessons. Gumperz (1986) and Florio-Ruane (1987) add that the display of such a role may serve as a precondition for access to academic knowledge. As was suggested in chapter four, the daycare children were exposed to much information and many situations that may have socially prepared them to exhibit the polite, mannerly behavior that is acceptable to schools. This may positively influence the daycare children's school experiences and may therefore have a concomitant influence on literacy acquisition.

To finally answer the question: What is the literary environment of the government-approved daycare centre? it must be said that while there were many potentially literacy-enhancing occurrences happening in the daycare including the very important occurrences of the mediation of environmental print and mainstream manners instruction, the literacy environment was not wholly conducive to literacy learning. This finding has a number of implications for practice.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study suggest that there were many positive literacy-related occurrences happening in the daycare but the overall literacy environment was not wholly conducive to literacy learning. The positive literacy-related occurrences should be applauded and encouraged

further; however, recommendations for the improvement of the literacy environment of the daycare must also be made.

First, it has become clear in this study that caring for a group of preschool children is clearly a different task than caring for one's own children. While the caregiver's love, patience, willingness to combine housecleaning, cooking and caregiving are important, it may be that, as in other professional fields, up-to-date inservice training should be offered to caregivers if the children's best interests with regard to literacy learning are to be met. To conduct such an inservice, the researcher envisages an early childhood expert with further expertise in the area of group care, visiting daycares on a regular, perhaps monthly, basis to help the caregivers become aware of and practice promoting preschool literacy learning. To be most helpful, it would seem necessary that the visiting expert work to achieve a collaborative working relationship with the caregivers so that all parties could learn from one another. Topics for such inservice training could include:

(1) How to conduct extended conversations with children and actual practice with the task. Greenberg (1970) claims that talking about talking with children does not work; practice is necessary.

(2) How to structure storybook sessions and encourage appropriate interaction within this context so that

all children experience storyreading as an
interactive, joyous occasion. With regard to the
structure of storybook sessions, to maximize child
participation it would seem appropriate to read to
individual children during freeplay time and also to
read to children grouped by age so that the younger
children would have greater opportunity to actively
participate in the reading event. This could be done
in place of and at times in addition to the large
group reading sessions. Furthermore, with regard to
encouraging interaction it would seem appropriate to
address the issue of asking personal response-type
divergent questions as opposed to the asking of
literal convergent-type questions.

(3) How to set up a daycare so that while the focus of the
curriculum is not on a literacy curriculum per se,
literacy is an integral part of the curriculum (Teale
& Sulzby, 1989). This could be done in the daycare by
allowing the already-established writing materials
centre and stocked bookshelves to be more accessible
to the children so that literacy activities could be
more readily "woven into the fabric of everyday life"
(Taylor, 1983, P.87). For example, notepads and
pencils could be left in the pretend kitchen area so
that menus and grocery lists could be printed by the
children (at will) in the context of play situations.

Recommendations for Further Research

As is explained in Appendix E (The History and Status of Daycare in Canada), literacy learning in the daycare setting has been a largely unexplored research issue because of the social, political and economic climate surrounding the subject of daycare. The findings of this research project provide a basis for further research recommendations.

First, this study was conducted at a middle-class, government-approved daycare centre in an urban setting. There are a range of daycare centres which cater to differing socioeconomic segments of the population in both urban and rural settings; some of these daycare centres may not be government-approved. In order that a better understanding of literacy learning in daycare may be attained, it is recommended that studies similar to this study be undertaken in a range of daycare situations.

Second, this study described the preschool literacy world of children in a daycare. In order that an understanding of the daycare child's entire literacy world may be understood, it is recommended that both the daycare child's literacy world at the daycare and the child's literacy world at home be studied concurrently.

Finally, the findings of this study suggested the need for ongoing inservice training for caregivers. It is

recommended that a future research effort be directed toward the development, implementation and evaluation of such a program.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Daycare
Workers/Management Personnel

Note: Daycare workers answer questions 1-7
Management personnel answer questions 1-8

1. What is the daycare's position relative to the home?
    Do you see yourself as a replacement for the
    parent? How?

2. What is the daycare's responsibility toward the
    child? Can you accomplish this? Why or why
    not?

3. Do you have other concerns about daycare?

4. What attributes are most important in a daycare
    worker?

5. What personal characteristics assist you in this
    work?

6. What is your educational background?

7. What was your reason for becoming a daycare worker?
    Do you foresee continuing to be a daycare
    worker?

8. What qualities do you look for in a potential
    employee?

Developed by F. K. Hurley (June, 1988)

Appendix B

CAREGIVER CODING SYSTEM EXPLANATION

A. Everyday Activities
   (E1) caregiver provides purposeful literacy-
         related experience (e.g. library trips)
   (E2) reading opportunities in the environment are
         captured
   (E3) reading opportunities in the environment are
         not captured
   (E4) writing opportunities in the environment are
         captured
   (E5) writing opportunities in the environment are
         not captured
   (E6) caregiver encourages/provides contact with
         books, paper, pencils etc.
   (E7) caregiver points out similarities and
         differences in the environment

B. Caregiver/Child Interaction
   (C1) caregiver speaks in language that child can
         understand
   (C2) caregiver scaffolds child's speech
   (C3) child's interests are addressed
   (C4) caregiver corrects child's language

C. Modelling
   (MI) caregiver reads for pleasure
   (M2) caregiver reads for information
   (M3) caregiver reads to others
   (M4) caregiver writes for pleasure
   (M5) caregiver writes to communicate information
   (M6) caregiver exemplifies a positive attitude
         toward literacy
   (M7) caregiver exemplifies a negative attitude
         toward literacy

D. Storybook Experience
   (SI) daily reading
   (S2) topics initiated by child are addressed
   (S3) topics initiated by adult speaker
   (S4) caregiver changes the topic
   (S5) caregiver's response answers a question
   (S6) caregiver's response clarifies a statement
   (S7) caregiver's response elaborates a statement
   (S8) scaffolding
   (S9) story is contextualized in children's own
         experiences
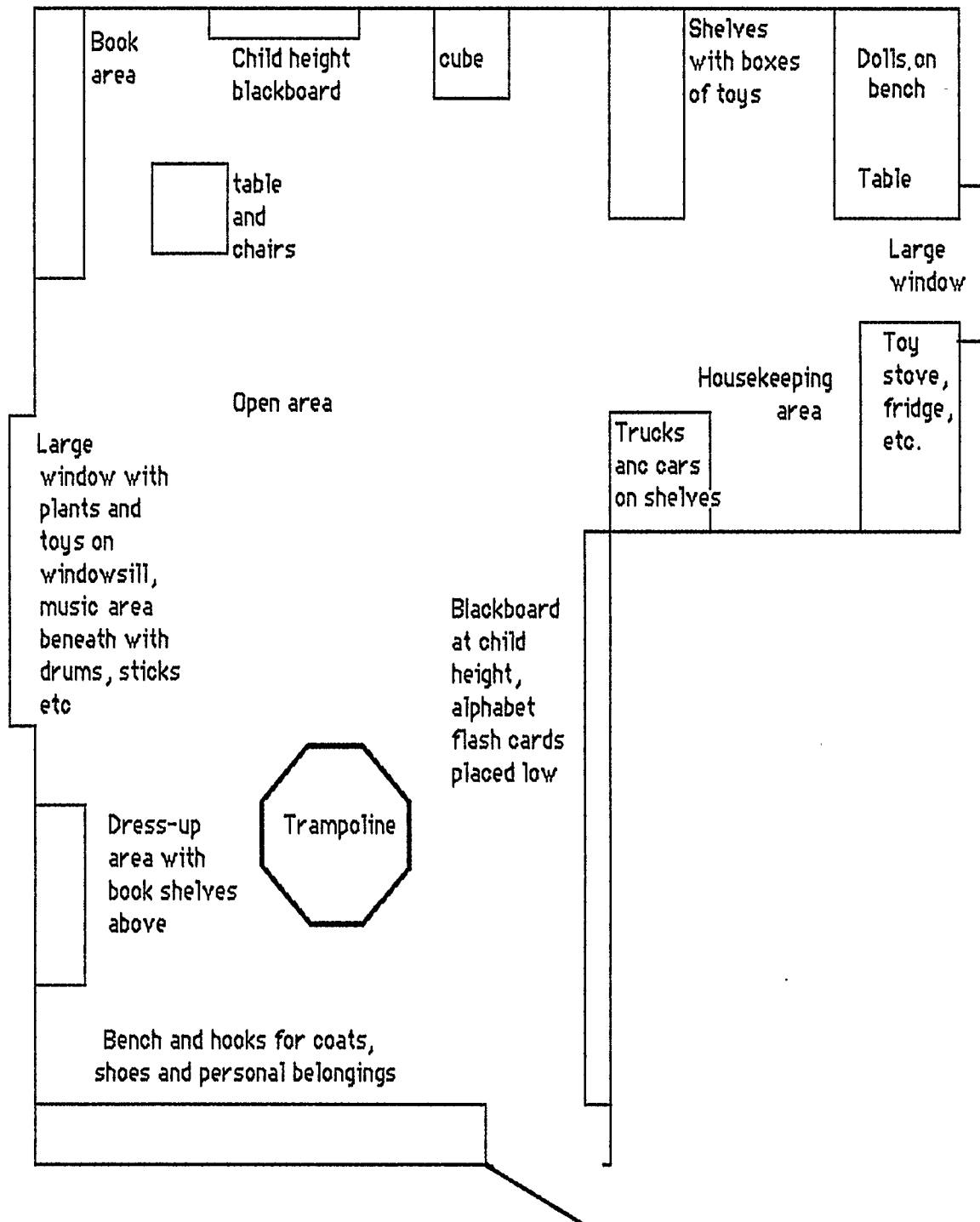
DEVELOPED BY F.K.Hurley (June, 1988)

Appendix C

CHILD CODING SYSTEM EXPLANATION

A. Everyday Activities
- (V1) child is taken on purposeful literacy-related trips (e.g. library trips)
- (V2) reading opportunities in the environment are provided
- (V3) writing opportunities in the environment are provided
- (V4) child has contact with books, paper, pencils etc.
- (V5) child has similarities and differences in the environment pointed out

B. Caregiver/Child Interaction
- (A1) child is spoken to in a language that he/she can understand (i.e. language is obviously simplified)
- (A2) child's speech is scaffolded
- (A3) child's interests are addressed
- (A4) child's speech is corrected

C. Modelling
- (O1) child observes caregiver read for pleasure
- (O2) child observes caregiver read for information
- (O3) child observes caregiver read to other
- (O4) child observes caregiver write for pleasure
- (O5) child observes caregiver write to communicate information
- (O6) child observes caregiver exemplify a positive attitude toward literacy
- (O6) child observes caregiver exemplify a negative attitude toward literacy

D. Storybook Experience
- (T1) child is read to daily
- (T2) topics initiated by child are addressed
- (T3) topics initiated by adult speaker
- (T4) caregivers changes the topic
- (T5) child asks a question
- (T6) child makes a statement
- (T7) caregiver's response answers a question
- (T8) caregiver's response clarifies a statement
- (T9) caregiver's response elaborates a statement
- (T10) child's speech is scaffolded
- (T11) story is contextualized in child's own experience

Developed by F. K. Hurley (June,1988)

Appendix D
Structural Organization of the Daycare Centre

Room 1: Playroom
(usually used for freeplay, music and storytime)

Book area

Child height blackboard

cube

Shelves with boxes of toys

Dolls on bench

Table

table and chairs

Large window

Open area

Toy stove, fridge, etc.

Housekeeping area

Large window with plants and toys on windowsill, music area beneath with drums, sticks etc

Trucks anc cars on shelves

Blackboard at child height, alphabet flash cards placed low

Dress-up area with book shelves above

Trampoline

Bench and hooks for coats, shoes and personal belongings

Room 2: Eating Room
(used for eating and sit-down activities)

Kitchen

Bathroom

bench

Table

bench

Shelves
with
boxes
of toys,
crayons,
paper and
other
writing
materials
are on top
of the
shelves

Hooks for
coats and
bags,
bench
and shoes
beneath

shelves
with
toys,
and
games
beneath

benches

Stereo
on
file
cabinet

chair

Table

chair

Large window with plants and decorations on the windowsill
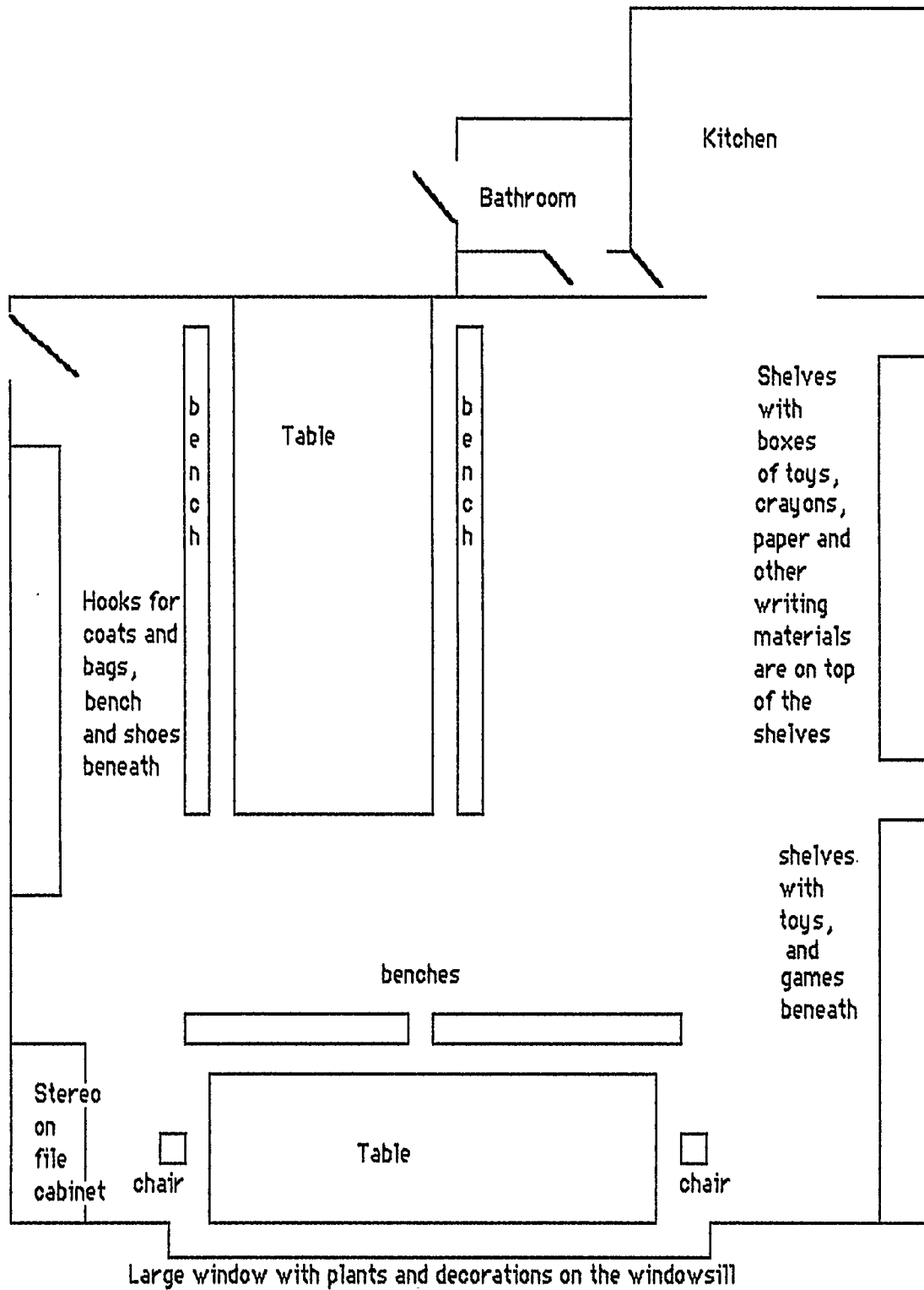
Appendix E

History and Status of Daycare in Canada

An examination of the research literature revealed
that the issue of preschool literacy learning in daycare
has been virtually unexplored. Given that the influence of
the preschool years on literacy learning has only recently
been determined, this is largely understandable. There
are, however, other reasons for the lack of research
literature pertaining to literacy and daycare. These
reasons are connected to politics, societal attitudes, and
economics. To understand these explanations and to put the
present undertaking in perspective, the researcher offers
an overview of the history and status of daycare in Canada.

Daycare is one part of a larger system of childcare in
Canada. This system is comprised of residential childcare,
the juvenile justice system, school based childcare,
hospital-based child life, early intervention and infant
development, community-based childcare, parent education
and support, and finally, daycare (Denholm, Ferguson and
Pence, 1987).

Daycare is not a recent phenomenon in Canadian
society: daycare dates back to the 1820's. At that time,
"infant schools" were established. The Canadian infant
schools were based primarily upon the British model (Pence
& Canning, 1987). For this reason, the British infant

school model will be discussed.

The motivation for such a daycare model came from upper class Londoners who were concerned with the large number of young children who were living on the streets of London and using criminal activity to provide a means of survival. As a result of the concern for these problems, infant programs were developed that offered young children both a place to live and instruction in how to be good citizens. The pedagogical approach involved the vertical grouping of children such that "older children were appointed to watch over groups of younger children while a central instructor lectured upon a focal topic" (Pence and Canning, 1987, p.113). Claims were made that this pedagogical approach made it possible "to have two or even three hundred children assembled together, the oldest not more than six years of age, and yet not have one of them cry for a whole day" (Albany Infant School Society, 1829, p. 7, cited in Pence & Canning, 1987, p. 113).

This particular pedogogical approach was the primary model for daycare in Canada from 1820 to 1840. During this time, daycare became not only a "resource for working parents [but was viewed] as a way to ensure that children received the benefits of early instruction" (Pence & Canning, 1987, p. 113). Both working and nonworking parents ethusiastically placed their children in infant schools, and many similar schools partially funded by the

government, opened across Canada.

This widespread availability and respect toward infant schools did not endure. In the 1840's, most Canadians began to consider daycare a welfare service for the minority of families who did not fit the ideal, traditional, or "Victorian" (Strickland, 1985) family structure in which the father worked while the mother was homemaker and chief caregiver. Correspondingly, almost all infant schools closed. The predominance of the "Victorian" family structure and the concomitant scarcity of daycare continued until the 1960's, except during World War II when daycare services were a political, and economic necessity (Pence & Canning, 1987).

In the 1960's, the number of families with traditional structures decreased markedly. The economic necessity of two-salary families, the changing role of women and the increasing number of female-headed, single parent families led to a major increase in the number of women with children in the out-of-home, paid labor force (Pence & Canning, 1987). Accordingly, alternative child care arrangements such as babysitters, family daycare, and centre daycare were made for the children.

This demographic trend continued into the 1970's. The Canadian parliament recognized these changes by passing the "Canadian Assistance Plan" to assist needy Canadians "who (required) financial assistance or who (required) social

services to prevent, overcome, or alleviate the causes and effects of poverty or child neglect" (Department of National Health and Welfare, 1974, p.2).

Additionally, American researchers responded to a similar demographic trend in the United States by attempting to prove or disprove the still widespread conviction that daycare was harmful to children. The Syracuse Project (1964), The North Carolina Projects (1968), The Boston Project (1977) and The New York City Infant Daycare Study (1978) investigated various aspects of development (cognitive gains, attachment behavior, social interaction, emotional security, aggression and cooperation for example) under various conditions ("typical" public and private daycare programs, academically oriented, research-based model daycare centres, social class and ethnicity) to determine whether daycare was harmful for children. Later, large scale studies such as The National [American] Day Care Study (Golden & Rosenbluth, 1978) sought to determine what kind of daycare would best meet the needs of children.

In general, these studies concluded that daycare is not harmful to children if high quality care is given. High quality of care was observed when the daycare centre had the following combination of characteristics: a high staff:child ratio (1:7 for children aged 3-5), a low ceiling on group size (approximately 14 children) and staff qualified with child-related education and training.

With particular reference to cognitive functioning,
Belsky (1985) asserted "research evidence is compellingly
consistent in demonstrating that there is absolutely no
adverse effect of out of home care be it in centres or in
families, on children's intellectual functioning. On the
contrary, there is evidence which indicates that daycare,
both during infant and preschool years, is beneficial,
particularly in the case of children from economically
disadvantaged households" (p. 4).

At the end of the decade, the recognition of all these
factors, their relationship to daycare, and an urge to act
upon what was presently known so that quality daycare could
become universal, was provided by The Task Force on the
Child as Citizen which was established by the Canadian
Council and Youth for the International Year of the Child
(1979):

> The customary conditions for a stable family and
> community environment no longer exists for increasing
> numbers of young Canadian families. If we accept
> successful child-rearing as crucial to the
> establishment of a stable society, we must be prepared
> to supplement the efforts of individual families in
> carrying out this responsibility. To this end, we
> must reject the concept of daycare as a babysitting
> service for working mothers or, worse, as a remedial
> service for inadequate parents. Daycare services must
> be perceived as support and enrichment to family life
> in general which offer the young child essential
> opportunities for socialization. Used to best
> advantage, daycare would be a universally available
> early education program funded by health and education
> authorities. Such a system would provide two-way
> universal access. Designed with imagination and
> creativity, it might offer an important system of
> support to all parents, allowing them to use its

> resources to help the early needs of their children.
> On the other hand, it would provide universal access
> to young children by health workers, access which
> could mean regular evening programs and the
> development of health promotion and fitness programs
> before school age.
>   (cited in Bagley, 1986, p. 4-5)

At the end of the 1970's, this "splendid ideal (was)
far from realization in Canadian society" (Bagley,1986,p.5)
but with research findings such as the aforementioned, with
an increasing need for daycare space, and with groups such
as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women
lobbying the federal government for universal programs of
quality childcare, the 1980's seemed destined to be the
time in which specific quality of child-care issues would
be addressed. The K.D. Cooke Report (1984), the report of
the Canadian government's task force on daycare in Canada,
announced that now was the time to act: high quality
daycare was a necessity. However, in the latter part of
the decade, conflicting research evidence and shifting
social and economic pressure have become evident.
Researcher Belsky, who had confidently claimed in 1984 that
daycare had no lasting negative effects on intellectual
functioning provided, in 1988, research results that dealt
with the affective rather than the cognitive domain, and
did not carry positive a message. With Rovine, he claimed
that:

> evidence from two longitudinal studies of infant and
> family development (were) combined and examined in
> order to determine if experience of extensive
> nonmaternal care in the first year is associated with

heightened risk of insecure infant-mother attachment, and, in the case of sons, insecure infant-father attachment. Analysis of data obtained during "Strange Situation" assessments conducted when infants were 12 -13 months (revealed) that infants exposed to 20 or more hours of care per week displayed more avoidance of mother on reunion and were more likely to be classified as insecurely attached to her than infants with less than 20 hours of care per week.
(Belsky & Rovine, 1988, p. 157)

In addition to emerging research results such as this, criticism has also been directed toward earlier daycare-related efforts because of purported small sample sizes and because of the claim that too much of the early research was done in university, high-quality daycare centres rather than being done in a range of representative daycare settings. As a result of this, many researchers have returned to the study of fundamental issues: the question of whether daycare is indeed harmful to children is again being addressed.

Additionally, social pressure directed against the "daycare movement" has surfaced from organizations (R.E.A.L. Women, for example) and stay-at-home mothers who feel that the federal government is allocating too much money for daycare at the expense of and/or without equal compensation for people who choose to stay out of the paid labor force to raise their children (Kids First, for example). Finally, the burgeoning national deficit has resulted in less money being available for daycare program subsidization, development, training, and monitoring.

Under these conditions, issues such as literacy in the

daycare setting have been left largely unexplored.